

## **Regional Fragility and India's Offensive Posture: Options for Pakistan**

**Khalid Chandio\***

### **Abstract**

South Asia is plagued by number of traditional and non-traditional threats, which make it fragile due to unresolved issues, especially between its two nuclear powers, Pakistan and India. 'Imbalance' would be a more appropriate term when describing the India-Pakistan equation. In straight numerical terms of population, economics, military manpower and equipment, India overtakes Pakistan. What has to be understood from the outset is that the two countries have very different military aspirations. India sees itself as a rising regional and extra-regional power and sees military power as a main element in this process. Like any aspiring regional player, India also seeks potential partners such as the United States; and is wary of potential rivals such as China and Pakistan. Pakistan, being in an altogether different position, seeks to deter any offense from India.<sup>1</sup> But lately, India has started adopting an offensive-defensive posture which poses greater challenges to the already fragile regional security. This paper will try to shed some light on the regional fragility and try to understand the evolving Indian offensive posture and its implications for Pakistan. An effort has been made to put forward some options for Pakistan in such eventuality.

**Key words:** South Asia, Pakistan, India, Regional Fragility, Offensive Posture, Cold Start.

### **Introduction**

**M**ao Zedong, former Chairman of the Communist Party of China (CPC), once opined that 'the only real defence is active defence', meaning defence for the purpose of counter-attacking and taking

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\* The author has recently completed his MPhil in International Relations from Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan. His areas of research interest include non-traditional security issues, peace studies (conflict management & resolution), and U.S. foreign policy (particularly towards Pakistan, India and China). He regularly contributes articles on current strategic issues in English newspapers of Pakistan.

<sup>1</sup> Khalid Chandio, "India: From Defensive to Offensive," *Pakistan Observer*, January 15, 2015.

the ‘offensive’ as success often rests on destroying the enemy’s ability to attack.<sup>2</sup> This principle is also paralleled in the writings of Machiavelli and Sun Tzu, both great military strategists.

In international politics, under an anarchic system states exist to survive and prefer to maximise their security, through two basic strategic options: (a) defensive posture; and (b) offensive posture. States display offensive and defensive behaviours in many specific situations, particularly in a conflict or tense environment. Likewise, attacks and threats can be classified as either physical or psychological, and their effects can also be categorised as such. Both offensive and defensive behaviours can involve the use of force and aggression. The difference lies in how that force or aggression is used in a given situation. An offensive state will use those two methods, i.e. physical or psychological, to secure a goal and try to eliminate the factors that might deter achieving that goal. On the other hand, defensive states will use force or aggression in order to ward off an attack, making the threat go away to prevent injury to themselves.

Having said this, this paper tries to evaluate the factors which have made India move from its defensive to offensive stance; and how India with such a posture could further complicate existing South Asian regional fragility, which could have direct implications for not only the region and beyond, but also for Pakistan due to ongoing Indo-Pak relations. The paper will further explore what options Pakistan has in such an environment.

### **Regional Fragility**

Before dwelling upon the Indian offensive posture, it is pertinent to paint the existing regional situation. The South Asian region is plagued by a simmering, volatile and dangerous situation in Afghanistan. Terrorism and extremism of all forms have further complicated matters. There are even calls and alerts about the footprints of the Islamic State (IS) in the region. Kashmir and other issues, especially water between the two nuclear powers, i.e. Pakistan and India can escalate tensions.

Also, the region is marred by inter and intra- regional non-traditional security threats (NTSTs) of almost all types and forms ranging from poverty to governance. The notable ones include environmental degradation, water security, hunger, malnutrition, corruption of all forms, low literacy rate, poor health facilities/conditions etc. Not only have South Asian states failed to solve these issues individually and internally, there is no cohesion amongst them collectively under the banner of the South Asian

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<sup>2</sup> James Holmes and Toshi Yoshihara, “The Best Defence is a Good Offense for China’s Navy,” *National Interest*, June 7, 2005, <http://nationalinterest.org/article/the-best-defence-is-a-good-offense-for-chinas-navy-2755>.

Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) unlike the European Union (EU) or the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

The unresolved intra-SAARC issues, especially, between Pakistan and India due to the Indian behaviour are not allowing SAARC to move forward. Not only that, India has problems with almost all its neighbours given its growing arrogance when it comes to resolving regional issues. External dimensions of regional fragility are associated with the United States (U.S). The U.S. is shaping its engagement with India under its policy of competition and containment of China. The Indo-U.S. Strategic Partnership, the Indo-U.S. Nuclear Deal, the Ten-year U.S-India Defence Framework Agreement, and the 2012 U.S-India Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) have made dents in an already asymmetrical balance of power in the region. Therefore, the U.S. has become a significant source of fragility within South Asia, especially, for Pakistan.

### **Theoretical Construct**

The best constructs that fit the current debate are the 'Offensive Realism' and 'Offensive-Defence' sub-paradigms of Realism.

#### ***Offensive Realism***

According to the 'Offensive Realism' theory of political scientist John Mearsheimer, the international system encourages an offensive strategy because anarchism leads to insecurity, and only by being the strongest can a state be secure. The nature of power balance leads weak states to fear the strong ones; but the latter fear rising states, and neighbors fear one another. This fear tends to make states strike first; engage in risky behaviour in the pursuit of security; and try the impossible to build up their military. In fact, it is presumed that war mongering, building of alliances, usurping resources, and the arms race have been the primary outcome of the existing international system.

#### ***Five Assumptions of Offensive Realism***<sup>3</sup>

1. Great powers are the main actors in world politics and the international system is anarchical.
2. States are rational actors and 'can never be certain about the intentions of other states, because intentions are inside the heads of

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<sup>3</sup> John Mearsheimer, "Offensive Realism in Brief," *Genius*, accessed May 2, 2016, <http://genius.com/John-mearsheimer-offensive-realism-in-brief-annotated>.

leaders and thus, virtually impossible to see and difficult to measure.<sup>4</sup>

3. The basic structure of the international system forces states concerned about their security to compete with each other for power. The ultimate goal of every state is to maximise its share of world power for survival and eventually to dominate the system.
4. All states possess some offensive military capabilities.
5. 'Once a state achieves regional hegemony, it has a further aim: to prevent other great powers/states from dominating their geographical regions. In other words, no regional hegemon wants a peer competitor. This situation implies that regional hegemons are likely to try to cause trouble in each other's backyard.'<sup>5</sup>

### ***Offense-Defence***

The Offense-Defence theory also called 'security dilemma theory' was conceptualised by Stephen William Van Evera in his famous work *Causes of War: Power & the Roots of Conflict*. It is an optimistic theory of International Relations (IR) since it argues that international conflict and war are more likely 'when offense has the advantage over the defence, while peace and cooperation are more probable when defence has the advantage'.<sup>6</sup> The theory argues that 'in a world where there is an offensive advantage, expansionist grand strategies will be more common, states will adopt offensive military doctrines, arms races will emerge' faster and be harder to control, foreign policies will be more confrontational, crises will be frequent.<sup>7</sup> States will shroud their capabilities in secrecy to conceal military and economic vulnerabilities; and being less likely to negotiate over differences, preemptive and preventive strikes will become more likely.<sup>8</sup>

The theory goes on to say that states that follow defensive strategy attempt to defend their territory (not expand it) and the resources they control. But in offense strategies, states use military conquest to expand their resources. In a nutshell, offense-defence predicts that 'international politics will become more competitive and less peaceful when the balance shifts towards the offense.'<sup>9</sup> The theory suggests that states that adopt

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Mearsheimer, "Offensive Realism in Brief."

<sup>6</sup> Sean M. Lynn-Jones, preface to *Offence, Defence and War*, eds. Michael E. Brown, Owen R. Coté, Sean M. Lynn-Jones and Steven E. Miller (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004), xi.

<sup>7</sup> Sean M. Lynn-Jones, "Offensive-Defence Theory and its Critics," *Security Studies* 4, no. 4 (1995): 660-691, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09636419509347600>.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 670.

offense strategies tend to succeed in international politics, whereas those that adopt defensive strategies tend to fail<sup>10</sup> as 'offense dominance is self-perpetuating' according to an online presentation *Offensive and Defensive Realism*, published by Carissa Wollman on March 5, 2013.<sup>11</sup> Given below is an example of a state's (namely India) defensive posture.

#### *Sundarji Doctrine (1981–2004)*

India followed the 'Sundarji Military Doctrine' for more than two decades (from 1981 to 2004), vis-à-vis Pakistan in particular. General (R) Krishnaswamy Sundarji, India's former Chief of Army Staff, had come up with the doctrine focussed on a two-pronged strategy (a) 'holding corps'; and (b) 'strike corps.' The seven defensive holding corps consisted of infantry divisions for static defence, mobile mechanised divisions and armoured formations for counter attacks/counter offensive deployed near the border region with Pakistan.<sup>12</sup> Sundarji concentrated the army's offensive power into three mobile 'strike corps' aimed at striking deep into Pakistan. Each strike corp consisted of an armoured division with mechanised infantry, extensive artillery and air support. The idea was that in the event of a war, after the holding corps had contained a Pakistani attack, the strike corps would launch counteroffensive from their bases in central India (I Corps in Mathura, II Corps in Ambala, and XXI Corps in Bhopal) and penetrate into Pakistani territory.<sup>13</sup>

#### *Main Characteristics of the Sundarji Doctrine*<sup>14</sup>

1. It aimed to avoid, to the extent possible, any action that might lead to a total war.
2. It permitted Pakistan the 'option of compromising without loss of face.'
3. It modulated 'offensives in scope and depth of ingress to stop before Pakistani resort to nuclear weapons.'

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<sup>10</sup> M. Lynn-Jones, "Offensive-Defence Theory."

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Walter C. Ladwig III, "A Cold Start for Hot Wars? An Indian Army's New Limited War Doctrine," *International Security* 32, no. 3(2007/08): 160-164, [http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/IS3203\\_pp158-190.pdf](http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/IS3203_pp158-190.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.; "The Indian Military Doctrine - The Sundarji Doctrine - 2," *SS24 Blog*, September 11, 2013, <http://ss24.blogspot.com/2013/09/the-indian-military-doctrine-sundarji.html>.

<sup>14</sup> Ali Ahmed, "In Tribute: Recalling the Sundarji Doctrine," *Journal of the United Service Institution of India* 88, no. 571, (2008), <http://usiofindia.org/Article/?pub=Journal&pubno=571&ano=356>. For operationalising this philosophy in relation to Pakistan as an example.

4. It avoided 'political rigidity through a policy of nuclear transparency in respect of keeping citizens informed of choices made and options avoided.'
5. It suggested that 'no first use of nuclear weapons' would be made.<sup>15</sup>

### **Indian Offensive Posture**

In numerical terms of population, economics, military manpower and equipment, it is almost meaningless to speak about an India-Pakistan balance. 'Imbalance' is a more appropriate term since India leads in every respect. 'The Indian military is the third largest force in the world, with a total size of about 1,346,000.'<sup>16</sup> What has to be understood from the outset is that the two countries have very different military aspirations. India sees itself as a rising regional and beyond regional actor/power, and it sees military power as one of the key elements in this process. As any aspiring regional player must, it looks for potential partners and potential enemies. India's broader strategic goals mean that it is pursuing an ambitious modernisation programme for all of its armed services:

India is working to overcome deficiencies in its overall military might. For said purpose, a massive modernisation programme is witnessed in collaboration with the help of Russia, America and Europe. Reference to the context could also be the manifold increase in defence budget and weapon purchases. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Indian imports of major weapons increased by 111 per cent from 2004 to 2015 and it accounted for 15 per cent of the global arms purchases. Major imports came from Russia (75 per cent), U.S.A. (12 per cent) and Israel (7 per cent). The Indian military's defence allocation reached \$45.2 billion in 2014-15. For the same year, India allocated \$14.93 billion to weapons and equipment purchases.<sup>17</sup>

India's defence partnership with Israel is a critical example of India's designs to upgrade and modernise its military might. While the two countries have had a long relationship, it has of late become even more active, especially in defence collaboration, primarily focused on network-centric and electronic warfare capabilities. While both have signed numerous pacts for defence procurement, avionics in ageing Russian

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Masood ur Rehman Khattak, "Strategic Significance of Indo-Israel Defence Collaboration: Implications for Pakistan's Security," *IPRI Journal* XVI, no.2 (2016).

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

aircrafts and other military equipment, 'the most entrenched partnership between two states is in intelligence, counterterrorism and counter insurgency skills.'<sup>18</sup>

Although Indian shift from defensive-defence to offensive-defence has been gradual, it has been constant and the following factors, supported by Van Evera's theory of 'Offensive-Defence' and John Mearsheimer's 'Offensive Realism', clearly manifest this shift over a period of time:

### **Offensive-Defence Theory and its Application**

1. *States Less Likely to Negotiate over Differences:* If one looks at the pages of history and the processes of negotiations between Pakistan and India, they have always been at the mercy of the Indian nod. Recently, India called off Foreign Secretary level talks.<sup>19</sup> Pakistan stood committed on resuming the Comprehensive Dialogue process but India, under Prime Minister Modi, did not agree. This is the reason that all outstanding issues including the main issue of Kashmir are at a stand still.
2. *Arms Races Faster and Harder to Control:* As discussed before, India has been the largest arms buyer according to SIPRI and Jane's-HIS Inc., London. In fact, it has maintained its position as the world's leading arms importer for the third consecutive year in a row, ahead of China. Its share in the volume of international arms imports increased from 7 to 14 per cent.<sup>20</sup> Till 2015, India accounted for 15 per cent of the volume of global arms imports in the last five years, according to new data on international arms transfers.<sup>21</sup>
3. *Offensive Military Doctrines:* India's Cold Start Doctrine (CSD)<sup>22</sup>, now being 're-packaged' as India's Proactive Strategy<sup>23</sup>, with the concept of

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Kamran Yousaf, "Pakistan Calls for Resumption of Foreign Secretary Level Talks with India," *Express Tribune*, February 18, 2016, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1049707/pakistan-calls-for-resumption-of-foreign-secretary-level-talks-with-india/>.

<sup>20</sup> "South Asia and the Gulf Lead Rising Trend in Arms Imports, Russian Exports Grow, Says SIPRI," *SIPRI*, March 17, 2014, (press release, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Solna, March 17, 2014), [http://www.sipri.org/media/pressreleases/2014/AT\\_march\\_2014](http://www.sipri.org/media/pressreleases/2014/AT_march_2014).

<sup>21</sup> Sushant Singh, "SIPRI Data Shows India World's Biggest Arms Importer at Three Times of China," *Indian Express*, March 16, 2015, <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/india-remains-worlds-biggest-arms-importer-sipri/>.

<sup>22</sup> Azam Khan, "Understanding India's 'Cold Start' Doctrine," *Express Tribune*, October 18, 2011, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/276661/understanding-indias-cold-start-doctrine/>.

<sup>23</sup> Khan A. Sufyan, "India's Offensive New Strategy," *Diplomat*, February 9, 2011, <http://thediplomat.com/2011/02/indias-offensive-new-strategy/>.

surgical strikes inside Pakistan is already in place. The details of this strategy are given in the succeeding paragraphs.

4. *Aggressive Diplomacy*: India is increasingly aligning with the United States in its Pivot-to-Asia policy<sup>24</sup> to counter China. Modi's perpetual series of foreign visits, for which he has even been criticised at home<sup>25</sup>, have taken him from East Asia to Middle East and to major European capitals. The 'Indo-U.S. Strategic Partnership' is an indication of not only Indian ambitions, but also of aggressive diplomacy in the region. Indo-U.S. cooperation in high-tech defence equipments has raised concerns in Pakistan, which have compelled it to look for advanced weapons technology. Such compulsions may create a path towards destabilisation of the strategic balance in the region.
5. *Confrontational Foreign Policy*: As already mentioned, history is witness to the fact that India has bad relations with almost all the SAARC states<sup>26</sup> in one way or the other. This is reflective of Indian arrogance and its confrontational foreign policy within the region.
6. *Crises will be Frequent*: Since Modi has come to power in India, the country has indulged in countless violations vis-à-vis Pakistan on the Line of Control (LoC).

Following the terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament on December 13, 2001 with rash and baseless allegations on Pakistan, India initiated a military buildup and the world witnessed yet another stand-off between the two neighbours. The 2002 Indian forces mobilisation 'Operation Parakram' and the recent episode of Kulbhushan Yadav, a Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) agent causing trouble in Balochistan, are clear examples of Indian offensive designs towards Pakistan. Not just that, soon after the U.S. Abbottabad operation in which Osama bin Laden was killed, the Indian Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal P. V. Naik, gave a statement that the Indian air force had the capability of carrying out surgical strikes against the Mumbai attackers hiding in Pakistan.<sup>27</sup> It was mentioned time and again that the Indian Air Force's (IAF's) Sukhoi, MIG-29s, and Mirage 2000s can take part in such an attack and destroy designated targets pinpointed by

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<sup>24</sup> Mike Green, "The Legacy of Obama's 'Pivot' to Asia," *Foreign Policy*, September 3, 2016, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/09/03/the-legacy-of-obamas-pivot-to-asia/>.

<sup>25</sup> "PM's Foreign Visits-Narendra Modi Joins the Club of Most Travelled World Leaders," *News18.com*, May 18, 2015, <http://www.news18.com/news/politics/pms-foreign-visits-narendra-modi-joins-the-club-of-most-travelled-world-leaders-993533.html>.

<sup>26</sup> Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

<sup>27</sup> "IAF Surgical Strikes: Castles in the Air," *Dawn*, May 12, 2011, <http://www.dawn.com/news/628185/iaf-surgical-strikes-castles-in-the-air>.



the IAF and Indian Government or can use their Brahmos supersonic cruise missiles.<sup>28</sup>

### ***Other Factors***

1. *No First Use to First Use*: During the last election campaign, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had hinted that once the party came into power, they would revise the nuclear doctrine from no first use to first use. 'The BJP unveiled its manifesto, pledging to review India's nuclear stance, whose two main pillars were a no-first-use commitment and building a credible but minimum nuclear arsenal.'<sup>29</sup> Since Modi became the Prime Minister, this proposal has not been touched. This shows that India's No First Use (NFU) policy is vague. India has failed to maintain its earlier strict NFU policy by declaring that in an event of a biological and chemical attack against India or its forces anywhere, it would retaliate with nuclear weapons.<sup>30</sup>
2. *Regional Ambitions*: Since every aspiring regional or extra-regional power wants to have potential friends/allies and potential enemies, India has exactly been doing the same by getting closer to the U.S .and pursuing hostile policies towards China and Pakistan.
3. *"Tricky Two-sided Policy"*<sup>31</sup>: India has been following a tricky two-sided South Asian/regional policy to 'maximise gains at minimum costs.'<sup>32</sup> By adopting an ambiguous strategy, India has placed itself in a position wherein almost all the major powers woo it, but it never explicitly promises anything to the wooing powers.<sup>33</sup>

### **Why Cold Start Doctrine (CSD)?**

A Pakistan-specific CSD has the potential to put the entire region into a quagmire of volatility and dismay. Soon after the attack on the Indian

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<sup>28</sup> "Pakistan's Likely Response to an Indian Surgical Strike," *Pakistan Defence Blog*, January 25, 2010, <http://defence.pk/threads/pakistans-likely-response-to-an-indian-surgical-strike.45328/>.

<sup>29</sup> "Modi Rules out BJP's will to Revise 'No-First-Use of Nukes' Policy," *Dawn*, April 17, 2014, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1100300>.

<sup>30</sup> GoI, "Cabinet Committee on Security Reviews Progress in Operationalising India's Nuclear Doctrine" (press release, Press Information Bureau, Government of India, New Delhi, January 4, 2003), <http://pib.nic.in/archieve/lreng/lyr2003/rjan2003/04012003/r040120033.html>.

<sup>31</sup> "India Following 'Tricky Two-Sided' China Policy: Chinese Media," *Indian Express*, April 25, 2016, <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/india-following-tricky-two-sided-china-policy-chinese-media/>.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

Parliament on December 13, 2001,<sup>34</sup> the country started troop mobilisation under ‘Operation Parakram’. However, during and after this Operation, the Indian strategic community started questioning the viability of the Sundarji Doctrine and called it ‘flawed’ and too ‘inflexible’<sup>35</sup> due to the following reasons:

1. The strike corps ‘was too big and too far away from the international border, making it difficult to deploy in a timely fashion’<sup>36</sup> since from the time mobilisation orders were given it took them nearly three weeks to reach the border.
2. ‘The long duration needed to mobilise the strike corps prevented strategic surprise, allowing not only Pakistan time to counter-mobilise’<sup>37</sup>, but also the international community (specifically the United States) to intervene and diffuse the tensions.<sup>38</sup>
3. ‘The holding corps’ lack of offensive power along the international border prevented it from engaging in significant offensives.’<sup>39</sup>

Therefore, the Indian security establishment came up with another idea-cum-doctrine called the CSD to address any ‘future’ threats from Pakistan.

#### ***Main Characteristics of the CSD***<sup>40</sup>

1. To acquire the capacity ‘to start a limited conventional war against Pakistan within 72 hours of the policy decision.’<sup>41</sup>
2. To ‘involve limited, rapid armoured thrusts, with infantry and necessary air support.’
3. To launch a ‘retaliatory conventional strike against Pakistan that would inflict significant harm on the Pakistan Army before the international community could intercede.’<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> “2001: Suicide Attack on Indian Parliament,” *BBC*, December 13, 2001, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/december/13/newsid\\_3695000/3695057.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/december/13/newsid_3695000/3695057.stm); Ladwig III, “A Cold Start for Hot Wars?”

<sup>35</sup> *Wikipedia*, s.v. “Cold Start (Military Doctrine),” last modified September 21, 2016, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold\\_Start\\_\(military\\_doctrine\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold_Start_(military_doctrine)); Ladwig III, “A Cold Start for Hot Wars?” 163.

<sup>36</sup> *Wikipedia*, s.v. “Cold Start.”

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Ladwig III, “A Cold Start for Hot Wars?” 163.

<sup>39</sup> *Wikipedia*, s.v. “Cold Start.”

<sup>40</sup> Presented in April 2004.

<sup>41</sup> Syed Kashif Ali, “An Overview of Indo-Pak Military Doctrines,” *Daily Times*, September 19, 2015, <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/19-Sep-15/an-overview-of-indo-pak-military-doctrines>.

<sup>42</sup> Ladwig III, “A Cold Start for Hot Wars?” 163, quoted in Adeel Mukhtar Mirza, “The Debate on Nuclear First Use and No First Use: The Case of Pakistan,” *South Asian Voices*,

4. To pursue limited aims 'to deny Islamabad a justification to escalate the conflict to the nuclear level.'<sup>43</sup>

In spite of Indian claims that such a policy does not exist, it has been constructing massive new airfields and bases, a wide rail and road communication network has been laid down to facilitate swift mobilisation, new logistic installations have been set up close to Pakistan's borders to support the offensives. 'India has spent 55 billion dollars on the CSD, and plans to invest another 100 billion on it, which is over and above the country's current 40 billion dollar defence budget. The K4 submarine-launched ballistic missile test and the development of INS Arihant', in addition to nuclearisation of the Indian Ocean, highlights Indian Navy's plans to carry out 'an effective blockade of Pakistan's Sea Lanes of Communications, as envisioned in the CSD.'<sup>44</sup> It has been pointed out that 'India and Israel in future may also work in partnership to induct Dvora-III vessels into the Indian Navy.' This would give the Indian Navy 'an edge against Pakistan when it comes to overlapping claims between the two countries over the Exclusive Economic Zone in the Arabian Sea, specifically in the Sir Creek area.'<sup>45</sup>

## **Options for Pakistan**

On the basis of above debate, Pakistan finds itself in an altogether different position.

It is difficult for Pakistan to compete with India in conventional arms race. Pakistan's fragile economy cannot take the burden of conventional arms procurement.<sup>46</sup>

At the same time, according to its Chief of Army Staff:

Pakistan is capable of dealing with all kinds of internal and external threats, be it conventional or sub-conventional, cold start or hot start. We are ready.<sup>47</sup>

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November 4, 2015, <http://southasianvoices.org/the-debate-on-nuclear-first-use-and-no-first-use-the-case-of-pakistan-3/>.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Muhammad Umer, "The Hot Reality of Cold Start," *News International*, April 19, 2016, <http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/113719-The-hot-reality-of-cold-start>.

<sup>45</sup> Khattak, "Strategic Significance of Indo-Israel Defence Collaboration."

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Kamran Yousaf, "'Cold Start or Hot Start': We're Ready, Says Gen. Raheel," *Express Tribune*, September 7, 2015, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/952014/cold-start-or-hot-start-were-ready-gen-raheel/>.

Be that as it may, with India expanding its defence industry, Pakistan needs to deter any offense not only from the former in the future, but also for its present efforts in the War on Terror. Given India's massive defence budget and its overall military strength in terms of sheer numbers, Pakistan needs to invest in defence technologies that maximise its capabilities against any enemy, be it external or internal. The following options can become part of a holistic programme/strategy to address any future Indian offense towards Pakistan:

1. Pakistan should continue the development of tactical nuclear weapons to deter India from launching a limited war.
2. Military exercises like Azm-e-Nau should be carried out on a regular and more frequent basis.
3. While Pakistan has a strong missile programme, it should focus on countering India's anti-ballistic missile technologies (ABMs).
4. Pakistan should exercise restraint rather than aggression vis-à-vis Indian offensive posture and keep on building defence mechanisms as 'sometimes aggressors are fed by temptation and fear, rather than deterred by security measures others adopt.'<sup>48</sup>
5. Pakistan should pursue a policy of self-help; and since military might is the only effective safeguard against any aggression, the government should strengthen its economic development to augment the security/defence sector.
6. On the diplomatic front, Pakistan should continue to highlight India's offensive designs in the region as well as internationally.
7. Keeping in view the changing international and regional security dynamics, Pakistan should maintain a consistent stance on full spectrum deterrence (FSD).<sup>49</sup>
8. Pakistan should keep its nuclear doctrine ambiguous. As per Indian security experts' writing expressing visible fears, India still does not know at what point Pakistan would cross its nuclear threshold. This feeling of doubt and fear deters India from carrying out surgical strikes inside Pakistan.

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<sup>48</sup> "Offensive and Defensive Realism"; and extensively discussed in Stephen Van Evera "Offense, Defence, and the Causes of War," *International Security* 22, no. 4 (1998): 5–43, <http://web.stanford.edu/class/polisci211z/2.1/Van%20Evera%20IS%201998.pdf>.

<sup>49</sup> For more on this, see, Mateen Haider, "Pakistan to Maintain Full Spectrum Nuclear Deterrence, FO Asserts," *Dawn*, October 8, 2015, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1211527>; ISPR, "Press Release" (press release, no. 280/2015, Inter Services Public Relations, Rawalpindi, September 9, 2015), [https://www.ispr.gov.pk/front/main.asp?o=t-press\\_release&id=3026](https://www.ispr.gov.pk/front/main.asp?o=t-press_release&id=3026); "What is Pakistan's Full Spectrum Deterrence Doctrine," *Pakistan Defence Blog*, September 10, 2015, <http://defence.pk/threads/what-is-pakistans-full-spectrum-deterrence-doctrine.396951/>.

9. Pakistan should start focusing on improving its network-centric and electronic warfare capabilities.
10. Pakistan must make every effort to implement the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) since it would create strategic interdependence of China on Pakistan. China, being the strongest player, both economically and militarily, in the region with a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), would not like any conflict between Pakistan and India and could use its influence internationally, if so needed.<sup>50</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The case of India's offensive posture is a harbinger of grave dangers for South Asia, especially Pakistan. Already, Indian aggressive policies have provoked an arms race in the region. According to Terestita C. Schaffer, a former U.S. diplomat and a senior analyst with Brookings:

In a nuclear environment, the conventional war concept propagated by India is not logical, [since] it is not possible to quantify the concept of limited war in terms of geography, weapons or political objectives in the Indo-Pakistan equation. A limited war from Indian point of view may not be limited from Pakistani perspective.<sup>51</sup>

Pakistan wants peace and good relations with all its neighbours, especially India since indulgence in any war may be more costly to the former than the latter. The technological developments by India including ABM systems and its defence agreements with other countries, including Israel, for latest weapons' procurement is forcing Pakistan to look for other options. The bottom line to India's continuing arrogance not only means more suffering for its own poverty-ridden people; but also Pakistan where much needed development budget may not reach the people-centric projects and programmes envisioned by its policy-makers and leaders. ■

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<sup>50</sup> Editor's note: Case in point, China blocking Indian membership to the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). See for details, Baqir Sajjad Syed, "India's Bid to Join NSG Hits Dead End," *Dawn*, June 24, 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1266838>; "China Blow to India's Nuclear Suppliers Group Hopes," *BBC News*, June 24, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-36620949>.

<sup>51</sup> Terestita C. Schaffer quoted in Sannia Abdullah, "Cold Start in Strategic Calculus," *IPRI Journal* XII, no. 1 (2012): 1-27, <http://www.ipripak.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/art1asanw12.pdf>.