

## **Azerbaijan-Pakistan Bilateral Defence Cooperation: Stabilizing Conventional Deterrence**

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### **Abstract**

Pakistan was third country that recognized Azerbaijan. Islamabad has always supported Baku on international forums particularly on Karabakh conflict and refused to recognize Armenia. Pakistan's Senate Committee on Foreign Relations recognized "Khojali Tragedy," to express solidarity with Azerbaijan. Yerevan's proclivity is to reject political solution of contentious issues and gradually escalate conflict. During the war it relied on securing advantages of surprise attack by opening new fronts to secure victory. Armenia rejects inherent disadvantages of conflict and conflict escalation. Military dictionary terms it as "friction," highlighting differences between theory and practice/conduct of war. Fragile nature is worrying aspect of conventional deterrence. Central problem of conventional deterrence is how to assure potential aggressor that defender will retaliate to aggression therefore cost of war would increase expected benefits. Azerbaijan's reliance on conventional deterrent necessitates efforts to introduce revolution in Azerbaijan's military affairs. Authors have inferred conclusion that deterrence by punishment and compellence strategies can be used simultaneously against Armenia in future conflicts. Escalation dominance and military preparedness is a key to deter Yerevan's potential interference in Karabakh or to impose war on Baku. Preponderance in military realm will assure strategic stability in South Caucasus. Pakistan's vast experience in fighting counter-insurgency operations enables it to provide assistance to Azerbaijan in defence sector in pursuit to stabilize conventional deterrence.

**Keywords:** Azerbaijan, Baku, Pakistan, Islamabad, Escalation Control.

## Introduction

On December 12, 1991 Pakistan became the second country to recognize Azerbaijan as a sovereign state (Bilateral Relations). Pakistan provided US \$ 1 in early 1992/93 to the government of Azerbaijan (Qaiser, 2017). Islamabad has always supported Baku on international forums particularly on Karabakh conflict and refused to recognize Armenia. Islamabad have had supported Baku's stance on February, 1992 Khojali genocide committed by Armenian occupation forces (Alizada, 2021). Pakistan played an important role in United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions to support Azerbaijan's case on Nagorno-Karabakh issue. In February, 2012 Pakistan's Senate Committee on Foreign Relations recognized "Khojali Tragedy," to express solidarity with Azerbaijan (Qaiser, 2017). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev while addressing the 13<sup>th</sup> Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) summit held in 2017, acknowledged Pakistan's stance on Khojali genocide. Geography separates both states as Pakistan is a South Asian nation. Contrarily, Azerbaijan is situated in South Caucasus and Caspian Sea's littoral state. However, irrespective of the forms of government in Pakistan, preserving brotherly relations with Azerbaijan and rejection of Armenian occupation of Azerbaijan's sovereign territories are distinct pillars of Pakistan's foreign policy. Politico-Strategic leadership of Pakistan stands with Azerbaijan in every need of hour. Forty-four days' war is as recent example to verify the above quoted statement.

Azerbaijan's leaders value their relations with Pakistan. Azerbaijan provided humanitarian assistance to Pakistani masses in difficult times through Haider Aliyev Foundation (Mukhtarli, 2017). Construction of girls' school in Muzafarabad was pilot project of the foundation. In 2010 and 2011, Azerbaijan gave US \$ 1 million in assistance to Pakistan for running developmental projects in flood hit areas. In 2012, foundation donated forty thousand doses of Hepatitis-B vaccine to provincial government of Khyber-Pakhtoon Khwa (KPK) and provided fully equipped ambulances to Eidhi foundation. Today foundation's clean drinking water project is running in Dera Ismail Khan. It is administering various projects in health sector, ecology and education field across Pakistan. Foundations activities are overseen by First Lady of Azerbaijan Madame Mehriban Aliyeva. President of Pakistan conferred H.E. Mehriban Aliyeva with Hilal-e-Pakistan, the highest civil award of Pakistan to acknowledge her services (Qaiser, 2017). Baku based leaders completely understand the nature of India-Pakistan Kashmir conflict and supported Islamabad on every international forum to oppose and highlight Indian illegal occupation of Kashmir. In May, 2020 President of Azerbaijan during telephonic conversation with his Pakistani counterpart expressed concerns over human rights violations committed by the Indian security forces in the Indian Occupied Kashmir (Hussain, 2020). Azerbaijan strongly supports Pakistan on Kashmir issue in the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC), United Nations (UN) and other international forums.

Azerbaijan and Pakistan shares common views, coordinates and cooperates with one another on range of regional and extra regional issues. The relations between the two countries are manifestation of bilateral confidences. Baku-Islamabad relations are exemplary both support each other in international organizations over the issue of candidature. Ties between both countries are strengthening with every passing day. On December 19, 2020 Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Suhail Mahmood and Azerbaijan's Deputy Foreign Minister Ramiz Hasanov during virtual session agreed to enhance cooperation in the fields of energy, railway sector, science and technology and education field (Sajid, 2020). Gradually increasing bilateral cooperation between the two countries is a positive sign of mutual understanding, bilateral trust and sustainable relations. It certainly

manifests direct accesses of officials from countries, satisfaction, mutual trust and prospects of development. Governments of both countries are engaged at diplomatic levels, eager to strengthen bilateral economic ties, cooperate in energy-transport sectors, military realm and cement this relationship in every field of life. Key takeaways gleaned from above passages are Islamabad and Baku attaches acute importance to each other's independent sovereign status and sanctity of territorial borders. Baku-Islamabad based officials have devised diplomatically concerted efforts to strengthen their positions backed by UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions and international laws to liberate and regain control of their territories from hostile enemies lawfully. Both states are confronted with hostile enemies obsessed with an ideology of lebensraum supported and backed by hostile active military doctrines.

After brief introduction it is pertinent to assert the focus of this academic research is bilateral defence cooperation between the two brotherly countries. It briefly analyses Armenian defence procurement and military doctrine. Subsequent section is followed by assessing Azerbaijan's military strength. Third section discusses how Pakistan can help Azerbaijan in strengthening its conventional deterrence.

### **Theory of Deterrence**

Deterrence means to dissuade the opponent from taking threatening steps or preclude an attack with use or threat of use of force (Deterrence). Deterrence is psychological in nature as it manipulates decision making of opponents. It is based on substantial verifiable capabilities. In post World War II (WWII) era deterrence is associated with military strategy of nuclear weapons states (NWS). Mere presence of nuclear weapons resulted in absenteeism of violence between superpowers. Successful deterrence is based on capabilities, credibility and resolve.

NWS agrees nuclear weapons are not normal weapons and nuclear war cannot be won. They acknowledge nuclear weapons use results in irreparable damage therefore should not be used. Fear of residual nuclear forces and resolve of attacked state to retaliate even at the expense of suffering auxiliary, crippling damage in second attack precludes would-be attacker from launching surprise, first strike, decapitating or preemptive strike. It is commonly known as mutual vulnerability or mutual assured destruction (MAD). In post nuclear weapons era nuclear deterrence remained hallmark of Cold War era. Deterrence is associated with nuclear strategy hence it eclipsed conventional deterrence. Significance efficiency and function of conventional deterrence yet cannot be ignored in contemporary era.

Fragile nature is worrying aspect of conventional deterrence. Central problem of conventional deterrence is how to assure potential aggressor that defender will retaliate to aggression therefore cost of war would increase expected benefits. Credibility of deterrence is maintained if an imminent attack of the potential aggressor is precluded. Antagonist view of opponent's capabilities and resolve to fight with skepticism erodes credibility of deterrence leading to deterrence breakdown. Differing political, economic and geo-strategic objectives, misperceptions and miscalculations can result in crisis, conflict and conflict escalation. Established rules cease to exist or are deliberately violated by the opportunist decision makers to seek the advantages of surprise attack. Chief purpose of antagonists remains to subdue the enemy by escalating violence.

Azerbaijan's developmental projects in liberated areas will attract Armenians to make attempts to illegally occupy or regain control of Karabakh region. Fragile nature of conventional deterrence

can result in deterrence breakdown if Armenian strategic planners believe they can retrieve lost territories by waging war. Strengthening conventional deterrence would require Baku to engage in long term holistic military modernization process to strengthen conventional deterrence. Substantial efforts are required from Azerbaijan to understand evolving weapons system and characteristics of war.

### **Escalation Control**

Crises, crisis prevention and to make compromise with Yerevan presumably is difficult rather problematic. For understanding compromises and escalation control process with Armenia critical evaluation of Karabakh war is necessary. Contrary to Baku, Yerevan's proclivity is to reject political solution and gradually escalate conflict. War allows us to comprehend Yerevan targeted civilian population to build pressure on Baku. It relied on securing advantages of surprise attack by opening new fronts to secure victory. Central point is it believes military force can be used for resolving conflicts or to secure advantageous position vis-à-vis enemy. Armenia rejects inherent disadvantages of conflict and conflict escalation. Military dictionary terms it as "friction," highlighting differences between theory and practice/conduct of war. Forty-four days war explains this dichotomy. Second Karabakh war can be divided into three distinct phases to understand the abovementioned phenomenon.

Low scale cross border firing escalating to artillery shelling from Armenian occupation forces necessitates Azerbaijan's countermeasures to protect civilian population. Yerevan counter-countermeasures by deploying BMDS, tanks and artillery led to horizontal escalation of conflict are the features of first phase. Azerbaijan's use of kamikaze drones, Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicles (UCAVs) to destroy counterforce targets with precision strike are the hallmarks of second phase. Third phase illustrates dangerous trajectory the application of "deterrence by denial posture" by Armenia. Use of Iskander missiles beyond war zone against Azerbaijani capital was move towards full-scale war. Dangerous proclivity to employ all available resources necessitates Azerbaijani countermeasures to preserve control on Karabakh and thwart enemy from taking Azerbaijani cities hostage in future conflict. South Caucasian geo-strategic changes have made Clausewitz assertion "war is continuation of politics by other means," significantly relevant to South Caucasus. Clausewitz underlined fragile nature of conventional deterrence and inherent advantages of surprise attack. Inference gleaned from Clausewitz's assertion is procurement, integration and efficient use of modern weapons makes wars more likely among conventional rivals. Dangerous trajectory accentuates application of brute force, coercion and compellence by Yerevan as it believes in offensive realism.

Deterrence by punishment, defensive compellence strategies can be used simultaneously against Armenia in future conflicts is a key to maintaining strategic stability. Cost of war ensures disruption and disposition of enemy's balance of power (BOP) resulting in efficient escalation control by remaining defensive. Immediately applying deterrence by punishment model taking the war into enemy's territory and inflict maximum damage against its counterforce assets. Yerevan can be forced to resolve conflict under the framework of compellence. Use of formidable military force in case conflict breaks out is key to deny political concessions and preserve peace.

**Anti Access/ Area Denial Capabilities: Prerequisite for Azerbaijan's Military in Post-44 Days War Era**

Armenians are psychologically and emotionally attached with Karabakh. Consequentially, Yerevan disregards UNSC resolutions acknowledges Nagorno-Karabakh as an integral part of Azerbaijan. Yet, Azerbaijan's military history manifests restraint in military strategy and reticence in the use of force as remarkable features of Azerbaijan. Supreme commander of the Azerbaijan's armed forces belief in peaceful resolution of the conflict by Minsk Group, Madrid Principles, in the light of UNSC resolutions and established international norms prevented the mechanism of generating military power. It manifests use of force for the resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict had never been considered a viable option. However, Baku's rejection of traditional realist teachings, applications of restraint and abidance to high moral standards were not seen as virtues instead it was considered as a sign of weakness by Yerevan. Consequentially, static defence strategy was replaced with hostile "active deterrence," known as new wars for new territories. David Tonoian, Deputy Defence Minister unveiled it during a seminar organized by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) (Armenia To Switch To Karabakh 'Deterrence' Strategy, 2016). General Staff, Lieutenant General Movses Hakobian, introduced the idea of "security belt." Expansionist strategy advocates if war breaks out take it into enemy's territory and forcefully annex more lands (Abrahamyan, 2017).

Military modernization, procurement of military equipment and use of force all were employed as last resort by Azerbaijan in response to grave provocations by Armenia.

Dramatic geo-strategic change introduced in South Caucasus was the byproduct of the application of modern-day military hardware during the war. Inference can be drawn that diplomacy, strategic restraint and stagnant military did not serve Azerbaijan's national interests. It remains ill-conceived choice can jeopardize national security in future. In Post-44 Days War era Armenia's revisionist agenda necessitates Azerbaijan military modernization, military preparedness, intermittent review and military up-gradation to cement its control on Karabakh. Azerbaijan's access to and incorporation of new military technology, expanded military, continuous threat assessment, institutional changes, establishment of command, control and communication centers (C3) to efficiently coordinate are prerequisites to maintaining escalation dominance vis-à-vis Armenia. Technologically advanced, stronger, efficient weapons can ensure operational readiness and tactical advantages hence Yerevan's counteroffensive capabilities can be negated. Escalation dominance and military preparedness is a key to deter Yerevan's potential interference in Karabakh or to impose war on Baku by operationalizing Hakobian's security belt. Azerbaijan can maintain regional strategic stability in South Caucasus by acquiring anti-access/area denial capabilities (A2/AD).

Anti-access mean to prevent enemy's access to areas of military operations its freedom of movement in battlefield and prevent belligerent's access to friendly areas (China's Anti-Access Area Denial, 2018). A2/AD will create a sense of vulnerability in enemy decision making circles hence ability to fight and win war will deter all forms of external aggression.

### **Missile Cooperation**

During 44-Days War Armenia heavily relied on 1970s and 1980s era tanks, artillery, military strategy and tactics. Its defence system was not armed with radars (Foy, 2020) to intercept and destroy Azerbaijan's Kamikaze drones and UCAVs. Aerial superiority confirmed Baku's upper hand and strategic dominance. Conversely, enemy will concentrate on improving radars to intercept Azerbaijani UCAVs, Kamikaze drones and fighter aircrafts to win future wars. Improved

BMDS and anti-aircraft system will make it difficult for Azerbaijan to penetrate enemy aerial space. Armenian forces possess Russian made Iskander Missiles with range of 280 Kilometers. Nikol Pashinyan Armenia's Prime Minister, Movses Hakobyan former Armenian army chief and Onik Gasparyan Armenia's former chief of general staff have confirmed use of Iskander Missile during the last days of recent war. Use of Iskander missile enabled Armenian army to change balance in its favor hence secured tactical advantage and entered tanks in Shusha city(Mammadli, Armenia's Use of Iskander Missiles Against Azerbaijan Confirmed with New Evidences, 2021).Van Hambarzumyan, Armenian military expert claimed Armenia fired four Iskander missiles including dangerous M-type during the war (Mehdiyev, 2021). Human Rights Watch in its report confirmed 11 violations of using ballistic missiles, artillery rockets and large-caliber artillery projectiles against Azerbaijan by Armenian forces killing forty civilians (Armenia: Unlawful Rocket, Missile Strikes on Azerbaijan, 2020).Limited use of missile force results from small scale missile capabilities Yerevan had. Use of available resources by Armenia e.g. BM-30 Smerch, Scud missile and Tochka-U to deter Azerbaijan forces is horizontal escalation of the conflict and application of deterrence by denial model. Had Azerbaijan not deployed Israeli Barak-8 air defence system the Armenian fired missiles would have produced havoc, catastrophic consequences and large scale destruction of infrastructure.

Armenia's military superiority resulted in the development of assertive military strategy leading to provocations, crises, wars, instability, shelling on civilian population, Azerbaijan's military positions were targeted, decades long occupation of Azerbaijan's sovereign territories and genocide of Azerbaijani population in the past. Enemy's decisive military superiority incessantly encouraged belligerency. Bellicose posture and aggression to fuel regional instability are Armenian military's permanent features. Azerbaijani president Ilham Aliyev has therefore expressed concerns over Armenia's efforts to acquire sophisticated weapons for military modernization in pursuit to acquire lost territories (Mehdiyev, President Aliyev Warns Armenia to Refrain from Revanchist Rhetoric, 2021). Concerns over Armenia's denial to accept strategic realities, revisionist pursuits to regain control over lost territories in future stems from previous attempts to regain control of Lala Tepe Hill lost in 2016 war (Hajiyev, 2021).

Possession of modern military technology can encourage enemy to adopt "deterrence by denial model." Assertive military posture encourages use of all available resources to target key counterforce and counter-value installations in pursuits to deny enemy victory, reverse strategic gains or restore the erstwhile status quo. Yerevan's possession of large scale offensive capabilities necessitates change in war fighting strategy resulting in large scale attacks against Azerbaijan in future war. Large scale survivable missile serve counterweight to evolving Armenian offensive capabilities and make war less likely. The development of robust missiles force structure is an ideal option to deal with potential threats. It adds value to Azerbaijan's conventional deterrence.

Missile cooperation with Pakistan can enable Azerbaijan's forces to achieve operational and tactical advantages over the enemy. Missile can evade enemy radars and anti-ballistic missile system e.g. S-300, TOR and OSA Surface to air missile (SAM) systems and penetrate into enemy airspace to hit and destroy counterforce targets easily without any fear of casualties. If enemy is able to destroy the missile precious lives of fighter pilots can be secured. Perhaps China therefore deliberately ignored conventional airpower and raised robust missile forces (Lewis & Litai, 2011). Medium range missile forces deployed away from the enemy border can hit and destroy targets

with precision. Survival of missile forces requires maneuverable force structure or mobile launch pads to avoid enemy's counterforce retaliation. It necessarily requires formation of small dispersed agile missile units with ability to survive and destroy enemy targets at distant locations. Ability to immediately move after firing missile at a target from the location is known as shoot-and-scoot in strategic dictionary. Survivable missile forces create fear of retaliation in the minds of the enemy strategic planners. Survivability of missile forces deters enemy preemptive strikes and dissuades him from launching surprise attack or decapitating strikes. Contrarily, precision strikes against enemy logistic supply lines, forward defence lines, counterforce targets e.g. airbases, artillery, advancing mechanized infantry, bridges and radar systems will ensure position of strength and augment escalations dominance vis-à-vis the enemy. Combat readiness and offensive missile capabilities will certainly deter Yerevan from provocations and any misadventure. Central idea is missile capabilities will enhance credibility of Azerbaijan's conventional deterrence.

Critics can assert Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) can prevent both states from missile cooperation. MTCR a group of thirty-five countries shares informal understanding to prevent missile proliferation. Its second task it to limit missiles capable of delivering 500 Kgs of payload up to 300 KMs (Fact Sheet). It can be evaded Pakistan can help Azerbaijan to procure surface to surface short range missiles capable of hitting targets across Armenia. Secondly, Pakistan can equip Azerbaijan's fighter aircrafts with long range missiles air to surface missiles. Enabling Azerbaijan's air force to acquires and-off weapon (SOW) capabilities to destroy any target with precision strike within enemy territory. It is discussed in details under the heading air force modernization.

The narrative cited above revolves around the following promises and postulates: First, Armenia's blatant rejection of UNSC resolutions on Nagorno-Karabakh encourages regaining control of lost territories consequentially, it breeds instability. Second, weak air defence system resulted in Armenia's humiliating defeat. Filling this vulnerability to intercept and destroy Azerbaijan's aerial vehicles remains priority for Yerevan. Third, enemy use of Iskander missile enabled it to enter tanks in Shusha. Yerevan therefore aims at acquiring sophisticated weapons in pursuit to restore balance of power. It will encourage belligerent posture, revisionist agenda and result in outbreak of war in the future. Fourth, Azerbaijan's incorporation of missile forces is driven by enemy's potential offensive capabilities. It highlights the change in nature of threat posed and response to Yerevan. Enemy's improved interception capabilities will render Baku's 44-Days War fighting strategy it is necessary to change one-rung on escalation ladder. Robust missile force structure is not part of Azerbaijan's war fighting strategy it aims at creating fear of punishment to deter Armenian aggression.

## **Air Force Modernization**

### **JF-17 Block-III**

Armenian opposition criticized government for not deploying SU-30SM fighter jets. Deployment of 4<sup>th</sup> generation fighter airplane could have denied strategic, operational and tactical advantages to Azerbaijan had it purchased Russian SU-30SM fighter aircrafts with missiles (War with Azerbaijan, 2021). Russian fighter jet is equipped with Bars-R radar capable of longer detection and medium range air-to-air missile. Secondly, test flights duration could not be completed by the Armenian pilots prior to the outbreak of war.

Post 44-Days War assessment resulting in Armenian humiliating defeat affirms Azerbaijan UAVs collected valuable information far beyond the front lines. UCAVs destroyed high value enemy targets with precise strikes warranting tactical advantages and Azerbaijan controlled skies. During the last days of war Armenia replaced Soviet era obsolete air defence systems with electronic warfare system. Polye-21, Buk- M2 SAM, and Tor-M2KM air defence systems disrupted UAVs/UCAVs flights and also shot down Azerbaijani drones (Shaikh & Rumbaugh, 2020). Armenian key takeaways from the post war assessment can be its ground counterforce assets were exposed to an individual weapons system “killer drones,” ensured Azerbaijan’s victory. Secondly, full-spectrum air defence system can prevent Azerbaijan from exploiting Armenian vulnerabilities in future war. Yerevan’s engineers lack resources and expertise to manufacture electronic jammers, Electronic Magnetic Pulse (EMP), counter-drone drones and advanced fighter aircrafts. It can be acquired from international market to prevent Azerbaijan drones from securing tactical advantages on land and controlling the skies in future conflict. Third, passive defence and slow movement of resulted in large scale destruction and humiliating defeat of Armenia.

Yerevan is actively working on a roadmap to modernize its air force and restore balance of power. On April 6, 2021 Pashinyan during interview expressed desire to import 4+ Generation additional SU-30SM fighter aircrafts and strengthen strategic cooperation with Moscow (Kocharyan, 2021). During meeting on August 11, 2021 Russian Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu assured Armenian counterpart that Moscow is ready to support and modernize Armenian military(Sargsyan, 2021).Procurement of additional fighter jets will enhance offensive and defensive capabilities of Armenian air force vis-à-vis it rival Azerbaijan air force. Moscow-Yerevan are tied in strategic partnership through Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). Treaty asserts aggression against one will be considered as an aggression against all signatories. Russian however, did not deploy its forces against Azerbaijan during the recent war. Perhaps it abstained owing to Minsk Group membership. Contrarily, Moscow is strengthening Yerevan through transfer of military equipment including SU-30SM to Match Baku’s aerial assets and prevents Russian military’s direct involvement in the conflict. Powerful detection system with 400 KMs range, it has search radius of 200 KMs, SAP-518 Jamming pods can neutralize enemy radar systems. Azerbaijan air force includingMIG-29s weak sensors system lacks capabilities to match SU-30SM hence Armenian air force will retake control of the skies. It is equipped with R-77 air-to-air missiles 193 KMs range. Russian manufactured jet can carry out precision strikes across Azerbaijan in some instances longer range of the missile can serve as a SOW system.

Pakistan’s JF-17 Block III fighter jet is comparable to MiG-35, F-18E and J-1. It is capable of carrying out air-to-air and air to surface missions. Fighter air craft inherits the potential to strengthen and revolutionize Azerbaijan’s air-force in short span. In 2016 First Deputy Prime Minister Yaqub Eyyubov and Yavar Jamalov, Minister of Defence Industry of Azerbaijan expressed interest to import JF-17(Shahbazov, 2017). Fourth plus generation fighter jet is equipped with air-to-airPL-10 missile capable to hit stealth fighter jets (Xuanzun, 2021). JF-17 fighter jets are equipped with infrared missile approach warning system. Sino-Pak jointly manufactured fighter jets can reach higher altitude 17 KMs as compared to rival F-16s and F-35s (the JF-17 Provide?, 2018). Aerial warfare capabilities, Advance Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) will provide situational awareness to pilots by detecting enemy aircrafts from beyond visual range, it is less prone to jamming hence can escape enemy interference.PL-15AAM with 200KMs range(Revolutionries Pakistani Capabilities, 2019)enables it acquire SOW capabilities so enemy fighter jets can be tracked and destroyed from safe distance. Advanced features can thus



deny aerial superiority to rival Armenian air force. Azerbaijan's MiG 29s, SU-24 and SU-25 fighter jets primarily designed for air-to-ground attacks cannot compete with rival Armenian SU-30 SM in aerial dogfight. JF-17 Block III fighter aircrafts over Baku air space can overcome Azerbaijan's air force requirements. Procurement and incorporation of JF-17 Block III will hold Armenian counterforce and counter value targets hostage during crisis situations and in the midst of war. Enemy's operationalization of security belt or active deterrence strategy can be deterred by fear of retaliation. Conversely, multirole fighter jets will enhance credibility of Azerbaijan's conventional deterrence.

Inferences can be gleaned from the above passages first; Azerbaijan's strategic planners cannot rely on individual weapon system to ensure sanctity of its borders. Second, sensitive videos shared by Azerbaijan revealing its military strategy, details of the operations and insight into tactics used during conflict enabled Yerevan to counter Azeri drones by deploying modern electronic warfare system. Baku erstwhile military strategy became obsolete during the last days of the war. Certainly, it will result in catastrophic consequences if reemployed. The central point is Azerbaijan inevitably requires advance weapon systems and critical changes in its war fighting strategy to maintain strategic stability in the region. Third, enemy SU-30 SM fleet enables Azerbaijan's air force lacks modern fighter jets required to neutralize enemy air force and preserve sanctity of Azerbaijan's airspace. JF-17 Block III in comparison to SU-30 SM, SU-35 is cost efficient, its maintenance is easy and affordable. Pak-China jointly manufactured fighter craft is superior to Iranian Kowsar fighter jets.

### **Auxiliary Runways**

Debris found of M series Iskander missiles fired by Armenia in Shusha (Mehdiyev, 2021). Armenian forces also fired rockets on Baku during the last days of 44-days war affirms horizontal escalation of the conflict. Procurement and incorporation of advance weapons by Armenian forces necessitates swift deployments of forces, efforts to increase combat readiness at operational and tactical levels. False sense of achieving highest military standards will encourage belligerency, revisionist tendency and efforts to replicate Azerbaijan's AA/AD strategy. Yerevan understands Azeri control of skies primarily produced strategic changes and redrawn geographical map in the region. Consequentially, Azerbaijan's counterforce assets particularly airports and runways can come under Armenian missiles, rockets and air force attack. Prime motive will be to deny aerial supremacy to Azeri air force. Israeli air force applied above quoted strategy during six days' war of 1967 by destroying 311 planes at eleven Egyptian airbases (1967 Middle East War). Enemy air force could not operate against Israeli air force.

Establishment of new airbases is economically costly activity and lengthy process. Pakistan can help Azerbaijan to construct road runways also known as highway strip specially built to act as a runway for Azerbaijani drones and aircrafts. Systematic construction of 800 meters or 2 kilometers to 3.5 Kilometers auxiliary runways can be made functional within 24 to 48 hours. Web of auxiliary runways can thus be constructed across country without bringing it into public debates. It will help Azerbaijan pilots to increase their confidence by improving their operational readiness, ability to operate from austere locations with limited resources and mature combat capabilities. Air force will be able to fuel its planes, rearm them project its capabilities during wartime and continue to operate. If implemented strategy will ensure functioning of Azeri missions during war despite the fact main runways are damaged by the enemy forces. Point in case is risks posed to

Azerbaijani air force have been increased in post 44-days war era. Smooth functioning of aerial operation to avoid becoming sitting duck or prey to Armenian aggression can be minimized by investing in construction of auxiliary runways. By dispersing air assets Azerbaijan air force can become more flexible, more maneuverable, agile and it can reduce its vulnerabilities. Increasing the number of areas to seize opportunities and operate from different locations will outpace the enemy air force.

## **Tanks**

Acquiring politico-military goals or to preserve status-quo requires application of all aspects of national power. Lessons of 44-Days War affirms Armenia relied on Soviet era military technology. Contrarily, Azerbaijan procured and incorporated 21<sup>st</sup> century military weapons. Second inference drawn from the war is Yerevan relied on erstwhile “Bagramyan Line,” strategy- a series of barricades setup during first Karabakh war for the defence of Nagorno-Karabakh-Azerbaijan border (Stronell, 2021). Azerbaijan’s use of aerial instead of ground forces rendered Armenia’s Bagramyan Line strategy obsolete. Underestimation of the enemy, resistance to change, continued reliance or straddling on UCAVs can result in political, military, economic and geographical losses.

War winning strategy entails holistic approach, knowledge of the enemy, and understanding of geo-strategic environment and incorporation of variety of military technologies. Azerbaijan operates T-90S, T-72 upgraded version commonly known as Aslan and T-55 tanks. Azerbaijan upgraded T90 and T-72 tanks with Israeli support can identify friends and foes, operate at night and GPS enabled. Yet, it is not suitable for fighting future wars as its first generation protection gear is not effective against modern era, anti-tank sub-caliber projectiles. Its obsolete 780hp engine does not ensure maneuverability (Force of Azerbaijan, 2016).Armenian military’s use of prohibited white phosphorus bombs against Azerbaijani civilian population of Sahlabad village of Tartar City and Fuzuli District (Mammadli, Armenia's Army Drops White Phosphorus Bombs On Civilians In Azerbaijan, 2020).

Pakistan manufactured Al Khalid-I armored tank equipped with thermal imaging technology, ability to operate in nuclear, chemical and biological environment ensures protection to crew (To its Tank, 2020). Incorporation of Al Khalid-I tank certainly inherits the potential to augment Azerbaijan’s conventional deterrent capabilities. Other features for instance to detect and neutralize incoming missiles, rockets and shells can be retrofitted into it.

## **Pakistan’s Counterterrorism Experience**

Pakistan armed forces have fought successfully and won the war on terror (WOT). It was one of the ruthless war in the country’s history waged by the unseen enemy across country. Overall 80,000 Pakistanis including innocent children, women, men, senior citizens and security forces personnel including Generals lost their lives in WOT. Tribal areas of Baluchistan bordering Afghanistan and Iran, formerly known Federally Administrative Tribal Areas (FATA) bordering Afghanistan, Karachi economic hub of Pakistan, urban centers of Punjab and KPK became battlefields.

Pakistani economy, tourism, international sports and economic growth are adversely damaged by decade of terrorism. Production cycles were severely disrupted resulting in significant delays in

exports and loss of foreign markets. Foreign direct investment stopped and outsourcing of the capital became a trend in the business community thus gross domestic product (GDP) dropped dramatically. Pakistan saw major influx of Afghan refugees it was an additional burden on state fragile economy. Terrorists from Afghanistan also entered Pakistan in the guise of refugees and spread across the country, resultantly scale and frequency of terrorist attacks and human suffering increased. Country's security forces had to be overstretched through their deployment on Pak-Afghan border and tribal areas. Military operation in tribal areas led to the displacement of tribal people. It created economic besides social problems e.g. rift in the society on ethnic lines. Economic Survey 2014-15 shows country incurred/suffered US \$ 107 billion dollars due to terrorism (On Pakistan's Economy, 2014). Pakistani currency is devalued as result US dollar reached all time high rate. Substance of the matter is terrorism creates economic uncertainty, loss of direct investment and tourism.

Pakistan armed forces launched kinetic operations e.g. Zarb-e-Azb in 2014 and Raad-al-Fasaad (Afzal, 2021) to root out the menace of terrorism and insurgency. Effective intelligence gathering mechanism enabled strategic planners to employ security forces on the basis of actionable intelligence against terrorists. It led to effectually extirpating terrorist groups including Al Qaeda and Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) from urban centers. Counterterrorism operations based on tip-off information, border security measures and law enforcement cooperation considerably reduced level and incidents of terrorism particularly in areas bordering Afghanistan and Iran. Holding major international sports events still remains a dream as players could not be satisfied of that favorable environment has been restored in the country.

Success of Pakistani security forces in WOT makes it an ideal candidate to discuss and chalk out prudent plan to train, raise, sustain and strengthen Azerbaijan special counterinsurgency (COIN) units. The strategic planners based in Islamabad can transform Azerbaijan's COIN forces in unprecedented ways by sharing reasons of failed operations, inherited flaws and significant aspects to devise a successful counterterrorism strategy with strategic decision makers in Baku. Bilateral cooperation is significant variable to understand potential reasons of terrorism, devise efficient counterterrorism strategy, raise QRF teams and how to make the process more efficient. It will enable Baku to glean significant lessons from Islamabad's counterterrorism experience in pursuit to preserve economic stability and provide foolproof security to general public.

Highly trained Azerbaijan's COIN forces can be deployed as Quick Reaction Force (QRF) across urban centers to deal with potential acts of terrorism. Successful COIN operations also known as kinetic operations are intelligence based to avoid civilian casualties. It is known as collateral damage in strategic dictionary. Large-scale collateral damage creates feelings of resentment in the society. Avoiding collateral damage remains high priority of country's security forces. Intelligence based kinetic operations helps in avoiding collateral damage it necessitates raising robust intelligence system and sleeper cells spread across frontier. Carefully conducted military operations also differentiate it from mindless violence carried out by terrorists. Pakistan can help Azerbaijan to master its expertise in military and intelligence fields to contribute in preserving country's peaceful environment.

Azerbaijan is safe, peaceful and secure country. Azerbaijan government is efficiently taking all measures to root out potential reasons leading to terrorism including radicalization, extremism,

sectarianism and poverty. Government policies are devised to fulfill basic necessities of general masses. Consequentially, terrorism has never posed a threat to Azerbaijan. Yet, raising counterinsurgency forces cannot be neglected. This need stems from presence of Islamic State Khurasan Province (ISKP) in Afghanistan (Abbas, 2021).

## Conclusion

Armenia-Azerbaijan war changed region's strategic landscape. Azerbaijan's victory carved new strategic realities in South Caucasus. This academic research concludes that Change in the status-quo might prove temporary as conventional deterrence is prone to breakdown. UNSCRs affirm Karabakh is Azerbaijan's sovereign territory. However, Armenians psychological emotional attachment with Karabakh can endanger regional peace and stability. Azerbaijan can only deter future provocations through military readiness and escalation dominance.

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