



COMPASS



PAKISTAN NAVY STAFF COURSE REVIEW
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PATRON-IN-CHIEF MESSAGE



It is with great pleasure that I present the latest edition of 'Compass 2024' which embodies academic-cum-professional research endeavours of participants of 53rd Pakistan Navy Staff Course (PNSC). This journal presents research on the most relevant and contemporary issues while simultaneously fostering a proclivity towards scholarly inquiry within Pakistan Navy. The journal includes seven articles, meticulously selected from rich array of research produced by the participants of 53rd PNSC, and one book review.

Pakistan Navy War College (PNWC) serves as a hub of academic learning, and its burgeoning focus on research is evident through the establishment of the Maritime Centre of Excellence (MCE) and ever-increasing integration with academia. 'Compass 2024' not only aims to popularize research culture within Pakistan Navy but also highlights the significant contributions made by our staff course participants toward rigorous academic research on pressing issues.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the editorial team for their diligent efforts in compiling and presenting this invaluable work.

**REAR ADMIRAL JAWAD AHMED HI(M)
COMMANDANT
PAKISTAN NAVY WAR COLLEGE**

PATRON'S NOTE



I am elated to extend my patronage to 'Compass 2024,' the distinguished academic journal of Maritime Centre of Excellence (MCE), Pakistan Navy War College (PNWC), Lahore. The publication is an effort that galvanizes intellectual inquiry and academic rigor, thereby fostering scholarship and contributing to advancement of academic excellence. The range of articles featured here is but a glimpse into the extensive body of research undertaken at PNWC.

I commend the authors for their valuable contributions towards enhancing richness of academic discourse. I also acknowledge the efforts of editorial team for advancing quality and depth of this publication. In these pages, readers will encounter thought-provoking discussions on contemporary issues including maritime security, lawfare, and space-based capabilities, etc.

As Patron, I gladly endorse 'Compass 2024' and its role in shaping scholarly thought. May it continue to serve as a catalyst for intellectual advancement and contribute meaningfully to broader academic landscape.

**COMMODORE EHSAN AHMED KHAN SI(M)
DY COMMANDANT/CHIEF INSTRUCTOR
PAKISTAN NAVY WAR COLLEGE**

EDITOR IN CHIEF'S NOTE



LT CDR DR SUFIAN ULLAH PN
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

The latest issue of 'Compass 2024' contains scholarly articles on diverse range of topics related to maritime and other key security issues. The twenty-first century has been witnessing transformative developments in the global geopolitical environment. The seismic shifts in global politics and advancements in technology have changed norms of engagement through war and diplomacy. South Asia, Indian Ocean and the Indo-Pacific have emerged as key regions through which new world order may find its origin and development.

Assertive ambitions of dominant and aspiring players, increased scope of naval diplomacy, use of law as a weapon of war, rise of new intergovernmental organisations, and states venturing into space for military dominance are important areas of reflective inquiry for scholars and academics.

In same vein, articles on these issues with contemporary relevance have been selected for informed readers of 'Compass'. I hope that the latest issue will contribute towards advancement of informed discourse on these topics. The editorial team would welcome any suggestion from our worthy readers for improvement in quality or content.

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RELEVANCE OF MAHAN IN CONTEMPORARY MARITIME SECURITY ENVIRONMENT AND GLOBAL INTERDEPENDENCE IN 21ST CENTURY

Lt Cdr Asadullah PN*

ABSTRACT

Sea Power is the foundation and a significant element to ensure the maritime security of any nation. Mahan advocated concepts of Sea Power in the late 19th century that were widely adapted by major navies of the world. This research article explores the enduring relevance of Alfred Thayer Mahan's theories on sea power in the contemporary maritime security environment and globally interconnected world of the 21st century. Mahan's concepts, centred on naval supremacy, control of maritime chokepoints, and strategic value of dominating seas, have historically influenced the development of naval doctrines. This research article highlights relevance of Mahanian thinking in contemporary maritime security environment amidst technological changes and Mahan's precepts as adopted by major world navies. Sea Power precepts, advocated by traditional and modern strategists, have also been studied in order to have a clear understanding of sea power concepts and reach tangible conclusion. Broad contours of the New World Order and its impact on de-globalisation have also been touched upon to analyse how Mahanian canon is still applicable to global interdependence in the 21st century.

Key Words: Sea Power, Maritime Security, De-globalisation, New World Order, Naval Doctrines.

* Author is a graduate of Pakistan Navy War College 53rd Pakistan Navy Staff Course.

INTRODUCTION

“Whosoever can hold the sea has command of everything.” This is how Themistocles (524-459 BC), an Athenian politician and naval strategist, expressed the importance of the sea. Geoffrey Till has defined Sea Power as ‘a technology-driven instrument, which underpins an important link between navies and technology.’¹ According to the Maritime Doctrine of Pakistan, ‘Sea Power of a nation stems from maritime potential.’² U.S. naval strategist, Alfred Thayer Mahan weighed Sea Power as the use of own land for productivity, own shipping to carry products and overseas colonies to monopolise markets. In order to achieve this, a state must increase production, concentrate a powerful navy for the protection of SLOCs and go for decisive battles for colonial expansion.³ Till 1945, U.S. maritime strategists based their theoretical concepts on Mahan’s idea.⁴ With time, the global maritime environment has changed significantly. Aforementioned in view, rapidly changing maritime security environment beholds such unique/ innovative aspects that merit re-evaluating relevance of Mahan’s concept in the 21st century.

MAHANIAN PRECEPTS OF SEA POWER

Mahan, after studying Britain’s history, formulated an influential concept of Sea Power in his magnum opus ‘Influence of Sea Power upon History 1660-1783’. He believed that ‘maritime communication is essential which could only be achieved through overseas bases.’⁵ Mahan believed that in order to win command of the sea, enemy’s means of conducting maritime commerce are to be defeated (*guerre de course*, introduced by French Admiral Theophile Aube) and overseas colonies, be taken. He also coined elements of sea power including: geographical position, physical confrontation, extent of territory, number of population, character of the people, and character of the government.⁶

Mahan believed that winning battles is the quickest way to achieve own goal of command of the sea; however, looking at maritime wars (American Revolution, Russo-Japanese War, WW-II), it can be asserted that the foremost purpose of the Sea Power is in fact to secure SLOCs and not to win battles. Moreover, Mahan’s theory is based on lessons from Britain’s (an island state) unique strategies and is not fully applicable to every nation.

¹ Geoffrey Till, *Seapower: A Guide for the Twenty-First Century*, 3rd ed., (London: Routledge, 2013), 114–44.

² *Maritime Doctrine of Pakistan (MDP), Preserving Freedom of Sea* (Pakistan Navy, 2018), 08.

³ Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History 1660-1783* (Methuen London: University Paperbacks, 1987), 71.

⁴ John B. Hattendorf and Ernest J. King, *The Evolution of the U.S. Navy’s Maritime Strategy: 1977 - 1986*, The Newport Papers 19 (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 2004), 20.

⁵ Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History 1660-1783.*, 16.

⁶ *Ibid*, 23.

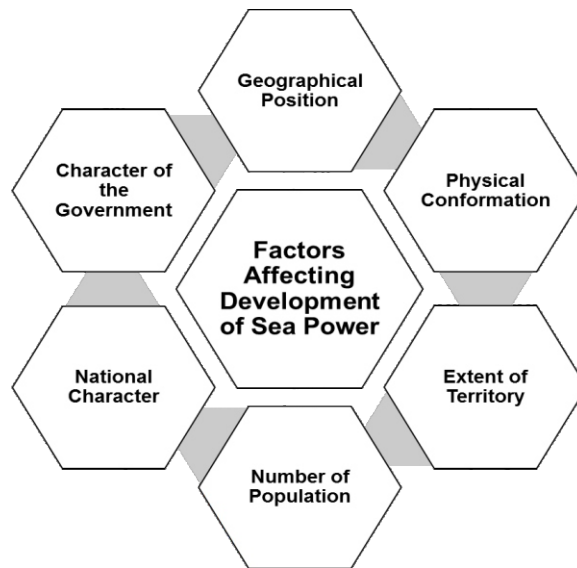


Figure 1: Elements/ Factors Affecting Development of Sea Power (Author's compilation)⁷

SEA POWER AS WHOLE

Sir Julian Corbett theorised that the purpose of maritime power is either to secure command of the sea (sea control) or to prevent an enemy from securing it (sea denial).⁸ As per Corbett, command of the sea means nothing more than merely control of maritime communication, whether for commercial or military purposes. He stated that navy is generally a supporting effort to army. Mahan and Corbett are not opposite, but Mahan's decisive naval battles are simply ways to achieve Corbett's command of the sea.

Sir Halford Mackinder explained in his 'Heartland Theory' that 'whichever nation controls Eastern Europe would control Heartland; subsequently this nation would then control the World Islands and finally dominate the world.'⁹ He pointed out that many long-lasting empires were based on land power not Sea Power.¹⁰

Capt. Stephen Wentworth Roskill emphasises that there exist three elements of Sea Power. First is a strength element, composed of those instruments which operate on, under and above the sea. Second is the security element, i.e. bases

⁷ Ibid, 29.

⁸ LCDR Brian P. O'Lavin, USN, "Mahan and Corbett on Maritime Strategy," *US Naval War College*, September 8, 2009.

⁹ Jennifer Loy, "Mackinder and Mahan: The Chinese Geopolitics in South Asia," *Real Clear Defense*, March 15, 2018, https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2018/03/15/mackinder_and_mahan_the_chinese_geopolitics_in_south_asia_113199.html

¹⁰ Till, *Seapower*, 2013, 03.

from which strength elements operate. Third is transport element which means merchant navy, ships, crew and yard to build and repair vessels.¹¹

Geoffrey Till believes that Sea Power can be visualised as a tight and inseparable system, in which, naval power protects maritime elements and becomes the ultimate source of prosperity and military effectiveness. This implies that mercantile financial gains could then be utilised to fund naval efforts. This suggests that it is easier for maritime power (naval power and strong mercantile elements) to build required navy to project naval power (Mahan's emphasis).

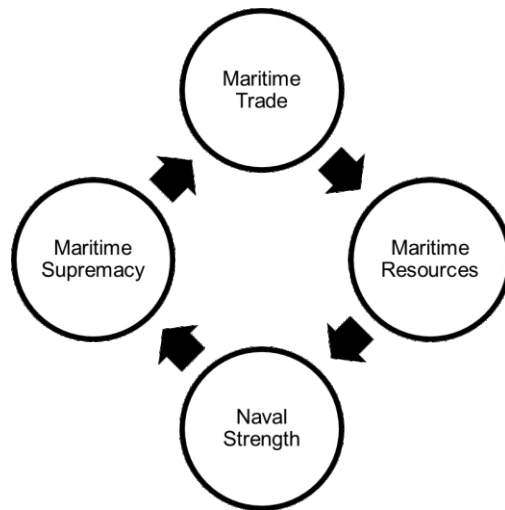


Figure 2: The Virtuous Maritime Circle (Author's compilation)

Other renowned modern naval strategists like Charles W. Koburger, Sam J. Tangredi, Admiral Thomas H. Collins and David Gompert have also argued about Sea Power in different ways. For every maritime strategist, although ways and means to achieve Sea Power are different, but the end objective remains the same, i.e., achievement of sea dominance.

SEA POWER IN THE CONTEMPORARY ERA

At the dawn of the 20th century, the U.S. was influenced by Mahan's ideas and started expanding its status in the region. During the Cold War (1954), the term 'The Transoceanic Navy'¹² was coined by Samuel P. Huntington explaining the need for the US Navy to reassert its transcendent position which was changed due to WW-II. In the contemporary era, Mahan's concept can be translated into a geo-economic dimension, wherein, Sea Power is essential for national security, prosperity, and global influence as he stressed not only on hard naval power but also

¹¹ Raymond G. O'Connor, "Naval Strategy in the 20th Century," *US Naval War College Review*, 1969.

¹² Hattendorf and King, *The Evolution of the U.S. Navy's Maritime Strategy*, 262.

its linkage with national wealth due to commercial power (trade) and global supply chain. As compared to Mahan's era, applicability of Sea Power has dramatically changed but the underlying principles of Mahan, especially the nexus between commercial and naval power leading to create national wealth, remain the same.

FACTORS DRIVING DE-GLOBALISATION AND RELEVANCE OF MAHAN

Global power dynamics are gradually transitioning where, West's global influence is on the decline and pivot of hegemonic competition is shifting from Euro-Atlantic to Asia Pacific. Globalisation is in gradual decline and is gradually being replaced by de-globalisation. The factors driving this trend are discussed below:

a. World Order in the 21st Century and Impact on Global Commons vis-à-vis Role of Maritime Sector.

Globalisation is a foundation to deal with global commons, built upon the heritage of Grotius' idea of Mare Liberum; an idea that aimed to preserve freedom of access for the benefit of all. However, old Mare Liberum idea has digressed into 'first come, first served' for the advantage of industrialised countries. Geoffrey Till writes that "not only does the modern shipping industry make globalisation possible, sea is itself profoundly globalised. The whole concept of globalisation is profoundly maritime."¹³ However, a civilisation-based world order is emerging wherein countries are grouping around lead state or group of core states of their civilisation to develop. This aspiration demands for de-globalisation depending on world leaders' acceptance and cooperation to maintain the multi-civilizational character of global politics.¹⁴ Russia-Ukraine war, Israel invasion on Palestine, global North v/s global South, and formulation of energy, economic and security blocks etc. are now contributing towards de-globalisation.

b. Globalisation v/s De-Globalisation. "Globalisation supports interdependence of world economies, cultures and populations, brought about by cross-border trade in goods and services, technology and flow of people and information."¹⁵ In contrast, "De-globalisation a is movement towards a less connected world, characterised by powerful nation states, local solutions and border controls rather than global institutions, treaties and free movement."¹⁶ Recent growth in protectionism, hurdles in global supply chain management, declining role of global institutions, geopolitical shifts of countries in various theatres of the world, technological rivalries and

¹³ Geoffrey Till, *Seapower: A Guide for the Twenty-First Century*, 3rd ed (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 09.

¹⁴ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

¹⁵ "What Is Globalization?," *PIIE - Peterson Institute for International Economics.*, October 29, 2019, <https://www.piie.com/commentary/speeches-papers/globalization-concept-causes-and-consequences#:~:text=We%20mean%20that%20the%20whole,responding%20to%20the%20same%20impulses>.

¹⁶ "De-Globalisation" (European Parliament, November 20, 2023).

degrading trend in foreign investment, etc. have spiked the scale of de-globalisation.

c. **Paradigm Shift from Globalisation to De-Globalisation: Myth or Reality.** Ambassador Javid Husain in his book 'Pakistan and a World in Disorder: A Grand Strategy for the Twenty-First Century' writes that in New World Order, various factors drive globalisation which are interconnected/ interrelated in complex ways, i.e. global economic integration, digital technological advents, socio-cultural convergence, civilization's focus to safeguard global interests, education system, eco-political cross-border influence, financial liberalism, interstate cooperation, boost in international business, global maritime trade, protection of global commons (maritime and space domain) for greater good of the world, etc.¹⁷ Consideration of environment and health issues has had a trans-border impact bringing countries closer together and encouraging international cooperation.

d. **Dynamics of De-Globalisation.** De-Globalisation, in concept, deals with eradication of geographical boundaries. It appears that power politics and elements of competition in international politics have upper hand compared with consequences of the globalisation process. As a result, states opt for a de-globalised world to safeguard interests of their citizens. A recent example of the same can be found in BREXIT mainly to regain control of immigration and trans-border movement.¹⁸ Some of the pertinent factors related to the maritime sector favouring de-globalisation include:

- (1) Shift from economic integrity to enhancement of maritime military might.
- (2) Shift from naval diplomacy to contestation for overseas naval bases.
- (3) Shift from combined/ multilateral naval exercises to harassment at sea.
- (4) Shift from global interdependence to state independence.
- (5) Shift of focus from landmasses to oceans.
- (6) Shift from single currency to de-dollarisation.

MAJOR NAVIES FOLLOWING MAHANIAN CONCEPTS

How Mahan is influencing USN, PLA(N) and IN in support of global supply chain to augment the economy is discussed in ensuing paragraphs:

a. **The United States Navy (USN).** As per the Monroe Doctrine, European powers were obligated to respect the Western Hemisphere as the

¹⁷ Javid Husain and Qāzī Jāved, *Pakistan and a World in Disorder: A Grand Strategy for the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 26.

¹⁸ "The EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement," *European Commission*, November 12, 2019, https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/relations-united-kingdom/eu-uk-withdrawal-agreement_en

U.S.' sphere of interest and the Monroe doctrine became cornerstone of the U.S. future hegemonic foreign policy designs.¹⁹ Former President of the U.S., Theodore Roosevelt in his book titled 'Fear God and Take Your Own Part' writes that "the Monroe Doctrine is as strong as the USN, and no stronger".²⁰ In similar fashion, Mahan can also truly be called as theoretical founder of 20th century USN due to his Sea Power theory.²¹ USN Admiral (Retd) James Stavridis in his book 'Sea Power: The History and Geopolitics of the World's Oceans' writes that "One former U.S. secretary of war, Henry Stimson opined that Mahan manifested peculiar psychology of USN department which frequently seemed to retire from realm of logic into a dim religious world in which Neptune was God, Mahan his prophet and USN, the only true church."²² His lectures were deeply admired and absorbed by Theodore Roosevelt. The Battle Force Navy has been at the heart of the USN's strategic culture since Mahan started writing on Naval strategy 130 years ago.²³

Till the start of 21st century, the U.S. remained a superpower due to adherence to the principles of Mahan and same deemed necessary to increase global dominance.²⁴ As the Chinese Navy becomes larger and more wide-ranging, USN appears to have embraced Julian Corbett, wherein, USN got smaller in number: from around 600 ships during the Cold War, to 350 during the 1990s, to 280 in 2012²⁵ and 299 ship as of 18 July 2023.²⁶ "A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower", focuses on cooperation (Corbettian thoughts) than dominance (Mahanian thought)²⁷ vis-à-vis provides flavour of Sea Power such as 'Sea Power has been and will continue to be critical foundation of national power and prosperity and international prestige for the U.S.'²⁸ This implies that USN has and presently been following a cocktail of Mahanian and Corbettian precepts to sustain its dominancy in the world.

¹⁹ "Monroe Doctrine (1823)," *US National Archives*, accessed December 27, 2023, <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/monroe-doctrine#:~:text=President%20James%20Monroe's%201823%20annual,nations%20of%20the%20Western%20Hemisphere>

²⁰ "Americanization; Principles of Americanism, Essentials of Americanization, Technic of Race-Assimilation," *Internet Archive*, 55–56, accessed December 27, 2023, <https://archive.org/details/technicraceassim00talbrich/mode/2up?view=theater>

²¹ Thomas R. Beall, "Why Are We Still Reading Mahan?," *US Naval Institute*, August 12, 2021, <https://blog.usni.org/posts/2021/08/12/why-are-we-still-reading-mahan>

²² James Stavridis, *Sea Power: The History and Geopolitics of the World's Oceans* (New York: Penguin Press, 2017), 310.

²³ R. Beall, "Why Are We Still Reading Mahan?"

²⁴ Lt Cdr Ronald D. Parker, USN, "Mahan for the Twenty First Century: His Principles Still Apply to National Power," *Defense Technical Information Center*, 2003.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Sam Lagrone, "Navy Raises Battle Force Goal to 381 Ships in Classified Report to Congress," *US Naval Institute*, July 18, 2023, <https://news.usni.org/2023/07/18/navy-raises-battle-force-goal-to-381-ships-in-classified-report-to-congress>

²⁷ "A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower, 2007" (US Navy, March 2015).

²⁸ Ibid.

b. **People's Liberation Army Navy – PLAN.** China's military and maritime sector reflects Mahan's teachings while following his three core pillars, i.e., productivity/ commercial dominance, investment in its own shipping²⁹ along with the nation's naval power, and overseas colonies/ expansion into other regions (except for Djibouti, where China has placed military footprint). PLAN has a very important standing in the overall configuration of China's national security and development. Under PLAN, there are ETC Navy (Donghai Fleet), the STC Navy (Nanhai Fleet), the NTC Navy (Beihai Fleet) and PLAN Marine Corps.³⁰

In addition, geopolitics in the South China Sea orbits around 'Island Chains.'³¹ However, China continuously maintains control in the area by developing infrastructure on artificial islands and underground naval bases/ air-craft carrier piers, i.e. Longpo³² and Yulin Naval Base at Hainan Island perceiving anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) strategy to USN, a concept Mahan suggested to the U.S. in Caribbean 130 years ago.³³ China seems to further enhance its area by extending further to the "Second Chain" of islands (Yokosuka Japan to Papua via Guam) in the western Pacific. Over the past year, possibility has surfaced that China is also striving to develop two more bases: in Cambodia³⁴ and in the UAE.³⁵ Currently, China has 96 ports around world. However, it still has only one offshore base in Djibouti.³⁶ According to the U.S. DoD's Annual Report to Congress, China has numerically the largest Navy in the world with an overall battle force of over 370 ships and submarines.³⁷ It is evident that Chinese planners must have consulted precepts of Mahan while developing maritime strategy in order to address interests in maritime sector. Moreover, China has presently adopted a

²⁹ Prof Andrew Wilson, Relevance of Mahan in contemporary maritime security environment and global interdependence in 21st century, interview by Lt Cdr Asadullah PN, Online, March 21, 2024.
³⁰ *China's National Defense in the New Era*, 21.

³¹ Orbaiceta, "Alfred Mahan's Influence on China's Naval Doctrine."

³² Mike Yeo, "Satellite Images Reveal Chinese Expansion of Submarine Base," *Defense News*, September 21, 2022, <https://www.defensenews.com/naval/2022/09/21/satellite-images-reveal-chinese-expansion-of-submarine-base/>

³³ Orbaiceta, "Alfred Mahan's Influence on China's Naval Doctrine."

³⁴ Matthew Loh, "China's Navy Has the World's Largest Fleet but Only One Foreign Base to Launch Ships. It's Secretly Trying to Change That, a Report Says," *Business Insider*, June 7, 2022, <https://www.businessinsider.com/china-largest-fleet-secretly-building-naval-base-cambodia-2022-6>

³⁵ Warren P. Strobel and Gordon Lubold, "Secret Chinese Port Project in Persian Gulf Rattles U.S. Relations With U.A.E.," *The Wall Street Journal*, November 19, 2019, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/us-china-uae-military-11637274224>

³⁶ Liam Fox and McFarlane Robert, "China Wants to Get a Stranglehold on Our Vital Energy Supplies - but We CAN Stop Them, Say LIAM FOX and ROBERT MCFARLANE in a Warning from Two Big Beasts on Either Side of the Atlantic," *Mailonline*, August 7, 2021, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9872359/China-wants-stranglehold-energy-supplies-LIAM-FOX-ROBERT-MCFARLANE.html>

³⁷ "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2023," Annual Report to Congress (US Department of Defense), 11, accessed December 27, 2023, <https://media.defense.gov/2023/Oct/19/2003323409/-1/-1/1/2023-MILITARY-AND-SECURITY-DEVELOPMENTS-INVOLVING-THE-PEOPLES-REPUBLIC-OF-CHINA.PDF>

combined model of Mackinder, Mahan and Corbett in the form of the BRI project wherein more than 60 nations of Asia, Africa and Europe are involved.

c. **Indian Navy (IN).** K.M. Panikkar, in his book titled “India and the Indian Ocean”, writes that “the future of India will undoubtedly be decided on the sea”.³⁸ IN strategists are majorly driven by Corbettian ideas from Britain’s Royal Navy and those have continued to affect IN thinking.³⁹ It can be said that Indian maritime strategy is a unique mixture of Mahanian and Corbettian thinking with a little taste of K.M. Panikkar.⁴⁰ IN’s tenor and tone reflect that Indian Naval analysts focus on threat posed by PLA(N)’s enhancing militarisation to control and dominate strategic chokepoints in IOR which may threaten/ deny Indian access to the world.⁴¹ Moreover, owing to a mission oriented IN structure, IN has adopted a maritime strategy based on four main operations, i.e., military, diplomatic, constabulary and benign.⁴² In military domain, in order to synergise coordination, India has adopted ‘Theatre Command System’ to support teamwork contributing to Navy’s ability to power projection.⁴³

IN is negotiating for support facilities access with countries like Madagascar, Oman, Singapore and Mauritius to constitute an Indian “Metal Chain” or “Iron Curtain” in order to counter China’s “String of Pearls”⁴⁴ to increase its footprint in IOR (Mahanian approach). In context of naval diplomacy, India is strengthening its defence ties with the U.S., Australia and Japan in the form of the Quad⁴⁵ and regular conduct of the Malabar series of exercises.⁴⁶ India has entered into two military pacts with Australia⁴⁷ and

³⁸ K M Panikkar, *India and the Indian Ocean - An Essay on the Influence of Sea Power on India History*, 1945th ed. (Ruskin House Museum Street: London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd), 15.

³⁹ Andrew Latham, “India’s Corbettian Maritime Strategy,” *Wavell Room*, January 20, 2021, <https://wavellroom.com/2021/01/20/indias-corbettian-maritime-strategy/>

⁴⁰ Ravindra Varma, “The Indian Ocean in India’s Strategy and Diplomacy,” *Indian Journal of Political Science*, accessed December 24, 2023, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41853998?seq=1>.

⁴¹ Mohamed Zeeshan, “Can India Pursue the ‘Strategic Encirclement’ of China?,” *The Diplomat*, October 06, 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/10/can-india-pursue-the-strategic-encirclement-of-china/>

⁴² “Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy.”

⁴³ Manjeet Negi, “Moving towards Tri-Service System, Officials Promote Unity among Defence Forces,” *India Today*, July 16, 2023, <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/indian-defence-tri-services-integrated-theatre-commands-navy-air-force-army-2407332-2023-07-16>

⁴⁴ Cmde Ranjit B Rai, “China’s String of Pearls vs India’s Iron Curtain,” *Indian Defence Review*, February 19, 2023, <https://indiandefencereview.com/chinas-string-of-pearls-vs-indias-iron-curtain/>

⁴⁵ Salvatore Babones, “The Quad’s Malabar Exercises Point the Way to an Asian NATO,” *Foreign Policy Magazine*, accessed December 24, 2023, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/11/25/india-japan-australia-u-s-quad-alliance-nato/>.

⁴⁶ Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan, “Malabar Exercise Brings Quad Navies Together in Australia,” *The Diplomat*, August 21, 2023, <https://thediplomat.com/2023/08/malabar-exercise-brings-quad-navies-together-in-australia/#:~:text=After%20returning%20to%20the%20long,played%20host%20to%20Malabar%2023.&text=Sailors%20assigned%20to%20the%20forward,through%20Sydney%20harbor%2C%20Aug%2011.ust%2011.>

⁴⁷ “Australia and India Sign Defence Arrangement,” *Australian Government, Department of Defence*, June 05, 2020, <https://www.dst.defence.gov.au/news/2020/06/05/australia-and-india-sign-defence->

multiple defence strategic partnerships with the U.S. in the 21st century (Corbettian approach).

In a sign of how power dynamics of the world are changing, Indian and Chinese strategists avidly read Mahan; they, much more than the U.S., are the Mahanians now: they are building fleets designed for armed encounters at sea.⁴⁸ Hegemonic aspirations in Asia-Pacific by the U.S., China and India through enhanced militarisation and joint tri-services focusing on control of chokepoints to safeguard their own interest (Mahanian dominance) have overcrowded littorals in the region while forming alliances with like-minded countries through cooperation (Corbettian cooperation).

ANALYSIS AND KEY TAKEAWAYS

Following are key takeaways:

- a. Mahan's 6 factors affecting Sea Power could be fully capitalized by strategically located countries with deep harbours (close proximity to SLOCs) and maritime attitude/ character of government; allowing smooth seaborne trade of manufacturing commodities utilizing own transportation, strong naval forces (key component of State's Sea Power) for protection of SLOCs underpinning predominance at sea.
- b. In Mahan's days, there were no nuclear weapons, proliferation of technology, mass/ social media and violent non-state actors (VNSAs). Sea-based nuclear capability substantially enhances nations' global maritime might/ stature, which is in line with Mahan's notion of Sea Power being necessary for global influence.
- c. Ways and means of traditional and modern precepts of Sea Power vary but all aim to achieve sea dominance with an aim to protect commerce. Countries with overwhelming dependence on maritime trade need to ensure a secure maritime environment requiring strong maritime force (commercial and Naval – Mahanian approach) along with collaboration with other navies (Corbettian approach).
- d. Effect of Mahanian approach is reflected more on major world navies, as they follow his three core pillars of geo-economic dimension. These navies support their economic necessities and political aims, enabled by technology and shaped by geography.
- e. Mahan's concept of decisive battles is less applicable in the contemporary era due to technological advancement, role of VNSAs, Blue

arrangement.

⁴⁸ Kaplan, *The Revenge of Geography*, 110.

Water Ops, WMD on-board sea platforms, SCW threats, shift of focus from high sea to littoral warfare, advocacy of protection of global commons, involvement of global economic interests, etc. However, underlined principles of protection of SLOCs/ global commons in support of interdependence through maritime preponderance utilising a strong navy remained sound till the imperial age.

f. Contemporary factors favouring de-globalisation are still linked to global interdependence through a secure maritime environment for protection of maritime trade.

g. To accrue maximum economic and political benefits, nations are vying to dominate oceans (Mahan's approach). Wherein, global interdependence in the 21st century is and will remain a major determinant to shape and drive nature of world politics mainly associated with maritime trading values and policy moderation.

h. Particular means of gaining command of the sea due to maritime security challenges - especially owing to asymmetric threats (not in Mahan's era) - have changed dramatically since the dawn of the 21st century but fundamental philosophies that Mahan put forward with respect to protection of commerce and overseas bases remain valid.

j. Sea Power and globalisation (through trade via sea, Mahan's emphasis on maritime trade) are interconnected with each other. Mahan's concept of enhancement of economic growth and trade volumes through indigenous means by developing coastal communities, strong naval capabilities to control SLOCs and controlling of strategic connections to ensure security of its merchant fleet is still valid in the 21st century.

k. Despite the formulation of energy economic/ security blocks, Mahan's concept of protection of maritime trade for economic growth requiring secure maritime environment underpins the whole concept of global interdependence/ globalisation in the contemporary era driven by geopolitics.

l. Modernisation does not make Mahan's theories irrelevant or less relevant. Intensity/ ever-changing contours of naval warfare and diversification of geo-political interests have added more dimensions to the fundamental elements of Mahan's philosophies. However, in the contemporary maritime environment, Corbett's concept of sea denial for a limited duration and international collaboration is more redolent than Mahan's absolute command of the sea for the protection of commerce.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of above, following is recommended:

- a. Governments need to encourage maritime commerce and development of industrial complexes in coastal areas as a key for national strength, wherein, strong navy is needed for protection of the global supply chain ensuring global connectivity.
- b. In the present era, commercial/ geo-economic dividends of Mahan's precepts can be accrued through dominance at sea utilising technological intelligence automation.
- c. Extensive naval collaboration to counter shared threats and challenges in maritime sector is need of the hour to maintain secure a maritime environment and global interdependence in the 21st century.
- d. Policymakers to define long-term national maritime objectives (commercial and naval) in the form of a generally accepted doctrine recognising assets and liabilities of maritime empire and the nation's diplomatic/ economic/ political prospects in support of enhancing national wealth.
- e. Small navies to endeavour to propagate their assertiveness and intentions for maritime deterrence in the contemporary maritime environment through doctrines, publications, maritime manoeuvres to showcase their intent, combat readiness and capabilities/ intent to counter conventional and non-conventional threats vis-à-vis deter hegemonic postures of traditional rivals and non-traditional maritime challenges.

CONCLUSION

Alfred Thayer Mahan's strategic insights remain highly relevant in the 21st century maritime security environment, despite significant evolution in global geopolitics and technological advancements. His emphasis on sea power, control of key maritime routes, and criticality of naval strength continues to shape the doctrines of major global powers, including the U.S., China, and India. However, in an era defined by interdependence, multilateralism, and economic integration, Mahan's principles must be adapted to reflect the complexity of contemporary challenges such as non-state threats, cyber warfare, and global supply chain disruptions. By integrating Mahanian thought with modern geopolitical realities, nations can better ensure their maritime security while fostering global cooperation and stability.

ASSESSMENT OF INDIAN NAVY AS NET SECURITY PROVIDER: INDIAN MARITIME SECURITY STRATEGY IN PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

India's evolving role in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) highlights its ambition to become a key 'Net Security Provider,' aiming to significantly influence regional security dynamics. This aspiration is closely tied to India's strategic autonomy and its goal of establishing a more India-centric order, characterised by a complex interplay of cooperation and caution, particularly with global powers like the United States. The concept of being a 'Net Security Provider' involves the Indian Navy's (IN) expanded role, as outlined in the Indian Maritime Security Strategy (IMSS), which seeks to enhance its centrality in the IOR. However, IN's growth faces several challenges including a weak defence industrial base, reliance on foreign equipment, and budget constraints, which impede India's pursuit of self-reliance in security. Additionally, an analysis of force structure reveals significant capability shortfalls, emphasising an urgent need for a more capable fleet. India's expanding role in the region is creating strategic dilemmas for IOR states, necessitating a transformative approach in maritime diplomacy and strategy to ensure regional stability and safeguard national interests.

Key Words: Indian Navy, Net Security Provider, Indian Maritime Security Strategy (IMSS), Security Dilemma, Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

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INTRODUCTION

The term 'Net Security Provider' (NSP) was first introduced by the Indian Navy in IMSS-2015, yet it remains without a generally accepted definition. One of the primary objectives outlined in IMSS-2015 was India's aspiration to become NSP in the IOR. Since 2015, shifting geopolitical dynamics in the IOR and South China Sea have bolstered this ambition. However, a closer examination of the Indian Navy reveals that it is not yet fully prepared to assume this enhanced role despite its significant expansion efforts. The 2019 U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy positioned India as a counterbalance to Chinese influence, further complicating regional dynamics. U.S. support in the maritime domain creates strategic dilemmas for IOR states, driven by India's maritime ambitions to pursue regional hegemony, which in turn poses challenges to Pakistan. This interplay of aspirations and geopolitical realities highlights the complexities of India's pursuit of NSP status.

SECURITY DILEMMA FOR IOR STATES

India's role as NSP in IOR is likely to create a security dilemma for its neighboring states, particularly Pakistan. Security dilemma refers to a situation where states' attempts to ensure their own security inadvertently lead to increased insecurity for others, as each state views its own actions as defensive while perceiving others' actions as potential threats.¹ The strategic competition in IOR is further complicated by India's assertive naval strategy. Recent diplomatic tensions between India and the Maldives illustrate this dilemma, with the Maldives seeking to strengthen its security and economic ties with China, resulting in strained relations with India. A similar situation arose when Sri Lanka allowed Chinese ships and submarines to dock at its ports, provoking significant criticism from India. In this complex geopolitical landscape, China has become a key economic partner for many IOR littoral states.² As India strives to enhance its naval capabilities and assert its influence in the Indo-Pacific, these actions may be viewed by neighbouring countries, especially Pakistan, as threatening. This contributes to escalating regional tensions and insecurity, as states navigate the competing influences of India and China.

INDIA'S ROLE AS NET SECURITY PROVIDER

It is pertinent to highlight different connotations of the term 'Net Security Provider'. In the U.S. context, the NSP concept particularly targets emerging powers seeking more influence, wherein the U.S. expects the designated states to undertake greater responsibilities on American terms.³ U.S. expects India in general and IN in

¹ John H. Herz, *Political Realism and Political Idealism* (University of Chicago Press, 1951), 157.

² Darshana M. Baruah, Nitya Labh, and Jessica Greely, "Mapping the Indian Ocean Region," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* (June 2023): 07, https://carnegie-production-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/static/files/Baruah_IO_final_6-28.pdf,

³ Courtney Fung and Shing-hon Lam, "Contesting Roles: Rising Powers as 'Net Providers of Security,'" *Journal of Global Security Studies* 6 (August 6, 2020),

particular to undertake a burden sharing with United States Navy (USN) in IOR in order to keep its focus on South China Sea. By 2012, foreseeing a possible focus towards South China Sea, USN identified India as a potential contender largely due to its alignment with U.S. over China issue. In 2012, U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta conveyed to Indian officials, including Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, that the U.S. recognizes India as NSP, responsible for security from Indian Ocean to Afghanistan and beyond. Contrary to the U.S. expectations, India's interpretation of being NSP diverges from analysts' views as well as American perspective, presenting a broader and somewhat vague definition. Naval analysts argue that IN's ambition to be NSP as outlined in IMSS-2015 essentially aligns with its 'benign role' similar to 'diplomatic tasks' in Indian Maritime Doctrine. Commander Ranendra Sing Sawan of Indian Navy questions novelty of this designation from IN perspective.⁴ He argues that IN's historical actions already embody expected responsibilities of NSP. Critics like former National Security Advisor M.K. Narayanan and former Defence Minister AK Antony have pointed out challenges and limitations of India assuming such a role, especially in regions like West Asia where India is not seen as a state to act as security provider.⁵

Consequently, India's NSP role is fraught with uncertainties, including questions about cooperation levels with other states, feasibility of unilateral actions against security threats, and overall assurance of security. This suggests that NSP role is more of an imposed obligation than a natural fit which was adopted to respond to expectations of the U.S. from India.

INDIAN NAVY'S EFFORTS TO FULFILL THE NSP ROLE

Over past few years, there have been visible efforts by IN fulfilling its ambitious goal of becoming NSP aligning with imperatives set forth in IMSS-2015. Some of these are mentioned below:

- a. Regular deployment of IN ships and aircrafts in IOR.⁶
- b. Increased focus on naval diplomacy as IN unit port calls are steadily increasing in foreign ports while foreign navies' port calls to India and number of Indian naval exercises have also seen a steady upward trend.
- c. IN has integrated into U.S.-led Combined Maritime Forces (CMF).
- d. Active role of IN in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) efforts within the region.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/jogss/ogaa034>.

⁴ Ranendra Singh Sawan, "Net Security Provider- Going Beyond Concept", *Indian Navy*, https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/sites/default/themes/indiannavy/images/pdf/resources/Article_5.pdf.

⁵ Commander Ranendra Singh Sawan, "Net Security Provider – Going Beyond Concept," *Indian Navy - Naval War College Journal - 2015*, September 27, 2016, <https://www.Indiannavy.Nic.In/Content/Naval-War-College-Journal-2015>.

⁶ India's Ministry of Defence, "Year End Review 2023," <https://Pib.Gov.In/Pib.Gov.In/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1989502>.

- e. Defence-focused engagements of IN with selected states of IOR and beyond.

An analysis of India's pursuit of NSP status since 2015 indicates that India and IN have enhanced collaboration with other countries in IOR; however, there are several challenges and limitations that IN is facing in this regard.

CHALLENGES & LIMITATIONS OF INDIAN NAVY AS NSP

Weak Defence Industrial Base in India

IN's aspirations to become NSP face various significant challenges notably weak defence-industrial base. Anit Mukherjee underscores a critical mismatch between India's aspirations to enhance partner nations' security and constraints posed by its defence industry and economy.⁷ As of December 2023, 66 ships are under construction for IN out of which 64 are being built in India. With 64 warships currently under construction domestically,⁸ The capacity to fulfil foreign orders by Indian Shipyards is constrained. Since 2015, India has been able to support a few countries like Taiwan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Mauritius and Seychelles through the provision of small ships and Dornier aircraft. Therefore, IN does not offer much prospects in terms of capacity building and military assistance to other nations since IN is bogged down by its own needs coupled with a weak defence industrial base.

Reliance on Foreign Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs)

IN heavily depends on foreign equipment, notably from Russia, Israel, and the U.S. for maintaining its operational capabilities. Its first indigenous aircraft carrier, INS Vikrant was termed as 'incomplete carrier' since it was launched without its essential Russian made Aviation Flight Complex (AFC). IAC is not only a project affected due to IN dependence on foreign OEMs; Kalvari-class Scorpene submarines, commissioned since 2017, lack originally planned Black Shark heavyweight torpedoes and operate with vintage SUT series torpedoes. IN has to contend itself with these vintage torpedoes as stopgap measures as the SUT series has already been afforded life extension to ensure its operational availability.⁹ A navy that is heavily dependent on foreign OEMs for maintaining operational capabilities is unlikely to be seen as NSP by small navies of IOR which too are facing similar limitations.

⁷ Anit Mukherjee, "India as a Net Security Provider: Concept and Impediments," *S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies* (August 2014), https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/PB_140903_India-Net-Security.pdf.

⁸ "Crest of Navy Warship 'Surat' to Be Unveiled in City It's Named After," *Business Standard*, November 5, 2023, https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/crest-of-navy-warship-surat-to-be-unveiled-in-city-it-s-named-after-123110500780_1.html

⁹ Rahul Bedi, "Rather Than Flaunting Operationally Inadequate' Vikrant, Navy Should Clear Backlog," *Wire India*, August 6, 2022, <https://thewire.in/government/ins-vikrant-inadequate-navy-backlog>

Below Par Performance of Local Defence Products

IN seems to be dissatisfied with performance of indigenous mission-critical equipment onboard its platforms. Albeit indigenisation, it appears that Indian Armed Forces in general and the IN in particular are willing to compromise on operational efficiency of major locally designed and licensed-built platforms. HUMSA, hull-mounted sonars, are considered 'operationally deficient' while 'Tejas aircraft' has yet not yet been cleared for regular operations from aircraft carriers.¹⁰ Although IN undertook landing of Tejas onboard Vikramaditya; however, it rejected the aircraft.¹¹ Now it is eyeing to incorporate an ambitious indigenous Twin Engine Deck Based Fighter (TEDBF) by 2040. IN is likely aiming to replace MiG-29K with Rafale-M aircraft.¹² Experts advise that IN needs to prioritise completing ongoing defence projects and improving performance of local equipment before initiating new ones to avoid accumulating a backlog of unfinished programs.

Flawed Sense of Indigenisation

IN boasts of using 70-80% of indigenous content in its warship and on the same basis, it claims to be transitioning from 'Buyers Navy to Builders Navy'.¹³ IN's assertion seems to be premature since its Indigenisation Plan (INIP) highlights its dependency on foreign suppliers for crucial 'Fight' and 'Move' category high-end equipment such as propulsion systems (especially Gas Turbines) and Marine Diesel Engines and Gear Boxes,¹⁴ with no significant indigenous advancements even after eight years. INS Betwa, commissioned in 2005, was proclaimed to be 70% indigenous while INS Mahendragiri is yet to be commissioned. It was floated in September 2023 and contained 75% indigenous content while INS Vikrant contained 76% indigenous content. IN's journey towards indigenisation reveals slow progress, mainly lacking high-tech equipment required for front-line platforms.

Average Force Balance

IN's force balance faces significant challenges that hinder its ability to undertake key roles and tasks expected of NSP despite being ranked as the 7th strongest navy in the world by 2024 Global Naval Powers Ranking with a True Value

¹⁰ Subhash Chandra NS, "Happy with Tejas, but Eyeing Its Advanced Version, Says Navy Chief," *New Indian Express*, August 22, 2023, <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/karnataka/2023/Aug/22/happy-with-tejas-but-eyeing-its-advanced-version-says-navy-chief-2607572.html>

¹¹ Sakshi Tiwari, "LCA Tejas: Why Did Indian Navy 'Reject' Naval Variant of Tejas Fighter Jet that is Hogging Global Limelight," *Eurasian Times*, February 07, 2023, <https://www.eurasiantimes.com/lca-tejas-why-did-indian-navy-reject-naval-variant-of-tejas-fighter-jet/>

¹² NS, "Happy with Tejas, but Eyeing Its Advanced Version, Says Navy Chief."

¹³ Ranjeet Kumar, "Indian Navy towards Indigenisation." *SP's Naval Forces* -. accessed September 21, 2024, <https://www.spsnavalforces.com/news/?id=175&h=Indian-Navy-towards-indigenisation>.

¹⁴ "INIP 2015-2030," *Directorate of Indigenisation IHQ MOD Navy*, . [https://www.ddpmod.gov.in/sites/default/files/INIP%20\(2015-2030\).pdf](https://www.ddpmod.gov.in/sites/default/files/INIP%20(2015-2030).pdf)

Rating (TVR) of 99.1.¹⁵ TVR ranking - which accounts for factors such as overall fleet strength, modernisation, logistic support, and attack and defence capabilities - places IN behind navies from four Asian countries including China, Indonesia, South Korea, and Japan.¹⁶ IN's reported force structure comprises 150 ships and submarines while in the ongoing projects more than 50 ships and submarines are under construction.¹⁷ As a result, IN's force balance has been assessed as 'average,' indicating that while the fleet covers basic operating requirements, it may not fully address all primary categories essential for asserting maritime dominance. This underscores IN's difficulties in expanding and modernising its fleet to meet its ambitious goals within IOR.

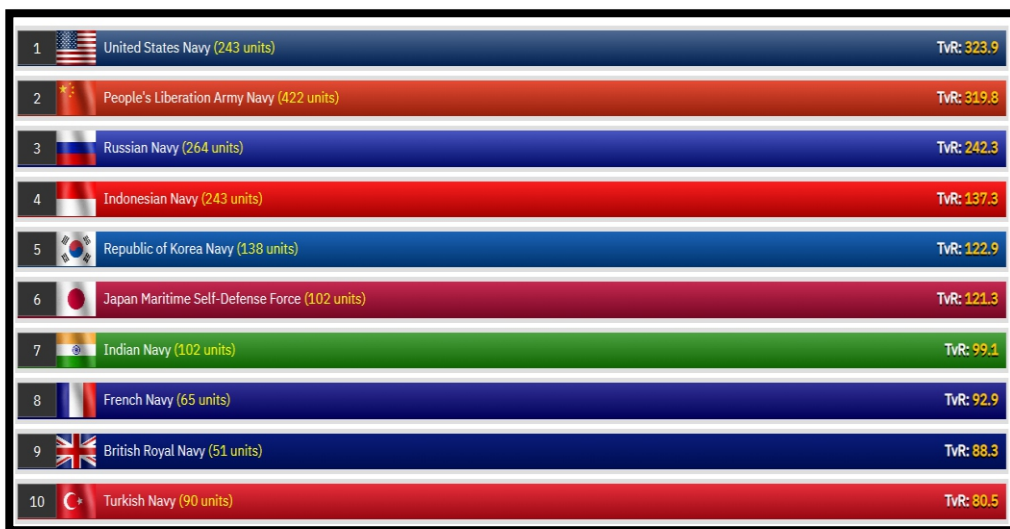


Figure 1: TVR Ranking of IN vis-à-vis Other Navies

Large Number of Vintage Platforms

About more than half of front-end platforms held by IN are vintage operating at more than average hull age of IN Ships. Apparently, IN is just pulling on with a number of those platforms to maintain force structure to project its force strength. According to Global Power Ranking, the 'Median Hull Age (MHA)' of IN platforms is 21 years that is even more than PN (19.1 years). An analysis of frontline platforms being operated by IN over the average age of 21 years reveals that more than 50% the of IN Surface Frontline Fleet has already crossed the average hull age and is

¹⁵ "Global Naval Powers Ranking (2024)," *World Directory of Modern Military Ships*, January 25, 2024, <https://www.wdmmw.org/ranking.php>.

¹⁶ Global Naval Powers Ranking (2024).

¹⁷ "FOQs," *Ministry of Defence India*, <https://mod.gov.in/faqs/q-1-what-are-current-force-levels-indian-navy-what-are-ongoing-projects-what-steps-are-being>, accessed on September 21, 2024.

destined to be decommissioned before 2035. However, IN is trying to keep these ships in its inventory to project inflated force strength as depicted below (as on December 2023).¹⁸

Type of Platforms	No of Platforms	Hulls with over 21 years
Aircraft Carriers	02	Nil
Submarines	17	12 (70%)
Destroyers	12	06 (50%)
Frigates	13	06 (46%)
Corvettes	23	18 (78%)
OPVs/ General Patrol Boats	29	06 (20%)
Amphibious Assault Ships	09	05 (55%)
<i>Total</i>	103	55 (53%)

Table 1: Hull Age of Indian Navy Platforms

Inadequacy of Major Surface Combatants

IN has consistently maintained a fleet of 20-25 (16% of claimed fleet strength) major surface combatants and 10-12 Long Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft (LRMPAs) from 1990s to present day. To evaluate the sufficiency of these platforms considering expanding roles and responsibilities of IN, a comparison has been made with several major navies in the Indo-Pacific region.¹⁹ In the Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF), 46 ships which constitute 52% of their total, are destroyers while it operates 84 LRMPAs/ MPAs. In the Royal Australian Navy (RAN), 13 ships or 48% of the fleet are major surface combatants, and the number of P8As is approximately equal to that of the IN. In the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), 96 ships or 28% of the fleet are major surface combatants, and it operates more than 25 MPAs. Additionally, PLAN's arsenal includes strategic bombers, 4th & 5th generation fighters, fixed wing Airborne Early Warning (AEW) aircrafts, and Electronic Intelligence (ELINT) aircraft that are neither held nor even included in envisaged force goals of the Indian Navy. It is also noteworthy that IOR states are increasingly recognizing India's limitations and are gradually moving away from Indian influence, leaning instead towards Chinese support for their security, as observed in recent events countries like Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Myanmar.

Budget Allocation for Indian Navy

IN's share of the defence budget demands a close examination in context of country's desire to become a net security provider. Navy often receives a smaller share compared to other branches of the Indian Armed Forces which raises

¹⁸ "Indian Navy," *World Directory of Modern Military Ships*, accessed on September 20, 2024, <https://www.wdmmw.org/indian-navy.php>.

¹⁹ "Indian Navy," *World Directory of Modern Military Ships*.

questions about the country's commitment to maritime security and its ability to maintain a strong naval presence in the region. In fiscal year 2021-22, the Indian Navy's share of the total defence budget was INR 56,614 crore, accounting for 16.31%.²⁰ This increased to INR 72,997 crore, which represented 18.94% of the budget in 2022-23. For year 2023-24, the Indian Navy's allocation rose to INR 85,089 crore, making up 20% of the total defence budget. Despite receiving the smallest portion of the overall defence budget, the Navy's share of the capital budget for tri-service modernisation has seen a substantial increase. From Fiscal Year 2014-15 to 2023-24, allocation for the Navy's modernization, including new weapons, systems, and domestic manufacturing, grew at an average annual rate of 26.7%.²¹ Increased capital budget has reflected in two ways w.r.t to IN. Firstly, it is prioritizing capital platforms, i.e. S/M & DDGs leading to reduced procurement of essential assets like Fleet Auxiliaries, MCMVs, AEWs A/Cs and Amphibious Ships coupled with delays in ongoing projects as was the case in IAC. These cutbacks and delays created significant capability gaps leaving IN vulnerable thus limiting its operational effectiveness. Secondly, IN is creating a progressively larger network of maritime security partnerships exploiting diplomatic clout of India using commercial ports/ infrastructure for Operational Turn Around (OTR) and collaboration with other navies like USN/ RN and French Navy for sustaining operations in IOR.

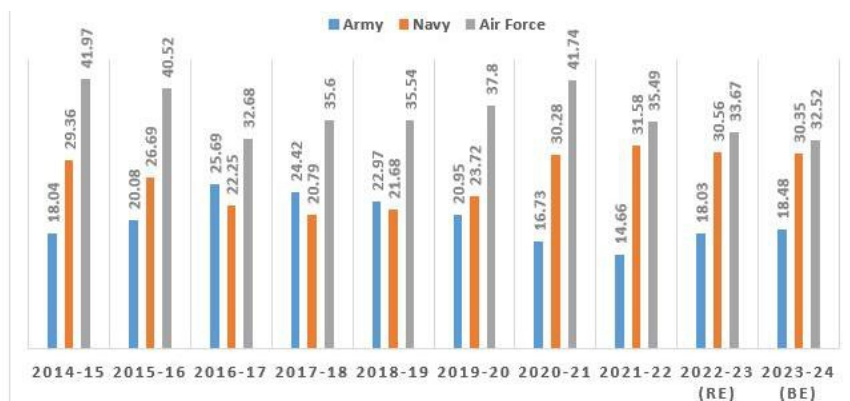


Figure 2: Modernisation Budget as Percentage of Capital Outlay Budget: Indian Army, Navy, Air Force (2014–24)²²

IMPLICATIONS OF INDIAN NAVY AS 'NET SECURITY PROVIDER'

Regional Hegemony

India's primary maritime goal is to assert dominance in the Indian Ocean,²³ aiming to become a hegemonic power in IOR. India's continued focus on regional

²⁰ Rahul Rawat, "India's Defence Budget: The Navy and its Atmanirbhar Bharat Mission," *Observer Research Foundation*, July 16, 2022, <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/indias-defence-budget>.

²¹ S. Samuel C. Rajiv and Abhay Kumar Singh, "Defence Budget 2023-24: Trends Analysis," *MPIDSA*, February 17, 2023, https://www.idsa.in/issuebrief/Defence-Budget-2023-24_170223

²² C. Rajiv and Kumar Singh, "Defence Budget 2023-24"

²³ David Scott, "India's "Grand Strategy" for the Indian Ocean: Mahanian Visions," *Asia-Pacific*

influence and keeping the Indian Ocean 'Indian' suggest a pursuit of regional hegemony, which could lead to tensions within IOR. Therefore, IN considers Chinese naval presence and the U.S. Navy's commitment to the Indian Ocean as inhibitors. India's strategy to assert regional hegemony risks tensions with other IOR countries as littoral and small states are expected to face strategic security dilemmas.

Competition for Overseas Bases in IOR

The Security dilemma of IOR states due to India and China's confrontation has manifested in the form of competition for naval bases in IOR. China has significantly expanded its maritime footprint in IOR through its Maritime Silk Road. China's enhanced maritime projection through a strategy of creating overseas bases also termed as 'String of Pearls' has heightened India's security concerns. India has responded with Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) and logistics facilities in strategic locations like Oman (Port of Duqm), Seychelles (Assumption Islands), and Mauritius (Agalega Island) and mutual naval logistics agreements with foreign navies. Strategic competition between China and India in the IOR creates significant pressures on regional countries, which may affect their ability to make independent decisions. This dynamic could lead to challenges in prioritising their own national interests amid strategic goals of larger powers.

India Navy, a Net Destabilizer in IOR

Strategic support for India against China in the region is likely to disrupt existing security dynamics. India's pursuit of regional dominance has prompted countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives to deepen their defence and economic ties with China as a counterbalance. This shift not only challenges India's influence but also facilitates China's clout in the IOR. In this context, the Indian Navy, while seeking to assert its dominance, may inadvertently act as a net destabiliser in the region. Its hegemonic ambitions could provoke regional tensions, prompting neighbouring states to align more closely with China. This competition may exacerbate security challenges, creating a cycle of distrust and escalation that undermines stability in the IOR.

Shift to Preferred Security Partner

India's transition from aspiring to be a "Net Security Provider" (NSP) to aiming to become a "Preferred Security Partner" (PSP) in IOR marks a pivotal shift in its approach to regional security. Acknowledging challenges in establishing itself as an NSP, India now seeks to be recognised as a PSP, emphasising its capability for rapid and effective crisis response. This ambition was highlighted by President Ram Nath Kovind during Presidential Fleet Review in 2022²⁴ and reinforced by Chief of IN

Review 13, no. 2 (2006), 97-129. doi:10.1080/13439000601029048.

²⁴ PIB "Address by President of India, Ram Nath Kovind on Occasion of Presidential Fleet Review – 2022", Last updated 21 February 2022.

<https://static.pib.gov.in/WriteReadData/specificdocs/documents/2022/feb/doc202222117001.pdf>

Admiral R. Hari Kumar at MILAN 2022²⁵ and was further detailed at Fifth National Security Advisor (NSA) level meeting of Colombo Security Conclave (CSC) in Maldives.²⁶

IMPLICATIONS FOR PAKISTAN

Pakistan is facing military and non-military challenges due to India's hegemonic ambitions in IOR.²⁷ This has created profound implications for Pakistan's security in the region:

- a. With a vast expanse of IOR, especially its entry and exit points in India's control, Pakistan's SLOCs would remain under constant threat.²⁸
- b. For a long time now; Extra Regional Forces (ERF) deployed in IOR play a stabilising role in region to minimise threats including maritime terrorism. Growing commitments of the U.S. and its allies towards South China Sea coupled with IN capability shortfalls would result in maritime threats to flourish in NAS.
- c. Indian Fleet could attempt to undertake distant blockade of adversary's ports thus severely affecting war stamina of the country.
- d. More bases across IOR would afford IN to challenge deployment initiatives of PN.

CONCLUSION

India aspires to become a NSP in IOR. However, several challenges and limitations in defence-industrial base, reliance on foreign-made equipment, budgetary constraints, difficulties in indigenisation, delays in critical projects, and operational deficiencies in its platforms pose significant challenges. Force structure analysis highlights need for a more capable fleet to fulfill security obligations effectively. Despite the strategic alignment on countering China's influence and bolstering maritime security, India's engagements with the West are characterised by a selective and opportunity-based approach rather than full alignment. While U.S. support for India's rise serves both countries' interests in countering China's influence in Indo-Pacific, it also requires careful management to avoid regional destabilisation.

²⁵ "Indian Navy Seeking to Be Preferred Security Partner, Says Its Chief," *The Economic Times*, February 27, 2022. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/indian-navy-seeking-to-be-preferred-security-partner-says-its-chief/articleshow/89874014.cms?from=mdr> .

²⁶ Rezaul H. Laskar, "At Maldives Meet, NSA Ajit Doval Calls Roadmap for Colombo Security Conclave", *Hindustan Times*, 10 March 2022. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/at-maldives-meet-nsa-ajit-doval-calls-for-roadmap-for-colombo-security-conclave-101646841097790.html>

²⁷ Interview with Dr Syed Hussain Shaheed, Professor at Peshawar University.

²⁸ Interview with Rear Admiral (Rtd) Foad Amin Baig SI(M).

LAWFARE AS MODERN TOOL OF WARFARE: CASE STUDY OF PAKISTAN AND FATF

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ABSTRACT

This research article delves into the concept of Economic Lawfare, a modern strategy in global geopolitics, with a particular focus on the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and its significant implications for Pakistan. By examining the theoretical frameworks of Realpolitik and Political Realism, this study sheds light on how FATF exerts economic and political pressure on nations, effectively shaping their policy decisions. Through a comprehensive case study of Pakistan, the article explores the multifaceted economic, financial, and reputational impacts of being listed on FATF grey List. Furthermore, it discusses the broader ramifications of FATF listings on international relations. It also proposes potential reforms within FATF framework to enhance its effectiveness and fairness and offers recommendations to counter such occurrences, ensuring that nations can better navigate the challenges posed by these listings.

Keywords: Modern Warfare, Economic Lawfare, Financial Action Task Force (FATF), Financial Regulations, Terror Financing.

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INTRODUCTION

Lawfare, a term that initially described the use of legal systems to achieve military or political objectives, has significantly evolved in recent decades. The concept now encompasses economic lawfare, where economic and financial regulations are manipulated to weaken or control other nations. This method has become increasingly prevalent as globalisation has interconnected national economies, allowing powerful states to exert influence over others through economic means.

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF), established in 1989 by G7 countries, has become a critical institution in this context. Initially tasked with combating money laundering and terrorist financing, the FATF has expanded its influence, often functioning as a tool for economic and political pressure. By placing countries on its grey or black lists, FATF can severely restrict their access to international financial systems, effectively isolating them economically.

This article explores how FATF, under guise of financial regulation, has been used as an instrument of economic lawfare, with a particular focus on its impact on Pakistan. Despite significant efforts to comply with FATF regulations, Pakistan has been repeatedly placed on grey list, raising questions about the underlying motives and fairness of actions of the FATF.

LAWFARE AS A MODERN WARFARE TOOL

The term 'Lawfare' is considered an evolving concept in today's modern warfare domain. Genesis of term can be traced back to 1975 in a paper by John Carlson and Neville who first coined the term in year 2001.¹ Later, Colonel Charles Dunlap (USAF) defined it as an instrument to advance a state's own interests.² Lately, many writers have explored different aspects of Lawfare as a tool of modern warfare through examination of its application by global powers like U.S., Russia, China and other European countries to achieve their political and military designs as examined by Orde F Kittrie in the book '*Lawfare – Law as a Weapon of War*'.³ Various scholars such as Victor A Ferguson have analysed economic lawfare for exercising power and achieving strategic objectives.⁴ In case of India and Pakistan,

¹ John Carlson and Neville Yeomans, "Whither Goeth the Law - Humanity or Barbarity," *Lace Web*, December 2013, <http://www.laceweb.org.au/whi.htm>.

² Colonel Charles J. Dunlap, Jr., "Law and Military Interventions: Preserving Humanitarian Values in 21st Conflicts," *Humanitarian Challenges in Military Intervention Conference, Carr Center for Human Rights Policy Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University Washington*, November 29, 2001, <https://people.duke.edu/~pfeaver/dunlap.pdf>

³ Orde F Kittrie, *Lawfare: Law as a Weapon of War* (Oxford University Press, 2016).

⁴ Victor A Ferguson, "Economic Lawfare: The Logic and Dynamics of Using Law to Exercise Economic Power," *International Studies Review* 24, no. 3 (2022). doi:10.1093/isr/viac032.

former has repeatedly employed lawfare against latter to attain diplomatic gains.⁵ Where application of law as an alternate of conventional warfare and its application for achieving economic gains have been thoroughly researched, aspect of exploiting international regulatory bodies like FATF remains less explored in domain of economic lawfare.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research delves into lawfare through lens of Ludwig von Rochau's theory of Realpolitik, which emphasises the pursuit of self-interest by states over idealism and notions of equality.⁶ In this context, international laws—advocated and enforced by various international bodies—are not static; their fluid nature makes them susceptible to manipulation. As a result, these laws can become tools for states to further negative agendas, often at expense of others.⁷ The study specifically applies this theory to economic domain, examining how states exploit international financial and regulatory bodies to achieve their strategic objectives. A critical case study is inclusion and retention of Pakistan on the FATF grey list.

By analysing this case through Realpolitik framework, the research highlights how Pakistan's listing can be seen as a manifestation of broader geopolitical dynamics where powerful states leverage international mechanisms to exert pressure and shape behaviour of other nations. This situation illustrates how laws and regulations, rather than being impartial instruments for promoting fairness, can be weaponised to serve the interests of more influential states, effectively transforming international law into a vehicle for economic lawfare.

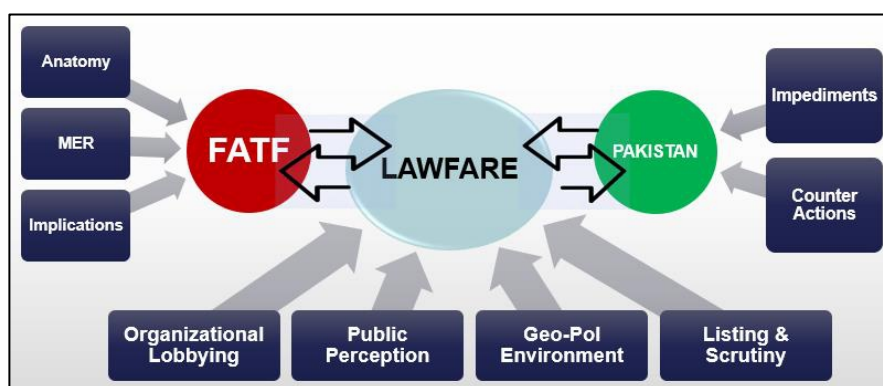


Figure 1: FATF Lawfare Against Pakistan

⁵ Professor Sikander Ahmed Shah and Professor Uzair J. Kayani, 'War to Lawfare: Spotlighting the India-Pakistan Conflict', *Jinnah Institute*, May 06, 2019, . <https://jinnah-institute.org/publication/war-to-lawfare-spotlighting-the-india-pakistan-conflict/>

⁶ August Ludwig von Rochau, *Grundsätze der Realpolitik: angewendet auf die staatlichen Zustände Deutschlands* (K. Göpel, 1859).

⁷ John Bew, *Realpolitik: A History* (Oxford University Press, 2015).

ANATOMY OF FATF

FATF was established by G7 countries in 1989. A total of 39 members constitutes FATF which includes 2 regional bodies and 37 countries.⁸ The organogram of the FATF is appended below:

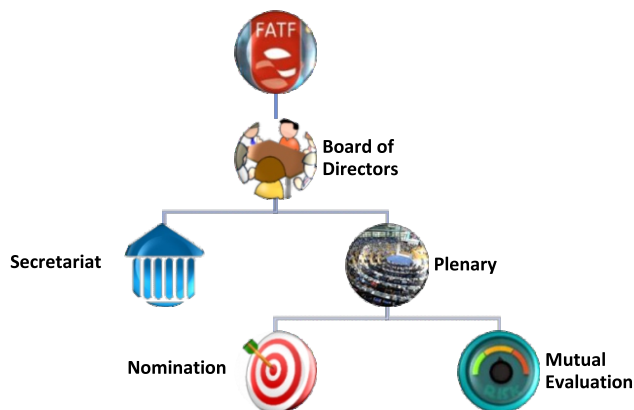


Figure 2: Organogram of FATF

The FATF employs a comprehensive evaluation procedure known as Mutual Evaluation Report (MER), which assesses countries' anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing frameworks.⁹ The process involves:

- **Information Gathering:** Collecting data on technical compliance and effectiveness of measures in place.
- **On-Site Visits:** Engaging with stakeholders to evaluate the practical implementation of Anti-Money Laundering/ Combating the Financing for Terrorism (AML/CFT) measures.
- **Feedback and Finalization:** Providing countries with opportunities to address misunderstandings before finalizing MER.

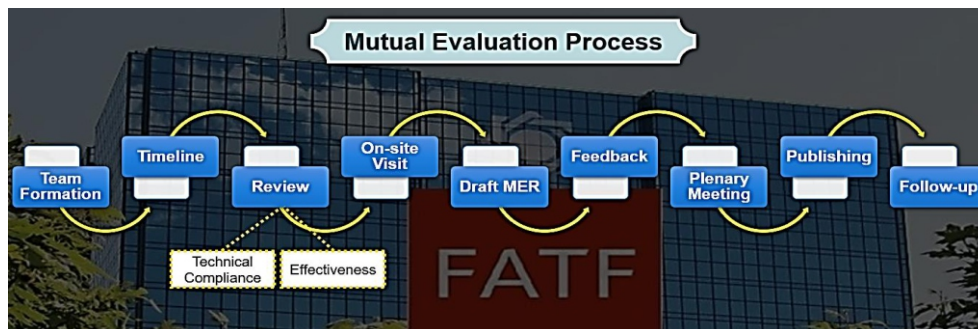


Figure 3: Mutual Evaluation Process of FATF

⁸ FATF, "Countries", accessed March 22, 2024, <https://www.fatf-gafi.org/en/countries.html>.

⁹ FATF, "Mutual Evaluations", accessed March 22, 2024. <https://www.fatf-gafi.org/en/topics/mutual-evaluations.html>

FATF categorises countries based on their compliance levels. These listings can have drastic economic ramifications, including reduced foreign direct investment and heightened scrutiny from international financial institutions. Grey list includes countries under increased monitoring due to deficiencies in compliance, while black list comprises of high-risk jurisdictions that are non-compliant.¹⁰

IMPLICATIONS OF FATF LISTING

The implications of being listed by FATF are multifaceted. These include:

- **Economic Ramifications:** Lowered investor confidence and reduced access to international markets.
- **Financial Sector Strain:** Increased regulatory scrutiny and restrictions on financial transactions.
- **Reputational Challenges:** Damage to international standing and difficulty in rebuilding trust.
- **Remediation Efforts and Path to Delisting:** While ramifications of FATF listings are severe, they also provide countries with an opportunity to reform their systems. The delisting process necessitates the implementation of robust AML/CFT measures, leading to constructive legislative and administrative reforms.

PAKISTAN AND FATF

Pakistan has been listed by FATF multiple times (2008, 2012, 2018), facing financial and geopolitical challenges due to grey-listing.¹¹ In 2018, FATF grey-listed Pakistan due to 'structural deficiencies' in combating terror financing and money laundering, including legal framework gaps, poor coordination, and inadequate international cooperation.¹²

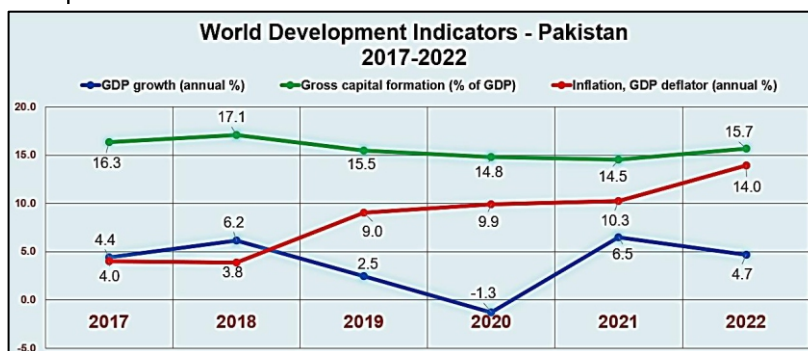


Figure 4: World Development Indicators of Pakistan (2017-2022)¹³

¹⁰“Black and Grey Lists,” *FATF*, accessed March 23, 2024, <https://www.fatf-gafi.org/en/countries/black-and-grey-lists.html>

¹¹ Victor A Ferguson, “Economic Lawfare: The Logic and Dynamics of Using Law to Exercise Economic Power,” *International Studies Review* 24, no. 3 (2022). doi:10.1093/isr/viac032.

¹² Shahbaz Rana, “Pakistan Formally Placed on FATF Grey List,” *The Express Tribune*, June 29, 2018, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1746079/1-pakistan-formally-placed-fatf-grey-list>

¹³ World Development Databank, “World Development Indicators” accessed March 22, 2024,

According to estimates, Pakistan lost approximately \$38 billion to grey listing since 2008-2019.¹⁴ Pakistan undertook significant reforms, passing around 15 different laws including comprehensive changes to the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997, and Anti-Money Laundering Act, 2010, forming core of Pakistan's AML/CFT frameworks¹⁵ and additional 30 pieces of regulations. FATF recognised these improvements in June 2018 and June 2021 comprising 27 original and 7 additional action points, making 34 action items in total.¹⁶ Ultimately, Pakistan was successfully removed from FATF's grey list on 21 Oct 22.¹⁷

- **Impediments in Fighting Lawfare**

- **Complex Legal Frameworks.** Pakistan struggles with understanding and responding to sophisticated international legal strategies due to complex global legal frameworks.¹⁸
- **Diplomatic Challenges.** Diplomatic efforts are hindered by strained relations and reputational issues. Effective diplomacy is necessary but challenging due to lack of a proactive strategy.
- **Institutional Capacity.** Pakistan's institutions lack specialised expertise in international law and coordination. There is a need for better-trained legal personnel and dedicated units.¹⁹
- **Internal/External Pressures.** External pressures, such as geopolitical rivalries and internal issues like domestic laws affecting international trade, impact Pakistan's ability to counter lawfare effectively.²⁰

These measures aim to enhance Pakistan's ability to navigate and respond to lawfare challenges strategically.

<https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators/Type/TABLE/preview/on#>

¹⁴ Nafeey Sardar, "Bearing the Cost of Global Politics", *Tabadlab*, accessed March 25, 2024, <https://www.tabadlab.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Tabadlab-Working-Paper-07-Bearing-the-Cost-of-Global-Politics.pdf>

¹⁵ Noor Fatima Iftikhar, Syed Qasim Abbas & Areesha Shahid, "Pakistan's FATF Journey 2018-2022," *RSIL*, October 2022, <https://rsilpak.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Pakistans-FATF-Journey-Global-Governance-Initiative-RSIL.pdf>

¹⁶ "Jurisdictions under Increased Monitoring", *FATF*, Updated October 21, 2022, <https://www.fatf-gafi.org/en/publications/High-risk-and-other-monitored-jurisdictions/Increased-monitoring-october-2022.html>

¹⁷ "Jurisdictions under Increased Monitoring".

¹⁸ Shahbaz Rana, "The Promise and Peril of Pakistan's Economic Recovery Effort," *United States Institute of Peace*, Updated September 06, 2023, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/09/promise-and-peril-pakistans-economic-recovery-effort>; and Ahmer Bilal Soofi, "Lawfare and Pakistan", *Hilal Magazine*, 2014, <https://hilal.gov.pk/view-article.php?i=1409>

¹⁹ Ahmer Bilal Soofi, "Lawfare and Pakistan."

²⁰ Mansij Asthana, "Five Key Reasons Why Pakistan Continues to be on FATF 'Grey List'," *The Eurasian Times*, February 27, 2021, <https://eurasianimes.com/five-key-reasons-why-pakistan-continues-to-be-on-fatf-grey-list>

DISSECTING GREY LISTING OF PAKISTAN

Pakistan made significant efforts to address deficiencies related to Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Counter-Terrorist Financing (CFT) during previous grey listing in 2008 and later in 2012. Commitment to take decisive actions against entities like Hafiz Saeed's Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD), Falah-e-Insaniyat Foundation (FIF), and Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) played a crucial role in Pakistan eventually being removed from the list in 2015.²¹

In February 2018, several member countries, including U.S., UK, France, and Germany, nominated Pakistan²² to be included in FATF grey list. ICRG report highlighted Pakistan's actions where banks in Pakistan actively monitored transactions for terrorism financing concerns.²³ Additionally, Pakistan froze 177 accounts totaling Rs. 48.2 million due to indirect linkages with UNSC-listed persons and entities.²⁴ Despite Pakistan's efforts, FATF ultimately placed the country on grey list due to "strategic deficiencies" in AML and terrorism financing. Continuous pressure from U.S. influenced this decision.²⁵

After being officially grey-listed in June 2018, Pakistan was handed over a 27-point action plan by FATF. During this period, Pakistan's standing in various indices, such as Basel Anti-Money Laundering Index, was impacted. Pakistan ranked 46 out of 146 countries, surpassing Tajikistan, Kenya, and Panama, all of which were not on FATF grey list at that time.²⁶

In June 2021, FATF recognised Pakistan's compliance with 26 out of 27 points from original 2018 Action Plan. While acknowledging this progress, FATF introduced an additional 7-Point Action Plan, focusing on money laundering concerns, particularly in regulating Designated Non-Financial Businesses and Professions (DNFBPs) and enhancing international cooperation.²⁷ Therefore, Pakistan underwent two simultaneous evaluations: first, a routine assessment under

²¹ Shahbaz, Rana. "Pakistan to Go on FATF Terror Financing List in June," *The Express Tribune*, April 29, 2018, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1643185/1-pakistan-go-fatf-terror-financing-list-june/>

²² Author's Interview with Khawaja Adnan Zahir, Ex DG FATF Secretariat, March 22, 2024.

²³ "First Follow-up Report: Mutual Evaluation of Pakistan," *The Asia-Pacific Group on Money Laundering*, September 2020, available at <https://nacta.gov.pk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/23-Pakistan-FUR-2020.pdf>,

²⁴ Shahbaz Rana, "Pakistan Formally Placed on Grey List," *The Express Tribune*, June 29, 2018. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1746079/1-pakistan-formally-placed-fatf-grey-list/>

²⁵ Maria Irfan, "Pakistan Under Grey List of Financial Action Task Force (FATF)", *Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services* 05, no. 10 (2018), https://www.pips.gov.pk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/10_PIPS_Parliamentary_Research_Digest_Oct_-2018.pdf

²⁶ Basel AML Index, "Assessing Money Laundering Risks All Around the World", accessed March 27, 2024, https://index.baselgovernance.org/api/uploads/2017_report_cccbe78d59.pdf.

²⁷ FATF, "Outcomes of the June 2021 Plenary – High Risk and Other Monitored Jurisdictions", accessed March 25, 2024, <http://www.fatf-gafi.org/publications/high-risk-and-other-monitored-jurisdictions/documents/increased-monitoringjune-2021.html>

fourth round, focusing on technical and effective compliance; second, an appraisal of its progress on the 27-Point and later 7-Point Action Plans.²⁸

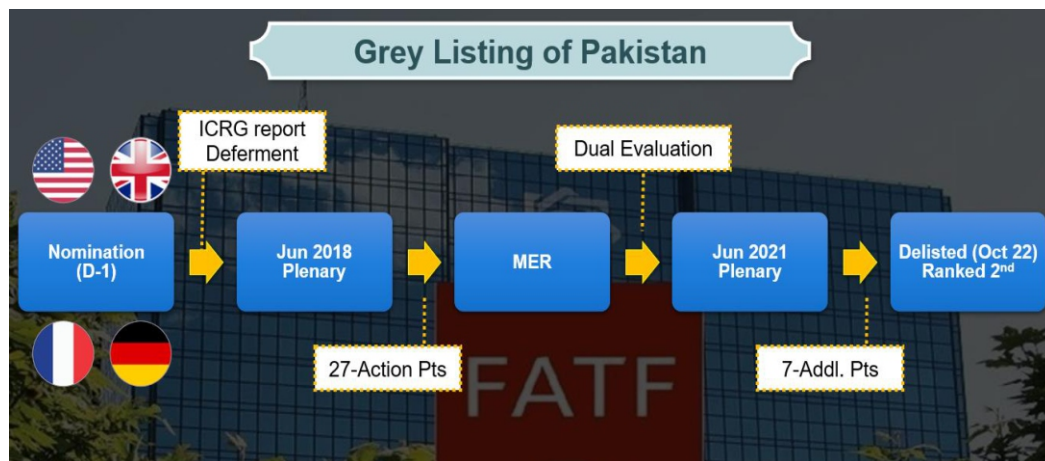


Figure 5: Phases of Grey Listing of Pakistan

Interestingly, upon completion of the Action Plan, Pakistan ranked second in compliance with FATF recommendations, outperforming countries like the U.S., Canada, Australia, and China.²⁹

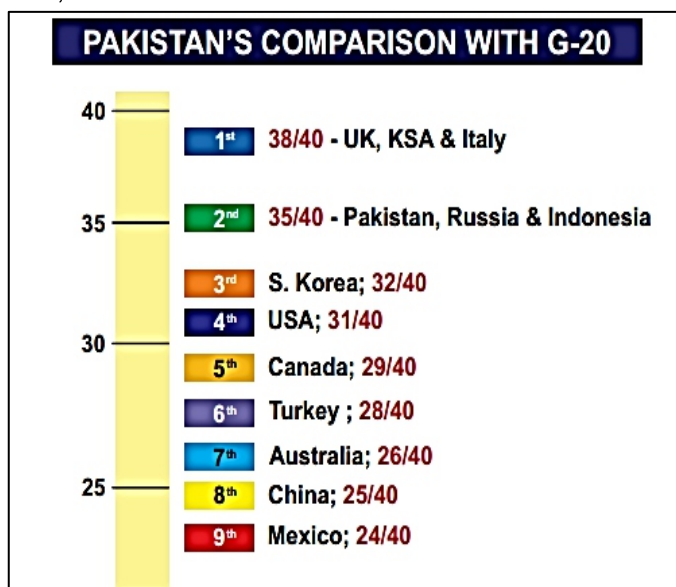


Figure 6: Pakistan Ranking w.r.t FATF Compliance

²⁸ Noor Fatima Iftikhar, Syed Qasim Abbas and Areesha Shahid, "Pakistan's FATF Journey 2018-2022," RSIL, accessed March 23, 2024, <https://rsilpak.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Pakistans-FATF-Journey-Global-Governance-Initiative-RSIL.pdf>

²⁹ National FATF Secretariat Pakistan, "INSIGHT AML-CFT in Pakistan", accessed March 23, 2024, https://fatf.gov.pk/WebsiteContent/News_And_Event/INSIGHT_AML-CFT%20IN%20PAKISTAN.pdf

PAKISTAN'S GREY LISTING & ROLE OF GEO-POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

Pakistan's grey listing by FATF in June 2018 occurred amidst a challenging politico-strategic environment influenced by global events and diplomatic pressures from adversaries and allies alike. The key factors that apparently stimulated this development include:

- **India-Pakistan Relations:** Rising tensions, particularly after Uri (2016) and Pulwama (2019) attacks were projected to harm Pakistan's diplomatic standing.
- **Indo-U.S. Relations:** The U.S. increasingly viewed India as a strategic partner to counter China's influence, evident in agreements like Quad, Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), and Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA), signalling a regional shift in favour of India.
- **Pak-China Relations:** The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Pakistan's closer ties with China raised concerns in the U.S. and Western nations, affecting perceptions of Pakistan.
- **U.S.-Pak Relations:** Fluctuations in relations with the U.S., particularly over Pakistan's role in Afghanistan and counterterrorism efforts and strained diplomatic ties.
- **Saudi Arabia and Yemen Crisis:** Pakistan's ambiguous stance during Yemen crisis strained relations with Saudi Arabia and impacted its standing in the Middle East.
- **OIC Summit Tashkent (2016):** The omission of Kashmir issue in Tashkent declaration highlighted a lack of diplomatic support for Pakistan on this key security concern.
- **Cancellation of SAARC Summit (2016):** India's boycott of SAARC summit, followed by other regional countries, reflected Pakistan's weakened diplomatic position in South Asia.
- **Indian Politics – Anti-Pakistan Drive:** Under PM Narendra Modi, India launched an aggressive campaign to isolate Pakistan internationally, portraying it as a state sponsor of terrorism and a regional threat.³⁰

³⁰ Abhinav Pandya, India Hopes for Pakistan's Diplomatic Isolation, *Fair Observer*, December 06, 2016, https://www.fairobserver.com/region/central_south_asia/india-pakistan-diplomacy-south-asia-news-81662/

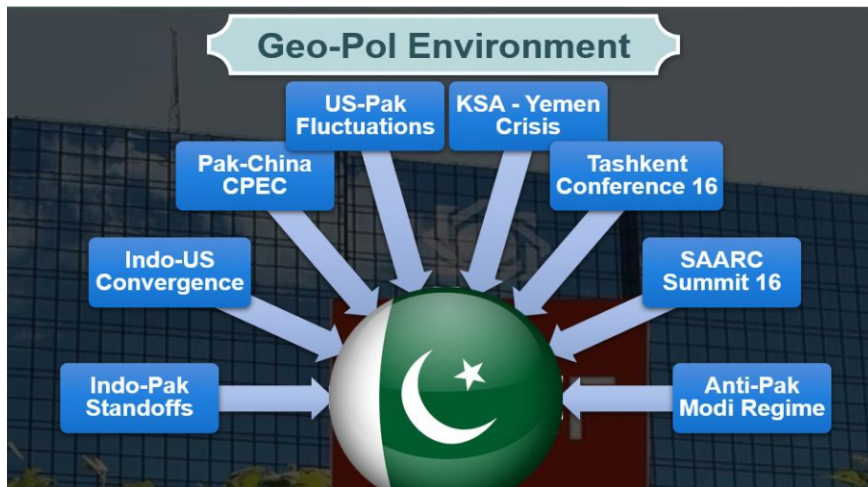


Figure 7: Geo-Political Dynamics Contributing to Pakistan's Grey Listing

ORGANISATIONAL LOBBYING IN FATF AGAINST PAKISTAN

- Role of India:** India aggressively lobbied against Pakistan in FATF, aiming to diplomatically isolate Pakistan by accusing it of terrorism and leveraging international forums.³¹ India's strategy involved diplomatic efforts and military actions, like Balakot strikes, to undermine Pakistan's credibility and position in the international community, particularly under Modi government.³²
- Role of the U.S.:** The U.S. played a significant role in listing and retaining Pakistan in FATF, endorsing India's allegations of Pakistan's support for terrorism. The U.S., frustrated with Afghan war and wary of China's growing influence, viewed India as a strategic partner and supported India's claims. Despite Pakistan's progress in meeting FATF standards, the U.S. continued to pressure Pakistan for full compliance, leading to its prolonged stay on grey list.³³
- Role of France:** France was crucial in nominating and retaining Pakistan on FATF grey list, driven by its strategic alignment with India in defence and economic collaborations. Tensions between France and Pakistan, particularly after France's defence of blasphemous acts as freedom of speech in 2020, further fuelled France's opposition to Pakistan in FATF discussions.³⁴

³¹ Author's Interview with Khawaja Adnan Zahir, Ex DG FATF Secretariat.

³² Musarat Amin, Rizwan Naseer & Nasreen Akhtar, Pakistan in the FATF Grey-list: Compliance and Policy Readjustments, *Pakistan Journal of Terrorism Research* 1, no.3 (2021). <https://nacta.gov.pk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Pakistan-in-the-FATF-Grey-list.pdf>

³³ Amin, Naseer and Akhtar, "Pakistan in the FATF Grey-list".

³⁴ Kim Willsher, 'Blasphemy 'is no crime'', *The Guardian*, February 15, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/feb/12/macron-wades-into-french-girls-anti-islam-row-saying-blasphemy-is-no-crime-mila> and "Macron decries 'Islamic separatism'", *Times of India*,

- **Roles of China, Saudi Arabia, and Türkiye:** Although Pakistan traditionally had strong ties with China, Saudi Arabia, and Türkiye, U.S. lobbying efforts including promises of leadership roles and memberships within FATF, persuaded China and Saudi Arabia to withdraw support for Pakistan.³⁵ However, Türkiye remained a steadfast supporter of Pakistan, although this support was insufficient to prevent Pakistan's grey listing. Additionally, Türkiye was also grey-listed in October 2021, allegedly for failing to supervise real estate, banking and other related institutions, until June 2024.³⁶ Despite some accounts suggesting China and Saudi Arabia withdrew their support, others claim they continued backing Pakistan, with Türkiye being the most prominent supporter.³⁷

PUBLIC PERCEPTION ABOUT PAKISTAN's GREY LISTING

A public survey was conducted as part of this research to gauge perceptions about Pakistan's inclusion and retention on FATF grey list, targeting a well-educated and professional audience. The sample included almost 100 people belonging to different sectors such as business, media, medicine engineering, serving and retired military personnel. The key findings of survey are:

- **Understanding of FATF:** Over 80% of participants correctly identified FATF's role, though 20% viewed it as a platform for enforcing sanctions.
- **Perceived Bias:** More than 82% believed FATF is biased or politicised by influential powers.
- **Influence of Countries:** All participants believed that the U.S. influences FATF decisions, with 61% citing UK influence, and 50% noting India's and France's influence.
- **Fairness of Grey Listing:** Around 57% felt Pakistan's retention on grey list was unjust, 20% believed both inclusion and retention were unjust, while rest saw it as fair.
- **Bias in Listing:** Over 92% thought some countries that should be listed are not included in list, indicating perceived bias.
- **Targeting of Specific Countries:** Nearly 100% believed FATF could be used to target specific countries.

September 04, 2020, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/europe/macron-decries-islamic-separatism-defends-blasphemy/articleshow/77932441.cms>

³⁵ Yasmeen Aftab Ali, "Pakistan and FATF grey list", *Pakistan Today*, July 3, 2019

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/07/03/pakistan-and-fatf-grey-list/>

³⁶ Huseyin Hayatsever and Daren Butler, "Turkey removed from FATF money laundering grey list in boost to standing," *Reuters*, 28 June 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/simsek-indicates-that-turkey-removed-fatf-watchdogs-grey-list-2024-06-28/>

³⁷ Author's Interview with Khawaja Adnan Zahir, Ex DG FATF Secretariat.

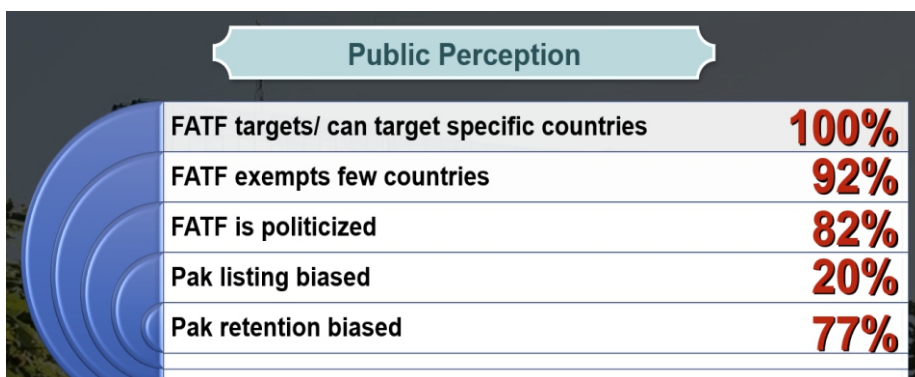


Figure 8: Statistical Analysis of Public Perception regarding Pakistan's Grey Listing

CONCLUSION

FATF serves as a critical international body that wages war against money laundering and terrorism financing. Its complex structure comprises of member countries and regional bodies that follow its well deliberated universal procedures to identify and counter these threats. Comprehensive evaluation process through MER not only identifies vulnerabilities but also highlights way forward for countries to improve upon their compliance to FATF standards. Role of FATF and its long-lasting impact on nations is subjected to its scrutiny and listing. FATF has evolved into a potent instrument of economic lawfare transcending its original mandate. It identified and exposed FATF as an intricate convergence zone of nation's economic, legal and strategic interests where destinies of few are decided.

The increasing rivalry between China and the U.S. is having global implications for smaller countries and their diplomatic alignments. This situation gave rise to lawfare in this arena where Pakistan's case identified challenges faced by country and advocacy for requisite safeguards against economic lawfare and coercion. It underscored the need for developing countries to address their AML/CFT framework deficiencies in order to navigate safely through this intricate web. It necessitates requirement of legal reforms, capacity building, diplomatic strategies and economic diversity underscored by a proactive strategy to counter lawfare in economic domain.

Dissection of Pakistan's listing revealed challenges faced by country due to non-compliance of FATF standards. Analysis of overall global politico-strategic environment preceding listing of Pakistan identified shifting global dynamics and alliances in the IOR and how they affected Pakistan. Moreover, newly emerging alliances have played a substantial role in organisational lobbying in FATF, which were used to satisfy political designs of one country.

Understanding role of FATF is vital to understand economic lawfare. The listing of Pakistan by nomination in 2018 and its retention in FATF grey-list amidst strong lobbying by India with the U.S. playing a key role is a classical case study of economic lawfare. Economic challenges faced by Pakistan brought it to the brink of economic default amidst COVID-19 pandemic which was countered through extensive legislative and administrative reforms. Highlighted selective scrutiny of FATF depicts its utility as a political tool of strategic importance and how such institutions can be leveraged to exercise economic lawfare.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To counter lawfare effectively, a state must adopt a multifaceted approach. Pakistan can build resilience against lawfare tactics designed to undermine its national and economic stability by actively engaging with international community, promoting economic diversity and bolstering its legal system.

a. Strengthening Pakistan in Lawfare

- **Legal Frameworks.** Improve inter-agency coordination, conduct legal reforms, and enhance legal education and training in international law.
- **Diplomatic Challenges.** Adopt proactive diplomacy, engage in public diplomacy, and build coalitions with friendly nations.
- **Institutional Capacity.** Allocate resources, establish specialized units, and support research and analysis in lawfare tactics.
- **Internal/External Pressures.** Diversify alliances, promote economic self-sufficiency, and communicate national interests effectively to international community.

In the backdrop of above discussion, following national and international level measures are recommended:

b. National Measures

- Maintain achieved level of AML/TF measures with regards to FATF recommendations.
- Establish a dedicated and empowered 'International Relations and Lawfare Body' under federal government.
- Build international standard law schools, provide international law scholarships, strengthen FMUs, enhance judiciary's capacity to adjudicate ML/TF cases and provide specialised training to lawyers.
- Build robust coordination mechanism between all vital agencies like FBR, NACTA, FIA etc.

- Enforce stringent punishments for ML/TF and secure legal cooperation from countries like Panama, UK and Switzerland.
- Enable transparency and financial tracking to reduce susceptibility to ML/TF
- Develop effective counter-narratives to address false accusations and distortions aimed at damaging Pakistan's reputation; equip national and private media to identify and analyse biased information and raise awareness.

c. International Measures

- Actively engage and contribute to international economic alliances that promote fair trade practices and discourage economic coercion.
- Create economic diversity through bilateral agreements with key trading partners to navigate legal challenges collaboratively.
- Cooperate with friendly nations and international organisations like UN Office of Legal Affairs to identify emerging lawfare tactics.
- Push for reforms and demand FATF for:
 - Enhanced transparency throughout Mutual Evaluation Process by live broadcasting of plenary sessions/ meetings and public attendance to foster greater trust.
 - Level playing field and fairness by ensuring accountability of all countries regardless of alliances or status to address perception of selective scrutiny.
 - Review grey listing in light of impact on country's economy, size and share in global ML/TF.

ENHANCING NAVAL DIPLOMACY: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PAKISTAN AND INDONESIAN NAVAL PARTNERSHIP

Lt Cdr Darmawan Wijaksono (Indonesian Navy)*

ABSTRACT

Naval forces play a critical role in conduct of maritime diplomacy. The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is a central arena for maritime geopolitics, international trade routes, security, environmental concerns, and boasts vast natural and fishery resources. Naval partnership between Indonesia and Pakistan is crucial for safeguarding security and stability in the Indian Ocean. Both countries occupy strategic positions critical for securing world oil trade and export routes, notably in Strait of Hormuz and Strait of Malacca. Their cooperative relationship, evidenced by mutual support in international forums, is instrumental in addressing regional challenges. Strengthening collaboration and partnership between the two navies is essential amidst escalating geopolitical competition in the Indian Ocean. This paper examines the strategic importance of naval diplomacy in maintaining maritime stability in the IOR. It discusses challenges and opportunities encountered by Indonesian and Pakistan naval partnership. Additionally, it offers practical recommendations for optimising the role and contribution of Indonesian and Pakistan Navy in enhancing naval diplomacy between both countries.

Keywords: Naval Diplomacy, Maritime Security, Regional Stability, Indian Ocean.

* Author is graduate of Pakistan Navy War College 53rd Pakistan Navy Staff Course.

INTRODUCTION

Diplomacy is an art and practice of negotiating and managing international relations short of war. The inherent characteristics of naval forces are remarkably distinct from those of land and air forces. Features such as mobility, sustainability, versatility, flexibility, and poise enable naval forces to act as efficient foreign policy tool. Since oceans are global commons, navies are often regarded as important tools for conduct of diplomacy.¹ Naval diplomatic practices usually involve increasing operational capacity, outreach, confidence-building measures, and efforts to gain support and provide reassurance.² In general, term gun boat diplomacy is used to describe the coercive element of naval diplomacy. However, the term gives negative connotations and is now often avoided.³ Instead of focusing on hard power, the utilisation of "soft power" strategy is considered more effective for maintaining stability and avoiding political tensions.

The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is geographically located at cross position between the continents of Asia, Africa and Australia. Covering area of 68,536,000 sq.km, the Indian Ocean is the third largest of the world's oceans. The ocean provides crucial maritime connectivity through sea-lines of communication (SLOCs) which pass through numerous choke points including Suez Canal, Bab-el-Mandeb, Strait of Hormuz, and Strait of Malacca.⁴ As many as two-thirds of world oil exports and one-third of bulk goods traffic passes through Indian Ocean. Besides that, this region is also rich in natural and fishery resources which have the potential as food reserves.

The Indian Ocean is a relatively enclosed ocean and is surrounded by regions which are politically volatile or have active threat perceptions. As a result, traditional and non-traditional maritime threats of varying types continue to challenge regional geopolitical stability. Effective diplomacy can help to undertake collaborative measures to counter such challenges. Security threats to free flow of these trade routes have a significant impact on world economic stability. With importance of this region, existing and emerging great powers compete to pursue influence and assert regional control to safeguard their SLOCs.

Indonesia and Pakistan are important maritime nations and are located at geostrategic positions that are critical for securing world oil trade and export routes in two world strategic choke points, namely the Strait of Hormuz and the Strait of Malacca. Naval partnership between Indonesia and Pakistan is essential in maintaining security stability in IOR. Moreover, the cooperative relationship between Indonesia and Pakistan is generally going well, as can be seen from the mutual support between Indonesia and Pakistan both at international and regional forums.⁵

¹ Ian Speller, *Understanding Naval Warfare*, 2nd ed., (New York: Routledge, 2019), 08.

² Speller, *Understanding Naval Warfare*, 88–90.

³ *Maritime Doctrine of Pakistan (MDP)*, *Preserving Freedom of Sea* (Pakistan Navy, 2018), 92-93.

⁴ Ibid, 25.

⁵ Darmastuti, Shanti and Subekti, E. Farida, "Challenges of Indonesian Maritime Diplomacy towards

This research paper will primarily focus on three research questions. First, how can naval partnership between Pakistan and Indonesian Navy can improve stability in IOR? Second, what are the challenges faced by both naval forces in development of bilateral collaboration? And third, how can a cooperation framework between both navies be established to support enhancing mutual capacity and capability?

UNDERSTANDING NAVAL DIPLOMACY AND MARITIME SECURITY

Christian Le Mière in his book, 'Maritime Diplomacy in the 21st Century' has divided maritime diplomacy into three sub-categories namely; 'cooperative maritime diplomacy' activities, 'persuasive maritime diplomacy' activities, and 'coercive maritime diplomacy' activities.⁶

Author Ken Booth in his book 'Naval and Foreign Policy' has argued that the diplomatic role is the most distinctive function of the navy. It relates with management of foreign policy through limited deployment of naval power. The diplomatic power of a navy can lend support to state policy, particularly during negotiations and in general during international interactions. Ken Booth identifies five strategies that might be utilised in field of naval diplomacy. These strategies include: standing demonstration of naval power, specific operational deployments, naval aid and assistance, operational visits, and specific good will visits.⁷

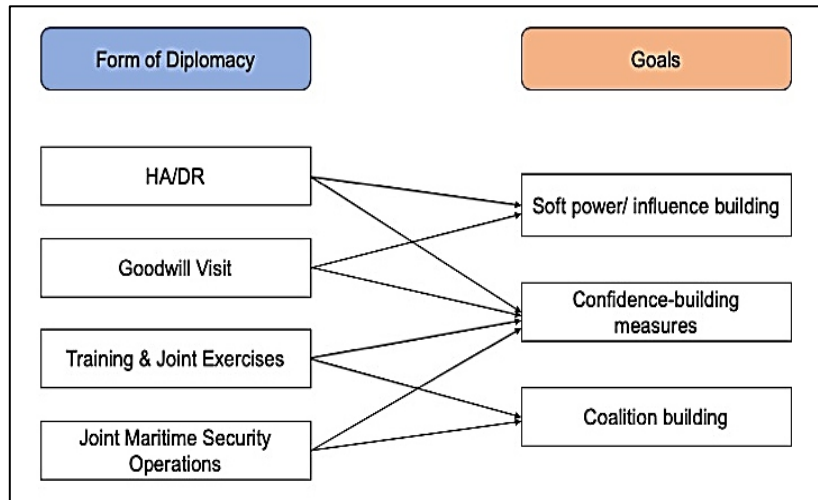


Figure 1. The Maritime Diplomacy Concept and its Purpose⁸

'Beyond Sea Blindness, a New Agenda for Maritime Security Studies' by Christian Bueger has explained that maritime security is a condition where there are no threats to maritime stability at sea such as disputes between countries, terrorism

the World Maritime Axis," *Journal of Pembangunan Negara Veteran*, (2018).

⁶ Christian Le Mière, *Maritime Diplomacy in the 21st Century Drivers and Challenges* (Taylor and Francis, 2014).

⁷ Ken Booth, *Navies and Foreign Policy* (London: Routledge, 2015).

⁸ Ian Speller, *Understanding Naval Warfare*.

at sea, piracy, trafficking in narcotics, humans, illegal goods; environmental crimes, disasters and accidents at sea.⁹ The concept of maritime security is transformative and has evolved from a narrow perspective of naval power projection to a collaboration that incorporates many mutually exclusive sub-fields including governmental, non-governmental, intra-governmental, and inter-governmental.

INDONESIA, PAKISTAN, AND NAVAL DIPLOMACY

Historical Perspectives

Indonesia and Pakistan have long had stable relations based on mutual support and respect both regionally and globally. Diplomatic relations were developed between the two countries in 1950 and 70 years of these ties were celebrated in the year 2020. Both countries emphasise significance of bilateral ties that were initiated by the late President Soekarno and Pakistani leaders. Indonesia provided military support to Pakistan during the Indo-Pak War of 1965.¹⁰ Additionally, Indonesia and Pakistan have been providing support to each other, particularly in trade cooperation which is closely linked with naval engagements to secure sea routes.

Diplomatic Engagement Programs

This diplomatic outreach contributes to a more stable and secure maritime environment through participation at diplomatic forums. Both navies have been promoting dialogue and undertaking confidence building measures to strengthen regional partnerships. The diplomatic relations between the Indonesian and Pakistani navies are progressing well and include measures like placement of defence attachés in each country, participation in various conference meetings, high level or chief of staff visits and exchange of officers in educational programs.

There are various kinds of diplomacy programs organised and participated in by both navies. For example, Navy to Navy Expert Level Staff Talk (NTNELST) is a unique forum used to exchange views on bilateral, regional and international issues and discuss future cooperation between the two navies. In 2022, the fourth meeting was held and with more expected in future. Additionally, International Maritime Security Symposium (IMSS) is carried out by the Indonesian Navy and Pakistan International Maritime Expo and Conference (PIMEC) held by Pakistan Navy that invited various friendly countries to discuss contemporary maritime security issues. Both countries are also active participants of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) which is a multilateral forum meant to discuss contemporary issues, especially in maritime security domain, as well as experiences in maritime security dynamics.

⁹ Christian Bueger and Timothy Edmunds, "Beyond sea blindness. A new agenda for maritime security Studies," *International Affairs* 93 (6): 1293-1311.

¹⁰ "Bilateral Relations," *Pakembjakarta*, February 10, 2024, <https://www.pakembjakarta.com/bilateral->

Joint Exercises

Joint naval exercises are a significant component of naval diplomacy. One of the contributions of naval diplomacy activities carried out by the navies of both countries is that Indonesia has been participating in multilateral Aman exercises since 2011 which are organised by Pakistan Navy. Similarly, Pakistan Navy is an active participant of Komodo Exercise since 2014. Moreover, joint exercises with marine forces Keris Thalwar Exercise and Sea Thunder Exercise for Special Operation Forces have been conducted annually since 2016.

Joint exercises and trainings have major impact on capacity and trust building between countries. Cooperation and interaction between both navies continue to grow every year in various fields, such as training and education, official visits, multinational activities, port visits, exercises, and operations.

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Support

Both nations have been providing humanitarian and disaster relief support to each other. In December 2004, Indonesia faced a devastating tsunami, prompting Pakistan to donate 7 million rupees as post-disaster humanitarian assistance.¹¹ Pakistani government launched a relief program, utilising Pakistan Navy for transportation, medical aid, and supplies to disaster-stricken areas in Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam and North Sumatra. Similarly, Indonesia supported Pakistan after the 2005 earthquake with \$1 million in aid and two C-130 Hercules aircraft for emergency supplies.¹² In 2022, after major floods in Pakistan, Indonesia again sent humanitarian and essential logistics aid via two Garuda planes.¹³

These efforts reflect the spirit of friendship to assist each other, as well as to enhance mutually supportive diplomatic relations. Both countries have also agreed to provide further disaster recovery support in the form of logistical and material assistance as well as provision of medical and technical support. Furthermore, the Indonesian Navy has also implemented its initiative in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) efforts by training it in the KOMODO Exercise material, in which Pakistan Navy has also participated.

¹¹ "Logistic support needed to transport urgent tsunami relief," *ReliefWeb*, January 2005,

<https://reliefweb.int/report/indonesia/pakistan-logistic-support-needed-transport-urgent-tsunami-relief>

¹² "Indonesia donates US\$ one million for rehabilitation of quake-hit areas," *ReliefWeb*, December 07, 2005, <https://reliefweb.int/report/pakistan/pakistan-indonesia-donates-us-one-million-rehabilitation-quake-hit-areas>

¹³ "Indonesia donates \$1 million to address impact of catastrophic floods in Pakistan," *Arab News*, December 27, 2022, <https://www.arabnews.pk/node/2220746/pakistan>

THE CHALLENGES TO INDONESIAN-PAKISTAN NAVAL DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS

Geopolitical Dynamics

The geopolitical landscape of the IOR is shaped by a variety of factors, including historical legacies, economic interests and strategic imperatives. This has led to emergence of complex geopolitical dynamics that influence behaviour of states and naval powers in the region. In addition, competing influences of territorial claims and power projection efforts by regional and global actors contribute to the complex geopolitical dynamics in the Indian Ocean. The presence of a number of new Middle Powers, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Iran and Indonesia are also poised to create influence in Indian Ocean politics.¹⁴ The assertive actions of certain countries in projecting their territorial claims can increase tensions and potential for conflict escalation in maritime domain.

Maritime Security Threats

Security dynamics of the IOR are characterised by diverse traditional and non-traditional maritime threats that pose significant challenges to regional stability and security. Piracy and armed robbery remain a persistent threat in the Indian Ocean, especially along major shipping routes such as the Gulf of Aden, the Strait of Hormuz and the Straits of Malacca. The cooperation between navies is necessary to combat piracy, to enhance maritime domain awareness, and to secure maritime routes.

Overfishing, destructive fishing practices and illegal transshipment of fish contribute to the depletion of marine resources and exacerbate tensions between coastal states.¹⁵ Both navies need to share common knowledge to enforce maritime laws and regulations to combat illegal fishing, conduct maritime patrols in their area and monitor fishing activities to prevent unauthorised exploitation of marine resources.

Smuggling of drugs, weapons and contrabands is another significant challenge to maritime security and law enforcement efforts in the Indian Ocean. Criminal networks exploit maritime routes and maritime borders for illicit activities, undermining state sovereignty and regional stability.¹⁶ Naval collaboration with national and international agencies is needed to eradicate smuggling networks, intercept illicit shipments, and enhance maritime interdiction capabilities to effectively counter maritime smuggling.

¹⁴ Jean Loup Samaan, "Gulf Arab States Position Themselves to Be Pivotal Players in the Indian Ocean," *Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington*, May 17, 2019, <https://agsiw.org/gulf-arab-states-position-themselves-to-be-pivotal-players-in-the-indian-ocean/>.

¹⁵ David J. Agnew, et.al, "Estimating the Worldwide Extent of Illegal Fishing," *PLoS ONE* 4, no. 2 (February 25, 2009). <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0004570>.

¹⁶ "Drug Trafficking," UNODC, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/drug-trafficking/index.html>

Resource Constraints

Resource constraint is a mutual challenge faced by the Indonesian Navy and Pakistan Navy.¹⁷ This limits the ability of naval forces to undertake fleet modernisation and maintenance, for sustaining operational duties.¹⁸ The allocation of limited financial resources among competing priorities requires cautious prioritisation and strategic planning to ensure optimal utilisation of available funds. Furthermore, economic recessions and fiscal pressures can exacerbate budgetary constraints, further limiting the capacity of navies to effectively address resource shortfalls.

The need for cutting-edge equipment and technology presents another challenge for both navies. Aging naval assets require continuous maintenance and upgrades to remain operationally viable.¹⁹ Limited access to advanced technology and technological obsolescence can hinder both navies' modernisation efforts, limiting their ability to keep pace with emerging maritime threats and technological advances in naval warfare.

Moreover, inadequate infrastructure, including naval bases, shipyards and logistics facilities can also significantly limit operational reach and sustainability of both navies thus reducing their operational availability and effectiveness in responding to emerging maritime threats.²⁰

Environmental Concern

Environmental degradation in the IOR presents significant challenges to maritime security and sustainable development. This issue is an integral component of a broader security and development agenda that requires cooperative naval diplomacy efforts to maintain security in the IOR.²¹

Marine pollution, resulting from industrial activities, shipping operations and coastal development, is a threat to marine ecosystems and human health in the Indian Ocean. Oil spills, chemical pollutants and plastic debris degrade water quality, damage marine biodiversity and disrupt ecosystem services.²² Naval partnership efforts are needed to contribute to pollution prevention efforts through surveillance, enforcement of maritime regulations and response to environmental emergencies, safeguarding marine environment and coastal communities.

Illegal fishing, including overfishing, destructive fishing methods and unauthorised fishing in protected areas undermine marine biodiversity and threaten

¹⁷ Jeffrey H. Dyer, and Harbir Singh, "The Relational View: Cooperative Strategy and Sources of Interorganizational Competitive Advantage," *Academy of Management Review* 23, no. 4 (October 1998): 660–79. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1998.1255632>.

¹⁸ Eric Jackson Labs, *Options for the Navy's Future Fleet*, 2006.

¹⁹ C.P. Hedderich, "Navy Proactive Maintenance," *Naval Engineers Journal* 108 (1996): 41–57.

²⁰ Peter Chalk, *The Maritime Dimension of International Security: Terrorism, piracy, and challenges for the United States* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2008).

²¹ Simon Dalby, "Global Environmental Security," *The Handbook of Global Climate and Environment Policy*, March 2013, 163–78. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118326213.ch10>.

²² "Global environment outlook – geo-6: Healthy planet, healthy people," *UNEP*, May 31, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108627146>.

food security in the Indian Ocean. Unsustainable fishing practices deplete fish stocks, disrupt marine ecosystems and exacerbate tensions between coastal states.²³ Collaboration between two navies is needed in maritime law enforcement efforts, sharing information on fisheries control in combating illegal fishing activities and promoting sustainable fisheries management and conservation of marine resources.

Climate change, characterised by rising sea levels, ocean acidification and extreme weather events, poses an existential threat to coastal communities and maritime infrastructure in the Indian Ocean. Rising sea level is threatening low-lying coastal areas by increasing the vulnerability of coastal populations to flooding and storm surges.²⁴ Active cooperation between both navies can initiate climate adaptation, coastal resilience planning and disaster response operations to mitigate the impacts of climate change on maritime security and sustainable development.

BUILDING NAVAL PARTNERSHIP

Naval Capability Assessment

In developing partnership framework, it is necessary to assess the naval capabilities of both Pakistan Navy and Indonesian Navy. This assessment should include fleet composition, technology, operational readiness, and training. Pakistan Navy has a diverse fleet, including advanced frigates and submarines, and excels in counter-terrorism, anti-piracy and humanitarian missions. Likewise, Indonesian Navy has a large fleet, is modernising with new ships and domestic technology, and is actively involved in regional security and joint patrols. Both navies face challenges in maritime domain awareness, security threats, and resources. To overcome this problem, collaborative information exchange and capacity building are needed to increase interoperability and effectiveness.

Identifying Common Interests and Objectives

In order to establish a cooperation framework, both Pakistan Navy and Indonesian Navy should identify common interests and goals. These include enhancing maritime security, conducting joint operations, as well as combating piracy and illegal fishing. Aligning their objectives can foster a unified vision for collaboration. Both navies have strategic interests in key maritime areas: Pakistan focuses on the northern Arabian Sea, while Indonesia's interests span the eastern Indian Ocean, South China Sea, southwestern Pacific, and Arafura Sea. They share concerns over maritime stability, freedom of navigation, and transnational threats like piracy and smuggling. By leveraging their strengths and resources, they can

²³ U. Rashid Sumaila, William W. Cheung, Vicky W. Lam, Daniel Pauly, and Samuel Herrick, "Climate Change Impacts on the Biophysics and Economics of World Fisheries," *Nature Climate Change* 1, no. 9 (November 20, 2011): 449–56, <https://doi.org/10.1038/nclimate1301>.

²⁴ Nathaniel L. Bindoff, "Changing Ocean, Marine Ecosystems, and Dependent Communities," *The Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate*, April 30, 2020, 447–588. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009157964.013>.

effectively address common challenges and seize cooperation opportunities to promote regional security and economic prosperity.

Development of Cooperation Mechanism

Once common interests are identified, cooperation mechanism needs to be developed through formalising agreements, protocols, and joint task forces for maritime operations, intelligence sharing, and training. Regular dialogues, exchange programs, and joint exercises will enhance communication and coordination. Developing standard operating procedures and interoperability frameworks is vital for effective joint operations. Opportunities for collaboration include joint exercises, information and personnel exchanges, capacity-building, and technology development. By establishing regular communication channels, both navies can build mutual understanding, trust, and collaboration to tackle maritime challenges and improve readiness and interoperability for emerging threats.

Capacity Building and Transfer of Technology

Technology transfer and capacity building are crucial in this collaboration. By collaborating on training, skill development, and knowledge exchange, the Indonesian and Pakistani navies can strengthen each other's capabilities. Technology transfer agreements will help both navies effectively use advanced maritime technologies by sharing knowledge and resources. Key collaboration areas include technology transfer, joint research and development, and defence industry partnerships. Leveraging their strengths, the navies can bridge capability gaps, enhance regional maritime security, and boost operational effectiveness. Collaboration with research institutions and defence industry can also promote indigenous defence growth and naval technological independence.

Way Forward

In order to fully optimise the effectiveness of naval partnership between both navies in future, an appropriate multi-fold strategy is needed so that both nations can effectively secure collective interests via naval diplomacy. This can involve:

- Active involvement in various bilateral and multilateral forums in maritime sector to discuss and develop solutions in solving maritime security challenges.
- Increasing regular coordinated maritime security operations exercises in the Indian Ocean, as well as establishing Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) between both navies to increase operational interoperability.
- Improving cooperation in maritime information exchange mechanisms through Pusinfomar TNI, which is Maritime Information Centre of the Indonesian National Armed Forces, and Joint Maritime Information Coordination Centre (JMICC) to enhance Maritime Domain Awareness.
- Enhancing the scope of cooperation not only between navies but also between Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) and BAKAMLA of Indonesia against illegal activities, especially IUU fishing as well as

establishing a bilateral information exchange mechanism particularly related to maritime security and safety.

- Developing naval cooperation between education board, particularly Pakistan Naval War College and Seskoal, which is Indonesian Naval Command and Staff College, in terms of discussions and seminars related to maritime security as well as interaction between students to exchange ideas on operational environment.
- Enhancing naval cooperation in developing defence equipment technology, as both navies have capability to build domestic defence equipment.

CONCLUSION

Naval diplomacy has an important role in rapidly transforming IOR. Partnership between navies of Pakistan and Indonesia has emerged as a significant example of enhancing regional security through naval diplomacy. By fostering joint exercises, maritime collaborations, and mutual capacity-building, both nations have strengthened their ability to ensure maritime security, combat shared threats like piracy and terrorism, and promote stability in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia. This partnership not only underscores the strategic importance of regional cooperation but also showcases potential of naval diplomacy in contributing to broader geopolitical stability. The ongoing collaboration paves way for future enhancements in defence relations and reinforces significance of collective maritime security efforts.

ASSESSING INDIA'S SPACE-BASED ISR, BMD, AND S-400 DEFENCE SYSTEMS: IMPLICATIONS FOR STRATEGIC STABILITY IN SOUTH ASIA

Lt Cdr Aman Sharif PN*

ABSTRACT

This research examines intricate dynamics of India's pursuit of advanced military technologies and their implications for strategic stability in South Asia. India's acquisition of cutting-edge air defence systems and enhanced satellite-based Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities significantly alters regional security environment in its favour. By employing the theory of offensive realism, this study analyses India's quest for offensive military technologies. The integration of India's multi-layered Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) system with S-400 Air Defence System (ADS) and satellite-based ISR capabilities fosters a misleading sense of security against incoming ballistic threats. This perceived invulnerability may embolden India's hyper-nationalist political elite to engage in risky military ventures. In response, Pakistan has been compelled to strengthen its own military capabilities to restore regional balance. Furthermore, this research assesses the impact of ongoing militarisation on escalation dynamics between India and Pakistan, emphasising the need for a nuanced understanding of these developments in context of potential conflict escalation.

Keywords: Strategic Stability, Neo-Realism, South Asia, Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) System, S-400 Air Defence System (ADS), and Satellite based ISR.

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INTRODUCTION

Thomas Schelling and Morten Halperin have defined strategic stability as a situation where likelihood of war between two opposing nations is minimal because neither side sees any advantage in striking first and their respective calculations are protected from upsets, fears and concerns.¹ In South Asia, strategic environment is shaped by adversarial relations between the two nuclear armed neighbours India and Pakistan as both countries share a long history of continuous competition, rivalry and conflicts. Nonetheless, in line with John Mearsheimer's theory of offensive realism, realist hegemonic aspirations have always inspired India's hyper nationalist political elite.

South Asian region has been experiencing a grey state between conflict and stability due to perpetual rivalry between regional players fuelled by safeguarding own interests.² Indian-centered territorial disputes with neighbouring states perpetuate a "No Peace, No War" situation. Similar to the Cold War era, nuclear weapons play a crucial role in maintaining crisis stability. Both India and Pakistan's nuclear arsenals help sustain strategic stability in South Asia despite ongoing rivalry.

India's growing military expenditure and Pakistan's economic and political turmoil have created significant conventional capability gaps. India's acquisition of Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) and S-400 Air Defence Systems (ADS) gives it an edge in safeguarding its nuclear force in a first-strike scenario, leading to deterrence instability. Additionally, India's satellite-based ISR capabilities offer battle space transparency, potentially disrupting the balance of power in South Asia. This situation necessitates an in-depth evaluation of the existing strategic environment and challenges to regional stability.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research uses concept of strategic stability to analyse South Asia's current strategic environment. Thomas Schelling explained strategic stability in the following manner: "If both sides have weapons that need not go first to avoid their own destruction, so that neither side can gain great advantage in jumping the gun and each is aware that the other cannot, it will be a good deal harder to get a war started. Both sides can afford the rule: When in doubt, wait."³ Strategic stability refers to a country's capacity to retaliate effectively after withstanding an initial nuclear strike. The core idea is that mutual vulnerability deters any nation from launching a disarming first strike against its rival.⁴ Hence, strategic stability may be assessed based on aspects like

¹ Thomas C. Schelling and Morton H. Halperin, *Strategy and Arms Control* (Washington: Pergamon Brassey, 1985).

² Tughral Yamin, *The Evolution of Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia* (Islamabad: Army Press, 2014), 20.

³ Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Heaven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966), 246.

⁴ Sitara Noor, "Strategic Stability in South Asia: The Evolving Challenges and Potential Opportunities for India and Pakistan." *Strategic Studies* 43, no. 1 (2023): 64-94. doi:10.53532/ss.043.01.00272.

credible threat, second strike capability, first strike absorption, and deterrence by denial.

Neorealism highlights how India and Pakistan pursue their interests amid security competition. Impact on strategic stability can be viewed through offensive neorealism as pursued by India versus defensive neorealism as pursued by Pakistan. India's pursuit of advanced military capabilities, including its BMD system, S-400 ADS, and space technologies, exemplifies offensive realism in action. By enhancing its offensive military capabilities and demonstrating the ability to intercept incoming threats, India aims to project power and assert dominance in region, fostering a perception of strategic superiority. In response, Pakistan's military strategy reflects defensive realism, focusing on reinforcing its own deterrent capabilities to counterbalance India's advancements. By developing technologies such as Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicles (MIRVs) and strengthening its defence, Pakistan seeks to maintain its strategic equilibrium without provoking an arms race. This interplay illustrates a classic security competition, where India's offensive posture drives Pakistan to adopt defensive measures, further complicating regional security landscape and heightening the potential for conflict.

INDIA'S BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENCE (BMD) CAPABILITY

Strategic stability between Pakistan and India is shaped by mutual vulnerabilities. Given asymmetry between conventional abilities, prevention of conflict is ensured due to presence of nuclear umbrella. India started its BMD programme in 1996 when it acquired Long Range Tracking Radar (LRTR) from Israel. This system was capable to detect missile launches from a range of 300 Km for interception. India's BMD employs Prithvi Air Defence (PAD) missile to intercept ballistic missiles in exo-atmosphere. This interceptor missile is a solid-fuelled missile intended to intercept incoming ballistic missiles at an altitude of 50-80 km. The interceptor was initially tested in 2006.⁵ In order to engage incoming ballistic missiles in endo-atmosphere, Advanced Air Defence (AAD), often referred to as Ashwin Ballistic Missile Interceptor, is employed. It is a single-stage solid fuel missile designed to intercept ballistic missiles at altitude up to 30 Km. Created collaboratively with Israel it underwent initial testing in 2011. In addition, DRDO conducted test of AAD interceptor from IN Ship Anvesh on 21 April 2023. The ship is built exclusively for naval BMD capability and for test trials of India's BMD Program Phase-I.⁶

India's strategy of strengthening its air defence can be viewed with the lens of offensive realism as it adversely affects equilibrium of mutual vulnerabilities. This can be analysed further by comparison of nuclear forces of India and Pakistan. Despite Pakistan's considerable land-based ballistic missile capabilities, India's employment

⁵Priya Chacko, "India's Ballistic Missile Defence: Stumbling towards Capability?," *The Nonproliferation Review* 25, no. 3-4 (2018): 251-267.

⁶ Amber Afsheen Abid, "Indian Ballistic Missile Defence System and South Asian Deterrence Equation," *Strategic Thought* 4, no. 1 (2022): 136-154, <https://strategicthought.ndu.edu.pk/site/article/view/82>

of BMD may give it a sense of protection against this advantage. However, due to employment of BMD, Pakistan may feel compelled to adopt counter measures which subsequently lead to arms race in the region. Pakistan has implemented a diverse strategy to offset and reduce strategic concerns it perceives from India's BMD capabilities. This strategy involves improving and expanding its ballistic missile capabilities including development of MIRVs and cruise missiles. Testing, re-testing and deployment of Ababeel weapon system is aimed to restore strategic balance affected by India's BMD capability.⁷ Therefore, Pakistan aims to maintain a strong deterrence posture against possible pre-emptive attacks under false sense of protection of BMD systems.⁸

INDIA'S S-400 AIR DEFENCE SYSTEM

In 2018, India concluded a deal with Russia to purchase the S-400 Triumph surface-to-air missile system, despite objections from the U.S. on possible sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA). The agreement was one of the biggest defence transactions between India and Russia (i.e., USD 5.5 billion)⁹. On 19 October 2018, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pakistan officially raised concerns that India's acquisition of S-400 ADS will further destabilise strategic stability in South Asia.¹⁰

Out of five ordered, three systems have been handed over to India whereas delivery of remaining two systems is expected to complete by end of 2024.¹¹ These three systems' squadron is named as "Sudarshan" after Hindu Lord Krishna's Sudharshan Chakra Weapon. During annual command level exercise "Poorvi Akash", held from 30 October 2023 to 04 November 2023, Eastern Air Command reportedly operationalized S-400 ADS.¹² The system's incorporation into India's wider air defence network is anticipated to greatly enhance the country's defensive capacity and reinforce its deterrent stance against potential enemies.¹³

⁷ Antoine Levesques, "Pakistan Missile Test confirms its MIRV ambitions," *International Institution for Strategic Studies*, November 07, 2023, <https://www.iiss.org/online-analysis/missile-dialogue-initiative/2023/10/pakistan-missile-test-confirms-its-mirv-ambitions/>.

⁸ Shams-uz-Zaman, "Developments in Indian Missile Program: Options for Pakistan," *Policy Perspectives: The Journal of the Institute of Policy Studies* 15, no. 1 (2018): 43-61, doi:10.13169/polipers.15.1.0043.

⁹ Franz-Stephan Gady, "India, Russia Sign \$5.5 Billion S-400 Deal During Modi-Putin Summit," *The Diplomat*, October 05, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com>

¹⁰ "Press Statement on Indian Purchase of S-400 Missiles," *Ministry of Foreign Affairs Pakistan*, October 19, 2018, <https://mofa.gov.pk/press-statement-on-indian-purchase-of-s-400-missiles>.

¹¹ "Russia supplying S-400 air defence systems to India on schedule," *Reuters*, August 14, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/russia-supplying-s-400-air-defence-systems-india-schedule-defence-official-2023-08-14/>.

¹² "S-400 Anti-Aircraft Systems Shoots down 'hostile Enemy Targets' in IAF Exercise," *India Defense News*, November 08, 2023, <https://www.indiandefensenews.in/2023/11/s-400-anti-aircraft-systems-shoots-down.html>.

¹³ "IAF Deploys 3 S-400 Missile Units on Border," *Livemint*, October 30, 2023, <https://www.livemint.com/news/iaf-deploys-3-s-400-missile-units-on-china-pak-border-process-to->

INDIA'S SATELLITE BASED ISR CAPABILITIES

India has been investing in its space programme for decades to gain situational awareness and a strategic edge in South Asia. India is developing space-based C4ISR assets, supported by ground components for Space Situational Awareness. The strategy includes launching satellites in Geo Stationary Orbit (GSO), Sun-Synchronous Polar Orbit (SSPO), and Low Earth Orbit (LEO). So far, India has launched 124 satellites, with the latest being INSAT- 3DS in GSO on 17 February 2024.¹⁴ Details of major programs and significant satellites systems are as under:¹⁵

a. Remote Sensing Satellites

(1) **RADAR Imaging Satellites.** Under Remote Sensing Satellite Program, ISRO is operating RISAT-2B and RISAT-2BRI satellites launched on 22 May 2019 and 11 December 2019 respectively.¹⁶ These satellites are used for Radar Imaging while flying in LEO, with a resolution of 1 meter and 0.3 meter respectively, and are equipped with Israeli origin TECSAR-1 X-Band SAR sensors for military surveillance purposes.

(2) **Cartosat Series Satellites.** Cartosat series of satellites are equipped with PAN, Multispectral and Hyperspectral cameras for remote sensing purpose. A total of 9 Cartosat satellites are currently operational.¹⁷ Among these, Cartosat 3 is considered most advanced as it is equipped with hyperspectral camera. The satellite was launched on 27 November 2019 and is known to carry world's highest resolution equipment with a capability of 0.25 m resolution over 16 Km swath. This satellite launch also carried 13 commercial nano satellites for U.S. under NewSpace India Limited (NSIL, commercial arm of ISRO).¹⁸

b. Communication Satellites

(1) **GSAT Series.** These satellites are being used for communication and navigational purposes. A number of these satellites are currently operational and flying in GEO. The latest satellite of the series, GSAT-24, was launched on 23 June 2022.¹⁹

(2) **INSAT Series.** These satellites are being used for communication, TV broadcasting and meteorological mapping. The

start-delivery-of-the-other-2-units-to-begin-russia-11698680437790.html.

¹⁴ "Missions Accomplished," ISRO, accessed March 18, 2024, <https://www.isro.gov.in/Mission.html>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ "PSLV-C48/RISAT-2BR1," ISRO, accessed March 24, 2024, https://www.isro.gov.in/mission_PSLV_C48_RISAT_2BR1.html.

¹⁷ "Cartosat-3," ISRO, accessed March 24, 2024, https://www.isro.gov.in/Cartosat_3.html.

¹⁸ "Cartosat 3, 3A, 3B (EOS 08)," *Gunter's Space Age*, accessed March 24, 2024, https://space.skyrocket.de/doc_sdat/cartosat-3.html.

¹⁹ "GSAT-24," ISRO, accessed March 24, 2024, https://www.isro.gov.in/GSAT_24.html.

latest satellite of the series, INSAT-3DS, was launched on 17 February 2024.²⁰

c. **Navigational Satellite Programme.** In order to develop its own Indian Region Navigation Satellite System, India has launched GPS aided Geo Augmented Navigation (GAGAN) programme. In this programme, a series of satellites have been launched into GSO, the latest of which was launched on 12 April 2018.²¹

d. **Electromagnetic Intelligence Satellite (EMISAT).** Launched on 01 April 2019, EMISAT is a reconnaissance satellite meant to measure electromagnetic spectrum.²² The satellite is a space-based electronic intelligence platform to locate RADARs using ELINT package “Kautilya”.

India’s exponentially growing satellite based ISR capabilities are concerning as same are detrimental to overall deterrence equation. India’s satellite based ISR capabilities may provide ability to India’s military for enhanced monitoring of Pakistan’s Armed Forces movements and strategic sites.²³ This ability adversely harms mutual vulnerability as it tends to favour India. In order to offset this edge, Pakistan may also pursue its own space programme for ISR purposes and in that may seek strategic partnerships to gain access to technology on similar lines as that of India’s Space Programme.

INDIA’S SPACE MILITARISATION – IMPACT ON ESCALATION LADDER

In April 2011, Rodney Jones published his view of Nuclear Escalation Ladder in South Asia.²⁴ Jones incorporated patterns of bilateral crises and conflicts between India and Pakistan, using “Context and Probability Estimate.” He created an 18-rung escalation ladder for Pakistan and a 19-rung ladder for India, reflecting their unique historical contexts. As per this exclusive escalation ladder, transforming threat bears significance. Therefore, same merits review of the Rodney Jones’ Escalation Ladder as discussed below:

Although Indian Army’s Cold Start Doctrine hasn’t been formally approved, Indian military has been modernising, training, and conducting joint exercises with air force and navy based on this concept. Pakistan views this seriously and has

²⁰ “GSLV-F14/INSAT-3DS mission,” ISRO, accessed March 24, 2024, https://www.isro.gov.in/GSLV-F14_INSAT-3DS_mission.html.

²¹ “IRNSS-1,” ISRO, accessed March 24, 2024, https://www.isro.gov.in/IRNSS_1I.html.

²² “PSLV-C45/EMISAT mission,” ISRO, accessed March 24, 2024, https://www.isro.gov.in/mission_PSLV_C45.html.

²³ Sher Bano, “Indian Militarization of Outer Space: Security Implications for Pakistan,” *Modern Diplomacy*, August 28, 2020, <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/08/29/indian-militarization-of-outer-space-security-implications-for-pakistan/>.

²⁴ Rodney Jones, “Nuclear Escalation Ladders in South Asia,” *Defense Technical Information Center*, April 2011, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/ADA555250>.

developed counter strategies to ensure full-spectrum deterrence.²⁵ Latest of these exercises was Exercise Baharat Shakti, a tri services exercise of fire power and maneuver in Pokhran, Rajasthan.²⁶ During the exercise, coordinated operations of Indian mechanised elements were conducted under the cover of Army Aviation, IAF and Air Defence Systems.

REVIEW OF RODNEY JONES' ESCALATION LADDER

- a. At time of formulation of Rodney Jones' Escalation ladder, following major developments, affecting strategic stability, had not been undertaken by both sides:

INDIA

- (1) Satellite based ISR capabilities had not been acquired for India's military.
- (2) India's deployment of BMD System as per Phase I in 2019 and ongoing research and testing of Phase II of BMD System.
- (3) Indian acquisition and operationalisation of S-400 ADS.

PAKISTAN

- (1) Testing and operational employment of TNWs in response to India's Cold Start Doctrine.²⁷
- (2) Testing and operational employment of MIRV capable Ababeel ballistic missile by Pakistan in response to India's BMD.

- b. These developments on both sides provide flexibility and incentive to both India and Pakistan during escalation of crisis. Therefore, escalation ladder as perceived by Rodney Jones in 2011, requires review. In light of interviews held with subject matter experts, it is perceived that both India and Pakistan crisis situation may follow new rungs in Rodney Jones' thematic phases of escalation ladder. Same is tabulated as follows:

²⁵ Zulfqar Khan, "Military Strategies of India and Pakistan: A Perspective," *Strategic Thought* 3 (2021): 126-146, <https://strategicthought.ndu.edu.pk/site/article/view/30>.

²⁶ "Bharat Shakti Exercise Tests Tri-Service Fire Power, Showcases Indigenous Defence Equipment," *The Hindu Bureau*, March 12, 2024, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/pm-modi-speech-in-bharat-shakti-exercise-in-pokhran-rajasthan-on-march-12-2024/article67942545.ece>.

²⁷ Ghazala Yasmin Jalil, "Tactical Nuclear Weapons and Deterrence Stability in South Asia: Pakistan's Stabilisation-Destabilisation Dilemma," *Strategic Studies* 34, no. 1 (2014): 47-73, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48527554>.

INDIA		PAKISTAN
All out counter-value strike	18	—
Strategic counter military strike	17	All out counter-value strike from land/ sea
Massive retaliation vs. TNW	16	Strategic counter-military strike
Demonstrate nuclear weapon use	15	Nuclear limited action vs. IBGs/ naval blockade
No Nuclear Use Threshold		
Conventional air campaign vs bases and airfields	14	Demonstrate nuclear weapon use
		No Nuclear Use Threshold
Initiate major war to cripple Pakistani forces	13	Covert nuclear employment at sea
Full nuclear alert (wpns assembly and transfer)	12	Full nuclear alert (wpns assembly and transfer)
Complete full mobilization, all services	11	Complete full mobilization, all services
No Major Conventional War Threshold		No Major Conventional War Threshold
Initiate full range of 'shallow' Cold Start options	10	TNW employment Blocking, limited escalation vs. Cold Start
Implement limited subset of Cold Start Options	9	Nuclear alert (transfer of TNWs)
Precautionary nuclear alert (no transfer)	8	Prepositioning to counter Cold Start options
Ultimatum for Cold Start Operations	7	Initiate ground and air force mobilization
		No Conventional War Threshold
Initiate ground and air force mobilization	6	Selective counter-military air strikes across LoC/ Int Border (response)
No Conventional War Threshold		
Selective counter-military air strikes across LoC/ Int Border	5	Sub conventional (covert) offensive campaign in heart of India
Sub conventional (covert) accelerated offensive campaign in mainland Pakistan	4	Resumption of (covert) offensive campaign in Kashmir
No "Hot" Warfare Threshold		No "Hot" Warfare Threshold
Selective areas of military mobilization	3	Selective areas of military mobilization
Military signalling (tests, exercises)	2	Military signalling (tests, exercises)
Pre-crisis manoeuvring, gestures, diplomacy	1	Pre-crisis manoeuvring, gestures, diplomacy
Disagreement – Pol-Mil Rivalry		

Table 1: Proposed New Rungs of Escalation Ladder²⁸

Summary of Proposed Changes

a. Changes – Pakistan facing India

- (1) Addition of new rung at Rung 6, i.e., selective counter-military air strikes across LoC/ International Border while remaining under No Conventional War Threshold.

²⁸ Interviews of of Prof. Dr. Hassan Askari Rizvi, Challenges for Strategic Stability, March 27, 2024, and Lt Gen (R) Nasir Khan Janjua, former National Security Advisor of Pakistan, Challenges for Strategic Stability, March 30, 2024.

- (2) In consonance with Full Spectrum Deterrence, transfer of Tactical Nuclear Weapons (TNWs) with nuclear alert at new Rung 9 while remaining under No Major Conventional War Threshold in order to deter Indian aggression in the form of Cold Start Doctrine.
- (3) Blocking of Cold Start operations by employment of TNWs duly catering threat axis at Rung 9 instead of Rodney Jones' perceived blockage with conventional force only.
- (4) Covert nuclear employment before the No Nuclear Threshold stage at Rung 13 instead of post nuclear threshold in order to cater for survivability in case India departs from its No-First-Use (NFU) commitment.

b. Changes – India facing Pakistan

- (1) Rung 4 modified as “Sub conventional (covert) accelerated offensive campaign in mainland Pakistan”.
- (2) Elimination of Rodney Jones' Rung 5 and Rung 6 as Indian Army has already been deployed after abrogation of IIOK's special status; therefore, offensive campaign against freedom fighters already been pursued. Instead of these rungs, a new response in the form of selective counter-military air strikes across LoC/ International Border at Rung 5 is perceived below No Conventional War Threshold as done earlier by India in February 2019.
- (3) Instead of proportional retaliation, massive retaliation is perceived in response to use of TNW at Rung 16.
- (4) Post No Nuclear Use Threshold, India may deviate from NFU under hyper nationalist political elite; therefore, instead of Rodney Jones' response/ reaction rungs it may be perceived as deliberate actions.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOUTH ASIAN STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

Indian employment of S-400 ADS in its overall air defence construct poses serious threat to strategic stability in South Asia. Cold Start Doctrine, which was subsided by Pakistan's development of short-range ballistic missiles becomes relevant with employment of S-400 ADS.²⁹ Given system's ability to intercept missile in battlefield just after launch, S-400 provides a constant shield to Indian forces under

²⁹ Brig Ahmed Saeed Minhas, “S-400 Ballistic Missile Defence System and South Asian Deterrence Stability Dynamics,” *HILAL*, November 2018, <https://www.hilal.gov.pk/eng-article/detail/MjA4Ng==.html>.

whose umbrella, counter force strikes may be denied, i.e. sense of security. Though countermeasures and responses as discussed above may subside the advantage of S-400; however, false sense of protection and security associated with its employment in parallel to BMD has potential to seriously disturb the strategic stability in region.

India's progress in its space program, which began with peaceful intentions, has transformed into a vital component of its military capabilities, thereby impacting strategic stability in South Asia. The country's advancements in satellite development signify a commitment to enhancing its offensive capabilities, supported by strategic partnerships with Russia, Israel, and the U.S. This pivot towards utilizing space technology for military purposes has the potential to disrupt strategic stability, heightening tensions and reshaping security dynamics across South Asia.

CONCLUSION

South Asia's strategic environment is becoming volatile with India's pursuit of advanced military technologies that in turn have horrendous impact on strategic stability in South Asia. India's acquisition of state-of-the-art air defence systems and enhanced satellite-based Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities significantly reshapes the regional security landscape to its advantage. Moreover, the ongoing militarisation contributes to heightened tensions between India and Pakistan, effectively adding new rungs to escalation ladder and undermining strategic stability. This evolving arms race complicates the security dynamics in the region, making it increasingly fragile.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to restore balance of power and strengthen strategic stability in South Asia against the implications caused by India's space militarisation, following is recommended:

a. Government Level Recommendations to Ensure Strategic Stability

Following recommendations may be considered to ensure strategic stability in South Asia:

- India should seriously consider Pakistan's proposal of Strategic Restraint Regime so as to ensure regional strategic stability.
- India should restrict military use of space-based assets to its own territory only. Space based ISR over Pakistan's territory must be ceased to restore mutual trust which has guaranteed peace and stability in the region earlier.
- India must curtail its ambition of adding BMD layers. Same may lead to arms race for similar nature systems and/ or counter measures.
- Pakistan may pursue a peaceful space program to reap benefit from space medium, i.e. global common.

- Pakistan may pursue the following to offset strategic threats posed by India's space militarisation:
 - (a) Pakistan must pursue indigenous development of unmanned ISR platforms for border surveillance to avoid being surprised in case of swift mobilisation of India's forces.
 - (b) Pakistan must develop cost effective and robust anti-satellite technologies such as directed energy and soft kill weapons.
- Pakistan's missile programme may be improved as per niche technologies to cater for evading BMD shields for their neutralization.

EFFICACY OF ARMS CONTROL IN SOUTH ASIA: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

Lt Cdr Shahzad Khalid PN*

ABSTRACT

The South Asian region, marked by longstanding rivalry between nuclear-armed neighbours India and Pakistan, presents challenging environment for arms control. The significance of arms control is highlighted in context of preventing conflict escalation between two nuclear-armed neighbours. The study further explores stability-instability paradox, which complicates efforts at arms control by maintaining a precarious balance where risk of limited conflict remains high despite strategic stability. Key challenges to arms control are also identified such as impact of Hindutva Ideology, the action-reaction dilemma, assured second-strike capability, and India's rejection of Strategic Restraint Regime (SRR). These factors are critically analysed to understand how they exacerbate tensions and hinder arms control efforts. The article also examines South Asian nuclear deterrence and nuclear postures of India and Pakistan, outlining how each country's military doctrines and strategic objectives contribute to a fragile deterrence landscape. In the end, article offers a detailed assessment of prospects of arms control between Pakistan and India, proposing the path forward for undertaking confidence building measures, diplomatic engagement and third party mediation for ensuring arms control in South Asia.

Key Words: Stability-Instability Paradox, Strategic Restraint Regime, Arms Control, Nuclear Posture.

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INTRODUCTION

South Asia is characterised by a complex history of geopolitical tensions, conflicts and security challenges. The region's stability is profoundly affected by longstanding disputes between two nuclear-armed states, Pakistan and India. Since their independence, these nations have engaged in numerous conflicts and have amassed substantial military capabilities including proliferating nuclear arsenals. Indo-Pak territorial issues, particularly issue of Jammu and Kashmir, have strained relations leading to enduring rivalries between both nations. The decision to develop nuclear deterrence was influenced by the broader global context. In South Asia, however, nuclear weapons have acted as a catalyst for a perilous arms race, with significant implications for regional stability.

During last two decades, India has undertaken extensive efforts to modernise its military forces and enhance its missile technology.¹ This modernisation, coupled with advancements in precision strike capabilities, has heightened tensions between India and Pakistan. Competitive enhancement in military technology risks plunging both nations into a dangerous arms race with profound implications for regional stability. The growing disparity between offensive and defensive capabilities further strains relations, potentially leading to increased risk of conflict. Driven by its two front threat perception against China and Pakistan, India has undertaken assertive force modernisation, prompting Pakistan to lower nuclear threshold to deter India's aggression.

SIGNIFICANCE OF ARMS CONTROL

Arms control agreements focus on increasing transparency in military capabilities to prevent misinterpretation or miscalculation. Arms control is more effective when offensive and defensive capabilities are easily distinguishable. It works best when offensive weapons pose a threat to both sides, encouraging both to enhance security. Thomas Schelling, a key economist and strategist during the Cold War, explained arms control by highlighting links between military strategy, diplomacy and conflict prevention.² Arms control aims to avoid war, reduce costs and minimise conflict eruption. It fosters stability by enabling governments to predict each other's actions, making strategic planning more reliable. In 'Strategy and Arms Control', Schelling defines arms control as an extension of military strategy that recognises mutual interests in avoiding unwanted wars, minimising costs of arms competition and reducing scope of conflict.³

¹ Hans M. Kristensen, Matt Korda, Eliana Johns, Mackenzie Knight, "Indian nuclear weapons, 2024," *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, 05 Sep 2024, <https://thebulletin.org/premium/2024-09/indian-nuclear-weapons-2024/>.

² Thomas C. Schelling, "Future of Arms Control," *Operations Research* 9, no. 7 (1961): 722-731.

³ Thomas Shelling, *Strategy and Arms Control*, Jan 01, 1985, Elsevier Science Ltd.

According to SIPRI database, as of January 2023, Pakistan has 170 while India has 164 nuclear weapons.⁴ Brig (R) Feroz Hasan Khan, former Director of Arms Control and Disarmament Affairs (ACDA) Branch at Strategic Plans Division (SPD), views that arms control concept is actually linked with non-proliferation. It was initially materialised during Cold War between the U.S. and USSR in nuclear domain to bring global stability and to avert nuclear war or any nuclear attack like Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Arms control proved to be effective if offensive and defensive capabilities are clearly identified.⁵ During an interview, Mr. Husham Ahmed, Counsellor of Permanent Mission of Pakistan to UN in Geneva, mentioned that arms control can bring balance of power between two states and subsequently, national resources can be reallocated for some other developmental projects. Negotiating and implementing arms control can also foster trust between states.⁶

STABILITY – INSTABILITY PARADOX

Strategic stability is crucial for nuclear-armed states like Pakistan and India, balancing international status quo and preventing major wars. This concept, originating from the Cold War arms race between the U.S. and Soviet Union, suggests that while nuclear weapons can prevent large-scale wars, they may increase the likelihood of smaller conflicts. The stability-instability paradox occurs when nuclear stability coexists with sub-strategic volatility, as is evident in the Indo-Pak scenario. Nuclear optimists, such as Kenneth Waltz, argue that nuclear weapons promote caution and stability, citing the Cold War's lack of nuclear conflict between the U.S. and Soviet Union.⁷ They believe that same applies to India and Pakistan, as their conflicts have avoided full scale escalation primarily due to threat of nuclear weapons. However, conflicts such as the 1999 Kargil War, the 2001-2002 Twin Crisis, the 2008 Mumbai attacks, and Pulwama-Balakot crisis have gradually intensified mistrust and communication gap between Islamabad and New Delhi.⁸ These events highlight the stability-instability paradox, where nuclear deterrence prevents full-scale war but does not eliminate sub-strategic instability. Thus, risks of inadvertent escalation of any Indo-Pak crisis persist, underscoring need for careful conflict management between both nuclear armed neighbors.

CHALLENGES TO ARMS CONTROL BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND INDIA

Hindutva Ideology. Hindutva, an ideology that highlights superiority of Hindu culture and religion, has been a defining factor in Indian politics, especially under

⁴ SIPRI Report 2023: 294 & 300.

⁵ Author's interview with Brig (R) Feroz Hassan, Ex Dir ACD at SPD, on March 19, 2023.

⁶ Author's interview with Husham Ahmed, Counsellor Permanent Mission of Pakistan to UN in Geneva on March 18, 2024.

⁷ Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May be Better," *The Adelphi Papers* 21, no. 171 (1981), <https://thebulletin.org/premium/2024-09/indian-nuclear-weapons-2024/>.

⁸ Rizwana Abbasi and Usman Muhammad Saeed Uzzaman, *Changing Patterns of Warfare Between India and Pakistan: Navigating the Impact of New and Disruptive Technologies* (New York: Routledge, 2023), 2.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) since 2014.⁹ Hindutva ideology frequently highlights historical accounts that minimise contributions of other religious and cultural groups, particularly Muslims, and present India as ancestral home of Hindus. India's position on the Kashmir dispute is heavily influenced by the Hindutva ideology. With a focus on nationalism and maintaining territorial integrity, the BJP government has adopted a more assertive stance towards Kashmir, as evidenced by 2019 repeal of Article 370 and 35-A, which gave the area exceptional autonomy. BJP government's propagation of Hindutva ideology has potential to impact diplomatic discussions and interactions between Pakistan and India. It might result in increased rhetoric, diplomatic impasses, and mistrust between the two nations, which would make it difficult to have meaningful conversations and work together on a range of topics, such as economic relations and regional security.

Action - Reaction Dilemma. Growing gap between conventional and nuclear capabilities is one of the main drivers of the arms race in the region. Pakistan faces more difficulties as a secondary power keeping up with investments required augmenting its conventional capabilities as opposed to growing its nuclear capabilities. These developments could intensify the nuclear and missile arms race between India and Pakistan.¹⁰

Assured Second-Strike Capability. Development of sea-based assured second-strike capability by India can create strategic instability in South Asia. In order to have strategic stability between India and Pakistan, the first step is building a credible capability of inflicting significant damage to the opponent. This has to be reinforced with an adequate second-strike capability. There is apparently a general consensus that for assured second-strike capability, SSBNs are essential. However, Pakistan does not possess such capability as of today. SSBNs favour their possessor state due to high mobility and stealth, making them an ideal launching platform. Considering these factors, India believes that possessing SSBNs is essential to bolster its nuclear deterrent capability.¹¹

Rejection of Strategic Restraint Regime (SRR) by India. SRR was offered by Pakistan to India in 1998 to ensure peace and stability in the region. The proposal comprises three main points: reduction in Armed Forces, stable deterrence and peaceful resolving of disputes.¹² It focused on measures for conventional balance and restraint from application of nuclear weapons in case of any conflict like non-deployment or acquisition of Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD), and nuclear weapons on

⁹ Asma Shakir Khawaja, *Shaking Hands with Clenched Fists* (Islamabad: National Defence University, 2018).

¹⁰ Dr Zafar Jaspal, "India-Pakistan: At the Cusp of a Destabilizing Missile Race," *We News*, November 29, 2023.

¹¹ Sufian Ullah, "India's Naval Nuclearization: Repercussions for Crisis Stability," *South Asian Voices*, June 27, 2018, <https://southasianvoices.org/indias-naval-nuclearization-repercussions-stability/>.

¹² Dr. Muhammad Khan, Ahmed Khan and Dr. Syed Turab Hyder, "Strategic Restraint Regime in South Asia," *Margalla Papers* 22, no. 1 (2018): 82.

low alert/ de-mated posture. All contours necessary for regional stability and good bilateral relations have been encapsulated in SRR. However, India had been reluctant in accepting such proposal.¹³

SOUTH ASIAN NUCLEAR DETERRENCE

When India and Pakistan became declared nuclear states in May 1998, the possibility of all-out war reduced.¹⁴ However, conflict over numerous disputes still persists.¹⁵ The Kargil Crisis remained confined to Kashmir and neither the conflict spilled across international border nor escalated to the nuclear threshold. According to Dr. Zulfiqar Khan and Dr. Rizwana Abbasi, there are two different schools of thought about Kargil.¹⁶ First group believes that Kargil would have occurred irrespective of nuclearisation of South Asia. Another group believes that in order to force India for dialogue process on Kashmir, nuclear deterrence was used. Moreover, Kargil war also helped Indians to believe that potential of conventional war/ low intensity conflicts exists under nuclear overhang.

NUCLEAR POSTURES – INDIA AND PAKISTAN

India started development of its nuclear arsenal primarily to achieve stature among world's leading countries.¹⁷ India's first ever draft nuclear doctrine was crafted in 1999. However, India announced its revised nuclear doctrine in 2003. No First Use (NFU) is important part of Indian nuclear doctrine, which states that India will not use nuclear weapons first in case of conflict. Debate on Indian nuclear doctrine started soon after the Pokhran II tests when one of the scientists revealed that tests had fizzled out with a yield much lower than what was claimed.

Pakistan has not published its nuclear doctrine and has kept ambiguity in its nuclear posture. Pakistan supports multilateralism and continues to play a key role in promoting international peace and security. Pakistan believes that maintaining peace and stability requires a strong, non-discriminatory international system founded on laws. A strong non-proliferation system is a key component of rules-based order. Pakistan supports nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament for benefit of all humanity. According to Lt Gen (R) Khalid Kidwai, (former DG of SPD), Pakistan might resort to use nuclear weapons under four conditions:

¹³ Sher Bano, Pakistan's Proposal for SRR: Commitment Towards Non-Proliferation, SVI, 29 Oct, 2021, <https://thesvi.org/pakistan-proposal-for-strategic-restraint-regime-commitment-towards-non-proliferation/>.

¹⁴ Bharat Karnad, "South Asia: The Irrelevance of Classical Nuclear Deterrence Theory," *India Review*, no. 2, 2005: 89-106.

¹⁵ Iram Khalid, "Management of Pakistan India Conflicts: An Application of Crisis Decision-Making," *NDU Journal*, 2013, 35-37.

¹⁶ Zulfiqar Khan and Rizwana Abbasi, "Regional-Centric Deterrence: Reassessing Its Efficacy for South Asia," *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* 25, no. 4, (2013).

¹⁷ Feroz Hassan, "Going Tactical: Pakistan's Nuclear Posture and Implications for Stability," *Proliferation Papers*, no 53 (Sept 2013),

<https://inis.iaea.org/search/searchsinglerecord.aspx?recordsFor=SingleRecord&RN=48018625>.

- a. If India attacks Pakistan and captures large part of territory,
- b. If India destroys large part of Pakistan's land and air forces,
- c. If India pursues economic strangulation of Pakistan and
- d. Finally, if India pushes Pakistan into political destabilisation or creates large scale internal insurrection.¹⁸

The first and most visible movement in declaratory policy has been from credible minimum deterrence (CMD) to so-called full-spectrum deterrence (FSD). As Lt Gen (R) Khalid Kidwai has elaborated, this new conception of deterrence involves possessing "full spectrum of nuclear weapons in all three categories—strategic, operational and tactical with full range coverage of the large Indian landmass and its outlying territories." It aims to bring "every Indian target into Pakistan's striking range" and as such requires "appropriate weapons yield coverage and the numbers to deter the adversary's pronounced policy of massive retaliation."¹⁹

PROSPECTS OF ARMS CONTROL BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND INDIA

India's resistance to nuclear agreements with Pakistan stems from its desire to assert regional dominance and increase its influence. India's focus on countering China's growing influence, particularly in the Indian Ocean Region through initiatives like Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), further complicates potential for arms control with Pakistan. Historical tensions, such as the Kashmir conflict and mutual distrust also hinder prospects for meaningful arms control measures. During an interview, Brig (R) Feroz Hasan Khan highlighted evolving concept of arms control requirement by nations, post-Cold War era:²⁰

- a. To maintain a balance of power in region or at global level.
- b. Once a weaker state feels of being overthrown by a powerful nation and is unable to counter its hegemony.
- c. Offset offence-defence balance.

Way Forward

Keeping in view various challenges as discussed above, some of tangible steps can be initiated by Pakistani authorities to foster cooperation.

¹⁸ "Economic Threat May Push Pakistan to Go Nuclear," *Asia Times*, February 06, 2002, <https://www.atimes.com/ind-pak>.

¹⁹ Lt Gen (R) Khalid Kidwai, Keynote address, Seventh IISS-CISS Workshop on South Asian Strategic Stability: Deterrence, Nuclear Weapons and Arms Control, London, February 06, 2020, <https://ciiss.org.pk/7th-ciiss-iiss-workshop-on-south-asian-strategic-stability-deterrence-nuclear-weapons-and-arms-control/>.

²⁰ Author's interview with Brig (R) Feroz Hassan, Ex Dir ACD at SPD, on 19 March 2023.

Track 1.5/ 2 Diplomacy. Track-Two diplomacy offers an opportunity to discuss and propose solutions to bilateral disputes and promote conflict management. Among various dialogues, Ottawa Dialogue focused primarily on nuclear issues and in addition proposed many CBMs in its reports. So, Track 1.5 / 2 Diplomacy efforts can be looked upon by Islamabad and New Delhi to enhance mutual trust. Enhancement of trust would help in implementation of existing CBMs by India in true spirit and could also provide opportunity to have new CBMs/ Arms Control measures.

Collaboration between Experts on Strategic Matters. Engagement between experts on strategic matters on both sides could be a critical step in enhancing understanding of each other's imperatives and rationales for nuclear postures. It may also pave way to promote broader talks for executing existing agreements and developing new NCBM avenues. A dedicated hotline can be established between heads of both organisations like Foreign Secretaries, DGMOs and DGs PMSA & ICG, which can be utilised to prevent any action being misinterpreted as hostile.

Reinitiate Composite Dialogues Process. Composite Dialogue Process was initiated in 2003 and then came to a halt due to unfortunate incidents like Mumbai attacks and Samjhota Express. Said process may be proposed again to India and options of mutual interest may be looked upon.

Third-Party Mediation. Indus Water Treaty (IWT), which was signed in 1960 for water management between both countries, represents successful continuation of Indo-Pak collaborative understanding regarding a shared issue. Despite several wars and low intensity conflicts, IWT has not been violated by any nation as of writing of this paper. A prime reason is the third-party guarantor, which is World Bank (an international body). Similarly, an international body like CD/ IAEA or a new mutual mediator can be approached to have new CBMs/ Arms Control measures.

Ratification of CTBT. Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) was adopted by UNGA on 10 September 1996 to ban any nuclear weapon test explosion. It contributes towards nuclear non-proliferation to enhance international peace. The treaty is not enforced yet due to pending ratification of few major countries which include Pakistan and India as well. Both countries may consider simultaneously ratifying CTBT to promote peace and security. This option coincides with Pakistan's principled stance on CTBT. But any development in this regard is unlikely from Indian side due to its great power ambitions. Pakistan may look for this small step to ratify this treaty as its policy is against arms race and possesses complete requisite capability in nuclear domain to retaliate in case of any requirement. Ratification by Pakistan would portray a positive signal to world regarding its commitment towards peace and non-proliferation efforts. Nevertheless, for broader objective of strategic stability, any such ratification should be done simultaneously.

Strategic Restraint Regime (SRR). SRR covers all contours which can bring

regional stability. However, owing to its great power and global ambitions, India does not find much value in engaging with Pakistan and hence continues to overlook any proposal aimed at ensuring strategic stability between the two states. Resultantly, a pragmatic approach could be breaking down SRR elements into small steps and then re-propose to India for regional stability and enhancing mutual trust. Keeping in view its regional hegemonic ambitions, following steps may be opted:

- a. Nuclear weapons particularly designed/ deployed for Pakistan may be kept on low alert status/ de-mated.
- b. Refrain building up military setups on each other's land borders.
- c. No further development/ installation of BMDs.
- d. Resolving Sir Creeks dispute on priority.

Retiring Old Missiles. Both Pakistan and India possess old missiles such as Hatf-I and Prithvi-I in their nuclear arsenal, respectively. The running cost of maintaining such old missiles may be having financial burden. Accordingly, both may assess/ identify strategic utility of old nuclear capable missiles as new advanced missiles with longer ranges have been developed by both countries. Upon identifying their strategic utility, old missiles can be obsoleted from their nuclear inventory. Such step can be unilateral or bilateral depending upon missiles' application. Pakistan can also initiate this process and declare the retirement of old missiles as it could reflect positive image of Pakistan in promoting arms control and even in disarmament as well, which is currently being discussed globally at Conference on Disarmament (CD).

CONCLUSION

India and Pakistan have a long history of conflict, marked by numerous wars and military standoffs. Such incidents, coupled with South Asia's ongoing arms race, have heightened concerns about potential future conflicts. India's military modernisation has exacerbated Pakistan's security dilemma, pushing it to increase reliance on nuclear weapons and lower nuclear threshold. This is further complicated by India's counterforce posture and perceived incentive for a first nuclear strike, driven by advances in technology and precision weaponry. Political rivalry, particularly fueled by BJP's Hindutva stance, has diminished prospects for arms control, with peace talks often derailed by terrorist activities. Both nations have taken different approaches to address the imbalance in conventional and nuclear capabilities; however, their respective goal of deterrence have led to parallel arms races and, therefore, prospects of arms control/ effective CBMs between both nations are bleak. However, through bilateral and multilateral engagements for undertaking confidence building measures, progress can be achieved to ensure establishment of arms control agreements between Pakistan and India.

**GLOBAL NORTH VS GLOBAL SOUTH IN THE EVOLVING WORLD ORDER:
POLICY OPTIONS FOR PAKISTAN IN CONTEXT OF EU, NATO, BRICS & SCO
DYNAMICS**

Lt Cdr Abdul Rehman PN*

ABSTRACT

Pakistan's significant geostrategic location makes it a focal point for global economic interests, with growing contestation between China and the U.S. having a direct impact on its economic and security environment. Pakistan's geoeconomic shift is influenced by Afghanistan situation, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Pakistan-India relations, relations between Pakistan and China, and overarching framework of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Pakistan is also affected by great power competition due to its geopolitical significance, and its relations with key countries, and blocs, such as BRICS, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), European Union (EU), and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) are inextricably linked to regional security dynamics. Pakistan needs a multifaceted strategy to identify its economic interests including trade, investment, and connectivity and exploring new markets. Engaging more constructively in the region and leveraging its strategic position through CPEC and Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program (CAREC) while addressing traditional security concerns can provide Pakistan with much needed economic impetus.

Keywords: Global North, Global South, Pakistan, EU, NATO, SCO, BRICS, CAREC.

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INTRODUCTION

Cycle of rise and fall among the great powers is one of the major driving forces of transition in the global system. During 20th century, overall world order transformed from multi-polarity to bipolarity and in the end to unipolar construction.¹ Since the dawn of 21st century, the U.S.-led hegemonic world system has been consistently challenged by the rising powers that are dissatisfied and striving for the transition of world order to multipolar or multi-centric international system. China challenges U.S. hegemony and the international order of liberal internationalism led by it and wants to move along the countries of global south.² Amid this confrontational situation, for a developing state like Pakistan, with highly significant geostrategic position, these emerging dynamics can certainly have substantial implications.

The concept of "Global South" is becoming more closely associated with the individual or collective endeavours of developing nations to actively influence international outcomes and their endeavours for a justified portion of global decision-making processes. Nations in the Global South have observed a noticeable inconsistency in how Global North approaches conflict management like Israel-Gaza and Russia-Ukraine. In contrast to their reluctance to respond to Israel's actions in Gaza, Northern states have vehemently condemned Russia's aggression in Ukraine and exerted immense pressure on others to do the same. The Global North promotes primacy of West in international affairs, which can sometimes position other countries in a less favourable light, particularly when their progress impacts the interests of the Global North.

Establishment of Global South institutions, such as BRICS and SCO, is indicative of substantial changes in strategies of numerous countries in region to expand their international influence. The ascent of these institutions presents substantial obstacles for Global North's institutions, such as the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Pakistan has maintained a security-oriented partnership with the U.S. since its creation, guided by a security-oriented foreign policy that served interests of both Cold War and Global War on Terror. However, over the past decade, relations between Pakistan and the U.S. have gradually deteriorated, primarily due to strengthening U.S.-India relations and their opposition to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Despite not being part of any great power competition and pursuing 'No Camp Politics', Pakistan finds itself faced with economic fragility endangering its national security.³ Therefore, Pakistan is required

¹ Farooq Hassan, Muhammad Khan Khan, and Sidra Khan, "The 21st Century World Order and Pakistan," *Journal of Contemporary Studies* 9, no. 2 (2020): 19-41, <https://doi.org/10.54690/jcs.v9i1.41>.

² Muhammad Ali Ehsan, "Geopolitical Uncertainties and the Rising Global South," *The Express Tribune*, February 18, 2024, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2456768/geopolitical-uncertainties-and-the-rising-global-south>.

³ Dr Shabana Fayyaz, "Pakistan's National Security Policy (2022) – Genesis and Analysis," *Strategic Thought* 5, no. 1 (December 31, 2023): 69–80. <https://strategicthought.ndu.edu.pk/site/article/view/88>

to maintain its significance for both blocs to remain relevant in rapidly transforming world.

PAKISTAN'S INTERESTS AND WORLD INSTITUTIONS (EU/ NATO/ SCO/ BRICS)

European Union (EU)

Formal interaction between Pakistan and EU established in 1960s. Specific events including 1998 nuclear tests, 1999 Kargil crisis and military takeover altered the course of bilateral relations.⁴ Consequently, EU–Pakistan relations remained peripheral to EU's Asia policy until 11 September 2001. Subsequent events of 9/11, which led to convergence of western interests and recognition of Pakistan's role in GWOT motivated the EU to invest in Pakistan's development. Concurrently, this provided Pakistan with a chance to strengthen its ties with EU while also presenting an opportunity to regain the favour of the U.S. following an extended period of strained relations between the two countries.

On 22 April 2004, the European Parliament ratified the Third Generation Agreement which was subsequently signed.⁵ Agreement granted Pakistan special status on the grounds that it was acknowledged as a frontline state in the global war against terrorism. EU subsequently included Pakistan into the group of nations eligible for EU's Generalised System of Preferences (GSP), which was upgraded to GSP Plus in 2019 and renewed in October 2023. It enabled duty-free entry of Pakistani goods into European market. European market serves as the primary export destination for Pakistan, receiving 29.8% of the nation's total exports. On contrary, Pakistan derived its third-largest imports from EU in 2023, amounting to \$5.3 billion.⁶

⁴ Sanam Noor, "Pakistan-EU Relations," *Pakistan Horizon* 61, no. 3 (2008): 19-28.

⁵ Ghulam Ali, ed., *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: Contemporary Developments and Dynamics* (London: Routledge, 2023).

⁶ "Pakistan's Trade with the EU & Its Member States," *Pakistan Business Council*, accessed January 15, 2024, <https://www.pbc.org.pk/research/pakistans-trade-with-the-eu-and-its-member-states-october-2023/>.

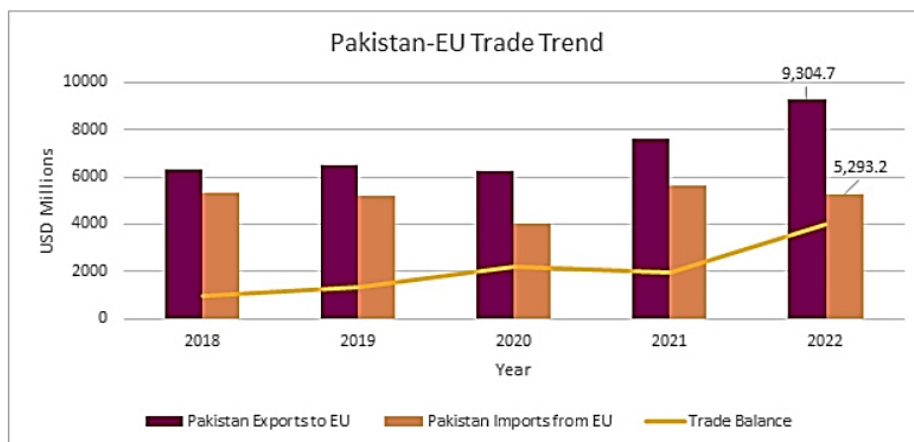


Figure 1: Pakistan's Trade with the EU & its Member States ⁷

Despite the fact that EU-Pak relations do not advocate for a central authority, it is not difficult to analyse that EU has a relatively stronger bargaining position over Pakistan. EU GSP+ serves as a special incentive for Pakistan granting duty free access or preferential tariffs on nearly 66% of tariff lines. Since granting of GSP+ status from 2014 to 2022, Pakistan's exports to EU increased by 108% whereas imports from EU increased by 65% increasing total trade volume from EUR 8.3 billion in 2013 to EUR 14.85 billion. Relations between EU and Pakistan are marked by persuasion, offering of rewards and a degree of intimidation. Practical manifestation of same was evident through inclusion of Pakistan in FATF "Grey List". Strategic relations between two are influenced by both FATF and the EU's Generalised System of Preferences-Plus (GSP+), which both involve cross-pollination.⁸

NATO

Established in 1949, the NATO is a political and military intergovernmental alliance tasked with implementing North Atlantic Treaty, which was signed after the conclusion of World War II. "The most important and enduring purpose of NATO is to guarantee the freedom and security of all its member states by political and military means," states Article 5 of the Washington Treaty.⁹

Following 9/11 incidents, Pakistan made the decision to align itself with the U.S. in Global War on Terror. The U.S. subsequently designated Pakistan as a Major Non-NATO Ally (MNNA). The resumption of bilateral relations resulted in Pakistan receiving economic and military assistance from the U.S. Designation of MNNA signifies the profound regard the U.S. has for incentivised relationship it maintains with Pakistan.

⁷ PBC, "Pakistan's Trade with the EU & Its Member States."

⁸ Ghulam Ali, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy*.

⁹ NATO, "The North Atlantic Treaty," accessed March 13, 2024, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm.

Although granted military and economic advantages, MNNA status does not impose any obligations regarding security on the designated nation.¹⁰ As per USAID data, the U.S. provided Pakistan with military and economic assistance of US\$ 33Bn for GWOT.¹¹ MNNAs are qualified to receive \$3 million annually under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 for counterterrorism 'research and development projects.'¹² The Arms Export Control Act permits MNNAs to obtain financing for the procurement of supplies and equipment. In response, Pakistan facilitated the passage of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) supplies through the country, thus extending support to the force that concluded its operations in Afghanistan in 2014.¹³ In a similar fashion, Pakistan facilitated resupply for Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan through establishment of air and ground communication routes.

As per conceptual documents of NATO, Russia and China were designated as primary threats.¹⁴ NATO under leadership of the U.S. has continued its policy of expanding anti-Russian military coalition since the onset of Ukrainian crisis. Annexation of land and sea borders between North Atlantic Alliance and Russia by Sweden and Finland will substantially broaden the alliance's perimeter with Russia. This development is anticipated to exacerbate regional instability and heighten tensions. 'Russia, terrorism, cyber-attacks, technology, the rise of China, and climate change' are identified as the primary threats to alliance in accordance with the NATO 2030: United for a New Era programme.¹⁵

There have been efforts in recent times to revoke Pakistan's Major Non-NATO Ally (MNNA) status. In January 2021, Republican Congressman Andy Biggs of the 5th Congressional District of Arizona introduced a resolution to revoke Pakistan's MNNA status in the House of Representatives.¹⁶ Like Pak-EU relations, Pakistan-NATO relations are also broadly based upon need to enhance relations with the U.S. Apart from NATO summit declaration, the U.S. has identified China as a main threat in Indo-Pacific strategy and U.S. Security Strategy 2022.¹⁷ With financial and military assistance associated with MNNA status, threat of economic coercion constrains Pakistan's options to embark upon a completely independent course of action.

¹⁰ Adrienne Cuffley, "What Would It Mean for Pakistan to Lose Major Non-NATO Ally Status?" *Stimson South Asian Voices*, November 23, 2021, <https://www.stimson.org/2021/what-would-it-mean-for-pakistan-to-lose-major-non-nato-ally-status/>.

¹¹ Synergia Foundation, "NATO vs SCO: A New Multipolar Order," Synergia Foundation, June 21, 2019, <https://www.synergiafoundation.org/insights/analyses-assessments/nato-vs-sco-new-multipolar-order>.

¹² Cuffley, "What Would It Mean for Pakistan to Lose Major Non-NATO Ally Status?"

¹³ NATO, "Relations with Pakistan," accessed March 7, 2024, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50071.htm.

¹⁴ Chels Michta, "NATO Wakes up to the Chinese Threat," *Center for European Policy Analysis*, 25 July 2024, <https://cepa.org/article/nato-wakes-up-to-the-chinese-threat/>.

¹⁵ Phelan Chatterjee, "How Sweden and Finland Went from Neutral to Nato," *BBC News*, May 10, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-61397478>.

¹⁶ Cuffley, "What Would It Mean for Pakistan to Lose Major Non-NATO Ally Status?"

¹⁷ "Indo-Pacific Strategy," *U.S. Department of State*, February 2022, <https://www.state.gov/indo-pacific-strategy/>.

Pakistan, due to its strategic partnership with China that encompasses both security and economic aspects, finds it difficult to navigate its relations with NATO. There exists a history of the U.S. imposing sanctions on Pakistan in past so repetition of the same may be a likely outcome of getting closer to China. Any tilt towards Chinese bloc may lead to sanctions and revoking of MNNA status having severe implications for Pakistan with respect to its economic and security stability.

SCO & CAREC

China founded SCO with Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan as members in 1996. Thereafter, India, Pakistan and Iran were also included as members in 2017. SCO membership represents 23% of World's GDP and 41% of world population.¹⁸ The organisation primarily deals with fields of security, military affairs, economics and culture. CPEC serves as a complementary initiative to the SCO's vision of fostering economic integration and connectivity within the region.¹⁹ Pakistan offers Central Asia and Eurasia the shortest land route to sea via its highways and harbours.²⁰ Although, there are reservations in Global North regarding SCO becoming a counterbalance to NATO; however, allegations have been discarded by SCO members negating any chances of military outlook of SCO. Inclusion of India and Pakistan, two U.S. allies, indicates same as organisation only addresses issues like separatism, terrorism and extremism.²¹

SCO provides unique opportunity for Pakistan to engage with India to resolve long-term disputes including Kashmir issue vis-à-vis preventing any conflict. Furthermore, it also provides opportunity for both countries to improve their relations under influence of China and Russia as major SCO partners. Owing to Indian reservations on CPEC and CASA-1000, Pakistan can address reservations by effectively engaging with India. Pakistan also possesses unique ability to unite Energy Producing Nations (Kazakhstan, Russia, Iran, and Uzbekistan) with energy consuming nations (China, Pakistan, and India).

Apart from that, SCO provides Pakistan an opportunity to enhance its cooperative ties with Russia. Recently, there have been convergences between two nations on geopolitical and geo-economic fronts. In 2015, a 1100-kilometer "Pakistan Stream gas project," also referred to as a "North-South gas pipeline," was signed between Pakistan and Russia, and later a revised deal was signed in 2020 increasing

¹⁸ Ambassador Babar Amin, "The Expanding Role of SCO: Strengthening Pakistan's Regional Integration," *Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad*, June 23, 2023, <https://issi.org.pk/the-expanding-role-of-sco-strengthening-pakistans-regional-integration/>.

¹⁹ Hameed Ullah Khan, Muhammad Farooq Shah, and Muhammad Ilyas Khan, "Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and Afghanistan: Interests and Limitations," *Margalla Papers* 27, no. 1 (June 30, 2023): 82–95, <https://doi.org/10.54690/margallapapers.27.1.153>.

²⁰ Babar Amin, "The Expanding Role of SCO."

²¹ Mehran Khan and Ferdos Jamal, "Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Opportunities for Pakistan," *Pakistan Social Sciences Review* 8, no. 1 (February 12, 2024): 282–94, [https://doi.org/10.35484/pssr.2024\(8-1\)26](https://doi.org/10.35484/pssr.2024(8-1)26).

Pakistan's shares to 74 percent.²² However, initiative has been delayed as a result of U.S. sanctions against the Russian executor, RT Global. Direct shipping service initiated in Oct 2023 has allowed Pakistani exports to reach Russia within 19-25 Days which used to take 50 days through a third country. Pakistan and India can reduce tensions through SCO membership, and their long-standing disputes may be resolved with the assistance of their SCO colleagues.

In June 2018, 18th SCO summit was convened in Qingdao, China, where heads of state of Pakistan and India converged to deliberate on significant matters, including status of peace in Afghanistan. Prior to this, in April 2018, foreign ministers of two countries convened at Foreign Ministers' Meeting of the SCO. September 2018 witnessed a collaborative military exercise overseen by the SCO with objective of dismantling terrorist networks. This marked inaugural military exercise in which both India and Pakistan took part. Despite operating under the auspices of the United Nations Peacekeeping Forces (UNPF), the combatants of both nations participated in a joint counter-terrorism exercise for the very first time.²³ As Pakistan is a close partner of China, and India is major importer of Russian military assets, it is probable that the influence of China and Russia on these two nations can contribute to the improvement of their mutual relations.

Owing to its strategic location, Pakistan has become an active participant in Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC). Since joining CAREC Program in 2010, Pakistan has been actively looking for new ways to overcome barriers to growth and to place Central Asia at heart of trade and commerce in increasingly integrated global markets. Pakistan's road network is connected to CAREC Corridor 5, which opens a vital trading link between landlocked Central Asian nations and country's warm water ports of Karachi and Gwadar on the Arabian Sea.²⁴

BRICS

An informal alliance of developing economies, BRICS is primarily concerned with political collaboration, economic progress, and economic cooperation.²⁵ It is an acronym representing founding/core member nations of organisation, which are South Africa, Brazil, Russia, India, and China. The constituent states of BRICS account for 41.25% of global population. Its proportion of global GDP was 32% as of 2022, and this figure is projected to increase to 40% by 2040.²⁶ The sole formal institution of

²² Adeela Ahmed, "The Contours of Pakistan's Relations with Russia," in Ghulam Ali, ed., *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: Contemporary Developments and Dynamics* (New York: Routledge, 2023).

²³ Amin, "The Expanding Role of SCO."

²⁴ "CAREC, "Pakistan," accessed on March 20, 2024, https://www.carecprogram.org/?page_id=9.

²⁵ Lucas Resende Carvalho, "BRICS: The Global South Challenging the Status Quo," *Global & European Dynamics*, September 21, 2023, <https://globaleurope.eu/globalization/brics-the-global-south-challenging-the-status-quo/>.

²⁶ Dr Andrew G. Ross, "Will BRICS Expansion Finally End Western Economic and Geopolitical Dominance?," *Geopolitical Monitor*, January 26, 2024, <https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/will-brics-expansion-finally-end-western-economic-and-geopolitical-dominance/>.

BRICS, New Development Bank (NDB), was founded in 2014 following agreement signature at 6th BRICS Summit. Furthermore, NDB approved its first non-USD loans denominated in Euro, Chinese Yuan, South African Rand, and Swiss Franc in 2019, which represents a significant milestone.²⁷ On August 24th, during 15th BRICS Summit, five additional countries joined the alliance: Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia (KSA), and UAE, bringing the total number of BRICS members to ten.²⁸ As a result of their expanding economic influence, all BRICS nations are emerging as catalysts for worldwide economic expansion. According to data from IMF, BRICS nations will account for nearly 40% of global economic expansion by 2028. Comparative to the G7's (Group of Seven) 29.9% share of global GDP as of April 2023, the BRICS members' collective share of global GDP was 32.1%.²⁹

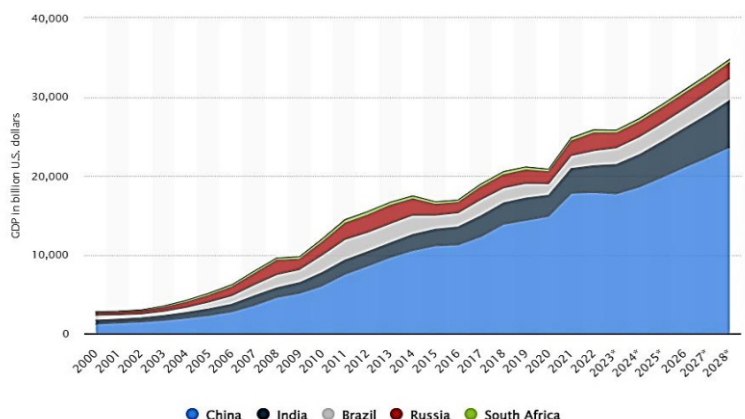


Figure 2: GDP Growth of BRICS Countries³⁰

During the 2000s, the G7 accounted for roughly 50% of the global GDP in terms of Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), whereas BRICS contributed just under 10%. BRICS now comprises nearly half of the world's population (55.75%), with five new members, and its proportion of global GDP at PPP is approximately 37% (36.9%).³¹

²⁷ "Lucas Resende Carvalho, "BRICS: The Global South Challenging the Status Quo,"

²⁸ Andrew G. Ross, "Will BRICS Expansion Finally End Western Economic and Geopolitical Dominance?"

²⁹ Muhammad Taimur Fahad Khan, "Issue Brief on 'BRICS and Pakistan – Assessing Opportunities & Challenges,'" *Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad*, October 12, 2023, <https://issi.org.pk/issue-brief-on-brics-and-pakistan-assessing-opportunities-challenges/>.

³⁰ Statista, "BRICS: GDP per Country 2028," accessed March 24, 2024, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/254281/gdp-of-the-bric-countries/>.

³¹ Taimur Fahad Khan, "Issue Brief on 'BRICS and Pakistan,'".

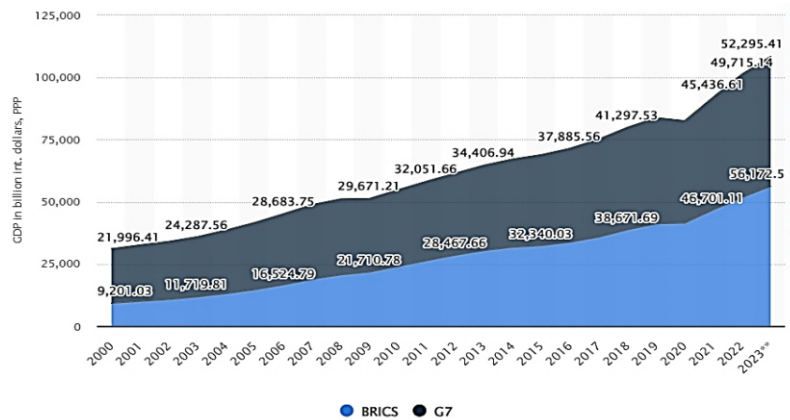


Figure 3: Global GDP and PPP Share BRICS Vs G7³²

BRICS nations transcend economic objectives by utilising their combined economic strength to advance a more expansive political goal that is to reduce reliance on World Bank and International Monetary Fund which have traditionally been presided over by Europeans and Americans respectively that in turn remain subjected to criticism for their perceived lack of transparency.³³ BRICS founded New Development Bank in 2015 with the objective of amassing funds for sustainable development initiatives and infrastructure development.³⁴ The bank which initially authorised \$100 billion in capital has allocated \$32.8 billion to 96 approved projects in 2022, contributing to construction and improvement of 260 km of rail transit networks, 15,700 km of highways, and 850 bridges.³⁵ BRICS seeks to lessen reliance on institutions led by West by promoting development and growth under more favourable conditions.³⁶

Geographically, strategically, economically, and diplomatically, BRICS appears to be a suitable forum for Pakistan to participate in. From a trade standpoint, expanded BRICS has contributed to over 43% of worldwide oil production and strengthened its geostrategic influence in Middle East through inclusion of Saudi Arabia, Iran, and United Arab Emirates. Moreover, 25% of worldwide exports are now contributed by expanded group, whereas initial four members of the BRICS comprise and control

³² Statista, "GDP in PPP of BRICS and G7 Countries 2023," accessed March 24, 2024, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1412418/gdp-development-g7-brics/>.

³³ Ngaire Woods, "Unelected Government: Making the IMF and World Bank more Transparent," *Brookings Institute*, 01 March 2003, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/unelected-government-making-the-imf-and-the-world-bank-more-accountable/>.

³⁴ Ekaterina Arapova and Yaroslav Lissovlik, "BRICS: The Global South Responds to New Challenges (In the Context of China's BRICS Chairmanship)," *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4301141>.

³⁵ Andrew G. Ross, "Will BRICS Expansion Finally End Western Economic and Geopolitical Dominance?," *Geopolitical Monitor*, January 26, 2024, <https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/will-brics-expansion-finally-end-western-economic-and-geopolitical-dominance/>.

³⁶ Taimur Fahad Khan, "Issue Brief on 'BRICS and Pakistan',".

72.5% of worldwide reserves of rare earth minerals, with China producing 85% of all refined rare-earth minerals produced globally.³⁷

CONCLUSION

In evolving world order characterised by the rivalry between the Global North and Global South, Pakistan finds itself at a critical juncture. Its strategic location and developing status make it a key player in geopolitical landscape influenced by major powers such as the U.S. and China. With the dynamics of the EU, NATO, BRICS, and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), Pakistan faces both opportunities and challenges. This entails leveraging its geostrategic assets while navigating complex regional security dynamics to foster economic growth and stability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

a. European Union

- Owing to GSP Plus status and EU-Pak Strategic Engagement Plan, maintenance of cordial relations is a need of the time and compulsion for Pakistan.
- With influence of Global North powers in institutions like FATF, IMF and World Bank, Pakistan cannot afford to become part of any partisan politics.

b. NATO

- Owing to dependence on the U.S. for defence procurement along with certain military and economic privileges associated with status of MNNA, Pakistan may continue engaging with U.S. led coalition to sustain MNNA status.
- Owing to declaration of China and Russia as a main threat by NATO and the U.S., Pakistan should only engage with NATO on issues having global importance like counterterrorism and climate change without becoming part of any counter China efforts.
- Pakistan should continue to participate in NATO's Security Programme, focusing on effective public safety communication and exploring regional security partnerships.

c. SCO

- Owing to presence of China, Russia, India, Iran and Central Asian states in the organisation, Pakistan can engage these countries to increase bilateral and multilateral trade.

³⁷ Lucas Resende Carvalho, "BRICS: The Global South Challenging the Status Quo,"

- Pakistan can proactively engage SCO countries for FDI in new businesses and economic opportunities as part of CPEC to address economic downfall.
- Pakistan can utilise SCO forum in engaging member countries for addressing security situation in Afghanistan by associating regional stability with peace and prosperity in Afghanistan.
- With enhanced strategic and diplomatic cooperation between U.S., EU and India, Pakistan will have to consider avenues of cooperation and trade with India while keeping the core bilateral issues under discussion on separate forums. Hence, Pakistan can utilise the SCO forum in engaging with India on common issues other than Kashmir including trade, climate change and counterterrorism.

d. BRICS

- Pakistan should engage with China and Russia to support its membership in BRICS to counter any opposition from India.
- Pakistan must address political and economic instability within country to encourage big markets of Global South to enhance their engagement with Pakistan.
- Pakistan must look for diversification of economy to enhance cooperation opportunities with BRICS countries.
- Pakistan must engage with BRICS countries to invest in initiatives taken under the ambit of SIFC and CPEC to improve economic outlook.

**THE RETURN OF THE TALIBAN: AFGHANISTAN AFTER THE AMERICANS
LEFT**

(Hassan Abbas, Yale University Press, United States, 2023)

Cdre Ehsan Ahmed Khan SI(M)**

Hassan Abbas's book, "The Return of Taliban: Afghanistan: After the Americans Left", delivers an in-depth analysis of events leading to Taliban's takeover following the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021. The book comprises six chapters that examine the new regime's composition and structure, religious ideology, international relations, and the challenges it encounters.

Following the United States' withdrawal from Afghanistan, the geopolitical landscape of the region has experienced a profound transformation that has captured the interest of both academics and policymakers. This phenomenon has significant ramifications for the broader spectrum of debates in the discipline of international relations since it necessitates a re-evaluation of regional power dynamics, the impact of external actors on a state's build-up, and a reassessment of key theoretical frameworks.

Hassan Abbas's book "The Return of the Taliban," describes the evolutionary process of Taliban in Afghanistan from their emergence in 1994, to their down fall post 9/11 and resurgence after 20 years. The author highlighted the impact of Sunni-Hanfi-Deobandi religious ideology and Pashtun ethnic culture, contestation of regional powers and the divergences within Taliban groups. Abbas provides a lens to explore the internal fissures in Ghani's government, its exclusion from U.S.-Taliban negotiations and lacklustre competence of Afghan National Army and other state organs. He also analysed how Taliban strategised their return to power through hard bargain on one end of the spectrum and increased violence on the other end while exploiting social media for perception management and creating narratives.

In the aftermath of U.S.-Taliban secret deals, the author examines the complexities of state-building in Afghanistan giving a detailed description of transition from warriors to governors, and mentions "The Taliban have not changed much in ideological sense but today's Taliban are different from the last time they were in power". While discussing the evolution of Taliban leadership and their road to Kabul, in his book, Hassan Abbas ponders that one of the biggest challenges for Taliban leadership was to win the hearts of the people of Afghanistan post-U.S. withdrawal.

The author highlights the key challenges faced by the Taliban regime such choice of right leaders in Pashtun-heavy cabinet (ignoring other ethnicities), policies

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toward women, financial instability, and consolidating legitimacy of regime in the presence of global isolation. Abbas summarised Taliban Theory of Governance referring to Mullah Hibatullah's book which provided essentials of Taliban's world view and laid out philosophy and public policy for post-US Afghanistan. The author also broached on Taliban's aggressive and militaristic Deoband (revivalist) outlook evolved from its genesis in colonial India and its cross road with Salfism and Pashtunwali. Dwelling on Taliban's religious narrative, author questions if change in current generation of leadership would slowly end the Taliban as we know. The author also posits a detailed description of TTP and ISKP evolution and presence in Afghanistan and its impact on security landscape within and outside Afghanistan.

Abbas mentions of the broken promises made during Doha negotiations especially in case of women seeking economic opportunities, continuation of girl child's education and displacement of Hazaras from ancestral lands vindicating return of Taliban's erstwhile hard-line stance. Amidst all the psycho-social turmoil, under the new regime, Afghan nation is economically destitute due seizures of foreign economic support and freezing of Afghan Government funds drastically shrinking the economy. The political fractures and intra-Taliban rivalries have accentuated the governance dilemmas leading to parallel power centres contesting for control and influence.

Diplomatically, Abbas mentions that Taliban Regime remains shrouded in cloak of isolation. Though formal communication channels with few countries established, Afghanistan largely remains cut off from rest of the world. The Regime's diplomatic relations with its neighbours and other regional countries remain subject to mistrust and scepticism over Taliban's intent to adhere to promises made, material capacity and political will to deny space to terrorist organisations pursuing safe havens in Afghanistan. Even with Pakistan, contrary to obvious, all is not well between Taliban and Pakistan. The centre of quagmire being Kabul's inability to pursue TTP on Afghan soil, triggering a resurgence of terrorism in Pakistan.

The author has drawn insightful conclusions and thorough analysis. He concludes that the challenges being faced by Taliban regime are primarily rooted in their inflexibility and dogmatism. Internal ethnic fissures, potential threats like ISK, and complex relationships in the region and beyond contributing to a precarious regional security landscape. Moreover, the emergence of a new generation within the Taliban, influenced by global movements and technology, presents an opportunity for policy evolution, especially in religious inclusivity. Financial management is identified as a pivotal factor in the Taliban's success, impacting their ability to provide security and prevent public unrest.

Hassan Abbas's book is highly recommended to international scholars, policy practitioners and decision makers pursuing a holistic grasp of a comprehensive understanding of complex internal and external dynamics unravelling in Afghanistan post U.S. withdrawal. This book provides an invaluable exploration of the multifaceted challenges the Taliban are confronted with. By delving into the political, social, and economic dimensions, the author offers nuanced insights that can greatly enhance

comprehension of the issue at both national as well as regional levels. The book serves as an indispensable resource for policymakers and scholars alike for crafting informed strategies and fostering a deeper understanding of the ongoing developments in the region post-U.S. exit.