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EVOLVING DETERRENCE OF POST-BALAKOT IN INDIA AND PAKISTAN: IMPLICATIONS ON THE STRATEGIC STABILITY OF SOUTH ASIA

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Abstract

Deterrence has been ratified as one of the most compelling tools for thwarting military escalation between nuclear-armed antagonists in post-Balakot military adventurism on February 26th, 2019. The continuous fragile security environment, growing India-Pakistan asymmetrical military outlook, Indian offensive military doctrines that derives Pakistan to rely on strategic deterrence, and Pakistan's restraint response over it added a new dimension in the nuclear lexicon. The skirmish between the two nuclear-armed states' Air forces was an unprecedented perilous escalation in the era of nuclear stratagem posing a subsequent risk to regional security calculus. The paper highlights the Indian leadership's proclivity to believe in robust deterrence, allowing for more retaliation even in the face of minimal incursions. For fear of escalation, Pakistan would not control its response from the start to avoid repeating such actions by India. The paper underscores the significance of restructuring deterrence strands to meet the demands of fifth-generation warfare.



1. Introduction

Since its inception, Indian political regimes have been engineering Hindutva version and identity

politics, making peace and stability in the region elusive. Hindutva was mainstreamed into Indian politics with Narendra Modi's election as Prime Minister in 2014 (Leidig, 2020). The ever-

changing security climate, the widening chasm between India and Pakistan's asymmetrical military positions, and Indian aggressive military doctrines have prompted Pakistan to maintain strategic deterrence. The United States has tainted the strategic balance of South Asia, primarily to reshape India's political, military, and diplomatic profile in order to achieve its strategic goals of containing China in the region. As a result, India evolved its "new normal strategy" for the erection of such a secure environment which would configure its status of quasi-regional surveillance. Constant attempts to Cease-Fire Violations, and consistently sponsoring terrorist organizations allegedly in the past decades, India at numerous stages intensely forced Pakistan to retaliate. The current Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi a war-mongering personality, systematically escalated tensions, despite de-stabilizing the reputation of the Indian military during the post-Pulwama episode (World, 2021). Pakistan's Air force responsive measures in the post-Pulwama scenario exposed the true face of Indian nationalist stakeholders. Both nuclear powers have played their cards carefully, but Balakot added to India's non-nuclear options, escalating the variety of modes of aggression open to it short of major conventional warfare, such as LOC violations and false flag operations. The overarching trend is raising Pakistan's threshold and expanding the window of punitive action without fear of retaliation. (Hasan, 2020). The standoff in Balakot and the subsequent autarchic abrogation of

Articles 370 and 35(A) in Indian-occupied Kashmir (IOK) are thus seen in the same light. Such Indian annoyances raise questions about the state of strategic deterrence in South Asia. The surgical strikes mantra of Indian administration from September 2016 to Balakot military exploration of February 26, contributed a new aspect in the nuclear lexicon. The confrontation between two nuclear states by air forces, shooting down of two Indian fighter-jets, and the seizing of Wing Commander Abhinandan by Pakistan were unprecedented. This particular paper designed to overlook the Post-Pulwama developments from the lens of deterrence stability of the regional environment and the tendency of war eruption, envisage of further counter-actions, with perilous prospects for attaining nuclear verges. This paper will also look at how seemingly minor events that are tactical in nature can impact regional strategic stability.

2. Stand-Off Of Pre and Post- Balakot

A continuous criticism over the entire picture of the Balakot attack is breezing towards unlike deterrence posture. Receptive calculations were not utterly apprehended by the international community. For a fact, prerequisites to understand the tactics of pre and post parameters in the backdrop of deterrence factors is a dire need to be observed. The occurrence of the event exaggerated on the 26th of February, 2019 in the region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Balakot. Analyzing the fact that there are two regions known as Balakot, one is located in Mansehra

district of KPK (outside Pakistan’s boundary) and the second one is located inside the boundary of Pakistan of around four to five Km of Line of Control (LoC) where Indian armed forces claimed to attack. However, it has been confirmed that the civilian population evacuated early from 2001 of the respected area due to fear of border clashes (Reuters, Border villagees evacuated, 2001). Notably in the context of Indian elections of 2019 which gave rise to Narendra Modi’s jingoism thrust. Nevertheless, the vengeance of India killing terrorist camps of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) has no match with veracity. India only managed to damage 19 trees to which Pakistan complained to the UN under Eco-Terrorism. Resultantly, the asymmetries in soft and hard power of India are deficient to stay deterred by Pakistan’s deterrence competences; however, the deterrence stabilizing is fluctuating in the south Asian region.

3. Basic Connotation of Deterrence

A renowned theoretical framework can be illustrated by Kenneth Waltz, neo-realist who argued that “*states may balance against the threat either through forming alliance or internally through its own military built-up*” (Waltz, 1979) Similarly, Glenn Snyder argument of “*the greater the stability of the strategic balance of terror, the lower the stability of overall balance at its lower levels of violence*”.

However, deterrence is an old phenomenon that is claimed by Robert Oppenheimer after the Hiroshima attack of the atomic bomb, demonstrating that the number of nuclear arsenals

will only be more destructive in nature and will upsurge aggression merely. Analyzing the deterrence factor in Pakistan’s perspective, Bernard Boride expressed that the responsive state should not act aggressively in retaliation. Usually, nuclear arsenals are more prone towards peace rather than helping to deter.

According to General C. Robert Kehler, contemporary deterrence strategy would have three costs imposing; the benefit of denial and encouraging restraint which implies in the case of India and Pakistan, below is the figure. (Kehler, 2007)

Table 1: Deterrence Strategy Comparison

TODAY’S DETERRENCE STRATEGY	
Deterrence by imposing cost	Traditional view of deterrence
Deterrence by denying benefit	Important for asymmetric threat or non-state actor
Deterrence by encouraging restraint	Convince adversary that being deterred is his “least bad” option

A visible gesture of India using this methodology is quite prevalent in the security environment. In fact, the Kargil war (1991), stability-instability paradox, Mumbai attack (2008), Surgical strikes (2016), Pathankot incident, Pulwama attack and now Balakot have played out a lot in a different way if there could be for Pakistan’s nuclear deterrence. Yet, it is not the first time India played its cards on false flag operations. Not neglecting the fact that the impression prevailed out the USA monopoly over Nuclear weapons came from conserving the nuclear arsenals likely relates to the

prevention of war as different to deterrence. The idea of deterrence reinforced right after the Anti-ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) of 1972 under the principles of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD). All scenarios that evolved the concept of deterrence have something mainly to do within South Asia, notwithstanding the key factors that are not indigenously attached to India and Pakistan's historical ties.

It does not predominantly imply the whole sum game in South Asia or specifically in the case of Indian's aggression. Despite the fact, Pakistan could have resolved on the soil of Afghanistan by annihilating all the terrorists but sustaining the international law, Pakistan used deterrence in a peaceful realm.

4. Strategic Discourse of India and Pakistan

The key aspect of deterrence is much larger in conventional and nuclear strategic capability predominantly possessed by India. The whole criteria are compelled due to security concerns rather than prestige and that is the reason Pakistan believes in Credible Minimum Deterrence (CMD) with all the aggression coming from neighbor country. For the sake of insecurity driven by Indian, it has called Pakistan towards Full Spectrum Deterrence (FSD) because looking at the possibility of a conventional attack in line with Cold Start policy through a Full-spectrum response. Catastrophic concerns are likely to be threatening the reconciliation and stability of the South Asian region. In this regard, Lt. General (R)

Tariq Khan particularized that now; the conventional war has been eroded to asymmetric response and nuclear retaliation which will result in hostilities in total war effect. Escalation of total war will be revealed by Indians beyond the border before the actual war occurs. Thus, deterrence is an outlook and at no time a perceptible posture rather an outcome of possibility.

For all the misconception allied with Balakot strikes by Indian Air force (IAF) has brought the posture of FSD into the limelight which can be seen through the perspective of short-range NASR Battlefield ballistic missile of Pakistan (Ashraf, 2019). In the context of conventional attack of India which is always retaliated by Nasr missile is merely a myth in Pakistan's nuclear edge. It makes Pakistan's nuclear capability and credibility out of the deterrence standards.

Hence, it is not to be interpreted that the use of FSD to signify a nuclear war-fighting strategy engaging tactical nuclear weapons in contradiction of India's conventional threat (Sultan, 2019). There has been a continuous debate over the Cold Start which was planned to use conventional dominance of India in order to punish Pakistan but NASR appears to be the last resort against such contradiction (Naz, 2019).

Apart from nuclear faceoff between Pakistan and India, there are few gestures of peace were accumulated only from Pakistan's side. Those fixing bids include, the opening of Kartarpur corridor, returning their military man and asking for negotiation.

5. Iaf Versus Paf

The table shows (Bilgic, 2019) nuclear capabilities IAF and PAF have for now. India's increasingly counter-force incentives are in action. Additionally, as a supplement to Joint Doctrine (2017), the Indian military announced Land Warfare doctrine (2018) in order to achieve its political and diplomatic strategy (mainly focused on Pakistan) objectives. Notwithstanding the fact that this doctrine will be further boosted Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Robotics with the idea of attaining allocation of resources and war-fighting (Chughtai, 2019). It has been said that India's firing Israeli Spice-2000 from Mirage-2000 jet has chosen approximately 6 targets but Precision Guided Munitions (PGM) did not leave the aircraft for the reason of a drift inertial navigation system (PTI, 2019). PAF scrambled and asked IAF to manage MiG-2000 aircraft with their triggered objective to drop their payloads from stand-off ranges. At this stage, the IAF Land Warfare Doctrine was questioned with their evolution of deterring the target.

Table 2. Military Balance between India and Pakistan

Sr. No.	Military Capabilities	PAKISTAN	INDIA
1	Total Military Capabilities	654,000	1,444,000
2	Army Personnel	560,000	1,237,00
3	Navy	23,800	67,700

	Personnel		
4	Combat-Capable Aircraft	425	814
5	Tank	2,496	3,565
6	Artillery guns	4,472	9,719
7	Aircraft carries	0	1
8	Submarines	8	16
9	Frigates	9	13
10	Nuclear warheads	145	135
11	Total defense budget	\$11.2 Bn+	\$57.9 Bn+

a) Mirage-2000 and Jf-17 Thunder

Mirage-2000 is the only upgraded supersonic multirole fighter India has with the capability of conducting precision targeting through 2 laser-guided munitions in all weather conditions vis-à-vis also from stand-off ranges. By carrying a large number of bomb operation, best suited for Air-to-Air combat with high maneuvering ability (Here's how India's Mirage 2000 differs from Pakistan's F-16, 2019). In the operation swift retort by Pakistan using JF-17, shooting down IAF captain Abhinandan Varthaman. The proficiencies of JF-17 show advanced and Actively Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) radar along with the helmet-mounted sight system. It is capable of attacking multiple targets from long-range and the navigation system is a bonus point added to target

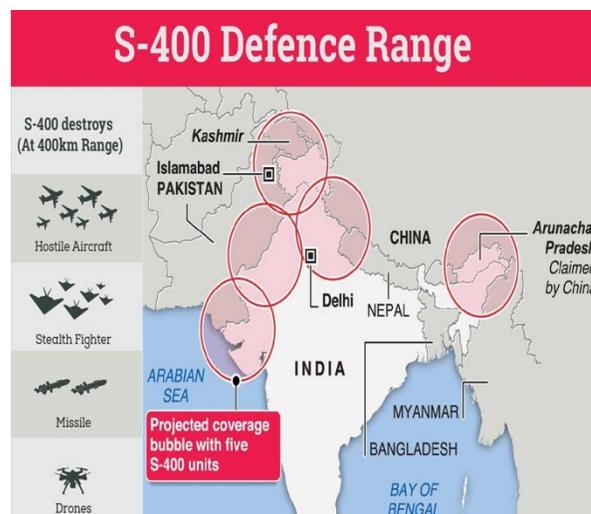
the exact objective. PAF employed JF-17 thunder the very next day of Airstrikes by India and Retrofit of Strike Element (ROSE) MiG-III/IV aircraft with the controlling to fly close to Indian's Army 15 corps Northern Command Headquarter. Meanwhile, in the new normal, F-16 Falcons, Saab 2000 Erieye Radar System with an Airborne Early Warning and Control System (AEW&C) and Falcon DA-20 Electronic Warfare aircraft laid out essential sustenance and protection from within Pakistan Airspace (Khan, 2019). The operation swift retort (OST) was exceptional for India with all the low-frequency effects by PAF learned from Red Flag and Anatolian Eagle exercises (Karavantos, 2019).

b) S-400 Air Defense System and Dassault Rafale Aircraft Projection

S-400 Triumf hypersonic missile was designed by Almaz Antey and originated by Russia with Surface-to-Air (SAM) capability (Akbar, 2018). It is said to be the most advanced air defense system technology but there is no ground damage record. The conclusion driven by Indian civilian and military leadership for S-400 battalions would now make it almost impossible for PAF to respond to an Indian Aerial attack in the mode it had accomplished in the post-Balakot raid. For the acquisition of five S-400 air defense systems, India made an advance payment to Russia and the contract will likely be fulfilled by 2025. According to Reuters, advance payment was about \$800 million but the exact amount has not been announced yet. Here, India will likely swift away

with the US sanction of Countering America's Adversaries through the Sanctions Act (CAATSA) by making the payment process in Euros rather than dollars. On the counterpart of Pakistan to get rid of any further escalation by India could be managed through the organization of industrial capability in producing ballistic and cruise missiles systems. They should be developed progressively to strike back any Indian aggression with enhanced speed and accuracy.

Linking to advancements in the nuclear world and evolving deterrence of the Post-Balakot attack, India is moving her head towards Rafale. IAF pilots are under the trainee of France Air Force and handed over around 36 Rafale fighter jets on 8th October 2019 and will be fulfilled by 2022. Four Rafales are expected to arrive in India by 2020 which is alarming for Pakistan (Gady, 2019). India has high expectations with Rafale aircraft and claiming that Pakistan would not be able to come near to LoC. These claims driven are somehow over-exaggerated by Indians because there will always the Third Party to intervene in



the conflict which has precaution for other neighboring countries as well. Following up on the Pulwama and Balakot raid, PAF is well aware of the capabilities Rafale has and to that extent, Pakistan is eagerly waiting for 250 JF-17 with up-gradation of Block 3 and stealth fighters projected under AZM of the fifth generation. In this regard, PAF familiarity with Rafale design is before IAF first men ready for its services. The deterrence at Pakistan's end would be with JF-17, HQ-16, and PL-12.

6. Crisis Of Mismanagement: Demands For International Peace

Right after the skirmishes of tactical posture by India, the debate over the entire international community was gone like a breeze. In this realm, India is delighted under the umbrella of Washington D.C, instigating Pakistan towards the crisis situation as a post-Balakot effect. The hierarchy of events illustrates that India is pushing Pakistan into cost imposing themes to establish predominance in the South Asian Region. 5th generation warfare has already been started under total war influence. India's efforts to isolate Pakistan with the engagement of the USA are critically seen because the monopoly over the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) platform is after the product of these escalations. However, the insight of 5th generation warfare has conventional and non-conventional means which cannot be ignored.

Crisis mismanagement started when India revoked the status of Kashmir. The follow up was taken by

BJP in the beginning to test its nuclear weapons. It is said by Bill Clinton that South Asia would become the most dangerous place in 2000 and that is what happens with the new norms of India. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has already crossed the Rubicon with all the illegalities attached to dare Pakistan in Kashmir. Along with such repercussions, India's Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) for Muslims 2019 revealed serious resentments for Muslims and the International response was in favor of Muslims as United Nations (UN) declared that the CAB Act is discriminatory in nature (Delhi, 2019). Even Punjab, Kerala, Western Bengal, Chhattisgarh, and Madhya Pradesh rejected on this unconstitutional Act to enforce in their region. Although, Pakistan continuously highlighted all the hierarchical events escorted by India and the seriousness of the international community is not yet been seen directly and implemented rather a verdict. Relatively, the European Union (EU) preferred to stay neutral on the crisis but action to be taken against Human Rights is stressed for the Kashmiri People and CAB Act. Meanwhile, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the firm to take action against India's demonstrated discrimination. With all start from 2016 surgical strikes, Pulwama, Balakot, revocation of Article 370, CAB Act indicates the parameters India's next strategy and evolving deterrence.

As the escalation towards provoked crisis is yet to be expected from India's side, the USA is set to support India in these terms. The clear national

interest of the USA as a pivot to Asia-Pacific whole sums the situation and India is an only ally in the South Asian region. USA has signed defense deals with India such as the Communication Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), in which deal revolves around no buying of nuclear arsenals from Russia and Iran. This means that even if India pile up its nuclear capabilities, USA has edge over diminishing the deals with other countries likewise the purchase deal of S-400 with Russia and collaboration with France in Rafael capabilities (Syed, 2019).

China has always been friendly and secured Pakistan with every emerging conflict. Chinese UN ambassador even warned that India-Pakistan should minimize their evolving deterrence posture and Kashmir conflict (Lederer, 2020). Along with China United Arab Emirates (UAE) recalled defusing the tension or any war fighting notions. In fact, UAE manifested a deal of about \$28 billion with India on oil (Kuchay, 2019) and yet India's goal was achieved. Between IAF deterrence and PAF riposte, there was unfettered of perspectives that how India's established new normal and to be called Pakistan nuclear bluff. However, Pakistan succeeded in maintaining its status-quo-ante by displaying efficiency in conventional deterrence in which self-possessed with strategic forces suggests a series of responses by India's offensive posture. If the international community will not check the indicators, South Asia would drown into deterrence failure.

7. Un in Sustaining Peace & Stability

The Balakot incident has unconcealed the facts of Indian aggravated events with postured ally state USA, being a ladder to Indo Pacific strategy and Quadrilateral Alliance among India, Japan, and Australia as well for the containment of China. In all the flared up circumstances, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) conducted a meeting behind closed doors. The Security General Antonio Guterres stated "maximum restraint" by observing the entire situation in Kashmir (Balakot raid was the by-product to Kashmir status) and reminded the Simla Agreement (1972) between India and Pakistan to be settled with all peace and stability (Stability, 2019). Analyzing the situation in global politics, a prominent work of Moeed Yusuf in his book "*Brokering Peace in Nuclear Environment: US Crisis Management in South Asia*" (O'Donnell, 2019). In his book all the trilateral crises stood out from the viewpoint of contemporary post- Balakot evolving deterrence. He explained the role of the United States to maintain a low-risk edge in selecting to interfere in the regional crisis with growing its potential within the South Asia region. Now, the United States of America's foreign policy primarily towards national interest and national dominance in the global perspective (Sameer P. Lalwani, 2021). In the same way, the United Nations was established on the terms of peace and stability maintenance by keeping countries engaged in friendly relations and to promote social progress with better standards and most important of

Human Right. In the case of India's aggression after the Balakot incident, Pakistan urged the United Nations to intervene in such upsurge but a vague response was continuously seen. Although India being a strategic and defense partner of the USA, provides a gateway to acquire nuclear arsenals for the past 15 years. Even Mike Pompeo stressed India being a strategic and defense ally to provided assistance in the Indian Ocean to achieve its objectives. In this pursuit, the United Nations acknowledged India for its Self-Defense against the terrorists of JeM which is an indicator to Pakistan that the USA has strong interests with India.

According to Indian source, there were around 60 ships, 12 coast guards and 60 aircraft were deployed during the Pulwama incident. The operational Readiness Exercise (TROPEX19) was held in the wake Balakot incident where India deployed INS Vikramaditya (Singh, 2019). Indian's use of Vehicle Borne Explosive (VBIED) in the Jammu and Kashmir illustrates boosted operational capabilities militarily. However, new expertise was shown in accumulating around 80 kilograms with highly explosive "RDX" along with formulating a VBIED. All of the sentiments were Modi's anger and a quest for liberating Kashmir with violated serving agenda (Noorani, 2021).

In the United Nation Security Council, India related to Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) with global security concerns and fluctuating situation which is created by them. Pankaj Sharma

illustrated growing capabilities and demise of some landmark disarmament treaties for lowering the threshold along with the intrinsic risk of nuclear brinkmanship pursued by countries as a cover for cross-border terrorism. He said that "Attributing the Conference on Disarmament's failure to adopt a program of work in 2019 to a lack of political will and fissiparous tendencies, it must return to substantive work as the sole negotiating forum of its kind" (Coverage, 2019). In return, the UN seemed to be considering India's stance in UNSC. However, there are no serious talks to be held by the UN in any further meeting in the future and in present. In this contrast, the USA is following the framework of India by attacking Iran because they are growing their capabilities in the nuclear arsenal. The talks for peace and stability are likely to turn over by the UN because Human Rights and India Hegemonic sentiments have been shifted towards the Self-defense and Predominance factor.

8. Justice as a Bluff and Rights as an Illusion

Indians claiming to pretend it as a nuclear bluff to Pakistan is significantly wrong because IAF intimated its incompetence for much greater retaliation. Additionally to that, further escalation of IAF was not to respond PAF counter-strike. Resultantly, the loss of SU-30 MKI and MiG-21 bison was faced by IAF. There was no Pakistan nuclear threshold anticipated because Pakistan rightly determined its deterrence exclusively through conventional means in all nuclear triads

(Mir, 2021). However, Indian intentions were prone towards limited warfare with reference to operation swift retort its naval combat unit which is INS Arihant. During the February crisis, India had deployed its Submarine INS Vikramaditya in the North Arabian Sea which later found damaged according to the Indian Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) investigated operational status (Negi, 2019).

The military aggression of India is pivotal in deterrence which is not going to slow down. India tried to figure out four bluffs i.e. capturing a large part of its territory, loss of military personals, and economic restraint by India and the instability paradox of political and diplomatic terms. None of them is entirely the red line or the nuclear bluff but temporary emotional distress with no enduring deterrence of denial and punishment. However, India's pre-emptive counterforce posture is considerable unrest towards Pakistan and for that reason; India would likely to practice its First Use policy. This effect could be Psychological warfare because India's attitude is not looking to step back out of their cruel aggression. Furthermore, Pakistan escalating retaliation from the threat was a win-win situation even after India advances its capabilities in the acquisition of S-400 and Rafale. The aftermath of Indian strategy in the name of deterrence was the abrogation of 370 in which nuclear weapon acquisition was retold. In the scale of intrusion, no operationalization of Cold Start Doctrine (CSD) was practiced instead self-imposed constraints were aforementioned. In

contrast, BJP hawks lacked the opportunity to prevent deterrence in the entire realm of Balakot raid and later on revoking Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir. Logically, nuclear weapons are the avoidance of violations and not to deter skirmishes at the tactical level. Unfortunately, FSD was not proven the day of strike for the reason of no tactical importance to coerce the overall deterrence (Jaffery, 2019)

9. Deterrence and Emerging New Postures

Over the past few years, India has been increasingly spending on the large-scale modernization and development of its conventional and strategic forces, the recent Balakot raid brought in focus in the international community to focus upon the risks of intensification in one of the "hot-test" nuclear flashpoints (Mathur, 2021). The lessons learned from post-Balakot raid analyzes the internal and external aspects contributed to conflict escalation and de-escalation, on condition that an insight significantly to decreasing provoked risks of the nuclear arsenal used in the conflict. In a future conflict, India is motivated to dominate Full Spectrum Deterrence (FSD) by including Chemical, biological, Radiological and Nuclear environments from side to side with operative cooperation of technology ambitious fighting force. There are chances that Joint Doctrine which is now Land Warfare Doctrine (LWD) is likely to be enhanced in terms of Artificial Intelligence, Quantum Computing, and Nano-technology, laser-technology, Directed Energy Weapons,

Hypersonic and Supersonic missiles, Drones, Pulsed Microwave weapons and Injection of False Information (Khattak, 2020). The warfare includes Cyber, space warfare, Electronic, Psychological, Limited warfare and might be towards Total warfare. Their capabilities would focus on two front wars based on a huge lift and rapid mobilization.

India is progressively enhancing its capabilities in all these areas. Keeping in mind that India is the largest importers of conventional military equipment during the past few decades and there is debate over their dual use of counterforce capabilities through the network of space-based ISR assets (Noor, 2021). However, it is essential for both countries to recommence constant diplomatic and senior-level strategic and regional stability within transparency by trust-building and managing their crisis mechanism.

10. Suggestion for Pakistan to Deter

In June 2017, the Nuclear Crisis Group issued Urgent Steps to De-Escalate Nuclear Flashpoints, a collection of timely guidelines to improve stability and minimize the likelihood of nuclear weapons being used by mistake, miscalculation, or motive in order to prevent potential escalation:

- Joint Declaration of acquiring Nuclear arsenals
- Hotline agreements between national and military leadership.
- Bilateral norms of Nuclear Weapons over NFU and FU.

- Nuclear risk reduction institution by using commercially available satellite photography.
- Nuclear test suspension on table talks
- Nuclear Posture to be reviewed.
- Development on non-attack agreement to cover all nuclear amenities, military and civilian
- Reduction in risk of miscalculations and guard against nuclear accidents
- Full-Spectrum Deterrence (FSD) concept to be reviewed by Pakistan
- Examination economical factor by Pakistan and Indian leadership false flag operations
- National Space bill (NSB) to be prepared by Pakistan and Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) with India.
- Pakistan Artificial Intelligence (AI), reconnaissance, scrutinization, early warning radars.
- Arms race to be minimized by both countries i.e. S-400 and Rafale
- SLBMs required for Pakistan and look over the Second Strike Capability
- National Security Strategy to be reviewed for any further escalation
- Pakistan to follow Quid-Pro- Quo Strategy
- False Flag operation of India to be deterred by Pakistan in terms of “Lobbying Strategy”
- Maxi-mist Approach by Pakistan in Kashmir issue.

- Pakistan to reach UNSC to claim the violation of Article 2 (4) UN Charter

11. Conclusion

The Balakot chapter has aggravated the instability of the South Asian security stratagem. Moreover, comprehensive deterrence skepticism has not exclusively faded away; new realities have emerged forcing the contenders to reevaluate their impending postures. Incidents such as Balakot may lead to an escalation that eventually crosses the line of the nuclear eruption. Furthermore, having gone through of potentially treacherous phase of crises must have forced Indian strategists to re-think. India's intention behind the false flag operations and surgical strikes is to destabilize the image of Pakistan in the international arena. There is still chance of small-scale war between India and Pakistan due to continuous aggressive posture of India despite Pakistan's efforts to neutralize the crisis situation in south Asian region. Irrespective of the military capabilities of Pakistan, the level of training, modern equipment, and improved protocol are still required to avoid any mistake in future. While regulating its nuclear posture, Pakistan must involve international players, highlight aggressive Indian doctrines and tacit moves and should express its concerns to divert moral and diplomatic pressure towards India. With greater vulnerabilities, Pakistan has to rely on deterrence as a critical element of its military approach, besides; Pakistan needs to expand its foreign policy options to give credence to the catalytic nuclear strategy options.

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