

Entanglement of Deterrence: Risk of Inadvertent War in South Asia

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Abstract

The acrimonious relationship between the nuclear rivals of South Asia has led to three full-scale wars and several limited crises in the region of South Asia. In the contemporary era, scholarly work is depicting the possibilities of risk escalation in Pakistan- India crisis resulting from the surgical strike of India intended to exert pressure on the conventional forces of Pakistan. The threat of war has been multiplied by the growing vulnerabilities of nuclear and conventional assets. There is a need to review the enabling command, control, communication, and intelligence (C3I) capabilities – and advanced non-nuclear weapons that are presumably intended to deter the enemy. The basic framework of this research is the deterrence theory and critical analysis of the advanced technologies and its impact on the South Asian nuclear rivals is being assessed. Interestingly, in issuing this threat – non nuclear attacks on the nuclear forces and C3I capabilities could be catastrophic not only for conventional war but could directly spark a nuclear war. These assets include satellites used for early warning, communication, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR); ground-based radars and transmitters; and communication aircraft. The key focus in avoiding these catastrophic consequences is that it is now possible to consider attacks on the enemy's C3I or its conventional/nuclear forces (whether they belong to Pakistan or India) as a deliberate attempt. The article draws an empirical claim that the inadvertent war and the risk of its escalation between Pakistan and India have become more severe than before and is increasing significantly in the future prospects.

Key Words

Deterrence, C3I, Entanglement, Disruptive Technologies, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), South Asia

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Introduction

Entanglement by deterrence is the concept that describes how states' military capabilities, especially nuclear /non-nuclear, are intertwined and can be volatile. For instance, in case of non-nuclear or conventional attack on an opponent's nuclear installations or its command-and-control structure, opponent can respond with nuclear weapons before they are disabled. Pakistan and India are continuously developing and deploying long-range missiles capable of carrying nuclear or non-nuclear warheads. In a crisis, there is a possibility to misinterpret a non-nuclear warhead as a nuclear warhead or vice versa. This risk of miscalculation may conclude in the failure of deterrence.¹ Both the states can attack each other's dual-use and C3I capabilities. Therefore, at the outbreak of the conventional war, the C3I system of both of the opponents could escalate. Scholars have written regarding the scarcity of Indian strikes on Pakistan's C3I assets soon after the nuclear test of 1998.² According to James Acton:

Two escalation mechanisms that have not been previously discussed in the academic literature are primarily responsible for increasing risk. First: the target might interpret non-nuclear attacks against its dual-use C3I assets motivated by conventional war fighting goals as preparations for nuclear use. They might respond to such misinterpreting warnings, to coin a term, by trying to deter the nuclear strike it believed might be coming or to mitigate its potentially catastrophic consequences. Such efforts, which might include provocative non-nuclear operations to protect remaining C3I assets (such as strikes against anti-satellite weapons deep within the adversary's territory) accompanied, perhaps, by nuclear threats, could prove highly escalatory. These escalation pressures could arise even if the recipient of misinterpreted warnings were not concerned about the survivability of its nuclear forces—a key distinction from crisis instability.³

The perceptions of its leaders based on escalation or de-escalation are highly influenced by the reaction of states towards structural modifies which are based on historical legacies between Pakistan and India.⁴ These perceptions play a very analytical role or sometimes a dangerous role in shaping state behavior.⁵ For instance, the need for offence-defence balance by a state directly

¹Christoph Bluth, "India and Pakistan: A case of Asymmetric Nuclear Deterrence," *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, 22:3 (2010), 406.

²Karthika Sasikumar, "India-Pakistan Crises under the Nuclear Shadow: The Role of Reassurance," *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament*, 2:1(2019), 169.

³James M. Acton, "Escalation through Entanglement: How the Vulnerability of Command-and-Control Systems Raises the Risks of an Inadvertent Nuclear War," *International Security*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (Summer 2018): 56–99.

⁴Taliaferro, Jeffrey W. "Security Seeking under Anarchy: Defensive Realism Revisited." *International Security* 25, no. 3 (2000), 61.

⁵Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain and Germany between the World Wars* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1984), 69.

opposes the civilian and military perception of security.⁶ To overrule legitimate security requirements, officials often seek examples from history to draw up a military doctrine.⁷

The Indian leadership has shared decades-long animosity and hostility towards Pakistan as the historical rivals. Often, the leaders' preexisting beliefs have prevented peace between the states. The government in power often antagonizes Pakistan to serve its domestic interests. Therefore, Pakistan faced security threat from India. It created a security competition between both states. Similarly, the nuclear doctrines of both states are directed towards one another. However, India claims that its security policies are China-centric.⁸ Still, as China and Pakistan always had friendly relations, especially in the wake of CPEC, the relations are more strengthened.

Deterrence is said to be in the eye of the beholder. Firstly, suppose Pakistan's nuclear doctrine is to influence the decisions of the Indian political and military leadership. In that case, it must be designed to affect their perceptions of how a nuclear war would be fought and their vision of the conflict's gruesome outcome. Secondly, there is a structural reason to expect that a pre-emptive element in Indian strategy will continue to exist in future. As of the commitment to Cold Start Doctrine (CSD), India maintains the threat of an apparent first-use conventional attack on Pakistan, which may escalate into the nuclear response. The continuous maintenance of limited strategic options thus provides a strong incentive for Pakistani military planners to retain pre-emptive options for nuclear weapons.⁹

The growing asymmetry and differential in the power capabilities between Pakistan and India, are promoting irrational behavior on India's part, which is now acting as USA's swing state in its strategy to counterbalance and limit the rise of China. India's self-image of a global power with ambition of becoming regional hegemon in South Asia, coupled with its steady economic growth, huge economic market domestically and diplomatic and political influence externally, are all

⁶James W. Davis, Jr., Bernard I. Finel, Stacie E. Goddard, Stephen Van Evera, Charles L. Glaser and Chaim Kaufmann, "Correspondence: Taking Offense at Offense-Defense Theory," *International Security*, 23:3 (1999), 206.
⁷ Ibid.

⁸ A.D. Muraviev, D. Ahlawat & L. Hughes, "India's Security Dilemma: Engaging Big Powers while Retaining Strategic Autonomy," *Int Polit* 59, 1138 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41311-021-00350-z> accessed September 24, 2023.

⁹ Walter C. Ladwig, "A Cold Start for Hot Wars? The Indian Army's New Limited War Doctrine" *International Security* 32, no. 3 (2007), 90, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30130521>, accessed September 24, 2023.

incentivizing the military build-up of India, which is contributing to the 'Offence-Defence Imbalance' in the region.¹⁰

Deterrence theory is further divided into two sub-categories: Direct Deterrence and Extended Deterrence. Direct Deterrence deals with preventing an attack by the adversary without involving great powers and through sole dependence over the internal power instruments.¹¹ However, Extended Deterrence involves thwarting an armed attack with the help of great powers. A successful deterrence relies on the defence of a state's strategy to the limits of attacking a state's vulnerability. The defence largely depends upon the balance of coercion and credibility of deterrence in a state's strategy, while a state manages to minimize its internal and external contrarians. However, the adversary's vulnerability is assessed through domestic and international constraints.¹² This theoretical understanding, which deals with the theory of deterrence, provides a basic understanding of research aim and provides a conceptual understanding of the relevance of deterrence in management and de-escalation of conflict between Pakistan and India.

South Asian Scenario: Deterrence Discourse

Kenneth Waltz, one of the leading proliferation optimists, says that the spread of nuclear weapons in the world would result in peace as it would limit the possibility of a conflict due to high cost of all-out war.¹³ Nevertheless this notion has been challenged by the entanglement of deterrence concept, which entails the risk of miscalculations and misperception that could lead towards the conventional and nuclear confrontation. Pakistan and India have experienced strained bilateral relations, marked by three major wars, since gaining independence. Despite both countries conducting nuclear tests in 1998, they have faced several severe crises that pushed them to the brink of large-scale war, casting a shadow of nuclear threat over South Asia. The enduring rivalry

¹⁰James W. Davis, Bernard I. Finel, Stacie E. Goddard, Stephen Van Evera, Charles L. Glaser, Chaim Kaufmann; Correspondence: Taking Offense at Offense-Defense Theory. *International Security* 1999; 23 (3), 206. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1162/isec.23.3.179>.

¹¹Jacek Kugler, A. F. K. Organski, and Daniel J. Fox. "Deterrence and the Arms Race: The Impotence of Power," *International Security* 4, no. 4 (1980), 38, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2626670>.

¹²Bruce W. Jentleson and Christopher Whytock, "Who 'Won' Libya? The Force-Diplomacy Debate and Its Implications for Theory and Policy," *International Security* 30, no. 3 (2006), 86.

¹³Kenneth Waltz, "The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Better," *Adelphi Papers*, Number 171 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1981), <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/waltz1.htm>, accessed January 30, 2023.

between these two nuclear-armed nations continues to pose the world's most significant risk of nuclear escalation.

During the crisis, the two sides also undertook their respective missile tests. India in 2002 conducted a test of its nuclear-capable "Agni-II surface-to-surface missile up to a distance of 420 miles and was followed by its BrahMos supersonic cruise missile that was developed in collaboration with Russia."¹⁴ Pakistan, on the other hand, tested its nuclear capable "Ghauri-I (Hatf-V), Ghazni (Hatf-III), Abdali (Hatf-II), and Shaheen (Hatf-IV) missiles in response to Indian tests between May and October 2002."¹⁵

Thus, political and military statements about nuclear war and the conduction of reciprocal missile tests during the crisis were meant to the threat of nuclear escalation. However, active involvement of the international community and the presence of robust nuclear deterrence helped the region in preventing a full-fledged war.

The recent development of the Disruptive technologies is complicating the South Asian strategic stability. These technologies provide decision-makers with a diverse range of stand-off kinetic and non-kinetic options, potentially replacing the reliance on traditional military instruments. Accurate cruise missiles, precision-guided munitions (PGMs), hypersonic weapons¹⁶, standoff weapon (SW) platforms, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or drone,¹⁷ are the avenues which are undermining the deterrence stability of the region. These disruptive technologies create additional complexities and uncertainties in the strategic landscape of South Asia.

Unmanned aerial vehicles may fly alone or in groups to launch kamikaze assaults.¹⁸ Without crossing international borders, these technologies might be employed against susceptible

¹⁴“India’s IGMP Missile programs: Export Contenders?” *Defence Industry Daily*, Last Updated December 4, 2020, <https://www.defenseindustrydaily.com/india-gears-up-to-begin-exporting-missiles-updated-01536/>, accessed on January 23, 2023.

¹⁵ “Pakistan Missile Update – 2003,” *Wisconsin Project on Arms Control*, November 1, 2003, <https://www.wisconsinproject.org/pakistan-missile-update-2003/>, accessed on January 23, 2023.

¹⁶China recently exhibited its hypersonic weapons capabilities, capable of traveling at speeds surpassing Mach 5 and reaching distances of 40-100 km in the outer atmosphere. US referred to it as a "Sputnik Moment." In 2020, India conducted trials of its hypersonic technology demonstrator vehicle (HSTDV), with the capacity to achieve speeds of 6.5 Mach at an altitude of 32 km, utilizing a solid rocket-launched booster.

¹⁷ Include loitering munitions that are either semi or fully autonomous and are programed to attack the target.

¹⁸ Vinay Chamola, Pavan Kotes, Aayush Agarwal, Naren, Navneet Gupta and Mohsen Guizani, “A Comprehensive Review of Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Attacks and Neutralization Techniques”, *National Library of Medicine*, Oct 10, 2020, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7547616/>, accessed January 25, 2023.

communications, gas pipelines, and petrochemical industries as well as military targets. Compared to using conventional military forces (manned aircraft), these technologies make it easier for political decision-making entities to approve the use of force. Future fighting situations would be influenced by drone combats and anti-drone counter veiling measures, which are actual possibilities.¹⁹

Pakistan traditionally trails in space investments and currently relying more on China for space collaboration.²⁰ India also has large-scale ambitions to launch several satellites and space-vehicle based missions in space. China launched its international space station in 2022 and it has the capacity for running scientific projects from many other countries.²¹ This shows China's aim to modify and expand its space programs which will have direct impact on South Asian politics.

Despite their apparent low cost, cyber weapons are one of the most potent tools in use today. They can be used to command and control systems, drive economic circles, critically target military systems, operate banking systems, gas supply systems, and electric power systems. Cyber-attacks and cyber defence have multiplied the threats for the nations that are already battling territorial disputes. The imbalance in military strength disrupts the equilibrium of the region resulting in mistrust, and deadlock of dialogue are evident that the strategic instability will never lessens and the fear of escalation never mitigates.

The nuclear capabilities of China, Pakistan and India are an illustrious example to deter any threat and maintain peace. The asymmetric military capacity of the three nations has sparked a rise in non-state entities like terrorist organizations which carry out assaults by taking advantage of the weak points in the region's security and local tensions, thus escalating the security situation. Additionally, contributing to the instability in the area and fostering the spread of extreme ideology are the fears of a nuclear war.

Global security may be affected by the weapons race and tensions that are escalating in South Asia. Given the flexibility of alliances, the significance of the region's markets, and the availability of its energy resources, any conflict or crisis in the region might have serious geopolitical and

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ahmad Khan & Zulfqar Khan, "Regionalism and Space Activities: China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and Space Power in South Asia," *Astro politics* 19:1-2(2021), 91, DOI: 10.1080/14777622.2021.2000323.

²¹ Zhao Dan, Qian Tong and Hao Xuai, "China's Great Race to Build a SpaceX Competitor," *Nikkei Asia*, August 2, 2023.

economic repercussions. The regional power balance may become unstable due to India's expanding military capacities and aspirations for regional dominance. Any violence in the area may have serious humanitarian repercussions, such as human loss, population displacement, and infrastructure devastation. Additionally, it might have an effect on the already precarious socioeconomic circumstances in the area.

The writers Buzan and Wæver call South Asia a complicated region where internal and external issues arise from linking of borders with each other.²² In South Asian context, according to Pakistan's perspective "India adopted an aggressive doctrine, the Cold Start, Pakistan responded by developing tactical nuclear weapons; India is developing ballistic missile defence and Pakistan is sure to respond by adjusting its nuclear force posture. It is thus not the individual weapons systems but the security dilemma that is the cause of instability in highly volatile South Asia."²³ On the other hand, Indian perspective states that "It can limit damage to oneself in the event deterrence fails. There are three ways in which deterrence might not work: if there is an accidental launch, if there is an unauthorized 'renegade' launch, and if an undeterrable adversary engages in a suicidal launch."²⁴ For India, the development of the BMD is the next logical step especially when the adversary has lowered their own nuclear threshold. On the other hand, Pakistan considers the introduction and the development of Indian BMD to be a damaging factor to the stability in the region and is actively researching ways to counter it.²⁵

Entanglement of Deterrence and The Risk of Inadvertent War

The advent of nuclear weapons in South Asia gave a predominant importance to the idea of deterrence in the strategic rivalry between the two adversaries. The incident at Pulwama and the significant subsequent events, like the claimed punitive surgical strikes at Balakot and the swift response by the Pakistan Air Force only further prove and bring to the forefront the fragile nature

²²Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and powers: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge University Press, 2003).

²³Ghazala Yasmine Jalil, "Nuclear Arms Race in South Asia: Pakistan's Quest for Security," *Strategic Studies* 37, no. 1 (2017), 41.

²⁴Rajesh M. Basrur, "Missile Defense: An Indian Perspective," in *The Impact of Missile Defenses on Southern Asia*, (Washington, DC: Stimson Center, June 2001), 10

²⁵Arun Vishwanathan, "Nuclear Signals in South Asia," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, September 8, 2013, <http://thebulletin.org/nuclear-signals-south-asia>, accessed on January 23, 2023.

that the peace of the region maintains and the effectiveness of the notion of full-spectrum deterrence in particular.²⁶

The scenario in the post Pulwama era raises a question, whether or not the entanglement of deterrence raises the risk of inadvertent war in the region. The Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has often iterated the *jaw for a tooth*²⁷ when relating to the punishment of Pakistani armed forces and, as part of his election campaign and on his oath-taking, he announced the drawing of new red-lines in the Kashmir conflict with Pakistan.²⁸ Commenting on the bilateral relations between Pakistan and India, the Indian Prime Minister has openly pointed out that mere dialogue is over and now is the time for solid execution. Since then, the Indian Premier has made no move to hide the fact that India has contemplated conducting surgical strikes against targets within its neighbour Pakistan.²⁹ In contemporary era, the assumption of offensive realism that “states prefer survival above other factors,” also can be justified in the Indian perspective under the rise of Hindutva Ideology. With the rise of Hindu ideologies, India considers that it should acquire and built robust defenses, get hold of advanced technologies and gather military strength in order to protect Hindu religion, beliefs and territory from foreign and internal enemies.³⁰ Along with BJP, the Indian print and electronic media have been making solid efforts to publicly prove that their Premier, Prime Minister Modi, can make bold and confident decisions regarding national security issues that the country faces.³¹

The Indian Director General Military Operations (DGMO), on September 29, 2016 stated in a press conference that "some terrorist teams had positioned themselves at launch-pads along the Line of Control (LoC) and the Indian Army conducted a ‘surgical strike’ at these launch pads. Significant casualties have been caused by these terrorists and those who are trying to support

²⁶ Admin, “Full Spectrum Deterrence: Capability and Credibility,” *Pakistanpolitico* (blog), June 7, 2018, <https://pakistanpolitico.com/full-spectrum-deterrence-capability-and-credibility/>.

²⁷ Atman Trivedi, Amy Searight, “Modi Needs to Show India Has Teeth: Asia is Ready for India to step up as the United States withdraw,” *Foreign Policy*, May 31, 2018, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/05/31/modi-needs-to-show-india-has-teeth/>, accessed on January 23, 2023.

²⁸ Zafar N. Jaspal, *India's, 'Surgical Strike' Stratagem: Brinkmanship and Response* (Islamabad: Khursheed Printers (Pvt.) Ltd, 2019), 2.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Jyotirmaya Sharma, *Hindutva: Exploring the Idea of Hindu Nationalism* (Penguin Books India, 2011).

³¹ “Modi and BJP Are Openly Politicising National Security, After Saying They Will Not,” accessed February 23, 2023, <https://thewire.in/politics/modi-bjp-national-security>.

them."³² However, the official stance of the Pakistani side was a dismissal of the false claims of the Indians regarding the execution of any such actions. Security analysts from India, many of them, also agreed with the Pakistani stance and brushed away any accounts of the 'surgical strike' as a convolution of the truth.³³ The Indian military, however, turned this faux 'surgical strike' into a critical integral part of their Joint Doctrine of the Indian Armed Forces – 2017 (JDIAF – 2017), which was released in April 2017. The JDIAF – 2017 states: "India has moved to a proactive and pragmatic philosophy to counter various conflict situations. The response to terror provocations could be in the form of 'surgical strike', and these would be subsumed in the sub conventional portion of the spectrum of armed conflict."³⁴ The integration of 'surgical strike' in the JDIAF – 2017 has signified the change in Indian nuclear doctrine. It has further affected and changed India's 'no-first-use' nuclear weapon policy.

The Indian Air Force Chief, Birender Singh Dhanoa made a statement on October 4, 2017 that if India needed to carry out a 'surgical strike,' its aircraft could target Pakistan's nuclear installations and destroy them.³⁵ However, this tactic is not a completely new one for the Indians because the Indian military strategists have been trying to institutionalize the CSD and its successor, the pro-active military operation strategy. After the Pulwama incident on February 14, 2019, Pakistan and India were brought to the point of almost all-out war by the negligent and reckless behaviour of the Indian Premier Narendra Modi and the Indian media who simply ignited the situation. However, Pakistan abstained from adopting the escalatory measures, even offering aid in the investigation and arrest of the offenders involved in the attack, if Delhi shared any actionable evidence.³⁶

³²"Surgical strikes: Full text of Indian Army DGM Lt Gen Ranbir Singh's press conference," *The Indian Express*, September 29, 2016, <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/pakistan-infiltration-attempts-indian-army-surgical-strikes-line-of-control-jammu-and-kashmir-uri-poonch-pok-3055874/>, accessed January 16, 2023

³³ "'Surgical' Farce Blows up in India's Face," *The Express Tribune*, September 29, 2016, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1191126/surgical-farce-blows-indias-face>.

³⁴*Joint Doctrine: Indian Armed Forces* (New Delhi: Directorate of Doctrines, Headquarters Integrated Defense Staff Ministry of Defense, April 2017), 14.

³⁵ Anwar Iqbal, "Pakistan warns India against targeting its N-installations," *Dawn*, October 6, 2017.

³⁶ Abid Hussain, "Pakistan Reacts to Ex-Kashmir Governor's Revelations on Pulwama," *Al Jazeera*, accessed February 23, 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/4/17/pakistan-reacts-to-ex-kashmir-governors-revelations-on-pulwama>.

At the same time, Pakistan also made it clear to her Indian counterpart that in case of any military misadventure, Pakistan would react swiftly and retaliate immediately.³⁷ India carried out the ‘surgical strike.’ Subsequently, Pakistan retaliated on February 27, 2019, six targets were targeted in broad daylight inside the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and two Indian fighter jets that had violated the country’s airspace were shot down, the Pakistan Air Force further verifying the country’s resolve to retaliate against the aggression of the Indians.³⁸

Moreover, the so-called accidental launching of BrahMos missile in Pakistan's territory is also raising concern for the international community and the self-aware and conscientious behavior and the immense restraint that was displayed by the Pakistani political elite, media and armed forces deescalated the situation. They averted the possibility of war between Pakistan and India.³⁹

Conclusion

Nuclear tests of South Asia in 1998 brought a consequential threat in the region that has been well documented and well researched by scholars, academicians and practitioners. The acrimonious relationship between the states led to three full- scale wars and several limited crises in the South Asian region. The threat of war has been multiplied by the growing vulnerabilities of nuclear and conventional assets. South Asia is facing severe challenges, such as risks due to the entanglement of civilian infrastructure viz-a-viz conventional and nuclear systems, associated with command and control of nuclear weapons of both the states. There is a need to review the enabling C3I capabilities – and advanced non-nuclear weapons that are presumably intended to deter the enemy. Interestingly, in issuing this threat – non nuclear attacks on the nuclear forces and C3I capabilities could be catastrophic not only for conventional war but could directly spark a nuclear war. These assets include satellites used for early warning, communication, and ISR; ground-based radars and transmitters; and communication aircraft. The premise of inadvertent war in South Asian region. In the contemporary era, scholarly work is depicting the possibilities of risk escalation in Pakistan- India crisis resulting from the surgical strike of India intended to exert

³⁷ Imran Khan, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, addresses the general debate of the 74th Session of the General Assembly of the UN (New York, 24 – 30 September 2019), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uyaQgnQCQ5k>, accessed February 28, 2023.

³⁸ “Pakistan says it shot down Indian jets, carried out air strikes in Kashmir,” *Reuters*, February 27, 2019, <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/02/27/indian-air-force-plane-crashes-in-kashmir-says-indian-police-official.html>, accessed February 28, 2023.

³⁹ “Pakistan Demands Joint Probe into ‘Accidental’ India Missile Fire,” *Al Jazeera*, accessed February 28, 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/12/pakistan-demands-joint-probe-after-accidental-india-missile>.

pressure on the conventional forces of Pakistan. The inadvertent war and the risk of its escalation between Pakistan and India have become more severe than before and is increasing significantly in the prospect. Nonetheless, this possibility of conventional conflict in South Asia cannot be ruled out. Both continue to invest in capabilities to ensure their deterrent posture's credibility, which indicates the growing imbalance in conventional and strategic military capabilities in South Asia. It is likely to contribute to crisis instability and could result in a failure of deterrence and the loss of escalation control during a future conflict in South Asia.