Introduction

This issue of CISS Newsletter provides a snapshot of the host of activities undertaken by the Center including research publications, roundtable discussions, and outreach activities, during the past three months.

On 30th Oct 2019, a cyberattack occurred at India's Kudankulam nuclear power plant. Apparently, the attack was meant to steal information from a network connected to the internet. If malicious actors are successful in targeting an airtight network of the nuclear reactor, the consequences of such attacks may have catastrophic effects. System-level access in an air-gapped network at a nuclear facility could allow a hacker to cause a radiological accident, or crash the reactor process by raising or lowering pressure, resulting in mass causalities and loss of the facility.

In another development, China and the United States have agreed to phase out trade tariffs imposed against each other. Both states are trying to move away from the rigid zero-sum game of the Cold War era. In Afghanistan, US troops are set to return in the near future. However, in such a situation all the non-state actors and warlords may again try to assert their power in the vacuum created by the absence of US troops and weakening of Afghan security forces who were dependent on US military support for operations. India may also try to exploit the situation to its advantage.

In Syria's Civil War, Turkey has launched a military operation against Kurdish fighters (YPG). However, the defeat of YPG, a former US proxy in Syria will further strengthen Iranian and Russian influence in the Middle East. Moreover, Saudi Arabia seeks a political settlement in Yemen and recently signed the Riyadh agreement. Apparently, this agreement has averted the war; however, as different stakeholders may make another pass to deepen their influence, the situation can result in a new round of conflict.

Happy Reading!

Editor
Syed Sadam Hussain Shah

Editorial Assistant
Maryyum Masood
To understand the simmering crisis in Kashmir and discuss policy options for Pakistan, the Center for International Strategic Studies (CISS) held a round-table conference on Pakistan's Perspective on Kashmir Crisis on October 24, at its conference room. For complete press release visit the link https://ciss.org.pk/ciss-round-table-on-pakistans-perspective-on-kashmir-crisis-with-dr-zahoor-ahmed/
Ms. Saima Sial presented a paper, on “India-Pakistan Nuclear Crises: Escalation Dynamics” in CSSPR-CASS Conference (Nov 11, 2019)

Ms Saima Aman Sial, Senior Research Officer CISS, presented a paper, on “India-Pakistan Nuclear Crises: Escalation Dynamics” in a one day Conference on Deconstructing Balakot Strikes: Pakistan's Conventional Warfighting Doctrine and the Way Forward, co-organized by Center for Security, Strategy and Policy Research (CSSPR), University of Lahore and Center for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS), Islamabad, on November 11, 2019.


Dr. Syed Javaid Khurshid Delivered a Lecture on Development of Pakistan's Nuclear Program for Peaceful Purposes at SVI (Dec 5, 2019)

Dr. Syed Javaid Khurshid, Senior Research Fellow CISS, delivered a lecture on “Development of Pakistan's Nuclear Program for Peaceful Purposes” at one-day conference on “Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Technology – Pakistan's Achievements” organized by Strategic Vision Institute, Islamabad (SVI) on December 05, 2019. For further details please visit https://ciss.org.pk/dr-syed-javaid-khurshid-delivered-a-lecture-on-development-of-pakistans-nuclear-program-for-peaceful-purposes-at-svi/
Center for International Strategic Studies, Islamabad (CISS) organized a seminar on India's Strategic Posture and Implications for Stability in South Asia”, in collaboration with the University of Sargodha (UOS) in Noon Business School Hall on 17, December 2019. This seminar was arranged as a part of CISS-Outreach Program aimed at engaging with students and faculty of Universities other than those located in Islamabad. CISS's outreach program focuses on strategic and nuclear issues. For details visit the link https://ciss.org.pk/ciss-and-uos-joint-seminar-on-indias-strategic-posture-and-implications-for-stability-in-south-asia/
US-IRAN STANDOFF
Maryyum Masood and Sajid Aziz (Oct 9, 2019)
The ominous prospect of a war between the US and Iran has loomed large over the last few months. Ever since the US withdrawal from a multi-lateral agreement on Iran's nuclear program last year, both states have pursued a set of escalatory policies that have pushed them on the precipice of a military confrontation.
For complete article visit https://ciss.org.pk/us-iran-standoff/

Cyber Weapons: Time to Get Worried
Afeera Firdous (Nov 28, 2019)
Whether the threat of a cyber-Pearl Harbor is real or exaggerated, it is clear that the world is certainly unprepared to deal with the consequences of a cyber war. Large installations of computer networks and internet have directly become part of the national security system of almost all countries. The smooth functioning of many services are dependent on them. Cyber revolution, in the last two decades, has shaped the threat perception of states as threat from cyber domain has become a reality.
Complete article can be accessed https://ciss.org.pk/cyber-weapons-time-to-get-worried/

Monograph on Nuclear Signaling, Escalation and De-escalation in South Asia Published by ISSI
Dr. Naeem Salik (Nov 29, 2019)
In deterrence theory, besides the capability and political will the communication of deterrence threat is the third crucial element. However, it has been commonly experienced especially in the context of India-Pakistan hostility that such signals fall on deaf ears.
For further details visit the link https://ciss.org.pk/dr-naeem-saliks-monograph-on-nuclear-signaling-escalation-and-de-escalation-in-south-asia-published-by-issi/

Balakot Strikes: Escalation Pathways and Crisis Management Takeaways
Saima Aman Sial (Dec 21, 2019)
Crisis is a situation between states which is characterized by surprise (sudden, unexpected) and poses a threat (potential to harm the interest of a state), which requires decision-making by a state in a time-constrained environment in order to prevent further escalation into a
full-blown conflict or war. In South Asian crises, the geographical contiguity is an important element while talking about the dynamics of possible escalation.


ISRAEL AND INDIA: DOPPELGANGERS?

Sajid Aziz (Dec 22, 2019)

The post-Pulwama military crisis and India's recent move to revoke articles 370 and 35(A), which gave Indian-held Kashmir a distinct constitutional status and administrative structure, have not only raised the ominous prospect of war between the two nuclear-armed South Asian states but has also led to some interesting comparisons between India and Israel, especially in their dealings with the occupied territories of Kashmir and Palestine respectively.

Complete article can be accessed at https://ciss.org.pk/israel-and-india-doppelgangers/

INTERNATIONAL VISITS

MS. SAIMA'S PARTICIPATION IN 2019 NEW SHAPE FORUM ON WEAPONS GOVERNANCE, GENEVA (Oct 1, 2019)

Ms. Saima Aman Sial, Senior Research Officer CISS, participated in the 2019 New Shape Forum on Weapons Governance, October 2019, organized by Global Challenges Foundation and Geneva Disarmament Platform in Geneva.

For further details please visit https://ciss.org.pk/ms-saimas-participation-in-2019-new-shape-forum-on-weapons-governance-geneva/
MS. MAIMUNA WAS SELECTED FOR THE NETHERLANDS MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS' SCHOLARSHIP
(From September 30 to October 4 2019)
Ms. Maimuna Ashraf, Research Officer CISS, was selected for the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Scholarship for the Training programme on disarmament and non-proliferation of WMD, co-organized by the T.M.C. Asser Instituut and the Organization for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (OPCW). She participated in this training programme in The Hague, the Netherlands from the 30th of September to the 4th of October 2019.
For further details visit the link https://ciss.org.pk/ms-maimuna-was-selected-for-the-netherlands-ministry-of-foreign-affairs-scholarship/

VISIT OF ATLANTIC COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC OFFICE REPRESENTATIVE AT CISS OFFICE
(Nov 4, 2019)
Atlantic Council Washington DC Office Representative visit at CISS Office on November 4, 2019.
For details please visit the link https://ciss.org.pk/visit-of-atlantic-council-washington-dc-office-representative-at-ciss-office/
Ms. Maimuna Ashraf, Research Officer CISS, was a speaker in the EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Next Generation Workshop held in Brussels on 12 December 2019. She served as a panelist in the session on Non-Proliferation and Arms Control in Asia. The EUNPD Next Generation Workshop was organized by the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), on behalf of the EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium. Further details can be accessed at https://ciss.org.pk/ms-maimuna-was-a-speaker-in-the-eu-non-proliferation-and-disarmament-next-generation-workshop-held-in-brussels/
DR. MANSOOR AND MS. MAIMUNA PARTICIPATED IN THE EIGHTH EUROPEAN UNION NON-PROLIFERATION AND DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE (EUNPDC) 2019 HELD IN BRUSSELS
(Dec 13-14, 2019)

Dr. Mansoor Ahmed, Senior Research Fellow CISS, and Ms. Maimuna Ashraf, Research Officer CISS, participated in the Eighth European Union Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Conference (EUNPDC) 2019 held in Brussels from 13-14 December, 2019. The two day international conference was organized by the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), on behalf of the EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium. Participants engaged in an open discussion, covering issues related to arms control, disarmament, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), their delivery systems, and small arms and light weapons (SALWs).

MS. AFEERA FIRDOUS PRESENTED A PAPER ON “KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY AND ICT: PROMOTING TECHNOLOGICAL CONNECTIVITY UNDER CPEC” AT A CONFERENCE IN CHINA (From Dec 18 to Dec 20, 2019)

Ms. Afeera Firdous, Research Assistant at CISS, presented a paper on “Knowledge Economy and ICT: Promoting Technological Connectivity under CPEC” in a three-day conference, The Third Conference on CICA Non-governmental Forum held in Chongqing, China.