

STRATEGIC DETERRENCE IN SOUTH ASIA FROM THE PRISM OF BALAKOT AND BEYOND

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Abstract

Ever since the advent of nuclear weapons, deterrence has been regarded as one of the most potent mechanisms of thwarting the application of military instruments between the nuclear-armed antagonists. Amidst the continual state of the fragile security environment, a growing military asymmetry between India and Pakistan and offensive Indian military doctrines obliges Pakistan to rely on Strategic Deterrence. Indian political and military elite has been looking to carve out space for limited war under nuclear overhang; Cold start and Proactive operations are two of the strategies evolved in the recent decades. Indian design to engage Pakistan in a limited war was an (at least partially) manifested during the Pulwama crisis, wherein, Indian Air force crossed international border and targeted alleged terrorist camps inside Pakistani territory. Pakistan responded with equally offensive action and bombed targets well inside the Indian Territory, besides downing Indian aircrafts. The unprecedented magnitude of Indian aggression and the resultant threat to regional security calculus, however, put a question mark on the general state of deterrence in South Asia. This article reviews the Pulwama incident and beyond from the perspective of deterrence and analyses the impact of small scale, apparently tactical operations with strategic objectives on the stability of deterrence in the Pak India security equation. The paper highlights that such proclivity of Indian leadership has given credence to the comprehensive deterrence which warrants an aggressive response to even the limited incursions. These limited incursions have a tendency to set in motion a series of actions and counter-actions, with dangerous prospects of touching the nuclear thresholds of one of the contenders. Indian attempt to establish new normal has met a severe setback as Pakistan displayed resolve to respond sharply to any aggressive move. In order to avoid the recurrence of such acts of Indian leadership, Pakistan would not regulate its response from the outset for fear of escalation. Planners of the next such conflict might be forced to take riskier actions thus putting deterrence stability under pressure. The paper underscores the need for redesigning the strands of deterrence to face challenges of fifth-generation warfare and likely Indian attempt of drawing strategic dividends from tactical actions in the era of the amplified scope of Information Operation thus carving victory in perception domain.

Keywords: Deterrence, South Asia, Nuclear Weapons, New Normal.

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Introduction

Strategic balance in South Asia has been tarnished by the US bid to develop India's Political, diplomatic and military profile for sustaining her as a hedge against China. As a result, Indian confidence and desired status of quasi regional policeman induced aspiration to shape a security environment, wherein state sovereignty is no longer inviolable and India could "turn the abnormal act of breaching the sovereignty of opponent into New-Normal".¹ Frequent acts of Cease Fire Violations and continued the spread of allegedly Indian sponsored terrorist organizations and occasional absence of a compelling rejoinder by Pakistan in the past emboldened hawks in extremist right-wing Indian political elite.

Country's resolve and capacity to react on Indian aggressions had faced questions, until the Post Balakot aggressive response by Pakistan Airforce. This time, considering the offensive a challenge to its comprehensive deterrence, Pakistan exhibited a resolute response paradigm. Such a response is particularly significant since Pakistan's will and ability to thwart adversaries' designs constitute its deterrence doctrine and is considered as surety for peace. With greater vulnerabilities, Pakistan has to rely on deterrence as a critical element of its military strategy, thus offsetting conventional force asymmetry with India and dissuade her from the application of the military instruments.²

While both nuclear neighbours in the past have played their cards cautiously, rise in Indian diplomatic and economic stature proffered an opportunity to coerce and condition Pakistan to tolerate aggressive Indian Actions as follow up of *allegedly Pakistan supported* acts of terrorism. Balakot thus added one more item to the *carte du jour* of non-nuclear options available to India thus expanding the variety of forms of aggression short of major conventional war.³ The central theme is raising Pakistan's threshold and continual widening of a window of punitive actions without fear of reprisal. Balakot standoff and lately, the autarchic repealing of Article 370 and 35(A) in Indian occupied Kashmir are hence viewed in the same context. Such Indian provocations put question mark on the general state of deterrence prevailing in sub-continent. This paper aimed looking at the Post-Pulwama developments from the prism of deterrence stability in the region.

There are multiple dimensions of Indo-Pakistan relations and varied explanations of Post-Pulwama happenings. This article will focus on the impact on deterrence with a view to ascertaining its sustainability amidst the varied character of future conflicts between nuclear neighbours of South Asia. Although, there is sufficient literature available on the subject of deterrence in South Asia, yet the impact of new cravings for venturing into the domains supposedly short of nuclear

threshold needs exploration. The paper will examine how the strategic stability in the region may be affected by smaller, not so spectacular operations, which may apparently seem to be tactical in nature.

Theoretical Construct of Deterrence

Deterrence is commonly understood in terms of convincing adversaries that aggression would provoke damage far greater than likely benefit. Dissuasion by the threat of momentous consequences for the aggressor thus lies in the foundation of the concept of deterrence. This implicit understanding ensures mutually assured survival sustained by the fear of mutually assured destruction.⁴ While analyzing fundamental principles of the concept of deterrence, one finds that it is a psychological function which carries roots far beyond the nuclear domain. Nonetheless, the induction of nuclear weapons in South Asia's security calculus has given primacy to the notion of nuclear deterrence. Nukes do not, however, automatically deter conflict unless the surety of the conflict escalating into a nuclear exchange obliges the target state to act rationally. Pakistan has employed both catalytic and asymmetric escalation strategies to ensure strategic deterrence in the region.⁵ Consequently, interplay of fear of reprisal and pursuance of major powers ensured stability of deterrence and has prevented major Indian adventure against Pakistan. This stability for a considerable period, kept the predicaments between the two countries consistently below the threshold where nuclear war remains thinkable.⁶

In order to offset the advantage of stable deterrence to its numerically inferior neighbour, India came up with a limited war doctrine, popularly known as the Cold Start. The doctrine envisaged that following a terrorist attack allegedly perpetrated by Pakistan, India would promptly attack, capture limited territory, cause adequate destruction and consequently embarrass/ discredit its armed forces. It was perceived that with these relatively limited politico-military objectives; India would force its will on Pakistan without crossing nuclear thresholds. Pakistan, as part of a comprehensive response, presented an important gap-filler in its deterrence mix by introducing low yield nuclear weapons, thus, denying limited spatial and military benchmarks.⁷ Later, Indian military thinkers, perhaps in a bid to further redesign subthreshold operations, conceived idea of limited tactical incursions and experimented the same earlier in (Indian claimed) surgical strikes 2016 and then at Balakot in 2018. Pakistan, therefore, believes that Indian offensive doctrines contradict the principle of rationality which rests at the core of the deterrence theory.⁸

Indian Attempts to Establish New Normal

One may ask why in an already fragile security environment in South Asia, India would cross international borders and engage in air battle against her nuclear neighbour. There is, however, a method in this madness which requires deeper a understanding of India's strategic thinking. Inspiration for such bellicosity lounges in its New-Normal mantra which brings forth new-fangled rules of engagement. The term New Normal, which Prime Minister Modi has already claimed to have established, was formerly conceived and then fabricated by the US and Israel after the deadly episode of 9/11.⁹ Breach of the sovereignty of other states like Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria was justified under the garb of fighting terrorism. The abnormal act of breaching the sovereignty of states was turned into New-Normal as state sovereignty was no more considered inviolable in new realities of international politics. India while following suite, repudiated the eternal logic of nuclear-deterrence since no other state ever attempted creating New-Normal in the presence of nuclear deterrence. It is either 'normal' to accept the logic of nuclear deterrence or 'abnormal' to reject it.¹⁰ Attempted creation of the New Normal by India, therefore, unsettled the theoretical and practical edifice of Nuclear-Deterrence. This attempt of altering the security environment seemingly miscarried as demonstrated by the sequence of events, which followed the Balakot air violation.

Threat to Deterrence Stability after Balakot Air Strikes

Incidents like Balakot may lead to an escalation that eventually could reach the nuclear red lines of one of the two states involved.¹¹ Nonetheless, having gone through somewhat similar potentially dangerous phases of the crises, the Indian strategic community now believes that since several escalators strides have never been taken, Balakot moved both countries only one rung up the escalation ladder. The inference they want to draw is that though, both countries came closer to making nuclear war, yet very far from the nuclear war itself; the space for a limited war, therefore, does exist.¹²

The encouraging fact for Pakistan's leadership is that in the case of Balakot, it managed to stop further aggression by relying on its conventional capability and without putting a strain on nuclear strategy. Pakistan showed resolve and capacity to mount a robust response against a type of aggression, which might continue to attract proponents of limited war. But does it imply that Pakistan accepts a space for limited war fighting? The resolution of this puzzle lies outside the nuclear domain, yet within the realm of comprehensive deterrence. Demonstration of resolve and capacity to respond with conventional capabilities do highlight that Pakistan will continue to express its will and react to any future belligerence with appropriate

offensive action. Some Indian analysts after Balakot hence opine that despite the partial set back to its nuclear posturing, Pakistan's reliance on deterrence has intensified amidst constantly growing conventional asymmetries.¹³

The situation after repealing Article 370, however, was different; though both antagonists did not portray any real threat, yet Pakistan had to face a direct attack on one of its vital national interests. India, in a bid to manipulate the social fabric of Indian Occupied Kashmir and bring its own version of normalcy, changed the special status accorded to the state of Kashmir. For Pakistan, the dilemma was how far could it go to enforce reversion of the decision and how far could it go to help the curfew-stricken people of Kashmir. This apparently a purely political matter is directly linked with the overall security of the region. Both countries have fought wars over the issue and still, the emotions of the people on both sides of the borders are highly charged. Theoretically, Kashmir is one of the vital national interests of Pakistan warrants application of all elements of national power, not excluding the military instrument of course. It was earlier perceived that in presence of comprehensive deterrence; India would not venture into taking such measures, which could alter the ground realities in Kashmir and force Pakistan to respond with all elements of its national power. Nonetheless, Modi played the card in a way that at least the catalytic strategy of deterrence was already neutralized. Despite Pakistan's vibrant diplomatic endeavors, no major world power perceived the situation leading to war. On the other hand, Pakistan, with internal politics under stress and the economy under duress was in no position to militarily engage with India. Modi took advantage and certainly played a smart card.

There can be other possible explanations for Modi's act like appeasing his hard-line supporters, look strong in a politically charged internal environment or gain political advantage in upcoming elections (Indian election 2019 results do highlight this advantage). One may also argue that by targeting a rural site of no strategic significance, Modi Government attempted to keep the level of escalation low right from the outset. However, as mentioned, the aggressive act of crossing an international border and then declaring it a success against the alleged terrorist camps did put Pakistani leadership in a situation, wherein a befitting response became critically essential. Focussing on the scope of this paper, the discussion in ensuing paragraphs will continue to concentrate on the issue of deterrence only. The question therefore arises, what type of Pakistani capacities could thwart limited operations like surgical strikes or tactical incursions (with attempted strategic advantages).

Three key dynamics currently mark the nuclear relationship between India and Pakistan; possible change to India's nuclear No First Use (NFU) policy, the

introduction of low yield weapons and lowering of the threshold for conventional military engagement.¹⁴ Each of these dynamics represents serious challenges to the security and stability of the region. Particularly, rescinding of NFU may situate Pakistan against lose-it-or-use-it dilemma and sow the seeds of pre-emptive tendencies in its strategic thinking.¹⁵ Low Yield Weapons may attract Pakistani military planners to synchronize nuclear strategy more intimately with military strategy. Lowering of a thresholds in view of Balakot like military incursions may compel the two sides to take series of dicier actions.

What was Different in Balakot?

Balakot air strike demonstrated two new markers. For the first time since 1971, IAF crossed into mainland Pakistan. It may be noted that the United States and erstwhile Soviet Union Air Forces even during the peak of the cold war avoided such incidences due to the fear of escalation. Indian air violation, therefore, exemplifies the renunciation of rational behaviour as the cost of switching on to the conflict escalator was perhaps not calculated.¹⁶ Second, Indian escalation both on vertical and horizontal planes showed her propensity to target undisputed Pakistani territory. This was a significant threshold to cross, which forecasts similar attacks on other areas of Pakistan where India claims the presence of terrorist camps.

Balakot illustrated heightened degree of Indian willingness to initiate a crisis with Pakistan.¹⁷ PM Modi, after the incident, claimed that he had called Pakistan's nuclear bluff since air strikes inside Pakistan deflated its nuclear threat.¹⁸ Indian Defence Analyst Rohan Mukharji, while highlighting Pakistan's act of releasing the Indian pilot, seeking to defuse tensions opines that "Pakistan may have just blinked."¹⁹ Indian political and military elite is therefore inclined to discredit strategic deterrence since India resorted to punitive military action disregarding Pakistan's nuclear capability.

Other school of thought opines that even after Pulwama, nuclear overhang did play on the minds of Indian strategists since India chose a limited aim instead of opening multiple frontages.²⁰ During the Balakot crisis and situation in the aftermath of repealing article 370, both neighbours continually reminded the other, that they possess nuclear weapons. Mutual vulnerability in the limited yet conventional realm was also manifested in the scale of the incursion. The Important thing to note here is that self-imposed limitations were observed despite operationalization of Cold Start Doctrine for which necessary forward placing of operational and logistic assets had already been carried out. Strategic capabilities must have played a role in escalation control. One may conclude that since the

aggressor (India) did not make a deep ingress, Pakistan's overall deterrence remained unharmed.²¹ On the contrary, the state of general deterrence could not prevent BJP hawks from initiating Balakot air strike and later the provocative act of repealing Article 370 in Indian occupied Kashmir.

An alternative reasoning questions even the need to consider the nuclear purview in such small-scale tactical actions. Nuclear weapons are certainly not meant to deter violations and skirmishes at the tactical level. This line of thinking argues that Pakistan's strategic weapons were neither thought to be bulwarks against a minute long air intrusion nor constitute its entire retaliatory ware withal.²² Comprehensive deterrence, when in place ideally should not put a strain on nuclear deterrence as limited tactical actions can be responded with other instruments of deterrence, however only when the responding state demonstrates will and capacity to escalate. On the other hand, although, response to tactical incursions falls at a low level of escalation, yet it does set in motion a series of reactions and counter-reactions. Keeping in mind the inherently charged environment in South Asia, such counteractions bear propensity to escalate into strategic domains, thus bringing Herman Kahn's rungs of escalation ladder into the equation.

Would India Venture Again

India demonstrated a new appetite for imposing costs on Pakistan, and especially for crossing thresholds and accepting risk. Its mass, economic relevance and military strength make India structurally inclined to establish its predominance in the region.²³ Right wing dominated cadence witnessed during Indian elections explicitly underline dangerous proclivities of Hindutva dominated BJP. Furthermore, revoking the special status of Kashmir and proclamations of likely abandoning of NFU is another testimony of the antagonistic outlook of Indian leadership. Such outlook foreshadows tendencies of instability and arms racing in the conflict-prone South Asia.²⁴

Balakot episode however, must have forced Indian leadership to think What if it escalates? In an author's view, Pakistan surprisingly offensive response so close to Election forced Indian leadership to act rationally. They had otherwise gained political mileage from the series of events and any further escalation could have negatively impacted the internal politics of India, particularly without the implicit endorsement of likeminded world powers. Having established a strong government, this taboo might not affect, allowing hawks to create opportunities to teach Pakistan a lesson. In this author's view, Indian attempt to alter the political and social landscape of Indian Occupied Kashmir by revoking special status may be viewed as another step in the same direction.

Under such a scenario, Indian actions probably will make the next crisis more dangerous. India may now assess that henceforth it can strike its neighbour, absorb a proportionate Pakistani retaliation, and safely de-escalate later in a crisis. But with Pakistan now more concerned about the state of general deterrence and her unwillingness to accept even limited violation of its sovereignty cannot but mount a more aggressive response, warranting aggressive counter-counter action by India. The future crises may therefore, induce both sides to take riskier action.²⁵ Unpredictable consequences of the abrogation of Article 370 and the breaking up of the occupied state of Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories have made the region more vulnerable to conflict. Stability of deterrence to prevent the possibility of wrong decisions leading to a situation of heightened conflict is therefore highly merited.

The episodes of Indian claimed surgical strikes in 2016 and Balakot attack 2019 can be taken as a prelude to creating an environment, wherein Pakistan is forced not to react to Indian small-scale tactical actions. Balakot incident opened another dimension of the debate on deterrence. Hitherto, Pakistan had relied more on the nuclear perspective of deterrence primarily owing to the conventional superiority of India. The question raised now is how to forestall small scale tactical operations aimed at gaining strategic effects. Under such an environment, strong conventional capability affords strength to strategic deterrence and forecloses chances of deterrence failure. A Retaliatory strike by the PAF demonstrated escalation control and refutation of Indian proclaimed new normal. Therefore, one may contend that Pakistan's full spectrum deterrence has actually proven its efficacy in the Balakot crisis.

One may argue that nothing significant happened at the tactical level to put pressure on overall deterrence. Pakistan's conventional riposte foiled Indian endeavour to establish a new normal; hence the old normal is most likely to persist. The pattern emerged during recent spat designates that Pakistan's conventional deterrence will address limited aggression (with violent response) while nuclear deterrence will ensure escalation control; the duo has taken together will reinforce overall deterrence. There is however a need for expanding the toolkit of deterrence doctrine. One of the determinants of Deterrence is threat perception. Pakistan must be able to Make India aware of exactly what all it is trying to deter. Its deterrence is against a full-blown conventional war only or does it want to deter aggressive political acts or a limited scale application of kinetic forces as well? Perhaps the concept has to be more objective now, especially when seen in the context of the following:

- Balakot types of incidents have given rise to the abridged manifestation of limited war. Acts, which may not even be termed as major engagements may question the deterrence regime of a nuclear neighbour warranting corresponding counter action. Every action and counteraction in this scenario will tend to cross another rung of escalation ladder in the conventional domain leading to invoking of nuclear deterrence.
- Indian desire of weakening civil military cohesion in Pakistan is most likely to gain impetus from tactical actions remaining below the psychological thresholds. In such a situation, Pakistan leadership will face dilemma; responding and facing an accusation of escalation from the international community OR restraining and getting discredited internally.
- Another dimension, which necessitates objective analysis is the continuous sponsoring of terrorism and dissident movements in Pakistan. It may be highlighted that there exists a tacit understanding within Pakistani political and military intelligentsia that these moves had been created or at least, patronized by Indian national security establishment. Pakistani think tanks have to see which strategic tool can deter India from playing with the internal security mosaic of Pakistan.
- Increased frustration of Kashmiris (and other dissatisfied elements like Sikhs and North Eastern states) after repelling of Article 370 is likely to force frustrated attacks on security forces, allowing India to blame Pakistan and encouraging BJP leadership to launch kinetic action in the garb of Response against Terrorism. Which element of national power can deter Prime Minister Modi from such provocation?

Thus far, strategic stability in South Asia has continued to hold. Indian unilateral decision to repeal the Jammu and Kashmir region's special constitutional status, however exacerbated volatility of the intrinsic conflictual environment in South Asia. Nonetheless, while the risks of a nuclear conflict have remained persistent, each passing crisis is making nuclear aspects progressively normalized. This apparent depreciation of the risks of a potential nuclear exchange presents an alarming insight into the strategic calculus of the region. Some scholars in India and the West, therefore, assert that "the rhetoric surrounding nuclear weapons and their potential use has not helped".²⁶ Since Balakot and repealing Article 370 in Kashmir, both countries are exercising their political and military options below the nuclear threshold. However, under heightened emotions in a crisis, leaderships resolve, mood, perception, personality and circumstance cannot be guesstimated; one cannot

assign probabilities for humans to act in a particular way. No one under such circumstances can ascertain where the other parties have drawn its nuclear red line.²⁷ Polarized nations of India and Pakistan and rise of right wing politics especially in India therefore bear risks of miscalculation, endangering strategic stability.²⁸ Under such uncertain environment, a rational choice for both the belligerents will have to be formed on constraint across the spectrum of conflict.

Deterrence and Evolving Character of Warfare

Amidst the evolving character of warfare, the Balakot incident followed by repealing of Article 370 in Kashmir has amplified the need for tailoring the deterrence as per changing character of Warfare. Owing to the destructive power of nuclear weapons, the conventional campaigns of the past have conceded to the limited wars under the 'hybrid' or '5th Generation' mantras.²⁹ Alongside military options, Indian policy analysts have accentuated the efforts to diplomatically isolate Pakistan and economically squeezing it from platforms like the International Financial Action Task Force.³⁰ Whereas, Fifth Generation Warfare envisages mostly non-contact warfare; the application of military instruments (including conventional and unconventional means) cannot be excluded from the game. Next escalation by India (at least in the initial phase) might not be in the land, air or naval domain but more likely in the form of cyber-attacks, information operations, enhanced support to violent non-state actors besides heightened politico, military, diplomatic and economic coercion (PMDEC).

The question arises at what stage; Pakistan will be compelled to respond in protracted mischievous battle. Would it continue to allow Indian brutalities in Occupied Kashmir, suffer minor wounds of PMDEC, keep bleeding and losing vitality to respond or would it react before it yields to the accumulative impact of multiple minor wounds on its social and moral fibre, economy and territorial integrity? With regard to Kashmir, how long Pakistani leadership can see the international community merely paying lip service to the sufferings of Kashmiris and do nothing to grant them the right for self-determination. Another question is whether or not the vigorous application of military instruments (warranting functionalization of nuclear cards) will be needed to force Pakistan to Indian will. The issue of Article 370 has demonstrated that India can target one of the vital national interests of Pakistan without bringing in the application of military means. This author opines that India will apply military hardware either in frustration (whereby it feels the futility of prolonged and mostly non-military option) or it will use the Indian military might after a sustained and successful application of instruments of fifth-generation warfare to cause coupe de grace. In either of the circumstances, neutralization of Pakistani nuclear capability has to be ensured.³¹

Pakistan's relevance in the region besides robust nuclear deterrence,(including supposed second-strike capability) arguably retains potential to thwart any such attempt. The question is how India will ensure the neutralization of Pakistani nuclear capability. The only plausible way for India is through the tacit support of the world community (international proponents of new normal) posing an existential dilemma to Pakistan's leadership. Under such stimulating security milieu, only a combination of coercive diplomacy/threat of escalation can prevent the conflict. From the discussion above, it seems as if playing of the nuclear card will continue to be a compulsion for Pakistan to safeguard its national interests.

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that the Balakot episode has further exacerbated the insubstantiality of the South Asian security environment. Whereas, comprehensive deterrence had not entirely faded away, new realities have emerged; this would force the contenders to re-articulate impending moves.³² Whereas, deterrence particularly when viewed from the prism of the nuclear domain does not completely prevent limited actions across LOC/ international borders, but it does pose caution on the way nuclear neighbour respond and counter responds to each other moves. It has also been observed that Indian attempt to establish new normal has met a severe setback as Pakistan displayed resolve to respond sharply to any aggressive move. Learning from Balakot, in order to avoid the recurrence of such irresponsible acts of Indian leadership, Pakistan would not regulate its response from the outset for fear of escalation. Planners of the next such conflict might be forced to take riskier actions thus putting deterrence stability under pressure. Pakistan may be compelled to escalate besides using brinkmanship and force caution on aggressor to deter or de-escalate a crisis.

Henceforth, Pakistan's leadership may have to escalate more boldly to ensure deterrence stability and may not allow India to calmly de-escalate. While adjusting its nuclear posture, Pakistan must involve international players, highlight aggressive Indian doctrines and tacitly express its concerns to divert moral and diplomatic pressure towards India. Besides, Pakistan needs to expand its foreign policy options to give credence to the catalytic nuclear strategy options.³³

Revoking of special status has highlighted that Pakistan's diplomatic efforts and nuclear deterrence have not prevented India from unilateral and provocative actions on Kashmir. Pakistan has to devise means and re-evaluate the use of elements of national power to prevent further moves of Indian right-wing leadership for absorbing the occupied region completely into the folds of Indian dominion. There is a need for Pakistani political and defense analysts to deliberate response to

be mounted against similar but more critical measures that can be taken by the Indian leadership. The issue is vital for the country may demand tailor of comprehensive deterrence. If it is to be in the domain of deterrence, what tool of deterrence strategy can be employed and what capabilities are needed for such deterrence strategy.

The paper has also underscored the need for redesigning the strands of deterrence to face challenges of fifth-generation warfare and likely Indian attempt of drawing strategic dividends from tactical actions in the era of the amplified scope of Information Operation thus carving victory in perception domain. Indifferent outlook (or deliberate act as part of the strategy of Pivot to Asia or Indo Pacific strategy) of Western powers towards perennial state of conflict between the two nuclear states will adversely affect the international security environment. Moral deterrence leveraged by the international community can bring India and Pakistan to the negotiating table for the amicable resolution of bilateral issues. Finally, scholars should focus more on strands of deterrence theory in fifth-generation warfare and safeguards against the use of purely political acts targeting vital national interests of the opposite states.

NOTES

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