Peoples Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) In The Indian Ocean: The Cost Of Full-Scale War For India

Saima Kausar¹, Dr. Ashfaq Ahmed², Dr. Sadia Fayaz³

¹former Visiting Lecturer University of Sargodha. M.Phil Scholar Department of International Relations, Iqra University Islamabad, Pakistan.

²Assistant Professor Department of Politics & International Relations (DPIR) University of Sargodha, Punjab Pakistan (Corresponding author )

³Assistant Professor Department of Political Science Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University Peshawar, Pakistan.

Abstract

Geo-strategic and geo-political contour of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) necessitates the development of robust Indian navy to perform the traditional role of protecting Indian coastline 7,516 Kilometers (KMs) (2017) and aspirations to evolve blue water navy. New Delhi aims at

1. Introduction

Geo-strategic and geo-political contour of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) necessitates the development of robust Indian navy to perform the traditional role of protecting Indian coastline 7,516 Kilometers (KMs) (2017) and aspirations to evolve blue water navy. New Delhi aims at
developing and raising large scale dispersed submarine force to strengthen its naval capabilities. It ordered to acquire twenty four submarines under P-75I. It will enable India to bring in modern naval technology to domestically develop P-76I submarines (Katoch, 2020). This programme helps India to achieve twofold objectives. First, modernize Indian submarines force structure by launching Project-75I. It was planned that Indian navy will manufacture better sensors, Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) System and weapons at home. Second, equip Indian submarines with long range nuclear capable missiles to complete nuclear triad and acquire assured second strike capability against China. Indian strategic planners aim to create fear of punishment in the minds of the enemy to maintain strategic and deterrence stability.

Indian leaders perceive collusive threat from Beijing and Islamabad. New Delhi is alone in the region it is posed with two-front war dilemma. Secondly, China blocks Indian way from acquiring strategic goals and interests. Resultantly, India reserves the right to use the available resources against its rivals. Enemy image of rivals and Indian countermeasures emanates from Indian leaderships “siege mentality,” (Neack, 2019). India signed Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) and Communications Capability and Security Agreement (COMCASA) (Hali, 2020) with United States (US) to counterbalance China. Indo-US security cooperation and Washington’s increasing foothold in the Chinese neighborhood enhances Beijing’s preexistent security dilemma. Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) strategic planners resultantly perceive enemy threats from the East (owing to Indo-US naval presence in the South China Sea), from the West (due to US presence in Afghanistan) and from the South (from India). Chinese countermeasures create security dilemma for India and US. Consequentially, enemy images, increasing security dilemma, reliance on nuclear deterrent and conventional arms buildup are common features of the unfolding hostility.

Objective of this paper is Chinese submarines deployment increases cost of war for India. Central objective of this academic research paper is New Delhi cannot afford full-scale war with Beijing so a strategy based on war avoidance instead of war fighting should be adopted. First segment of this paper briefly reminds the readership significant aspects of the types of the theory of nuclear deterrence. Second segment underlines that Chinese submarine deployment in the IOR and threats posed to counterforce and counter-value targets. Third, segment underlines rationale behind the deployment of Chinese submarines in the IOR. Paper endeavours to answer what are Chinese strategic interests in the IOR? Can India afford a full-scale war with China?

2. Theory of Nuclear Deterrence

New Delhi evolved strategic partnerships and orchestrated policies demanding interference in Chinese sphere of influence. Consequentially, PLAN increased its submarine presence in IOR in post 2013 era presumably to counter emerging challenges to its territorial security. A significant
aspect of this evolving hostility is to incorporate technologically advanced weapons systems, Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance (ISR) and nuclear weapons into their naval platforms.

This hostility gives a new life to the theory of nuclear deterrence therefore the role of nuclear weapons is reviving in the IORs. Deterrence means to dissuade the enemy from taking undesirable action with force or threat of use of force it maintains the status-quo (Ahmed, 2017). Two inferences can be drawn first deterrence is thus a psychological affair (Arbatov, 2019). Second, it is aggressive military posture and form of coercive foreign policy. However, it aims at war prevention rather than war fighting. In 1946, Brodie rightly maintained that, “thus far the chief purpose of our military establishment has been to win wars. From now on, its chief purpose must be to avert them. It can have no other useful purpose,” (Brodie B., 1946). In post World War II (WWII) era Thomas Schelling was the first analyst who discussed the idea of deterrence. Theory asserts that nuclear weapons possession creates fear of irreversible damage in the minds of the adversary. Fear emanates from second strike or punitive retaliation. Second strike capability can be achieved by completion of nuclear triad or nuclear weapons deployed on submarines. It enables a nuclear weapons state (NWS) to create fear of punitive retaliation in the minds of potential aggressors. Fear of punishment denies inherited benefits of first-strike, preemptive, decapitating strike and surprise attacks against mainland. Fear of punitive retaliation helps belligerents to acknowledge that nuclear war cannot be won so it should be avoided. Consequentially, belligerents attempt to overcome trust deficit and amicably resolve conflict. Deterrence stability helps belligerents to achieve national interest without war fighting and maintains strategic stability.

Deterrence types include deterrence by denial model, deterrence by punishment model, direct deterrence, extended deterrence and basic deterrence. Deterrer while applying deterrence by denial model sends a clear message to deterree that all available nuclear forces will be used in case undeniable action is taken. Deterrence by punishment model manifests that severe penalties will be imposed on the aggressor in case redline (nuclear threshold) is crossed or first-strike is carried out. Deterrence by punishment model vows that cost of nuclear attack/first-strike would outweigh benefits of the attack. Chinese and Indian nuclear doctrines theoretically are based on deterrence by punishment model. Nuclear weapons are absolute security guarantors. It provides security guarantees against external threats. Nuclear weapons possession increases political stature and credibility of security guarantees (extended deterrence) provided by nuclear weapons possessor. Extended deterence is security guarantees provided/vowed to third parties mainly allies against external threats. Washington provides extended deterence to its European allies and East Asian allies e.g., South Korea and Japan. The form direct deterrence consists of a situation when NWS deter threat posed to its own security. Mostly, NWS relies on first-strike e.g., Pakistan and US nuclear doctrines are based on first-strike (Mazarr, 2018). Additional common feature of Pak-US nuclear postures is the development of tactical nuclear weapons (TNWs) and their potential use against enemy’s conventional forces to avoid large scale hostilities and preserve the status-quo. Russian “escalate to deescalate strategy,” (Ball, 2019) emulates aforestated approach. Indian
strategic planners have adopted measures to increase nuclear weapons stockpiles, delivery capabilities, enhance precision strike of the missiles and massively investing in submerged technologies. In theory New Delhi proclaims to develop Credible Minimum Deterrent (CMD) for war prevention. Practically, it is developing overkill capabilities for war fighting with an ultimate objective to win nuclear wars in the pretext to complete nuclear triad. Basic deterrence aims at thwarting enemy attacks against mainland (Brodie, 1959). In conclusion concept of deterrence is synonymous with nuclear deterrence. Theory of nuclear deterrence gained significance in the IOR.

3. Chinese Submarines in the Indian Ocean Region and Threats to Indian Counterforce and Counter Value Targets

Quadrilateral alliance in South China Sea comprising of Australia, India, Japan and US aims at containing China (Buchan & Rimland, 2020). It creates feelings of vulnerability and unrest in the minds of Chinese strategic planners. Strategic planners in Beijing responded with deployment of Peoples Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) in the IOR. Chinese naval presence in the IOR the East and the West of India is apparently aimed at securing sea-lanes of communications. It is first step to emerge from coastal navy to blue water navy. PLAN aims at counterbalancing the growing regional and extra-regional naval presence in its neighborhood. This logic is borrowed from traditional concept of security as it focuses on external threats posed to state security. Threats to Chinese territorial integrity are considered as threats to its national sovereignty. China’s increasing naval might, missile capabilities and military modernization programme can be understood in the light of realism. Theory believes security is a zero-sum game only robust military can ensure state security in international anarchic system. PLAN’s submarines presence is spotted on Pakistani and Sri Lankan ports. Growing influence of PLAN in the IOR is a cause of concern for India. It creates sense of vulnerability in the minds of Indian security planners.

Measures-countermeasures and intensifying military modernization bespeaks of the Sino-Indian depleting strategic trust and the unfolding rivalry. It marks the birth of regional Cold War. India views Chinese military modernization process from Mearsheimer’s offensive realist perspective. It believes China as a revisionist state a potent threat to India and rejects China’s peaceful rise. Indian defence planners presume Beijing will use Jewani Peninsula near Gawadar port as naval and airbase. Jewani base will endow PLAN to maintain permanent presence in Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean to monitor Indian transit in the region. Further, Jewani will serve as a support base for PLA forces and as a base to forward deploy its fighter crafts, ships and submarines. Strategic planners in New Delhi are forgetting PLAN’s increased presence in the IOR since, 2013 is a response to Indian intrusion in Chinese sphere of influence since, 2004. Secondly, they are also forgetting the lessons of theory of nuclear deterrence. Theory underpins that sense of mutual vulnerability strengthens crisis stability. It results in war avoidance and creates deterrence stability. Third, “Indira Doctrine,” views South Asia as India’s traditional sphere of influence to contain outside powers interference in the region (Ogden, 2019). Beijing from Indira doctrine’s perspective wants to secure its sphere of influence by maintaining its presence in the IOR.
However, neither it seems acceptable nor India has respect for China’s 1958 declaration highlighting its right over South China Sea (1958).

Deployment of submarines by PLAN in the IOR underlines Chinese leaders’ hostile image of the IOR. It endeavors to send twofold messages. First, the development of naval base at Djibouti in Horn of Africa (China, Pak Navies Deploy Submarines in Strategic Arabian Sea Drills, 2020) and Jewani Peninsula in the Arabian sea is a message to extra regional naval forces that appropriate countermeasures will be taken to prevent hostile navies from dominating the IOR. Chinese navy’s permanent presence in close proximity with Peninsular India is a message to New Delhi. Beijing endeavors to power project and strengthen its numerical strength vis-à-vis India. It is an attempt to convince India present day Chinese navy poses wide range of threats to Indian mainland and it can surge quickly to the area in crises situations. PLA naval assets will be able to carry-out swift offensive amphibious operations while maintaining secrecy and element of surprise. Indian counterforce assets responsible for the defence of coastal areas will become vulnerable to PLAN amphibious forces. Chinese forces can make shallow thrusts into India to capture important Indian ports or deserted land. Chinese forces will then declare cease-fire and maintain their presence on Indian soil to pressurize India during conflict resolution dialogues.

3.1 Major Indian Ports

Chinese submarines are equipped with long-range ballistic and nuclear missiles (SLBMs) and serves as stand-off weapons (SOW) against Indian counterforce and counter-value targets. SLBMs poses direct threats to India’s Eastern Commercial Ports e.g. Chennai Port second largest port in the Bay of Bengal, Kolkata port, V.O. Chidambaran port, Krishnapatnam port, Machilipatnam port, Kamarajar port, Puduchery, Vishkapatnam major ports and particularly Rambili as it is base for nuclear powered submarine can be an ideal counterforce target (Unnithan, 2014). AF Technical Training Center gives Chennai an edge over India’s other Eastern cities. Major ports of South-Western India include Kandla port it handles crude oil imports of India, the adjacent Kandla special economic zone, Kochi, Mangalore, Marmagao, Cochin port, Adani Haira port, Tuticorin and Panaji (South India). Mumbai, Jawaharlal Nehru Port (JNP) 28th top container port in the world, Mundra private port, world largest Mundra coal import terminal (an airport is under construction for air cargo) (Menon, 2021), Kandla and Tuticonn are the major ports of Western India. Porbander, Veraval, Bhavangar, Bharuch, Surat, Ratnagiri are intermediate seaports of Western India. Likewise, Alappuzha is an intermediate seaport of Southern India (Sea Ports in India).

The destruction of even a single port will result in the loss of billions of dollars in the form of infrastructure, including the highways that can serve as runway during conflict/war time, 44 million tons container bulk at Machilipatnam port alone (2019), supporting infrastructure, power plants, economic zones, industrial facilities and import/export items oil, petroleum, fertilizers, automobiles, textiles, leather, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, food items and minerals dumped on the
Indian ports. Consequentially, national economy will abruptly decline leading to joblessness, bankruptcy, demoralization of the population leading to socio-economic and psychological problems. Indian ports have played pivotal role in the development and economic growth of the country. Destruction of these ports will slow the pace of the economic growth of India. Certainly, the central and provincial governments will come under intense public and economic pressure. Devastating attacks will create administrative problems for the authorities to control the blazing fire during the conflict and compensate the affected and restore normalcy in post-conflict era.

3.2 Threats to Indian Counter-Value targets

SLBMs of PLAN can also pose serious threats to South Western urban centers of India including Bangalore, Goa, Hyderabad, Ahmednagar, Nizamabad, Pune, Mumbai, Mysur, Pune, Surat and Madurai associated with Kutilya (Pincode of Air Force Station Madurai, Tamil Nadu is 625001). In case of war Andhra Pardesh can come under attack as it is number one in entire India due to basic infrastructure development, 98.8% electrification rate and 16.5% fastest economic growth rate. Karnataka can attract Chinese missiles because of 0.9% unemployment rate. Human Development Index (HDI) and 99.2% electrification rate (2018) can endow Chinese SLBMs to land in Kerala. Maharashtra state contributed 13.88% to Indian Gross Domestic Product (GDP) during fiscal year 2018-19 (Indian states by GDP, 2020). It is second in entire India due to its basic infrastructure. Maharashtra’s economic contribution plays significant role in raising, strengthening and sustaining Indian armed forces. It is speculated that Maharashtra’s contribution to country’s economic growth rate and sustainable development of this particular region and its potential role in supporting Indian defence budget will attract enemy forces to launch conventional attack against it. Inference can be drawn that destruction of Maharashtra will disrupt the growing pace of Indian economy and sustainable development. Destruction of the economic infrastructure will necessitate efforts from the Indian government to rebuild it in pursuit to economic problems.

Tirupur’s multi-million dollar knitting industry based in Tamil Nadu has 8000 manufacturing units and 2000 spinning mills provides employment to 300,000- 400,000 workers. Tamil Nadu is the second largest state economy of India with 14.9% foreign investment (Kapur, 2020). It contributes 9.25% to Indian exports as its export volume stood at $30.5 billion. Tamil Nadu has 41 operational special economic zones, eight Information Technology (IT) Parks, 690 railway stations, 28 national highways, four major and seven minor ports three international and three domestic airports and industrial parks (Tamil Nadu Profile). Tamil Nadu ranks first in terms of wind energy production, factories and industries e.g., automobiles and auto components, engineering, pharmaceuticals, garments, textiles, leather, chemicals, plastics. Tea industry is based in Tamil Nadu and Kerala (2020). Kerela has two dozen of hydroelectric stations. Major manufactures of Kerala include fertilizers, chemicals, electrical equipment, titanium, aluminum, plywood, ceramics, and synthetic fabrics. Kochi also has major shipyard and oil refining facilities (Resources and Power). Karnataka’s hydroelectric power plants easily fulfill local needs and supply it to neighboring states. The hydroelectric station particularly on Sharavati River can be an ideal target of enemy attack. It generates and supplies electricity to major chunk of Karnataka’s
industries (Karnataka). SLBMs can be launched against industrial hub in Karnataka to carryout effect-based operations (EBOs). This strategy aims at creating less destruction, more chaos and psychological effects. Consequentially, population brings bellicose leaders under pressure to surrender. It is though conventional strategy yet different than traditional war fighting strategy aimed at total destruction of enemy’s counterforce and counter value centers. In case of crisis escalation and nuclear weapons use in two central states Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh with 14.9 corer population alone will create immeasurable human crisis. Problems can aggravate if nuclear warheads are delivered to Western states Rajhastan, Maharashtra, Gujrat and Goa inhabited by 17.9 Corer people. Eastern Indian sates e.g., West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar and Odisa have 28.7 corer populations. South Indian states Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu have 14.9 corer populations (Times of India, 2020). Indian civilian-military authorities will collapse as it will become nearly impossible to evacuate the population from these densely inhabited areas. Major highways will be blocked and food will either be contaminated or their price will be sky-rocketing. Provision of clean drinking water, food, shelter and medicine will become impossible.

3.3 Threats to Counterforce Targets

Enemy targets are selected during peacetime this process is continuous, systematic and comprehensive. Targets are prior selected with clear understanding to exploit enemy’s vulnerabilities during wartime. Counterforce targets are military facilities and infrastructure strikes are carried out against these targets to eliminate enemy’s resistance and subdue him. This militarily useful strategy aims to keep the war limited by avoiding destruction of the enemy cities and to avoid killings of the civilians. EBO rather than disarming or decapitating strikes are carried out with an aim to realize the enemy leadership that war cannot be won hence avoided. Probability of Sino-India war cannot be ignored it requires prior selection of the enemy targets by PLAN. This section briefly brings into limelight high value military targets in India that will certainly come under attack or destroyed to create desired effects to achieve politico-military objectives. Counterforce targeting will be aimed at conveying a message that China will not attack Indian cities in return India should avoid targeting Chinese cities. City avoidance strategy can benefit both rivals in terms of reducing civilian casualties and to avoid destruction of the basic infrastructure.

Indira Gandhi Nuclear Power Plant at Kalpakkam is responsible for developing Fast Breeder Reactors. It is second largest research facility (2003) in India. It produces plutonium for nuclear warheads so makes it an ideal target for the enemy missile strikes.

In August, 2019 setting up of the Gullalamoda missile testing facility worth Rs 1,000 crore in Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh was approved (2019). A single successful missile strike from China’s submerged platforms will result in destroying the loss of missiles, engineers and missile manufacturing unit. The second, significant military site vulnerable to Chinese ballistic missiles is any future conflict is Indian Air Force Station (IAFS) based at Suryalanka in Andhra Pradesh. This IAFS is also used for test firing ballistic missiles e.g., Akash Missiles with a range of 1.8 M to 2.5
Mach surface to air missile system (SAM) (2020). Deployment of SAM poses grave challenges for enemy’s incoming aircrafts, missiles and drones. Conversely, this military site will become high priority target for the enemy.

Chandipur Missiles test facility in Balasore Odisha is planned to be used for testing missiles with 5,000 KMs range. Earlier it was used for test-firing nuclear capable Akash, Agni, Shurya and Prithvi Missiles. Military facilities particularly with longer range missiles capable of penetrating enemy defence systems deployed in Odisha poses grave threats to Chinese mainland particularly Western China e.g., major urban center e Chengdu, Lhasa, Tibet and Southern Chinese urban center Kunming, Guangzhou, Nanning and Guiyang. Military facilities located on the East Coast or Bay of Bengal with longer range missiles and bombers pose threats to counterforce and counter-value targets and industrial units. Consequentially, neutralizing these military facilities at the outset of any military conflict in future will become high priority to Chinese military commanders. It would require Chinese official to acquire incredible level of precision strike-rate to destroy Indian counterforce targets.

Indian secret nuclear city is based in Challakere, Kernataka in Southern India. It is believed to be home to Sub-continent’s largest military and nuclear facilities e.g., weapons/aerials testing facility, atomic research facilities and nuclear centrifuges. Challakere is responsible for producing fissile material for Indian nuclear reactors, nuclear powered submarines, nuclear capable ballistic-SLBMs and hydrogen/ thermo nuclear bomb (Levy, 2015). Fissile material production bestows India to increase strength of its nuclear warheads in the light of theory of nuclear deterrence. The more India produces weapons grade fissile material the more it will produce nuclear warheads and disperse it. Dispersal of nuclear forces increases chances of survival. Conversely, residual nuclear missile forces increase the cost of war for the enemy. From military perspective Challakere is sensitive site. New Delhi’s ambitious designs perhaps to acquire escalation dominance will disturb the balance. It provides imputes to new nuclear arms race in the region. Certainly, it draws enemy attention. Ignoring strikes against nuclear cities during conflict will be fatal military/ strategic blunder with grave consequences for the enemies. In Sino-India or any other conflict attacks against India’s secret nuclear city cannot be ignored by the enemy. Another significant counterforce target in the vicinity of Challakere is Rare Materials Plant, Uranium enrichment facility near Mysore worth $ 100 million feeds Indian nuclear weapons programme. This site is associated with ambitious hydrogen bomb facility (Levy, 2015). Sino-Indian open war will endow Chinese submarine commanders to authorize the launch of SLBMs and destroy this high-value target. Destruction of this nuclear enrichment facility will deprive Indian scientists from producing additional stocks of nuclear warheads.

Hyderabad is home to three major IAF stations Hakimpet, Dundigal and Begumpet. It is largest city and major center for technological industry, Pharmaceuticals, cigarettes, and textiles of Telengana. Conversely, these features will attract Chinese SLBMs (Hyderabad). IAF Administrative College is setup in Coimbatore. IAF Southern Air Command is setup in Thiruvananthapuram (Thiruvananthapuram). Thanjavur home of China’s warships in Nicobar and
Andaman specific 222 Squadron tigersharks Sukhoi-30MKIs fighter crafts equipped with air-launched BrahMos supersonic cruise missile (Why India is Placing Su-30 Fighter Jets in South India, 2020), Coimbatore and Thiruvananthapuram can be ideal targets of China’s SLBMs. Counter value targets in Trivandrum include sugar mills, textile mills, and mineral processing industries in the city. Southern India is attractive target as Indian Southern Naval Command responsible for thwarting threats and challenges posed to India (Chandramohan, 2018) and naval air station is based at Kochi, Kerala. It can potentially engage Indian navy with US African Command, Indo-Pacific Command and Central Command. Indian navy’s Western Command responsible for the defence of mainland India is located in Mumbai, Maharashatra. It commands eighteen naval bases. Vishkapatnam is home to Indian Eastern Command (2002).

3.4 Threats to Indian Airports (South India)

In September, 2018 Indian officials revealed to deploy fighter crafts on civilian airports including Rajahmundry and Vijayawada in the Eastern state of Andhra Pradesh (2018). Deployment of fighter jets was directly linked to growing threats from China to the Indian mainland. The magnitude of Chinese potential threats to India is heightened by the Indian allies e.g., US former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo while addressing the Brussels Forum Virtual Conference on June 25, 2020 indicated PLA threatens India and other Asian countries (Sutton, 2020). Beijing is viewed as a substantial threat to Indian mainland naturally New Delhi is resisting it.

It is in this background claimed here that dual use of Indian civilian airports will bring them under threat. PLAN SOWs can pose threats to twenty-five Southern Indian airports including domestic and international in five Southern Indian states Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Telengana alone. It includes twelve international airports e.g., Hyderabad, Vishkapatnam, Chennai, Bangalore, Mangalore, Kozhikode, Coimbatore, Trichy, Madurai, Nedumbassery and Thiruvananthapuram and thirteen domestic airports Warangal, Rajamundry, Vijayawada, Nadirgul, Donakonda, Cuddapah, Puttaparthi, Tirupati, Hassan, Mysore, Vellore, Salem and Tuticorin (htt). Chinese surveillance aircrafts will serve the purpose to track Indian submarine movements in the region.

4. The Rationale behind PLAN Submarines Deployment in the IOR

PLA Naval deployments will pose punitive threats, prevent the enemy from controlling PLAN and ensure freedom of naval movement. Technological advancement and modernization of its submarines enabled PLAN to expand from seawards/ coastal areas or brown water to deep/blue waters navy. Chinese navy’s traditional defensive role is transformed into more assertive navy capable of carrying out preemptive strikes, expeditionary missions and amphibious operations. Its role as coastal guard is transformed into blue water navy. China’s expanding submarine force in the Indian Ocean indicates PLA navy’s preparations to achieve the long-term objective e.g., sea-control, sea-denial and full-spectrum naval dominance particularly in anti-submarine warfare. Secondly, Chinese naval expansion is aimed at dispersing nuclear capable SLBMs to achieve
assured second-strike capability against the enemies. PLAN assured second strike capability dissuades enemies from launching nuclear first strike against Chinese mainland. Contrarily, Indian navy lacks robust C3 systems and submarines launched long range missiles. Indian naval forces presently lack capability to cover all targets on Chinese mainland. However, India and China share other problems e.g., they have yet to overcome the challenges to cover long ranges without being detected and reduce noise produced by their diesel-electric submarines. Longer range nuclear capable SLBMs enable Chinese submarines to avoid detection by the Indian surveillance operates. It is claimed here that Beijing’s nuclear triad is complete vis-à-vis its South-Western neighbor. Residual capability or sub-merged deterrent force will create fear of punitive retaliation hence maintain crisis, strategic and deterrence stability. Third, Chinese nuclear doctrine calls for No-First-Use (NFU) policy. Operational changes enable Beijing to continue to adhere to NFU policy. Fourth, robust naval presence aims at securing sea-lanes of communications to ensure uninterrupted economic growth. Fifth, PLAN presence thousands of miles away from the mainland marked blue-water navy aspirations. Sixth, deployment of Chinese 093 Shang-Class submarine in the Indian Ocean is projection of naval military might and technological advancement. Chinese submarines Type 092 Xia Class is equipped with JL-1 missile with 2,500 KMs range. Type 094 Jin Class is equipped with nuclear capable JL-2 7,400 KMs range. Naval facility at Huludao will enable Beijing to produce six to twelve submarines per annum (Bhat, 2019). Fourth, growing naval military capabilities will enable Chinese navy to carry out amphibious operations in the region.

Sino-India naval expansion aims at achieving assured second-strike capability to prevent crisis/wars or thwart enemy first-strike or decapitating attack. It is resulting in active rivalry. The belligerents are increasing stockpiles of conventional and nuclear weapons and modernizing war fighting capabilities to acquire full-spectrum escalation dominance. Inherited flaws of escalating rivalry includes deterrence breakdown owing to accidental or deliberate use and unauthorized use. Sea-based deterrence requires submarines to cover long distances, reduced noise and robust command, control and communication (C3) system. Submarines noise will become Achilles heel for PLAN. It necessitates Chinese engineers to overcome this inherent flaw as Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) recently test fired Supersonic Missile Assisted Release of Torpedo (SMART). DRDO planners consider SMART as Chinese submarine killer. Traditional lightweight torpedoes can hit and destroy their targets within a range of twenty to twenty-five kilometers. It requires the target to get closer however dangers posed to the decision-makers are naturally increased. SMART capable of hitting and destroying its targets within a range of 650KMs overcome this dilemma. SMART deployed at surface ships and missile launch facilities at shore will capacitates the launch-platform to have stand-off weapon ranges (2020). India commissioned nine P8I surveillance, reconnaissance and anti-submarine warfare airplanes. It will receive three additional submarine hunters/killers and six more will be procured from Boeing. Indian navy will commission twenty-two P8Is to counter threats emanating from PLAN submarines in the IOR.
Indian P8I aircrafts were used over Ladakh to live stream data and gather information of Chinese deployments (2020). PLAN possesses long range ballistic and nuclear missiles capable of hitting any target with precision strike rate in the world. Indian targets are not an exception. Submarine launched long-range missiles helps Chinese submarines to avoid detection by the Indian P8I anti-submarine warplanes. It persistently maintains fear of punishment in the minds of Indian defence planners. Threat of punitive retaliation pours cold water on hot-start/ preemptive strikes and aggressive war-fighting strategy.

Conclusion
In conclusion, Indo-China border disputes remains unresolved it is fueling ongoing rivalry and widening the preexistent bilateral security dilemma. Consequentially, Southern Asia’s rivals’ reliance on sea-based deterrence has increased. Both rivals are relentlessly increasing the size of their naval forces, developing longer range missiles and incorporating SOW capabilities to destroy opponent vital counterforce and counter-value targets. This academic research concludes with substantial and verifiable facts that in case conventional war breaks out India will have to face billions of dollars of losses. The reconstruction of military facilities, SEZs and basic infrastructure including highways, railways and airports would require additional amount in trillions of dollars. It will bring Indian state and central governments under immense pressure. Hence, from socio-economic-politico and military perspective war is out of question therefore a strategy based on war avoidance rather war fighting should be adopted.

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