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# How China can aggravate India-Pakistan tensions over Agni-V tests

By Prateek Joshi

*The idea of mobile launchers stationed anywhere in India capable of striking any major city in China can alter Asia's strategic environment*

The Agni-V tests have demonstrated India's capabilities to enter the elite club of ICBM (Intercontinental ballistic missiles) possessing nations. Last December, its fourth successful test to validate the canister launch system has added more teeth to India's deterrence and second-strike capabilities.

The idea of mobile launchers stationed anywhere in India capable of striking any major city in China has all the reasons to alter Asia's strategic environment, especially the equation between New Delhi and Beijing. Naturally, the development hasn't gone down well with Beijing and the commonality in unpleasant reactions across China's strategic, political and media circles evince that a more aggressive posturing from China is on the anvil.

From terming the test as a violation of UN norms to advising India "to cool down its missile fever", the reactions from Beijing are sufficient to put New Delhi on a high alert. Moreover, an editorial in the state-run *Global Times* clearly stated that China shall not restrain itself in expanding Pakistan's nuclear capabilities in response, thereby pointing towards an aggressive stance vis-à-vis India.

Although the Sino-Indian border has remained relatively peaceful for the past three decades (barring the incidents of PLA's aggressive border patrols) and both the nations have set up institutionalised mechanisms to enhance the case for peaceful border, China's cooperation with Pakistan in the domains detrimental to India's stability is something that seems to have deteriorated Sino-Indian ties.

This article analyses three key irritants in the India-Pak relationship which Beijing may attempt to aggravate further in response to India's recent missile tests:

## **Masood Azhar Issue**

As expected, China recently exercised its veto to block India's bid to get Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Masood Azhar designated as a terrorist under the UNSC's 1267 Sanctions Committee. New Delhi does believe that Beijing would eventually cooperate even if it takes intense negotiations to convince it regarding the threats from non-state actors operating from Pakistan. But, the aggressive militarisation along the LAC by both the sides, and the China-centric debate surrounding Agni-V have definitely unnerved Beijing. Keeping India entangled with its western neighbor in a sub-conventional warfare shall turn out to be a good diverting tactic in this scenario.

China's stance has generated a strong reaction from New Delhi, which calls these moves as double standards as well as threats directly aimed at undermining India's sovereignty. By not cooperating with New Delhi regarding this highly sensitive issue, Beijing seems to have conveniently delegated its India-specific antagonisms to Pakistan.

## **Indian Ocean Region**

With the inception of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the IOR is heading towards witnessing more muscle flexing. Pakistan has recently set up a maritime force to safeguard the Gwadar Port and CPEC-linked

sea lanes; hence, the region is set to witness greater naval activity. Besides assisting in strengthening the Pakistani naval program, the Chinese maritime footprint is expected to be extended into the Arabian Sea as well.

Recently, an NDTV report stated that a Chinese submarine which had secretly docked at Karachi last year might have spied on the movements of the Indian warships. Given that nuclear submarines can remain underwater for extended durations, Pakistani waters may witness higher instances of Chinese submarines paying visits, thus giving the Indian Navy a tough time.

Heating up of the IOR with surprise criss-crossing of Chinese stealth submarines to and from the Pakistani waters is another challenge New Delhi must be prepared to address.

## **Afghanistan**

The closeness of post-9/11 Kabul regimes with New Delhi has long been a bone of contention in the Af-Pak relations. With the Afghan regime still facing challenges from the Taliban, the Sino-Pak combine has ramped up its efforts to dominate the security discourse in Afghanistan. It is a known fact that a negotiation window between the Taliban and China is active and a Taliban delegation paid a secret visit to China last July.

Parallely, China has also increased its aid and economic activities in Afghanistan with the commencement of direct railway connectivity being the recent high point. As Beijing follows the strategy of keeping negotiations open with all the stakeholders irrespective of their legitimacy, it also looks forward to put Pakistan on-board at any opportunity it finds regarding the Afghan issue.

The recent meeting between Russia, China and Pakistan to discuss Afghanistan's deteriorating security situation, which called for reviving talks with Taliban demonstrate the keenness with which China and Pakistan wish to see the Taliban having a say in running Kabul's affairs, something which is anything but good for Afghan peace and India's hard-earned goodwill in the nation.

Though the mobile version of Agni-V is indeed a game-changer in the hitherto skewed Sino-Indian strategic balance and has filled the much needed gap in India's nuclear capabilities, the reactions from Beijing have been thoroughly unsettling. All the above mentioned issues point towards rekindling the flashpoints which have always kept interstate relations simmering in South Asia.

Intensification of these multiple challenges cannot be ruled out as Beijing's reactions suggest, but what remains to be seen is how New Delhi is geared to handle them.



*Fri, 03 Feb, 2017*

# **Create unit outside Defence Ministry to fast-track defence deals: Panel to tell Govt**

*By Sushant Singh*

*Defence acquisitions have been stuck in a long-drawn spiral with major procurements like the Rafale fighters or M-777 howitzers taking nearly a decade to fructify.*

To overcome the perennial problem of delays in defence procurement, unspent budgets, allegations of corruption and botched deals, an expert committee established by the government has recommended the creation of a new, independent organisation outside the Ministry of Defence to undertake defence procurement. The committee, headed by retired IIM professor Pritam Singh, will submit its report to Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar next week.

“We have given this new organisation full ownership of the acquisition process by bringing legal, financial, costing and technical experts under one roof. Independent of the Ministry (of Defence), they will not be constrained by government rules. This professionalisation of the process will bring down the time taken to

complete defence acquisitions. We have also recommended adequate internal checks and balances to reduce corruption,” a member of the expert committee said.

The Indian Express spoke to two members of the committee who said that the report, running into more than 300 pages, was ready last month. They have discussed the report with the Defence Secretary since Parrikar was busy with assembly elections in Goa.

Defence acquisitions have been stuck in a long-drawn spiral with major procurements like the Rafale fighters or M-777 howitzers taking nearly a decade to fructify. This is the state of government-to-government deals while the situation with the open tender processes has been worse, with allegations of corruption and subsequent blacklisting of firms.

This is reflected in the quantum of unutilised funds of defence procurement. In the last ten years, the Ministry has been unable to utilise Rs 54,416 crore from its capital acquisition budget. This includes the current financial year, in which an amount of Rs 6,886 crore from the capital budget has been transferred for revenue spending of the defence services, according to Budget documents placed before Parliament Wednesday.

The nine-member expert committee was formed by the Ministry in May last year with the mandate for ‘Restructuring of the Acquisition wing to make it more effective’. It was embroiled in controversy when the head of the committee, former Director General (Acquisition) Vivek Rae, resigned in October after fundamental differences with other members over the proposed defence procurement organisation.

While Rae wanted this new organisation to be a part of the Ministry, other members were determined to keep it independent of the government.

In its recommendations, the committee has proposed that a new organisation, tentatively called the Defence Capital Acquisition Authority, will be fully responsible for the entire process of acquisition after the operational requirements have been identified by the defence services.

Operating independently of the Ministry, it will be manned by people with specific qualifications which will include experts from outside the government who are fit to serve in these positions. The report says that “at the highest level, there will be a seamless integration between the MoD and this organisation” where the “decision-making will be collective and collegiate”.

“This organisation will convert all acquisition schemes and programmes into projects, which will be the responsibility of a project management team from the start to finish. Project which are of different service, say UAVs for the army and the air force, will be clubbed together as one single project,” a member of the expert committee said.

The committee has recommended that the government should not rush into the process of creating this organisation to disrupt ongoing procurements. While timelines have been left open for further deliberation, it has proposed two years to complete this exercise.



*Fri, 03 Feb, 2017*

## **War memorial to be built by '18**

The defence ministry was facing issues in the construction of the national war museum which is to be built on a piece of land adjacent to the India Gate due to squatters.

However, sources say the issue has been sorted out as the civilians would now be shifted out to some other place. The war memorial coming up at India Gate complex would be ready by 2018.

## Scientist: I had warned army about avalanches

The death of 20 army personnel in avalanches which hit Kashmir's Sonamarg and Gurez sector on January 25 may have come as a surprise to many. However, the Indian Army was informed about the likelihood of these avalanches before-hand claims the Snow and Avalanche Study Establishment (SASE). Ashwagosh Ganju, Director SASE said, "Avalanche is a result of many factors. These avalanches were predicted in advance. It can't be said they will occur at so and so time and in such an such area but we have what is called an area forecast and we could tell them about the area concerned. This was passed on to the Army.

"With the unprecedented, high intensity snowfall, we knew that an avalanche would strike but predicting intensity is not possible, still we had informed the people." Ganju emphasised that, "Army has its own compulsions so I will not be able to give you more about that. Avalanches can't be predicted specifically but we were accurate about the area. And we did tell them in advance." Talking about the predictions, the Director of SASE said that reports are about 80-85 per cent accurate.

With the vision to 'provide precision avalanche forecasting support to the services', SASE is spread out in key areas but to collect and assess information from all parts of Himalayas poses a challenge for the experts due to the vastness of the terrain and limited infrastructure. A staffer said SASE sends a general report before 5 pm with its predictions for the next 24 hours, "Those are public reports and are widely shared. We also send a detailed report to our users like the Army," he added.



Fri, 03 Feb, 2017

## VRS of jawan who complained of poor food revoked by BSF

The Border Security Force has cancelled the voluntary retirement of constable Tej Bahadur Yadav, whose video about "sub-standard" food served to jawans recently went viral, citing the pending court of inquiry into his allegations and charges of indiscipline against him.

The move evoked an adverse reaction from Yadav and his family, with an audio clip allegedly recorded by him and shared by his wife complaining that he was being "threatened and mentally tortured". He claimed that his voluntary retirement was revoked on January 31 and that he was "arrested".

The BSF confirmed the cancellation, pointing out that as Yadav is under the scanner for indiscipline, the privilege of VRS could not be allowed to him, but said that he "has not been arrested".



Fri, 03 Feb, 2017

## China Tests Missile with 10 Nuclear Warheads: Report

China has reportedly tested a new version of a missile that can carry up to 10 nuclear warheads, signalling a major shift in its nuclear capability as Beijing gears up for a possible military showdown with the US under Trump Presidency.

The flight test of the DF-5C missile was carried out last month using 10 multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles, or MIRVs, the Washington Free Beacon reported.

The test of the inert warheads was monitored closely by US intelligence agencies, said two officials familiar with reports of the missile test.

The Dongfeng-5C missile, carrying 10 dummy warheads, was launched from the Taiyuan Space Launch Centre in Shanxi province, and flew to a desert in western China, the report said.

The missile is a new variant of the DF-5, an intercontinental ballistic missile that first went into service in the early 1980's.

"The [Defence Department] routinely monitors Chinese military developments and accounts for PLA capabilities in our defence plans," Pentagon spokesman Commander Gary Ross was quoted as saying by the report.

For decades, the US has put the estimated number of warheads in China's nuclear arsenal at about 250.

But the report suggested that the latest test with 10 warheads meant the actual number could be larger.

China also began adding warheads to older DF-5 missiles in February last year, according to US intelligence agencies.

US defence officials have previously warned that China's rapid development of long-range ballistic missiles, coupled with a lack of transparency about its nuclear capabilities, could bring uncertainty to stability in the region.

The timing of the test coincided with the election of Donald Trump as US President who signalled a tougher stance against China over a range of issues, from the trade deficit to Beijing's military build-up in the disputed South China Sea.

Chinese military expert from an institute affiliated with the People's Liberation Army, (PLA) said a new test would not have been aimed at Trump.

"The test of a nuclear missile requires permission from the highest level – the Central Military Commission. It takes at least one year for the military to get the approval and to prepare for it," the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post quoted unnamed expert as saying.

"It is not a random decision to be made just because Trump is now in office," the expert said.

Although China had made steady progress in nuclear arms development in recent years, the government had no plans to drastically adjust its nuclear policy, the expert said.

Also recent commentaries in the official media here said China is stepping up preparedness for a possible military conflict with US after Trump election.

A commentary in the official website of People's Liberation Army's (PLA) said on January 20 the day Trump assumed Presidency that the chances of war have become "more real" amid a more complex security situation in Asia Pacific.

The commentary written by an official at the national defence mobilisation department in the Central Military Commission, China's overall military high command said the call for a US rebalancing of its strategy in Asia, military deployments in the East and South China Seas and the instillation of a missile defence system in South Korea were hot spots getting closer to ignition.

"A war within the President's term or wars breaking out tonight are not just slogans, they are becoming a practical reality," the commentary said.

Recent images purporting to show China's Dongfeng-41 missile have surfaced on Chinese websites with reports suggesting that Beijing has deployed them in Heilongjiang province, which borders Russia.

The missile, with a range of 14,000 km and a payload of 10-12 nuclear warheads, is considered one of the military's most powerful.

Global Times, a state-run tabloid in a recent commentary said the deployment of the DF-41 was a "strategic deterrence tool" and Beijing would "ready itself for pressures imposed by the new US government".



## US puts Tehran 'on notice' for missile, Iranian advisor dismisses threat

**WASHINGTON:** The White House issued a cryptic warning on Wednesday that the US will act against Iran unless it stops testing ballistic missiles and supporting Houthi rebels in Yemen, but declined to say what retaliatory actions the US would pursue.

Michael Flynn, President Donald Trump's national security adviser, forcefully denounced Iran's behaviour in his first public remarks since Trump took office. He accused Iran of threatening US allies and spreading instability throughout the Middle East while faulting the Obama administration for doing too little to stop the Islamic Republic.

"As of today, we are officially putting Iran on notice," Flynn said from the White House podium.

A top adviser to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Thursday Iran will not yield to "useless" US threats from "an inexperienced person" over its ballistic missile programme.

"This is not the first time that an inexperienced person has threatened Iran... the American government will understand that threatening Iran is useless," Ali Akbar Velayati said.

He did not identify any specific US official. **AGENCIES**

**The Statesman**  
PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION

## S Korea, US agree to push missile defence system

South Korea and the United States today agreed to push through with the deployment of a US missile defence system strongly opposed by China, the prime minister said. Hwang Kyo-Ahn and US Defence Secretary James Mattis confirmed that the two allies will go ahead with the installation of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system in the South this year as planned, the prime minister's office said.

Mattis arrived today in South Korea on the first leg of a trip that also includes Japan, two key allies rattled by US President Donald Trump's ascent to power. It is the first overseas tour by a senior official in Trump's administration as concerns rise about the direction of American policy in the region under the protectionist and fiery leader. On the campaign trail, Trump threatened to withdraw US forces from the two countries if they do not step up their financial support. Some 28,500 US troops are based in South Korea and 47,000 in Japan.

The rhetoric has raised concerns in both Seoul and Tokyo, and in a statement this week South Korea's defence ministry said it hoped Mattis' trip would be "an opportunity for the Trump administration to maintain and strengthen US commitment" to their alliance. "President Trump ... wanted me to make a very clear statement about the priority that we place on this alliance between our two allies", Mattis said at the start of his talks with

Hwang, who serves as the South's acting leader following the impeachment of President Park Geun-Hye in December over corruption charges.

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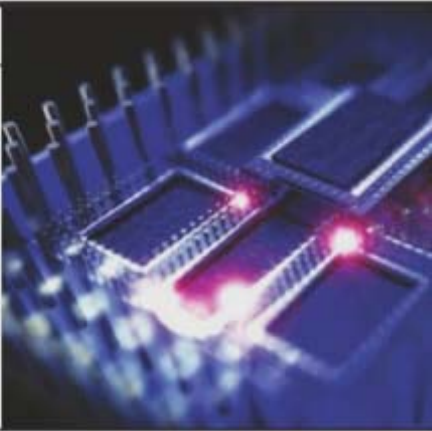
## Soon, a computer million times faster than PCs

By Ian Johnston

### *Quantum Computers Closer To Reality As Researchers Make First Blueprint for Prototype*

Scientists have produced the first-ever blueprint for a large-scale quantum computer in a development that could bring about a technological revolution on a par with the invention of computing itself.

Present quantum computers have just a fraction of the processing power they are capable of producing.

<b>THE HOLY GRAIL OF SCIENCE</b>	
➤ Quantum computers harness the power of atoms and molecules to perform memory and processing tasks	
➤ This is the first time that researchers are building a prototype and a full-scale quantum computer	
➤ It will be many millions of times faster than the best computers currently available	
➤ It could be built in about a decade and cost an estimated £100 million	
➤ Quantum mechanics will lead to new, life-saving medicines, help solve the most intractable scientific problems and probe the mysteries of the universe	

Researchers believe they have overcome the main problems that have prevented the construction of powerful machines.

They are currently building a prototype and a full-scale quantum computer. Such devices work by utilising the magical properties found in the world of the very small, where an atom can apparently

exist in two different places at the same time. Professor Winfried Hensinger, head of Ion Quantum Technology Group at Sussex University, research head, said, “It is the Holy Grail of science, to build a quantum computer. And we are now publishing the actual nuts-and-bolts construction plan for a large-scale quantum computer.” “Life will change completely. We will be able to do certain things we could never even dream of before,” he said.

He said small quantum computers had been built in the past but to test the theories.

The problem is that existing quantum computers require lasers focused on individual atoms. The larger the computer, the more lasers are required and greater the chance of going wrong. But Hensinger and colleagues used a different technique to monitor the atoms, involving a microwave field and electricity in an ‘ion-trap’ device. “What we have is a solution that we can scale to arbitrary (computing) power,” he said.

“Within two years we think we will have completed a prototype which incorporates all the technology in this blueprint. It's extraordinarily expensive so we need industry partners ... this will be in the 10s of millions, up to £100m.”

Commenting on the research, described in the journal Science Advances, some academics expressed caution about how quickly it could be developed. Dr Toby Cubitt of said, “Ion traps were one of the earliest proposals. Though there's still a long way to go before you'll be making spreadsheets on your quantum computer.”