

## India's growing muscle power: Will it bring regional peace?



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SOUTH Asia's security does not depend only on South Asian countries because China comes in the picture. The impact of Indo-Sino war of 1962 looms large in India's security strategy.

India assesses its security concerns in the light of Chinese military strength, and Pakistan defines its security position against India's position. This has manifested in arms and missile race in South Asia.

India is turning to the US for military hardware to secure its border. India is planning to procure 126 US built multirole combat fighter jets at a cost of \$11 billion to rearm country's outdated air force and upgrade defence capabilities against China and Pakistan. India is one of the biggest arms buying country in the world.

Both India and Pakistan have intensified in manufacturing missile capabilities not only as defence strategy but also as symbol of power and prestige. Both India and Pakistan are capable of striking any part of each other's territory with missiles.

It is reported by the Arms Control Association, a US weapons research organisation, India has between 45 and 95 nuclear bombs, while Pakistan, 30 and 50 and China has 300.

Both India and Pakistan have been investing money to improve the range and mobility of their missile systems for delivering nuclear warheads.

India already tested Agni-3 missile (16 metres long and weighs 48 tonnes) that has a range of beyond 3,000 kilometres and can easily hit China. The US Department of State made a statement that the successful launch of the Agni-3 hopefully would not destabilize the security situation in South Asia.

India will receive nuclear fuel and technology for civilian nuclear power and will be able to divert its domestic nuclear fuel to enlarge its nuclear arsenal. This will set in motion arms race as China and Pakistan will not sit idle with India's increased defence capabilities.

According to the Bulletin of the Atomic

Scientists, the India's Defence Ministry has earmarked US\$ 2 billion annually to build 300 to 400 nuclear weapons over the next 5 to 7 years.

Indian army (1.3 million as compared to Pakistan 6,25,000) is one of the largest in the world in active service and India possesses large conventional sophisticated weapons. It has a strong military presence in the Indian Ocean and its naval bases in far off islands, Andaman and Lakshadweep and Nicobar, are getting stronger day by day, to meet future challenges on the sea. India has also undertaken a number of naval and air projects including military reconnaissance centre in the Maldives and Sri Lanka.

Some time ago, India has begun constructing a 37,500-tonne aircraft carrier that will fly MiG-29 fighters, joining only with navies of big powers in such capabilities. It also plans to lease two nuclear submarines from Russia. The US has openly discussed the sale of naval vessels, and helicopters to India.

Pakistan is also building with Chinese support the Gwadar naval base in Balochistan to counter India's supremacy in the Indian Ocean. China has a naval base in Myanmar's off-shore Coco islands to have its presence felt in the Indian Ocean. China has recently opened Hambantota port in south Sri Lanka. Currently an ambitious programme to develop Colombo port has been given to another Chinese consortium.

**Why do India and Pakistan seek to develop missile capability?**

First, recent events in world politics have not only highlighted the indispensability of military capability, they have accentuated the military-strategic allure of missiles.

Second, both India and Pakistan have decided to rely on ballistic missiles as a critical element of their deterrent strategy against each other. In the case of Pakistan, it has comparatively less strategic depth. More significantly, all Pakistani airbases and nuclear and ballistic missile research and deployment sites are extremely vulnerable to India's pre-emptive air strikes.

Missile capability has its effectiveness due to its speed and assured penetration together with its deterrent value.

Third, Indian plans to acquire theatre missile defence system (TMD) from Israel and Russia as part of its efforts to effectively neutralise Pakistan's missile capabilities. The introduction of anti-tactical ballistic missile (ATBM) capability into South Asia by India, according to Pakistani defence analysts, will have cascading effect on Pakistan by generating pressures for a bigger missile force as a countermeasure. Pakistan worries that India's defensive systems would be able to neutralize a nuclear strike by Pakistan, thus allowing India to engage in a conventional war with large army without fear of nuclear retaliation from Pakistan.

Fourth, missile defence systems could help alleviate some of the instability associated with the region's poor command and control and the possibility of the accidental or unauthorized launch of nuclear weapons.

Fifth, India, Pakistan claims, views Pakistan as an obstacle to its great power ambitions and is therefore pursuing a security strategy that seeks to nullify the Pakistani threat through Indian threat of a second strike option.

### Conclusion

Many strategists say that military superiority of India would not bring peace and stability between them or in the region. Both countries must proceed to negotiate how to reduce mistrust among them.

Military strength does not necessarily give a country the power to influence another country politically as the world politics involves global processes in an increasingly complex world.

During the Cold War, an absence of armed conflicts was considered a success. At the end of the Cold War, there is a different definition of success. It is judged by interactions within the regional countries to collectively utilize their resources to enhance their economic gains in a globalised competitive world.

Finally, the US is courting both India and Pakistan for different reasons. The US wants India to counter China's claim to regional leadership and it needs Pakistan to combat growing might of Taliban in Afghanistan.

The visit of President Obama in India in November demonstrates that the US looks forward to strengthening strategic partnership with India and seeks greater cooperation in areas such as trade, investment, services, nuclear energy, science, technology and defence.

After President Obama, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev are scheduled to visit India confirming India's regional leadership.

On 30th October former Prime Minister of Australia John Howard has predicted China's one-child policy and its political philosophy will allow India to supersede it as the dominant nation in Asia before the end of the 21st century.

The writer is a Former Bangladesh Ambassador to the UN, Geneva.

## Taiwan missile to target Chinese air bases, ports

Taipei: Taiwan is developing a potent missile system that can strike airfields and harbours on the mainland, in a bid to nip a Chinese invasion in the bud, local media said Tuesday.

The "Wan Chien" or "Ten Thousand Swords" missile system, which so far has cost nearly three billion Taiwan dollars (97 million US), passed an initial operating test earlier this year, said Defence Technology Monthly.

Each missile carries more than 100 cluster bomb warheads capable of blowing dozens of small craters in airport runways, making them impossible to use, the magazine said.

The missile is also designed to target harbours, missile and radar bases, as well as troop build-up areas prior to an invasion of the island, the magazine said.

The defence ministry is planning to invest 15 billion Taiwan dollars in 2011 and 2012 to equip its Indigenous Defence Fighters (IDFs) with the new system, it said.

The system could go into mass production after it is integrated with the IDF jets to reduce the risks of having to send Taiwanese jets to the mainland, as it can aim at Chinese targets from a distance, it added.

Military pundit Lin Yu-fang, a lawmaker of the ruling Kuomintang (KMT) party, told AFP that there had been "some progress" in the "Wan Chien" project but he declined to elaborate.

Taiwanese experts estimate the People's Liberation Army currently has more than 1,600 missiles aimed at the island.

Ties between Taiwan and its giant neighbour have improved markedly since the Beijing-friendly KMT took office in Taipei in 2008.

But China still considers the island part of its territory awaiting reunification, by force if necessary, prompting Taipei to seek more advanced defence weaponry mainly from the United States.

Washington announced in January a weapons package for Taiwan that includes Patriot missiles, Black Hawk helicopters, and equipment for Taiwan's F-16 fighter jets, but no submarines or new fighter aircraft.

A defence spokesman was not immediately available for comment.



## N.Korea ready to provide torpedo sample over warship sinking

Seoul: North Korea said Tuesday it was ready to provide torpedo samples to back up its denial of responsibility for the deadly sinking of a South Korean warship.

It said aluminium alloy fragments salvaged by South Korea from the site of the sinking in March "prove, themselves, that the torpedo was not from the North".

North Korean torpedoes are "made of steel alloy material" not the aluminium alloy used in other countries, said the country's top ruling body, the National Defence Commission.

"(North Korea) is still willing to directly hand the steel alloy sample of Juche (self-reliance)-based torpedo" to the United States and South Korea, it said in a statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency.

The 1,200-tonne Cheonan was split into two on March 26 near the tense disputed border off the west coast, in one of the divided peninsula's deadliest incidents in decades.

The incident plunged cross-border relations to their lowest point in years and sharply raised regional tensions.

The North, in a statement several thousand words long, rejected as the "most hideous conspiratorial farce in history" the findings of a Seoul-led multinational probe.

That inquiry in May concluded that a submarine-launched North Korean torpedo sank the corvette with the loss of 46 lives.

Investigators cited "overwhelming" evidence, including a partial torpedo motor and propeller said to have been dredged from the seabed. They said this matched a type which the North had previously offered for export.

The South announced reprisals including a partial trade cut-off and staged several naval exercises as a warning to the North, some of them in conjunction with the United States.

In September the South reaffirmed the findings in a final report.

Russia sent its own experts to Seoul for an independent investigation but has not made the results public.

The North has demanded the right to send a high-level team to the South to inspect the evidence, including the torpedo part.

The South has rejected the demand, saying the UN Command should handle the case as a serious breach of the armistice that ended the 1950-53 war.

The North, as it has done earlier, disputed the scientific findings of the multinational investigation.

It also cast doubt on the discovery of the torpedo motor and propeller.

"It is nonsensical for them to claim that a civilian fishing boat appeared all of a sudden and netted the propelling body which dozens of warships equipped with sophisticated detecting devices failed to find out in at least 50 days," the statement said.

Citing what it called assertions by some experts, the North also claimed the warship could have broken into two after running aground on rocks.

If the hull had been split by a torpedo, it said, the edges would not have been jagged and the hull would have had fragments embedded in it.

Some South Koreans have also been sceptical about the assertion that a North Korean torpedo sank the ship. Alternative theories have included a grounding and a stray mine.

The South's defence ministry made no immediate comment on the North's fresh claims. The ministry, when releasing its final report, had said it was acting to dispel "groundless suspicions."

Source: defencetalk.com

## Bangladesh: New impetus in counter-terrorism effort

SIFAT UDDIN

IF I am asked about the different dimensions added to the studies of twenty first century terrorism then I would refer to the latest inclusion of terrorism into the study of Disaster Management. In many Universities of western world now terrorism is studied giving equal importance as much as given to the other disasters like earthquake, typhoon, flood, drought etc, but why? Because terrorism successfully emerged as a real catastrophic threat to the progress of human development. Terrorism is a man made disaster. Though ironically it is true that scholars are yet to define terrorism properly but concept like counter-terrorism has already emerged. Counter-terrorism involves those offensive measures taken to prevent, deter and respond to terrorism. Bangladesh also entered into that phase with some limited developments. Thanks go to European Union for their recent initiatives taken to build a regional counter-terrorism centre here in Dhaka. The regional Counter-Terrorism Centre will be set up in with financial and technological assistance from European Union to train people across South Asia to combat terrorism. The international standard centre will start functioning by early next year. Renowned counter-terrorism experts from European countries, United States and Canada will train investigators, police and intelligence agency personnel to fight terrorism. The centre will be the second in its type and the first one was established in Indonesia (National Anti-terrorism Agency (BNPT) way back in August this year. Now let us see the implications of BNPT typed centre in Dhaka in the present context of Bangladesh and why not other countries like India and Pakistan were not chosen as a host country.



### Context of Bangladesh

While discussing about the development of terrorism and effort for counter-terrorism of Bangladesh none can escape the context of South Asia where these are so much interrelated and interconnected. In South Asia we have had our home-grown terrorists for quite some time. The authorities in these countries have sometimes claimed that terrorist activities taking place in their respective territories have been made possible through active support and planning originating in neighboring country. After Mumbai

carnage in 2008 the Indian government blamed mainly Pakistan and partially Bangladesh for harboring terrorists involved behind the attack. After all these bloody experiences the countries are yet to come in a consensus to counter terrorism with hand in hand rather they are maintaining a blame game situation with each other. In the last two SAARC summits (last one was in 2010) member countries couldn't reach at a concrete decision to establish a regional counterterrorism task force. Bangladesh has always been firm in its stated principles about combating terrorism. For last two years there have been significant developments in Bangladesh as per as combating terrorism is concerned. The present government passed the law for combating terrorism in 2009 and in the year of 2010 during Hasina's visit to New Delhi Bangladesh signed an accord where third agreement was 'on Combating International Terrorism, Organized Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking fight against terrorism'. But in the aspect of counter terrorism there is little development. During February 2009 Prime

Minister Sheikh Hasina and her new government sent out an unambiguous political message to South Asian leaders and beyond to create a 'South Asian Task Force on Counter-terrorism'. But the proposal couldn't find the light because of various realities. Bangladesh cannot afford to establish a national counter-terrorism task force or centre so far. However, in our neighboring country India, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had his staff prepare a roadmap to "overhaul and modernize" internal security mechanisms, the key element of which was the setting up of a National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) like in most developed countries. This initiative was taken in May 2009 and is expected to be completed by the end of 2010. It took thirty six months for the US to set up a counter-terrorism centre since 9/11 accident but India responded earlier than the US as per as the terrorist attack on Mumbai in 2008 is concerned. Pakistan has there own National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) since 2009. But what about Bangladesh if we consider 2005 country wide bomb blast by JMB as a biggest terrorist attack against Bangladesh's national security?

### EU's Initiatives and Bangladesh

Regional counter terrorism centre is going to be a pioneering initiative taken by EU for Bangladesh. Since the attacks in New York, London and Madrid, the EU's counter-terrorism strategy has become a separate policy in all the EU's institutions. They are attempting to achieve this through prevention, protection, pursuit and response measures. EU's counter-terrorism now plays a central role in the European Security and Defense Policy. South Asian countries like India and Pakistan agreed with the EU plan to set up the counter-terrorism centre in Bangladesh, which will be the second after the first one in Indonesia. Both India and Pakistan have their own national counterterrorism agency on the other hand

Bangladesh yet to experience such centre. Second thing, in the recent past Bangladesh successfully combated terrorism; hanged all terrorist kingpins and now have shrunk its activities into some scattered areas with rare possibility to reemerge. Offer of setting up a centre from EU might have come as a prize for these successes and Bangladesh's perpetual commitment to fight against terrorism.

### Some Observations

Setting up of a centre for countering terrorism may not be a decisive solution. There are lot of pros and cons on the success and activities of counter-terrorism centers existing around the world. In Indonesia civil society welcomed BNPT with praise but later they were disillusioned with its activities. Much of the objection from civil society groups over the formation of the BNPT was because of fears that the agency was seen to have too much power. Another argument over the BNPT was generated from the failure of the decree to draw clear lines on how the agency was involved in taking measures on the man-hunt of terrorists. This was a critical point since the BNPT was not a law enforcement body. On the aspect of setting up a counter-terrorism centre in Bangladesh the concerned authorities need to look upon these matters. It is important for the future centre to establish complete and detailed rules and operational guidelines for all member units of the agency to prevent potential overlap or breach of laws and responsibilities. Any unclear regulation could lead to legal violations and possible human rights violations by the centre members, units or personnel. Failure to build suitable strategies for the upcoming centre will be counterproductive -- the centre may not get a chance to realize its full potential if no firm plans or strategies are in place.

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