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**INDIA – PAKISTAN RIVALRY'S INFLUENCE ON INDIA'S
ENGAGEMENT IN THE INDO-PACIFIC REGION**

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UTICAJ INDIJSKO-PAKISTANSKOG RIVALSTVA NA
ANGAZOVANJE INDIJE U INDO-PACIFIČKOM REGIONU

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INDIA – PAKISTAN RIVALRY’S INFLUENCE ON INDIA’S ENGAGEMENT IN THE INDO-PACIFIC REGION

Abstract

This research aimed to find an answer to whether the rivalry between India and Pakistan negatively affects India’s efforts and ambitions to establish itself as a major political, economic and military power regionally and globally. The author’s understanding was that the rivalry diminished India's potential to perform actively in the Indo-Pacific region and global affairs because significant resources were being allocated to manage this rivalry. The author primarily employed a qualitative approach, analysing numerous primary and secondary sources through content analysis as a research method. Additionally, the secondary analysis involved interpretation, synthesis, comparison, and the author’s insights. Having thoroughly studied the relationship between the India – Pakistan rivalry, as a first variable, and the influence of that rivalry on India's involvement in the Indo-Pacific region, as a second variable, it was concluded that the rivalry has a significant capacity to complicate India’s efforts to pursue its ambitions to establish itself as a major political, economic, and military power regionally and globally. It was also concluded that India’s engagement in the Indo-Pacific region, the QUAD, and minilateral formats such as the SCO, the BRICS, and the EAS, enhances its global political, economic, and military role and helps reduce the scale of the rivalry’s capacity to contain that role, thus serving this country’s quest for strategic goals.

This research confirms that India's rivalry with Pakistan negatively impacts its performance in the Indo-Pacific region. It also contributes to the existing literature and knowledge on the subject.

Keywords: India, Pakistan, Indo-Pakistan rivalry, militarisation, *security dilemma*, economic slowdown, *major powers*, Indo-Pacific region, minilateral formats, regional and global ambitions.

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Rezime

Svrha ovog istraživanja bila je da se pronađe odgovor na pitanje da li rivalstvo između Indije i Pakistana negativno utiče na napore i ambicije Indije da uzraste u veliku političku, ekonomsku i vojnu silu na regionalnom i globalnom nivou. Autorovo razumevanje je da ovo rivalstvo umanjuje potencijal Indije da aktivno deluje u Indo-pacifičkom regionu i u globalnim poslovima zbog značajnih resursa koje koristi da bi se nosila sa njim. Autor je prvenstveno primenio kvalitativni pristup proučavajući veliki broj primarnih i sekundarnih izvora i koristeći analizu sadržaja kao metod istraživanja. Tumačenje, sinteza, poređenje i uvidi autora kao sekundarna analiza su takođe primenjeni. Having thoroughly studied the relationship between the India – Pakistan and their rivalry, as a first variable, and the influence of that rivalry on India's involvement in the Indo-Pacific region, as a second variable, it was concluded that the rivalry has a significant capacity to complicate India's efforts to pursue its ambitions to establish itself as a major political, economic, and military power regionally and globally. Kroz temeljno proučavanje odnosa između Indije i Pakistana i indijsko-pakistanskog rivalstva, kao prve varijable, i uticaja tog rivalstva na učešće Indije u Indo-pacifičkom regionu, kao druge varijable, iznet je zaključak da ovo rivalstvo ima značajan kapacitet da komplikuje napore Indije da ostvari ambiciju izrastanja u veliku političku, ekonomsku i vojnu silu na regionalnom i globalnom nivou. Zaključak ovog istraživanja je i da angažman Indije u Indo-pacifičkom regionu, KVAD-u i minilateralnim formatima kao što su Šangajska organizacija za saradnju (ŠOS), BRIKS i Istočno azijski samit (IAS), jača njenu globalnu političku, ekonomsku i vojnu ulogu i pomaže u smanjenju kapaciteta posmatranog rivalstva da umani tu ulogu Indije. U tom smislu, ovi angažmani Indije joj pomažu u ostvarenju strateških ciljeva.

Ovo istraživanje potvrđuje da rivalstvo između Indije i Pakistana negativno utiče na uspešnost indijskog angažmana u Indo-pacifičkom regionu. Ono je doprinos postojećoj literaturi i akademskom znanju o ovoj temi.

Ključne reči: Indija, Pakistan, Indo-pakistansko rivalstvo, militarizacija, *bezbednosna dilema*, ekonomsko usporavanje, *velike sile*, Indo-pacifički region, minilateralni formati, regionalne i globalne ambicije.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Subject and objectives of the research.

Formulation of the research problem.

On 15 August 1945, India gained its independence from the United Kingdom. The Union of India was born as an independent dominion in the British Commonwealth of Nations. The dominion existed until 26 January 1950, when India became a republic. In its turn, Pakistan gained independence from the United Kingdom on 14 August 1947, a day before India. Pakistan was also born as an independent dominion in the British Commonwealth of Nations, and it existed as such until 23 March 1956, when Pakistan became an Islamic republic. India and Pakistan were created under the Indian Independence Act of 1947, thus marking the end of the British Raj, also known as the British Indian Empire, ruled by the United Kingdom. Two months and several days after British rule was over, the first Indo-Pakistani war started and lasted for over a year. The relations between the two neighbours were far from good-neighbourly since the very outset. The rivalry was the dominant feature of the relations between the two states in the early days of their independent existence. And it has remained the case until now. The 1971 Indo-Pakistani war brought the split of West Pakistan and East Pakistan as defined per the 1956 Constitution of the country, and a new country was born. East Pakistan became Bangladesh, and West Pakistan is today's Pakistan. The latter was just another confirmation of the thorny character of Indo-Pakistan relations. To sum it up, they once existed together as a colony, then two independent countries later, and finally, three independent countries in the present, with relations between New Delhi and Islamabad remaining complicated and with no signs of immediate improvement. This is the story of the India-Pakistan relations, cut very short, which we see as important enough to be the focus of our work. The title of this research is "India – Pakistan Rivalry's Influence on India's Engagement in the Indo-Pacific Region". The effort would, therefore, be on analysing the influence of the India-Pakistan rivalry on India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region, i.e. on the broader topic of India-Pakistan relations as a factor determining India's performance in the Indo-Pacific region.

To begin with, it is worth studying the origins, evolution, and present state of the India – Pakistan rivalry. The rivalry between India and Pakistan is a reality that should not be ignored. It affects the domestic developments in the two countries and sets the tone for their behaviour bilaterally, regionally, and even globally, to a great extent in the case of both. The significance of this rivalry matters not only for India and Pakistan. It goes far beyond the scope of the two countries. The rivalry has implications for the processes in the region of South Asia and Asia as a whole. It is a factor to be considered in the dichotomy of the Asia-Pacific and Indo-Pacific regions. It would not be a mistake also to claim that the rivalry is to be reckoned with in global terms. Looking at it from different angles, it affects South-South cooperation, the interaction in the framework of the SCO, etc. We, therefore, deem it essential to investigate it profoundly. In this context, it seems helpful to define what rivalry is. Many of the definitions of rivalry could be referred to. Summing up, rivalry is seen as a situation in which people, groups, businesses, etc., compete for the same thing, which is usually severe and continuing.¹ If speaking of *enduring rivalries*, the understanding of Gary Goertz and Paul F. Diehl is that it is about a repeated conflict among the same set of states.²

¹ "Rivalry", Cambridge Dictionary, Available at: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/rivalry> and "Rivalry", The Britannica Dictionary, Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/dictionary/rivalry>

² Gary Goertz and Paul F. Diehl, "Enduring Rivalries: Theoretical Constructs and Empirical Patterns", International Studies Quarterly, Volume 37, Issue 2, June 1993, Pages 147–171, Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2307/2600766>

The relations between the two countries have been thoroughly studied, and many works focus on their history, major issues, current developments, etc. The rivalry between the neighbours and military confrontation, conflicts, and wars as an element of their relationship have also been delved into. During its short history of being the two individual states, India and Pakistan have gone through a series of full-fledged armed conflicts, border skirmishes, cross-border violations, and situations where nuclear war seemed a real possibility.³ The way India and Pakistan became two states and the prehistory of the subcontinent, in addition to the existing religious and ethnic differences and the dominant foreign management, are only a few of the detrimental factors to be considered when explaining the reasons behind this. The latter will be part of the analysis in the next chapter of our work.

There may be different views regarding the roots of the conflict between India and Pakistan. According to Narasingha P. Sil, the bone of the Indo-Pakistani contentions is looked for and found in the erstwhile princely state of Kashmir, part of which was forcibly incorporated into the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and part into the Republic of India.⁴ The recent developments on the ground do not show signs of great optimism. The Center for Preventive Action estimates that as a result of the continued violence in Kashmir and a heightened threat of terrorist activity by Pakistan-based militant groups, the tensions and concerns over a serious military confrontation between the nuclear-armed neighbours remain high.⁵ As per a publication by BBC on 25 January 2023, the former US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has said in his new memoir that India and Pakistan came *close* to a *nuclear conflagration* in February 2019.⁶

The high probability of a nuclear war between New Delhi and Islamabad naturally brings us to the question of what could and should be done to prevent such a scenario. This, in turn, puts the rivalry into the highlights. What actually is the result of the latter is that the competition for superiority between India and Pakistan is seen as one of the most enduring rivalries of the post-World War era and as one that contains factors such as unsettled territorial issues, political incompatibility, irreconcilable positions on national identity, and absence of significant economic and trade relations, all of them causing the rivalry to persist. Furthermore, it is argued that the peculiar power asymmetry that has prevailed between the two countries for over half a century has made the complete termination of the rivalry complex in the near term.⁷

To sum up, India and Pakistan are rivals. One reason for that rivalry is the dispute over Kashmir. With the Pakistan terrorist threat prominently featured in the analyses of experts, the two countries are sometimes very close to nuclear war. The rivalry presents itself as an enduring one.

While it is undoubtedly essential to understand the reasons behind the conflict and explain its enduring character, the practical outcomes for India as a result of its involvement in such a rivalry should not be underestimated either. The latter will be discussed in more detail later.

³ Rafi Amir-ud-Din, Fatima Waqi Sajjad and Shazia Aziz, “Revisiting Arms Race between India and Pakistan: A case of Asymmetric Causal Relationship of Military Expenditures”, *Defence and Peace Economics*, Volume 31, 2020 – Issue 6, Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10242694.2019.1624334?journalCode=gdpe20>

⁴ Narasingha P. Sil, “India-Pakistan Conflict: An Overview, *Association for Asian Studies*”, Volume 14:3 (Winter 2009), Available at: <https://www.asianstudies.org/publications/eaa/archives/india-pakistan-conflict-an-overview/>

⁵ “Conflict Between India and Pakistan”, Center for Preventive Action, June 28, 2022, Available at: <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-between-india-and-pakistan>

⁶ Soutik Biswas, “India and Pakistan came close to nuclear war: Pompeo”, BBC News, January 25, 2023, Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-64396138>

⁷ T. V. Paul, “Why has the India-Pakistan Rivalry Been so Enduring? Power Asymmetry and an Intractable Conflict”, *Security Studies*, Volume 15, 2006 - Issue 4, pp. 600-630, Available at: [https://www.tvpaul.com/files/Paul\(2006\).pdf](https://www.tvpaul.com/files/Paul(2006).pdf)

Secondly, India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region will also be studied. More precisely, India's importance region-wise with a focus on two main components, namely this country's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region and its involvement in the activities of formats such as BRICS, SCO, etc., should be scrutinised next.

To begin with, it would be necessary to define the geographic scope of the Indo-Pacific region should we need to speak accurately of India's engagement within it. As per a publication in Ceoworld Magazine, the Indo-Pacific region is a vast geopolitical area stretching from the west coast of the United States to the west coast of India and comprising the tropical waters of the Indian Ocean, the western and central Pacific Ocean, and the seas connecting the two in the general area of Indonesia.⁸ The region includes 24 countries, with India being among them.⁹ It is compulsory to note that all major powers have expressed their interest and commitment to the region in some way. For clarity, *major power* is usually described as a "state powerful enough to influence events throughout the world".¹⁰ Though engaged with the same region, the major powers do not necessarily see its geographical scope similarly. For example, Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy considers the number of Indo-Pacific countries to be forty.¹¹ When it comes to India, then for New Delhi, the Indo-Pacific construct stretches from Africa to the Americas and covers both the Indian and Pacific Oceans, with China and Indonesia being considered parts of it. Israel is also referred to in the same context, which is strange but not difficult to understand given the warm relations between New Delhi and Jerusalem.¹² In a similar vein, while Washington sees the Indo-Pacific region as extending from the west coast of the USA to the west coast of India for New Delhi, the *Indo* must cover the whole of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), including the East Coast of Africa – Australia as well.¹³

If speaking of India's presence in the Indo-Pacific region, what needs to be pointed out is that New Delhi's concept of the Indo-Pacific was outlined by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his keynote speech at the Shangri-la Dialogue in Singapore in June 2018 with no document or text of the concept being available. The concept expands the US formula of a free and open Indo-Pacific region to become free, open, and inclusive, with other aspects of India's perspective being ASEAN centrality and the concept not being *directed against any country*. Connectivity, enhancing maritime security, counterterrorism, non-proliferation, and cyber issues are also in focus. Last but not least, maritime cooperation, dialogue and exercises in the Indo-Pacific region fall within the practical dimension of the concept where the SAGAR (Security And Growth for All in the Region) concept of the Indian government, the annual Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD) held by the India Navy and the Malabar and Triumph exercises of India, USA and Japan are just a few of the examples.¹⁴ The acronym SAGAR is, in fact, a synonym for India's vision for the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). It was first

⁸ "Indo-Pacific Region", Ceoworld Magazine, Available at: <https://ceoworld.biz/indo-pacific/#:~:text=Countries%20of%20the%20Indo-Pacific%20Region%3A%20%20,%20%2026939%20%2020%20more%20rows%20>

⁹ The following 24 countries are defined as the Indo-Pacific region: Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Timor Leste, United States, Vietnam. Ibid.

¹⁰ "Major power", The Free Dictionary, Available at: <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/major+power>

¹¹ "Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy", Government of Canada, November 11, 2022, Available at: <https://www.international.gc.ca/transparency-transparence/indo-pacific-indo-pacifique/index.aspx?lang=eng>

¹² Huma Siddiqui, "India's concept of Indo-Pacific is inclusive and across oceans", Ministry of External Affairs, India, November 8, 2019, Available at: [https://mea.gov.in/articles-in-indian-media.htm?dtl/32015/Indias concept of IndoPacific is inclusive and across oceans](https://mea.gov.in/articles-in-indian-media.htm?dtl/32015/Indias%20concept%20of%20IndoPacific%20is%20inclusive%20and%20across%20oceans)

¹³ Imran Malik, "US Indo-Pacific strategy and India", The Nation, June 30, 2020, Available at: <https://nation.com.pk/30-Jun-2020/us-indo-pacific-strategy-and-india>

¹⁴ See *supra* note 12.

articulated by Prime Minister Modi in March 2015 in Mauritius and has been broadly referred to in India's foreign policy discourse ever since.¹⁵

Prime Minister Modi further developed the Indo-Pacific Concept of India a year later. The idea suggested by him in a speech at the East Asia Summit (EAS) in Bangkok in November 2019 to translate India's concept of the Indo-Pacific into practical, actionable, and cooperative measures in the maritime domain is referred to as the Indo-Pacific Oceans' Initiative (IPOI). Seven of the sectors of cooperation proposed by the initiative are as follows: maritime security, marine ecology, maritime resources, capacity building and resource sharing, disaster risk reduction and management, science, technology, academic cooperation, trade, connectivity, and maritime transport. The initiative targets the entire spectrum of challenges in the marine domain and aims to widen the scope of the Indo-Pacific narrative beyond security and geopolitics to include economic, development, and environmental challenges. While relying on existing platforms such as ASEAN-led mechanisms and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), in 2019 and 2020, several countries, amongst them Australia, Japan, Vietnam and the Philippines, expressed support to the initiative and committed themselves to cooperation with India in its framework. The evolving initiative complements two multilateral efforts being steered by India, namely the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), and it could be easily seen that New Delhi's ambition is to have the leading role in respect of the IPOI as well.¹⁶

On the other hand, while actively promoting its Indo-Pacific concept, New Delhi was meanwhile supposed to work hard on a challenge serious enough to neglect. Thorny relations with another neighbouring country are, this time, at the heart of its moves. India's border clashes with China have incentivised New Delhi to firm up strong ties with the other three Indo-Pacific democracies, namely the United States, Japan, and Australia. Initiated in 2007 with the idea of cooperation and conversation among the four maritime democracies and revived in 2017, the Indo-Pacific Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) has ever since become one of the most significant global forums. Provision of security deterrence and political coordination, as well as discussion of other aspects such as development, distribution, climate change, green infrastructure, and cyber and space domains, allow India, amongst others, to showcase itself as a responsible, status quo power in the region.¹⁷

As it may be well seen from the above, India has been trying hard to position itself in the Indo-Pacific region in a way corresponding in the most appropriate way to its national interests and endeavours, where the national concepts for the Indo-Pacific and the Indian Ocean regions go in parallel with respective initiatives for practical cooperation and political and security dialogue and coordination.

In addition to its active engagement within the Indo-Pacific region, and though competing to a certain extent with it, India is an active member as well of many other formats such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) and the East Asia Summit (EAS). Amongst many other reasons for India being supportive of the BRICS, its involvement in the latter can also be explained, according to Abhijnan Rej, by New Delhi's quest for

¹⁵ G. Padmaja, "Revisiting SAGAR – India's Template for Cooperation in the Indian Ocean region", National Maritime Foundation, April 25, 2018, Available at: <https://maritimeindia.org/revisiting-sagar-indias-template-for-cooperation-in-the-indian-ocean-region/>

¹⁶ Subhasish Sarangi, "Indo-Pacific Oceans' Initiative (IPOI): India's Indo-Pacific concept translated into action", The United Service Institution of India, October – December 2020, Available at: <https://usiofindia.org/publication/cs3-strategic-perspectives/indo-pacific-oceans-initiative-ipoi-indias-into-pacific-concept-translated-into-action/>

¹⁷ Shreya Upadhyay, "BRICS, Quad, and India's Multi-Alignment Strategy", Stimson, July 12, 2022, Available at: <https://www.stimson.org/2022/brics-quad-and-indias-multi-alignment-strategy/>

international status, by the fact that the reform of the international multilateral architecture remains the key political issue for the BRICS, and last but not least, because of this format allowing India and China to modulate their rivalry within the setting of a small grouping.¹⁸ In another context, it seems to be the case again that except for, presumably, raising its global stature, India is trying to take advantage of its membership in the SCO to resolve some issues with the neighbouring countries. As per a publication of 25 January 2023 in the Pakistani newspaper Dawn, India has invited Pakistan's foreign minister to a meeting of the SCO to be hosted by New Delhi in May 2023, thus signalling a possible thaw in the relations between the two nuclear-armed rivals.¹⁹ Finally, the EAS is seen as a forum of 18 countries of the Asia-Pacific region for strategic dialogue and cooperation on political, security and economic issues of common regional concern formed to further the objectives of regional peace, security and prosperity and playing an important role in the regional architecture.²⁰ Having in mind the way this format is being defined, one may easily argue that participating in this format is yet another opportunity for India to perform as a major factor in the Asia-Pacific and to pursue the inherent objectives and ambitions.

To put it in a nutshell, India exerts efforts to engage with the United States, Japan, Australia, Europe, and Russia, to manage its ties with China, to forge its ties with the developing world, and to expand its neighbourhood policies with New Delhi pursuing multi-alignment through multilateral settings contributing to strengthening India's security architecture and raising India's global standing.²¹ Though India is keen on joining various formats, this country is not amongst NATO's partners across the globe. However, despite the lack of a programme of cooperation between the two, consultations are being held.²²

Summarising the above, joining various other formats corresponds to India's ambitions to upgrade its international status. The country is also trying to achieve its objectives related to the UNSC permanent membership status. In parallel, New Delhi is pursuing the objective of regulating its relations with neighbouring Beijing and Islamabad.

Against this background, it would be appropriate to focus on another recent development that has dramatically changed the situation worldwide. The war in Ukraine has put humanity in front of many new challenges going far beyond the military and security ones. It has raised a lot of difficult-to-answer questions, including those related to the energy crisis, food security, etc. The ongoing Ukraine war has brought some new considerations regarding the way ahead for India as well. It is believed that nowadays, New Delhi has found itself in the awkward situation of having to choose between Russia and the USA. According to Lakhvinder Singh and Dalbir Ahlawat, in the near future, it will be more and more complicated for India to balance between China, Russia and the USA. What the two authors suggest in these circumstances is that India should maintain sound relations with China, Japan, Russia, South Korea, the USA, and ASEAN and that the major regional powers should take the lead and play a more proactive role in building a new security architecture in the Indo-Pacific with the backing of the

¹⁸ Abhijnan Rej, "4 Reasons Why India Supports the BRICS", The Diplomat, October 12, 2020, Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2020/10/4-reasons-why-india-support-the-brics/>

¹⁹ "India invites FM Bilawal for Shanghai Cooperation Organisation meeting: reports", Dawn, January 25, 2023, Available at: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1733534/india-invites-fm-bilawal-for-shanghai-cooperation-organisation-meeting-reports>

²⁰ "India at the East Asia Summit", Ministry of External Affairs, India, August 2018, Available at: <https://www.mea.gov.in/aseanindia/about-eas.htm>

²¹ See *supra* note 17.

²² "Relations with partners across the globe", NATO, August 25, 2021, Available at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49188.htm

USA.²³ In other words, New Delhi needs to support a multilateral security arrangement in the region rather than siding with somebody else's strategy.

As a last step, the specific way in which the India-Pakistan rivalry affects India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region and India's attempt to provide stability, security and economic prosperity through its regional engagements needs to be explained. Our understanding is that the rivalry between the two countries is conducive to a large number of negative consequences for each of them.

In the first place, the rivalry often leads to military confrontation. The confrontation, in its turn, may lead to a conventional and even nuclear war. In any case, a peaceful settlement is required. Muhammad Tasleem Ashraf, Dr. Ali Shan Shah, Dr. Zil-e-Huma Rafique²⁴, but also Ahmed Usman, Shabbir Hussain, Aaisha Amjad, Jawad Tariq, and Amal Sajjad²⁵, as well as Zahid Yaseen, Iqra Jathol and Muhammad Muzaffar,²⁶ refer to the disputes and the military confrontation between India and Pakistan and to the security challenges they faced.

Furthermore, Ahmed Usman, Shabbir Hussain, Aaisha Amjad, Jawad Tariq, and Amal Sajjad²⁷, and Liliang You²⁸, as well as Zahid Yaseen, Iqra Jathol, and Muhammad Muzaffar²⁹ and Sanjay Kumar, Mohammad Samir Hussain, and Dharendra Dwivedi³⁰ focus on the need for a peaceful settlement to avoid a nuclear war.

Secondly, the military confrontation has adverse implications for the economies of the two countries. To say that differently, the military confrontation encourages the militarisation of each of the two countries and, respectively, the arms race between them. These two processes adversely affect the economies of India and Pakistan and their economic development. As a result of the above stated, the resources of each of the two countries should be allocated to prepare for the eventual next round of confrontation rather than to increase economic power. The consequences of the latter are the diminished potential and capabilities to perform regionally and globally. Aspects of the arms race, including its consequences for the economy of the two countries, are being touched upon by Jülide Yildirim and Nadir Öcal³¹, Muhammad Tasleem Ashraf, Dr. Ali Shan Shah, and Dr. Zil-e-Huma Rafique³², and by Rafi Amir-ud-Din, Fatima Waqi Sajjad and Shazia Aziz³³.

²³ Lakhvinder Singh and Dalbir Ahlawat, "India in Indo-Pacific: a way forward", Asia Times, June 13, 2022, Available at: <https://asiatimes.com/2022/06/india-in-indo-pacific-a-way-forward/>

²⁴ Muhammad Tasleem Ashraf, Dr. Ali Shan Shah and Dr. Zil-e-Huma Rafique, "Impact of Security Issues on Pakistan-India Relations: Remedies and Political Advantages", Sir Syed Journal of Education & Social Research, Vol. 4, Issue 1, 2021, Available at: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/0cb6/a3b274da70f782a98d78492a0d0a1a056bf3.pdf>

²⁵ Ahmed Usman, Shabbir Hussain, Aaisha Amjad, Jawad Tariq and Amal Sajjad, "The Pakistan-India Security Dilemma - Contemporary Challenges", Journal of Indian Studies, Vol. 3, No. 1, January – July 2017, pp. 19 – 25, Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319141050_The_Pakistan-India_Security_Dilemma_-_Contemporary_Challenges

²⁶ Zahid Yaseen, Iqra Jathol and Muhammad Muzaffar, "Pakistan and India Relations: A Political Analysis of Conflicts and Regional Security in South Asia", Global Political Review (GPR), Vol. I, No. I (2016), Available at: <https://ideas.repec.org/a/aaw/gprjrn/v1y2016i1p1-9.html>

²⁷ See *supra* note 25.

²⁸ Liliang You, Looking at the "Security Dilemma" between India and Pakistan, Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research, volume 325, Atlantis press, Available at: <https://www.atlantis-press.com/article/125910253.pdf>

²⁹ See *supra* note 26.

³⁰ Sanjay Kumar, Mohammad Samir Hussain and Dharendra Dwivedi, "India - Pakistan Relations: Issues and Challenges", G.B. Books, New Delhi, 2016, Available at: https://openlibrary.org/books/OL30810587M/India-Pakistan_relations

³¹ Jülide Yildirim and Nadir Öcal, "Arms Race and Economic Growth: The Case of India and Pakistan", Defence and Peace Economics, Volume 17, 2006 – Issue 1, Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10242690500369231?journalCode=gdpe20>

³² See *supra* note 24.

The logic being followed above is that because of their rivalry, the two countries are objectively forced to resort to militarisation and arms race, which in turn has a negative impact on their economies and, which is in fact of relevance to our study, on India's regional and global ambitions, i.e., on its engagement in the Indo-Pacific region.

In such a line of reasoning, it seems to be important to have a deeper look at India's economic development and recent economic indicators. After gaining its independence, India changed its economic policies with a view to encouraging economic growth. Since then, the increasing economic growth has been one of the many positive features of the country. In 1991, the concept of the free market was introduced, which marked the beginning of rapid growth. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the country witnessed an economic revolution, and the economy has been constantly growing. With its large population and developed manufacturing sector, the country saves a lot, and this boosts further stabilisation and growth. Today, India is one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. As of 2011, India was ranked 11th in terms of nominal GDP and fourth in terms of GDP in purchasing power parities (PPP).³⁴

In April 2018, the State Minister for Finance, P. Radhakrishnan, said in the Lok Sabha (the lower chamber of the Indian parliament) that as per the UN World Economic Situation and Prospects 2018 report, the Indian economy is projected to grow at 7.2 per cent in 2018-19 and at 7.4 per cent in 2019-20. He also pointed out that the confidence in the Indian economy has increased on account of policy measures taken up by the Government and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) as a result of what Moody's rating agency upgraded India's local and foreign currency issuer rating to Baa2 with a stable outlook from Baa3 on the expectation that continued progress in India's economic reforms will enhance India's growth potential over time. Additional data and figures were presented by him, namely that according to World Bank's Ease of Doing Business 2018 Report, India's ranking improved by 30 positions to 100th rank in 2018 and that as per the World Economic Forum, India's rank in Global Competitiveness Index is 40 out of 137 countries in 2017-18 the latter being an improvement in comparison to 55 out of 140 countries in 2015-16. Minister Radhakrishnan finally highlighted the various initiatives undertaken by the Indian government and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to improve confidence in the Indian economy and boost its growth.³⁵ The latter, according to our understanding, is just another confirmation of the assumption that the government has a prominent role vis-à-vis the economic development of the country. To say it differently, in terms of economic growth, the most determinant factor in India is political.

According to available data, in 2017, India's GDP growth rate was 6.80%. It diminished by 0.26% in 2018 to stand at 6.53%. There was a further decrease of 2.49% in 2019 and the respective figure was 4.04%. The decline continued in 2020, when the growth rate was even negative, with the figure being -7.96%. To be more specific, these are annual percentage GDP growth rates at market prices based on constant local currency.³⁶ It is logical to admit that the 12.01% decline in 2020 compared to the previous 2019 is objectively due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The data published by the Marcotrends platform do not entirely match the predictions and the forecasts of the sources referred to

³³ See *supra* note 3.

³⁴ Harshit Mittal, "Top 7 Factors Affecting The Indian Economy", RVCJ Media, November 7, 2019, Available at: <https://www.rvcj.com/top-7-factors-affecting-the-indian-economy/> and "Factors Affecting Indian Economic Growth", Premiumessays.net, November 1, 2019, Available at: <https://www.premiumessays.net/sample-essay-on-factors-affecting-indian-economic-growth/>

³⁵ "Growth of Indian Economy", India Brand Equity Foundation, Press Information Bureau, April 9, 2018, Available at: <https://www.ibef.org/news/growth-of-indian-economy>

³⁶ "India GDP Growth Rate 1961-2023", Marcotrends, Available at: <https://www.marcotrends.net/countries/IND/india/gdp-growth-rate>

by the State Minister of Finance, Mr. P. Radhakrishnan, in his speech in the Lok Sabha. The only logical explanation here would be that the forecasts for 2020 did not prove to be correct because of the COVID-19 pandemic that hit the world at the beginning of this same year.

To sum up those as mentioned above, ever since the country's independence in 1947, Indian governments have diligently worked on improving the conditions for economic growth. As a result, India has established itself as one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. The COVID-19 pandemic is challenging the positive trends that inevitably necessitate new decisive and well-measured actions on the part of the political factor. On the other hand, improving the country's economic performance requires much energy, and any distraction of efforts and resources from the objectives related to the economy to the rivalry with Pakistan would inevitably be conducive to negative consequences for India's economy. Respectively, negatives are expected to have implications for India's weight in regional and global affairs as well.

The conclusion that could be derived from the above is that India is actively engaged in the Indo-Pacific region, thus pursuing its objectives in accordance with its national interests. Simultaneously, the country has joined and participated in various formats where the use of following such a line is related again to this country's priorities vis-à-vis complex relations with neighbours or key issues of the global agenda. Against this background, India is faced with a problem in the form of its rivalry with Pakistan. The rivalry has its historical roots and manifestations and may lead to undesirable catastrophic consequences. In any case, it is the reason for the constant militarization of the two countries and the arms race between them. One of the negative outcomes of the latter is that the economies of the two countries are suffering. Ever since India became independent in 1947, the government has been exerting efforts to improve its economic performance, and nowadays, India has become one of the fastest-growing economies worldwide. The rivalry affects India's economy and undermines the efforts of the central government in this regard as far as the attention is objectively and forcefully refocused from the economic performance to the rivalry with a neighbouring state. What suffers as a consequence is India's ability to achieve its ambitions region-wise and globally. The problem is, therefore, serious and is moreover seen as an enduring one that is impossible to overcome soon.

Research question and argument.

In view of the above-mentioned, the following research question may be formulated: Does the rivalry between India and Pakistan negatively affect India's efforts and ambitions to establish itself as a major political, economic, and military power regionally and globally?

In the context of the last paragraph of the section related to the formulation of the research problem, our argument concerning such a question would be that India's rivalry with Pakistan diminishes New Delhi's potential to perform actively in the Indo-Pacific region and in world affairs due to significant amounts of resources being used to serve the cause of its rivalry with Islamabad. To see the above from a different angle, militarization, in particular acquisition of weapons, has clearly got a link to the possibility of avoiding future wars between India and Pakistan. Moreover, militarization and acquisition of more weapons by India does not reduce the possibility of war with Pakistan and, respectively, does not exclude Pakistan from the list of India's security challenges. The reasoning behind such a statement stems from the essence of the *security dilemma*, namely that acquisition of more weapons by India triggers the same reaction from Pakistan which at the end may escalate into a military confrontation.

Our research will step on the relevant literature and will further elaborate on the link between India - Pakistan rivalry and India's performance in the Indo-Pacific region and various formats. What still can be added to the existing literature is a clearer confirmation that the former negatively affects the latter.

While our efforts would be aimed at analysing the influence of the India-Pakistan rivalry on India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region, the study would not be ambitious in any way as regards the provision of advice and recommendations on how to avoid, counter, minimise or correct the damages of the rivalry. This, in fact, reveals itself as the limitation of the study.

Review of the most important debates on inter-state wars.

As far as the rivalry between India and Pakistan has led to military confrontation, conflicts, and wars, to better study the conflict, we may need to dive into interstate wars literature. The numerous various works see the problem from different perspectives.

If speaking generally, some of the authors have concentrated on classification of wars while others tackle specific issues such as bringing the war to end, for example. John Vasquez and Brandon Valeriano classify interstate wars as territorial wars, complex territorial wars, non-territorial complex wars, etc.³⁷ In another work of theirs they focus on multiparty, or complex wars, in contrast to the dyadic wars.³⁸ The Correlates of War (COW) Project (2020 – 2022) categorizes wars by whether they take place between states, between a state and a non-state actor, and within states.³⁹ Reiter speaks of preventive wars⁴⁰ and factors relevant for the decision to end a war⁴¹. Other works discuss trade-related conflicts, ethnic conflicts, security aspects of wars, etc.

Many authors have already worked on the topic mentioned above in India and Pakistan, and we have mentioned some of their works in the preceding paragraphs. What could also be of interest is that Rafi Amir-ud-Din, Fatima Waqi Sajjad and Shazia Aziz⁴² and Ejaz Hussain⁴³ speak of resolving the disputes between New Delhi and Islamabad by changing their current policies.

In view of the above, the present research will be focused as well on some security-related aspects of the dyadic interstate war case of India and Pakistan. It will consider issues of consequences of militarisation for the economy of the two countries.

Literature review and contribution to literature.

Literature review.

³⁷ John Vasquez, Brandon Valeriano, "Classification of Interstate Wars", The Journal of Politics, April 2010, Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/231965017_Classification_of_Interstate_Wars

³⁸ Brandon Valeriano, John A. Vasquez, "Identifying and Classifying Complex Interstate Wars", International Studies Quarterly, Volume 54, Issue 2, June 2010, Pages 561–582, Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2478.2010.00599.x>

³⁹ "Correlates of War: Interstate Wars", Available at: <https://www.kaggle.com/datasets/umichigan/interstate-wars>

⁴⁰ Dan Reiter, "Preventive War And Its Alternatives: The Lessons Of History", Strategic Studies Institute, 2006, Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237357189_Preventive_War_and_Its_Alternatives_The_Lessons_of_History

⁴¹ Dan Reiter, "How Wars End: Why We Always Fight the Last Battle", Deckle Edge, October 11, 2010

⁴² See *supra* note 3.

⁴³ Ejaz Hussain, "India–Pakistan Relations: Challenges and Opportunities", Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs, 2019, Available at: https://www.academia.edu/38641297/India_Pakistan_Relations_Challenges_and_Opportunities

The present section is focused on the main strands in academic literature dealing with our research question. As stemming from the previous discussion, the answer we shall be looking for throughout our research is related to whether the rivalry between India and Pakistan negatively affects India's efforts and ambitions to establish itself as a major political, economic, and military power regionally and globally.

Objective of the literature review and approach to it.

In this part of our research work we shall engage with the previous scholarship related to the topic of our thesis. The objective of this literature review would be to provide for an idea of what has already been written on our topic. Furthermore, we shall aim at explaining why our work, including our topic and our approach, would be interesting, necessary, and valuable.⁴⁴

In the framework of the review, we shall summarise and interpret the content of all relevant sources. Each source will be critically evaluated as regards the methods, methodologies and theoretical perspectives used in the past, as well as the results achieved, and the conclusions reached. The review will therefore give an indication of what are the gaps, misconceptions, and limitations of the existing scholarship, i.e., what is lacking and what is being explored from a limited perspective. Finally, the review will explain how our research will address the problem, how it will fill the gap, and/or provide new ways of thinking. By saying how our research will provide what is lacking, the review will make it clear where our work fits into the larger picture and will make it possible to position this work of ours in relation to other already existing research in this area.⁴⁵

Our review will not include every piece of scholarship on the topic. Seen from that perspective, the review will be selective and only reflect important works considered to be helpful for the conduct of our research.⁴⁶

In order to identically approach all works of interest, if and when applicable, the answers to the following questions will be included in the summary of each one of them: (1) what is the topic/idea/problem explored, (2) is the methodology applied effective and what its key elements and limitations are, (3) what are the main points made by the author, (4) does the discussion accurately reflect the nature of the methodology and the results, and (5) do the conclusions follow logically from the methods and the results. Furthermore, one or more key ideas/themes will form the resume's backbone.⁴⁷

The topic of the thesis and key themes.

To begin with, we shall briefly explain our topic. As discussed in the section related to the formulation of the research problem, our research topic is about India-Pakistan relations as a factor determining India's performance in the Indo-Pacific region.

⁴⁴ Rene Tetzner, "PHD SUCCESS – HOW TO WRITE A DOCTORAL THESIS", PRS, Oct 21. 2021, Available at: <https://www.dissertation-proofreading.com/blog/how-to-write-phd-thesis/>

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

Within this framework, we shall, therefore, first study India–Pakistan relations, including their rivalry and, respectively, the military confrontation, conflicts, and wars between them. Having defined *rivalry* and *enduring rivalry*, we shall further go through the roots of the India – Pakistan conflict, and particularly Kashmir, to come to its recent developments involving continued violence and terrorist activities and end up, eventually, with the nuclear war scenario and the possibility and the way to avoid it. The conclusion that has imposed itself at that point is that in the case of India and Pakistan it is about an enduring and rather difficult to overcome rivalry.

The next phase of our research work will be centred on India's regional and global ambitions. Two will be the main themes here, respectively, India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region involving geographically defining the Indo-Pacific region and scrutinising India's and some major powers' concepts of this region and India's engagement in some minilateral formats. We shall speak as well of the expected implications of the war in Ukraine for the region and for India's performance within it, with the understanding reached for as of now being that India is pursuing active engagement in the Indo-Pacific region and various existing formats with a view of defending its national interests, including raising its international standing and achieving its foreign policy objectives, and that in doing so India has to opt for a multilateral security arrangement region-wise as a consequence of the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Having focused on India–Pakistan relations in general and India–Pakistan rivalry in particular, as well as on India's engagement in the Indo–Pacific region as an emanation of its regional and global ambitions, the final step in the conduct of our research will logically be to delve into the influence of India – Pakistan rivalry on these regional and global ambitions of India. Militarisation, arms race, military confrontation, and their implications for India's economy and the influence of such consequences on this country's regional and global ambitions will be in the highlights. The outcome of the preceding discussion related to this theme is, as of now, that the militarisation of India and Pakistan and the arms race between them, both as a direct consequence of their rivalry, negatively affect the economy of India, which in turn diminishes the ability of the latter to achieve its ambitions.

In line with the logic of the preceding paragraph, our research will inevitably need to deal with the security-related aspects of the India – Pakistan conflict, defined as a dyadic interstate war case, including the need to resolve the dispute by changing the current policies of the leaderships of the two countries.

The latter is better explained by the logic of the *security dilemma*, according to which militarisation and an arms race can only lead to a military confrontation and war. This can easily be avoided by changing the approach of the two leaderships to advancing their interests, from using military power to reallocating resources and efforts to economic development.

The general assessment of the existing literature on the topic.

The study will focus on the politics of the Indian government. In particular, India's relations with Pakistan and other countries, as well as India's regional and global ambitions, will be dealt with. The latest developments in the India – Pakistan rivalry and the processes in the Indo-Pacific region will be analysed. In the research, we shall rely on various primary and secondary sources such as books, articles, research works, publications of think tanks, official documents and websites, reference sources, etc. Focusing on the timespan, covering mainly the two terms in office of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the preliminary review shows a great deal of existing literature on the topic and its

main themes. The assessment that could be made in connection to the latter is that the existing scholarship in the area of our interest is recent and abundant. A review of the literature on each of the main themes will follow below, whereas other useful sources will also be referred to.

Review of existing literature on the theme of India – Pakistan relations: India – Pakistan rivalry.

The India – Pakistan relations, in general, and the India – Pakistan rivalry, in particular, have been studied in depth, and there are many publications on them. This is the first theme of primary importance to our research. Some of the main sources to be used when studying this theme are as follows: “Enduring Rivalries: Theoretical Constructs and Empirical Patterns” by Gary Goertz and Paul F. Diehl, “Revisiting Arms Race between India and Pakistan: A Case of Asymmetric Causal Relationship of Military Expenditures” by Rafi Amir-ud-Din, Fatima Waqi Sajjad and Shazia Aziz, “India-Pakistan Conflict: An Overview” by Narasingha P. Sil, “Why has the India-Pakistan Rivalry Been so Enduring? Power Asymmetry and an Intractable Conflict” by T. V. Paul, “India and Pakistan came close to nuclear war: Pompeo” by Soutik Biswas, “Conflict between India and Pakistan” by Center for Preventive Action, etc. In addition, to define the term “rivalry”, we shall resort to sources of reference like the Cambridge Dictionary and The Britannica Dictionary. Other sources may be used in the course of the study if and when necessary.

In “Enduring Rivalries: Theoretical Constructs and Empirical Patterns”, Gary Goertz and Paul F. Diehl focus on *enduring rivalries*, already defined in the preceding section as a repeated conflict among the same set of states, and more precisely on the concept of *enduring rivalries*.⁴⁸

In “Revisiting Arms Race between India and Pakistan: A Case of Asymmetric Causal Relationship of Military Expenditures”, by using the maximum entropy bootstrapping method, Rafi Amir-ud-Din, Fatima Waqi Sajjad, and Shazia Aziz explore the military expenditure of India and Pakistan and try to find out whether they are causally associated or the arms race between the two states is asymmetric. A conclusion they come to, and which is of importance to our study, is that the military expenditure of India shapes the military expenditure of Pakistan, while the opposite is not the case. On that basis, a suggestion is made for Pakistan to think of changing its relationship with India.⁴⁹

Focusing on communalism, colonialism, and nationalism as possible causes of the India-Pakistan conflict in “India-Pakistan Conflict: An Overview” Narasingha P. Sil analyses the origins and the development of the conflict and makes some suggestions as to its future resolution. In addition to pointing out to Kashmir as the bone of contention between India and Pakistan, the inhabitants of which constituted a single political nation prior to 1947, the author goes through the four Indo-Pakistan wars and the rise of terrorism to come to conclusion that “time may be ripe to begin the process for a rapprochement between the two neighbours”. While hinting at some conducive to such a process changes, in the approach of the Indian leadership, Sil, nevertheless, does not provide grounds for too much of optimism as far as the Pakistan response to these changes is concerned. According to him, the problems for Pakistan to opt for such a turn in its position are to be sought in its connection with militant Islam, its claims on Kashmir and issues related to national identity. Having said that, we need not to overlook another conclusion of the author according to which thanks to “sober judgments on the part of the two countries” open confrontations were averted in the aftermath of the terror attacks in

⁴⁸ See *supra* note 2.

⁴⁹ See *supra* note 3.

New Delhi and Mumbai in 2001 and 2008.⁵⁰ This conclusion would be important for our work from the perspective that the option of avoiding the war between India and Pakistan is not to be totally denied.

Territorial disputes over the Kashmir region are also seen by the Center for Preventive Action as the reason behind the Indo-Pakistan wars in 1947, 1965 and 1999. In the publication of the Center of May 2022 entitled “Conflict Between India and Pakistan” it speaks of the background of the conflict and its recent developments. While recognising Kashmir as being at the origins of the conflict and making a prediction as regards the concerns over a serious military confrontation remaining high, the publication is worth mentioning due to bringing our attention as well to the need to ensure stability in the region of South Asia, identified as “an epicentre of terrorism and religious extremism”, and to prevent proliferation of nuclear weapons and minimize the potential of a nuclear war between India and Pakistan. Another point worth to be mentioned here is the reference to the hopes in 2014 that the government of the newly elected at that time Prime Minister Narendra Modi would pursue meaningful peace negotiations with Pakistan.⁵¹ The latter by itself is, according to us, a clear proof of the need to have such negotiations as a means of bringing to end the long existing rivalry between the two countries. Without going into too many details, it needs to be underlined that the idea of such a need to *pursue meaningful negotiations* is this time related to the Indian government, and not to the Pakistan leadership.

In the article “India and Pakistan came close to nuclear war: Pompeo”, published in January 2023, BBC’s India correspondent Soutik Biswas quotes former US State Secretary Mike Pompeo of writing in his book “Never Give an Inch: Fighting for the America I Love” that India-Pakistan rivalry came too close to “spilling over into a nuclear conflagration in February 2019” and of explaining what high ranking US officials did “to avoid a horrible outcome”. According to Pompeo it took several hours and remarkably good work of the teams on the ground in New Delhi and Islamabad to convince each of the two rivals that the other was not preparing for nuclear war.⁵² Such a statement as a factor to consider carefully is of undisputable importance as far as it proves that the nuclear war can be avoided should the willingness to do so is there.

Finally, while accepting that India-Pakistan conflict is one of the most enduring rivalries of the post-World War era as a result of it containing a number of factors causing the persistence of this rivalry and also of the fact of “absence of an appropriate internal or external shock that could act as a catalyst for change”, referring to International relations (IR) theory T. V. Paul speaks in his article “Why has the India-Pakistan Rivalry Been so Enduring? Power Asymmetry and an Intractable Conflict” of the “truncated” power asymmetry as a crucial structural factor causing the persistence of the rivalry. He moreover uses the India-Pakistan case to test the argument that if two states in an asymmetric dyad engage in conflict their rivalry can endure for a long time without resolution. One of the conclusions put up by the author and deserving our attention is that the rivalry between India and Pakistan proves that balance of power and deterrence are not conducive to resolving an enduring rivalry as far as in a mutual deterrence relationship neither party would make the concessions required to end the conflict and the relatively weaker side may resort to provoking various crises being assured that a massive retaliation is unlikely.⁵³

⁵⁰ See *supra* note 4.

⁵¹ See *supra* note 5.

⁵² See *supra* note 6.

⁵³ See *supra* note 7.

Review of existing literature on the themes of India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region and India's engagement in minilateral formats.

India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region.

India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region is the second theme of importance to our research we are going to deal with. As in the case of the previous one, here again we have plenty of information to step on. Amongst the sources we shall use and refer to, the following ones are to be mentioned: "India's concept of Indo-Pacific is inclusive and across oceans" by Huma Siddiqui, "Revisiting SAGAR – India's Template for Cooperation in the Indian Ocean region" by G. Padmaja, "Indo-Pacific Oceans' Initiative (IPOI): India's Indo-Pacific concept translated into action" by Subhasish Sarangi, "US Indo-Pacific strategy and India" by Imran Malik, "Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy", published on the official website of the Government of Canada, "BRICS, Quad, and India's Multi-Alignment Strategy" by Shreya Upadhyay, etc. Publications on the Ceoworld Magazine's website and in The Free Dictionary will be used to clarify the geographic scope of the Indo-Pacific region and the meaning of the term *major power*. Other sources will also be used should there be a need to do so.

In her publication in the official website of the Ministry of External Affairs of India entitled "India's concept of Indo-Pacific is inclusive and across oceans" Huma Siddiqui not only outlines India's understanding as regards the geographic scope of the Indo-Pacific construct. The author speaks as well of what is the difference between India's concept on the Indo-Pacific region and the US one and of the main aspects of the maritime cooperation, dialogue, and exercises within this region. It seems to be the case that special place has been reserved to China's posture in the construct. Amongst the important conclusions to be noted here are that given the specific character of the relationship between India and China – active trade relations and a standoff and a confrontation in the Doklam valley – efforts are underway to improve the ties and that India has avoided participation in several military and naval exercises in the region in view of this specific relationship. Another consideration of the author to be taken into account is that the Indo-Pacific construct is a US-led maritime initiative still trying to find its right direction amongst the partners with China having actually already taken it to heart.⁵⁴

While the concept of SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) of the Indian government for the Indian Ocean region is only mentioned by Huma Siddiqui as one of the many practical emanations of the New Delhi's concept on the Indo-Pacific, together with other initiatives and formats such as the Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD), the Malabar naval exercise, the Tiger Triumph tri-service exercise, etc., G. Padmaja examines in much more details in his essay entitled "Revisiting SAGAR – India's Template for Cooperation in the Indian Ocean region" the main policy statements of this concept and the way in which these statements were breaking new ground in India's maritime diplomacy. Seven are the important landmarks from this point of view according to the author but the essence is that SAGAR sought to create a positive and favourable maritime environment given the understanding that any instability in this maritime environment would not enhance India's maritime security and its interests. Analysing the importance of SAGAR for India's maritime diplomacy Padmaja comes to conclusion that the concept filled a serious vacuum and positioned the maritime issues in the centre of India's foreign policy. It moreover highlighted the interdependence between maritime security, maritime cooperation, and blue economy.⁵⁵

On his part, Subhasish Sarangi devotes his article "Indo-Pacific Oceans' Initiative (IPOI): India's Indo-Pacific concept translated into action" on the evolving character of New Delhi's concept

⁵⁴ See *supra* note 12.

⁵⁵ See *supra* note 15.

on the Indo-Pacific and more precisely on the efforts to implement it into practice. He moreover focuses on the open, cooperative, and inclusive character of the IPOI where any two or more nations can take up cooperation in a particular area of interest and other countries can join at any later stage if they deem it useful to do so. The main conclusions Sarangi comes to are that the IPOI, still in progress, is another “umbrella” of the type of SAGAR, that it will highlight India’s endeavour to be recognized as a partner in the areas of security and development and not as aspiring for influence and that it has to be steered by India and its label will probably be only used for activities in which India participates.⁵⁶

In “US Indo-Pacific strategy and India” Imran Malik speaks of India’s position on the US Indo-Pacific strategy. The publication reflects his views on the ambitions of other countries vis-à-vis a region of significant importance to India. It is of interest to us as far as it helps us analyse India’s own views on that same region. Revealing the disagreement between the two strategic partners, namely US and India, on the geographic boundaries of the Indo-Pacific region the author goes further to conclude that the US strategy is China-centric, and it needs to be rethought.⁵⁷

Views on the geographic scope of the Indo-Pacific region can also be found in the texts of “Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States”⁵⁸ and “Canada’s Indo-Pacific Strategy”⁵⁹. The two documents are worth reading through as they both contain reflections on the role of India.

In her article of July 2022 entitled “BRICS, Quad, and India’s Multi-Alignment Strategy” Shreya Upadhyay speaks of the *internationalist* foreign policy of India as exhibited by this country’s recent by that time participation in a series of summits. In this article it says that India has worked to engage with a number of individual countries, to establish ties with countries of the developing world and to manage its relationship with China and expand its neighbourhood policies. The idea of India remaining outside block politics and firmly practicing its strategic autonomy is being put up for consideration. The conclusions drawn are that the perspective of an Indo-centric multi-alignment underscores India’s participation in these summits and that “a multipolar order presents India an opportunity to practice multiple and multi-layered alignments based on economic and security interests”.⁶⁰ This work would be useful for our research as far as it explains the rationale behind India’s foreign policy action in addition to highlighting New Delhi’s foreign policy priorities.

India’s engagement in minilateral formats.

This theme could be seen as complementary to the theme of India’s engagement in the Indo-Pacific region. Sources such as “4 Reasons Why India Supports the BRICS” by Abhijnan Rej, “India invites FM Bilawal for Shanghai Cooperation Organisation meeting: reports”, published in Dawn, “India at the East Asia Summit”, published on the website of the Ministry of External Affairs of India, “Relations with partners across the globe”, published on NATO’s website, etc., will be used to highlight the rationale behind India’s engagement in various minilateral formats.

In his article entitled “4 Reasons Why India Supports the BRICS” Abhijnan Rej discusses the reasons for India to remain part of the BRICS format, against the background of a criticism on the part

⁵⁶ See *supra* note 16.

⁵⁷ See *supra* note 13.

⁵⁸ “Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States”, The White House, February 2022, Available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf>

⁵⁹ See *supra* note 11.

⁶⁰ See *supra* note 17.

of observers related to the tension between India and China, by correctly pointing out that participation in BRICS activities serves India's interests and its ambitions related to international status.⁶¹

As per a publication in "Dawn" of January 2023 entitled "India invites FM Bilawal for Shanghai Cooperation Organisation meeting: reports" it may be concluded that the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) format is being used by India in the context of New Delhi's efforts to achieve "normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan" by resolving issues between them, if any, bilaterally and peacefully.⁶² It is worth noting here that according to the article mentioned in the previous paragraph similar are the motives of India when it comes to its involvement in the activities of BRICS with relations with China being the target there.⁶³ The conclusion that could be made of us is that India's engagement in some minilateral formats aims, amongst other, at managing relations with neighbouring countries.

The publication on the website of the Ministry of External Affairs of India under the title of "India at the East Asia Summit" comes to confirm our understanding that India's participation in various formats responds to its interests and ambitions.⁶⁴ Having said that, it is worth mentioning that India does not join various formats in an indiscriminate way which can be confirmed, for example, by the publication on the NATO website entitled "Relations with partners across the globe".⁶⁵

Review of literature on impact of the war in Ukraine.

Information on the consequences of the war in Ukraine is largely available from various sources. One of those we deem useful and helpful for the purposes of our research is "India in Indo-Pacific: a way forward" by Lakhvinder Singh and Dalbir Ahlawat. Resorting to other sources is not to be excluded.

Review of literature on impact of India-Pakistan rivalry on India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region.

Impact of India-Pakistan rivalry on the engagement of India in the Indo-Pacific region is the third theme of importance to our study and it could be defined as the key theme of our research. Information on this theme could be obtained from numerous sources. We shall refer, amongst other, to the following ones in particular: "Impact of Security Issues on Pakistan-India Relations: Remedies and Political Advantages" by Muhammad Tasleem Ashraf, Dr. Ali Shan Shah and Dr. Zil-e-Huma Rafique, "The Pakistan-India Security Dilemma - Contemporary Challenges" by Ahmed Usman, Shabbir Hussain, Aaisha Amjad, Jawad Tariq and Amal Sajjad, "Pakistan and India Relations: A Political Analysis of Conflicts and Regional Security in South Asia" by Zahid Yaseen, Iqra Jathol and Muhammad Muzaffar, "Looking at the "Security Dilemma" between India and Pakistan" by Liliang You, "India - Pakistan Relations: Issues and Challenges" by Sanjay Kumar, Mohammad Samir Hussain and Dharendra Dwivedi, "Arms Race and Economic Growth: The Case of India and Pakistan" by Jülide Yildirim and Nadir Öcal, etc.

⁶¹ See *supra* note 18.

⁶² See *supra* note 19.

⁶³ See *supra* note 18.

⁶⁴ "India at the East Asia Summit", Ministry of External Affairs, India, August 2018, Available at: <https://www.mea.gov.in/aseanindia/about-eas.htm>

⁶⁵ See *supra* note 22.

In their study entitled “Impact of Security Issues on Pakistan-India Relations: Remedies and Political Advantages” Muhammad Tasleem Ashraf, Dr. Ali Shan Shah and Dr. Zil-e-Huma Rafique focus on the impact of cross-border terrorism and activities on the relations and the peace process between the two countries as well as on the measures undertaken by Pakistan in view of developing sustainable ties with India. Relying on a big number of sources, including official documents of the ministries of foreign affairs of the two countries, the descriptive research comes to conclusion that the issues of security and terrorism in both countries have worsened the situation by increasing the distrust, blocking the peace process and seriously threatening the regional stability in South Asia.⁶⁶

The article of Ahmed Usman, Shabbir Hussain, Aaisha Amjad, Jawad Tariq and Amal Sajjad entitled “The Pakistan-India Security Dilemma - Contemporary Challenges” examines three of the main issues between India and Pakistan that have brought to security concerns, namely the Kashmir dispute, water dispute and cross-border terrorism. The authors come up with a recommendation for successful negotiations between New Delhi and Islamabad with a view of peaceful settlement of the disputes given that a war between the two nuclear states is to affect not only them but the entire region of South Asia.⁶⁷

Analysing the conflict between India and Pakistan on basis of the security concept Zahid Yaseen, Iqra Jathol and Muhammad Muzaffar come in their study entitled “Pakistan and India Relations: A Political Analysis of Conflicts and Regional Security in South Asia” to the conclusion that the peace process between the two countries must be continued at any cost because the inability to find a solution of the existing longstanding issues affects the regional security structure of South Asia.⁶⁸

Analysing the roots of the lingering “security dilemma” by applying the structural realism, in his study under the title of “Looking at the “Security Dilemma” between India and Pakistan” Liliang You concludes that the rivalry between India and Pakistan affects the development of the two countries and influences the security environment in South Asia. Based upon that conclusion the author recommends to the two countries to pay attention to the convergence of their common interests and “establish an effective security mechanism to achieve peace”.⁶⁹

The need for India and Pakistan to leave aside the differences and closely engage in areas of common interest such as economy, energy, etc., as well as to continue the negotiations on areas of conflicting interests is highlighted also by Rajiv Bhalla in his Foreword to the volume “India - Pakistan Relations: Issues and Challenges” edited by Sanjay Kumar, Mohammad Samir Hussain and Dharendra Dwivedi. The volume itself is a collection of papers on various issues preventing India and Pakistan from reaching the full potential of their bilateral relations.⁷⁰

In their study entitled “Arms Race and Economic Growth: The Case of India and Pakistan” Jülide Yildirim and Nadir Öcal analyse the impact of the arms race between India and Pakistan on their economic growth. The results of their study suggest that there is a mutual causal relationship between the military expenditures of the two countries. Moreover, the analysis shows that in the longer run military expenditure hinders economic growth of India.⁷¹ This conclusion is important to our study as far as we are looking at the impact of the arms race on the ability of India to be a regional and global

⁶⁶ See *supra* note 24.

⁶⁷ See *supra* note 25.

⁶⁸ See *supra* note 26.

⁶⁹ See *supra* note 28.

⁷⁰ See *supra* note 30.

⁷¹ See *supra* note 31.

player. As mentioned earlier in this section, consequences of the arms race for the economy of the two countries is also dealt with by Rafi Amir-ud-Din, Fatima Waqi Sajjad and Shazia Aziz.⁷²

Review of literature on India's economic development and recent economic indicators.

India's economic development, and India's recent economic indicators, in particular, is another theme of great importance to our research from the point of view of explaining the influence of the India – Pakistan rivalry on the potential of India to engage regionally and globally. This theme is in fact supplementary to the key theme of our research. The sources we can use to present the recent economic indicators of the country are more than numerous. We shall mainly refer to some of them as follows: “Top 7 Factors Affecting The Indian Economy” by Harshit Mittal, “Growth of Indian Economy”, published on the website of the India Brand Equity Foundation, “India GDP Growth Rate 1961-2023”, published on the website of the Marcotrends research platform, etc.

In his writing “Top 7 Factors Affecting The Indian Economy” Harshit Mittal presents the main stages in the development of the Indian economy after the country got its independence in 1947 and points out that today India is one of the fastest growing economies in the world.⁷³

Specific examples related to the performance of the Indian economy and attesting to its growth are presented in a publication under the title of “Growth of Indian Economy”, published on the website of the India Brand Equity Foundation.⁷⁴

Additional information on India's GDP growth rate can be obtained from the publication under the title of “India GDP Growth Rate 1961-2023”, published on the website of the Marcotrends research platform.⁷⁵

Review of theoretical debates of relevance to our research.

In order to duly conduct our research, we shall need to refer to and be guided by some of the already established theoretical approaches. Brief overview of existing literature related to realism, including inter-state wars and security dilemma, and to international political economy follows here below.

Review of literature related to realist theories.

To define realism and highlight its importance as an analytical tool, given the abundance of the existing sources, we shall generally refer to “Introducing Realism in International Relations Theory” by Sandrina Antunes and Isabel Camis o. Other sources may be of use as well.

Review of debates on inter-state wars.

⁷² See *supra* note 3.

⁷³ See *supra* note 34.

⁷⁴ See *supra* note 35.

⁷⁵ See *supra* note 36.

To study the rivalry between India and Pakistan that has led to military confrontation, conflicts and wars we shall also need to refer to sources from the inter-state wars literatures such as “Classification of Interstate Wars” and “Identifying and Classifying Complex Interstate Wars” by John Vasquez and Brandon Valeriano, “Preventive War And Its Alternatives: The Lessons Of History” and “How Wars End: Why We Always Fight the Last Battle” by Dan Reiter, “India–Pakistan Relations: Challenges and Opportunities” by Ejaz Hussain, “Correlates of War: Interstate Wars”, publication of The Correlates of War Project, etc.

Review of literature related to the *security dilemma* concept.

Defining the terms “conflict” and “war” and, subsequently, studying them will inevitably bring us to the need to delve into the security dilemma concept. In addition to some of the previously mentioned sources, publications and works such as “India’s security challenges out to 2020” by Varun Sahni, “Handbook of International Relations” by Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth A. Simmons, “Any military confrontation between India, Pakistan would be disaster of unmitigated proportion: UN chief”, published in The Economic Times, “Conflict”, publication in Cambridge Dictionary, “Conflict”, publication in Merriam-Webster, etc., will be used in the course of our work.

Review of scholarship in the area of international political economy.

In addition to realism, international political economy will also be applied as an approach during our study. Relevant sources from that area of studies to be mentioned here are “Međunarodna politička ekonomija” by Prof. Dragana Mitrovic and “International Political Economy” by Günter Walzenbach.

Summary.

In the context of the above stated several are the key takeaways that could be formulated. To begin with, the existing scholarship in the area of our interest in general and the one related to our topic in particular is recent and abundant. While the focus of this review is put on the three main themes and the two complementary ones as well as on the theme of the impact of the war in Ukraine, scholarship related to the theoretical debates of importance to our study is referred to as well. The latter includes but is not limited to literature related to realist theories, inter-state wars theory, security dilemma concept, and international political economy.

Secondly, if speaking of the first theme, namely India – Pakistan relations and India – Pakistan rivalry several are the points to outline as follows: (1) The bone of contention between New Delhi and Islamabad is Kashmir, (2) The possibility of a serious military confrontation between them remains high, (3) Proliferation of nuclear weapons in South Asia should be overcome and there is a need to minimize the potential of a nuclear war between India and Pakistan, (4) India and Pakistan came close to a nuclear war in February 2019 and as a result of the US efforts it became possible to avoid it, (5) Military expenditure of Pakistan is shaped by the military expenditure of India and given that the opposite is not the case it may be in the interest of Islamabad to think of changing its relationship with New Delhi, (6) It may be a good time to start a process of rapprochement between the two countries with both of them possibly having some constraints in this regard, (7) Sober approach on the part of the

two countries helped avert open confrontations in 2001 and 2008, (8) Hopes were there in 2014 that the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi would pursue meaningful peace negotiations with Pakistan, (10) The rivalry between India and Pakistan is one of the most enduring in the post-World War era due to a number of factors including the “truncated” power asymmetry, and (11) In the case of a mutual deterrence relationship neither party would make the concessions required to end the conflict.

Third, going to the next two themes, related to India’s engagement in the Indo-Pacific region and in minilateral formats, the following points need to be underlined: (1) India’s concept on the Indo-Pacific region is in disagreement with the US concept on the Indo-Pacific when it comes to geographic boundaries, (2) The US strategy is China-centric and it needs to be rethought with China having already taken it to heart, (3) India’s concept is evolving with SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) and IPOI (Indo-Pacific Oceans’ Initiative) being one of its main emanations, (4) SAGAR sought to enhance India’s maritime security and its interests and it positioned the maritime issues in the centre of India’s foreign policy and highlighted the interdependence between maritime security, maritime cooperation and blue economy, (5) IPOI is of open, cooperative and inclusive character and it highlights India’s endeavour to be recognized as a partner in the areas of security and development and has to be steered by India, (6) Given the specific character of the India-China relationship efforts are underway to improve the ties between them, (7) India has worked to engage and establish ties with a number of individual countries, to manage relations with neighbours and to expand its neighbourhood policies, (8) Remaining outside block politics and practicing strategic autonomy serves the economic and security interests of India, (9) Participation in various minilateral formats responds to India’s interests and ambitions related to international status and helps manage relations with neighbouring countries, and (10) Joining various formats is not being done by India in an indiscriminate way.

And last, coming to the key theme of the impact of India-Pakistan rivalry on India’s engagement in the Indo-Pacific region and the supplementary to it theme of India’s economic development and recent economic indicators the following points have to be highlighted according to us: (1) Issues of security and terrorism worsen the relations between India and Pakistan, by increasing distrust and blocking the peace process, and threaten seriously the regional stability in South Asia, (2) Peaceful settlement of the longstanding disputes is needed as far as a war between the two countries will affect both of them and the whole of South Asia, (3) In addition to negatively influencing the security environment in South Asia the rivalry between India and Pakistan affects their development, (4) There is a mutual causal relationship between the military expenditures of the two countries and in the longer run military expenditure hinders the economic growth of India, (5) India and Pakistan need to leave aside the differences, to closely engage in areas of common interest, and to continue the negotiations on areas of conflicting interests, (6) Peace process between the two countries must continue at any cost and effective security mechanism must be established to achieve peace, and (7) Nowadays India’s economy is performing in such a way that the country has joined the group of fastest growing economies in the world.

Contribution to literature.

In the context of what has been stated in the preceding part, related to the summary of the literature review, we may conclude that there is a great deal of sources on each of the three main themes of importance to our study. Focusing on the main one, the impact of India-Pakistan rivalry on India’s engagement in the Indo-Pacific region, we shall explain why our research deserves to be conducted and what is the gap in the existing scholarship we are going to try to fill. One of the outcomes previous works have come to is that there is a mutual causal relationship between the military expenditures of

the two countries and that in the longer run military expenditure hinders the economic growth of India. Stepping on that, what we can and need to do yet is one further step in the same direction to confirm that the hindered economic growth of India hinders its performance in the Indo-Pacific region and in various formats. By doing so we shall tackle directly and answer our research question and we shall prove our hypothesis that the rivalry between India and Pakistan has a significant capacity to complicate India's efforts to pursue its ambitions to establish itself as a major political, economic, and military power regionally and globally. By providing a clearer confirmation that the rivalry between India and Pakistan negatively affects the ambitions of India regarding the Indo-Pacific region and beyond it we shall add to the existing literature and deepen and expand the existing knowledge about the topic of our research.

Determination of the subject of the research.

Theoretical determination of the subject of the research.

The subject of this research will be the India–Pakistan rivalry and the influence of this rivalry on India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region. Relations between India and Pakistan, including their security and military aspects and dimensions, as well as the negative effects of militarisation and arms race on the economic performance of India, will be thoroughly studied. The involvement of India in processes and activities in the Indo-Pacific region will also be part of the study.

Realism and international political economy seem to be the most appropriate theoretical approaches for this research.

Realism.

It is believed that in the discipline of International Relations (IR), *realism is a school of thought that emphasises the competitive and conflictual side of international relations*. Furthermore, it is claimed that realism explains the reality of international politics and emphasises the constraints on politics resulting from humankind's egoistic nature and the absence of a central authority above the state. In realism, the highest goal is the survival of the state, and responsibility rather than morality is the criteria against which the actions of a state are being judged. Realism is considered to be an important analytical tool in the field of International Relations.⁷⁶

The analysis and interpretation of the above definitions highlight several important points. In the first place, conflict and competition are the focus of attention. Secondly, there is no central authority to which the individual states should obey. Third, the survival of a state is the highest goal and responsibility. Fourth, each individual state has the goal and responsibility to survive in the name of its nationals. Last but not least, acting in accordance with the responsibility to achieve the goal of survival, states may and inevitably enter into conflicts at some point in time. The explanation for the latter may be found in the fact that the interests of a state related to its survival may be conflicting with the interests related to the survival of another state or states. There is no need to argue that this is usually not the case. On the contrary, it goes without saying this is usually the case and examples of

⁷⁶ Sandrina Antunes and Isabel Camis o, "Introducing Realism in International Relations Theory", E-International Relations, February 27, 2018, Available at: <https://www.e-ir.info/2018/02/27/introducing-realism-in-international-relations-theory/>

that, even nowadays, are more than abundant. From that perspective one could easily agree with the understanding of realism being an important and useful analytical tool.

International political economy.

On the other hand, International Political Economy (IPE), as the other theoretical approach to be applied in the research, studies the reciprocal relationship between politics and economics in the global system. It acknowledges the economic foundations of the global order and proposes a fusion of economic and political analysis, thus forming a holistic approach to examining the global system. The importance of International Political Economy is seen in highlighting the different views on how the global system might progress and in approaching the issue of can or should the established *who gets what* order change fundamentally.⁷⁷

IPE also requires a research approach that analyses three levels: individual, state and level of the international system, with numerous actors in all three. Additionally, the IPE approach includes the concept of power, relational and structural.⁷⁸

From such a perspective, while realism would be mainly focused on the political and military aspects of the rivalry between India and Pakistan, International Political Economy would be helpful in explaining the economic aspects of the adverse effects of this rivalry on the ambitions of New Delhi related to regional and global affairs.

Interstate wars theory.

Moving on to the India–Pakistan rivalry that has led to military confrontation, conflicts, and wars. Again, as in the case of rivalry, we realise that there may be different definitions of conflict, but it could be described in short as a disagreement, competitive action or fighting between two or more countries.⁷⁹ The paper will draw on the interstate wars theory to study the conflict between India and Pakistan. Referring to a standard definition of war as large-scale or sustained violence between political organisations and the need to explain the choice of political leaders to resort to military force to achieve their goals, Jack S. Levy reflects on the main theories of war, including realism.⁸⁰ According to Levy, a common understanding shared by realists is that sovereign states are critical actors in world politics, and they act rationally to advance their security, power, and wealth in the anarchic international system. Political leaders use coercive threats to influence the adversary and advance their interests. A war may begin either in case of aggression when a dissatisfied state thinks it can best advance its interests through military force or because of an escalating conflict spiral involving two relatively satisfied states interested in maintaining their security. Uncertainty about the other side's intentions, the so-called

⁷⁷ Günter Walzenbach, “International Political Economy”, E-International Relations, August 19, 2022, Available at: <https://www.e-ir.info/2022/08/19/international-political-economy/>

⁷⁸ Dragana Mitrović, *Međunarodna politička ekonomija*, PSF&Čigoja štampa, Belgrade, 2012., pp. 21-22.

⁷⁹ “Conflict”, Cambridge Dictionary, Available at: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/conflict> and “Conflict”, Merriam-Webster, Available at: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/conflict>

⁸⁰ Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth A. Simmons, “Handbook of International Relations”, SAGE Publications Ltd, 2013, p. 581 - 582

security dilemma, may lead to both sides increasing their military power and the thus-triggered action–reaction cycle can escalate to war.⁸¹

Security dilemma in the case of India – Pakistan rivalry.

In the case of India and Pakistan, when reflecting on *the security dilemma* between them, Liliang You argues that the contest between them affects the development of the two countries and influences the security environment, we presume negatively, and as far as neither of them can bypass or avoid the existence of the other in a security context the two countries need to focus in the future on the convergence of common interests and to establish an effective mechanism to achieve peace.⁸² To us, the latter refers to the need to avoid any reasons that may provoke a military confrontation. Rajiv Bhalla also speaks of the need for both sides to engage with each other in areas of common interests such as economics and energy.⁸³

Militarization, acquisition of weapons, arms race, military confrontation, and challenges to security in the case of India – Pakistan rivalry.

Regarding the influence of the rivalry of India with Pakistan on the involvement of the former in the Indo-Pacific region, it was previously concluded that being preoccupied with the rivalry negatively affects the country's economy, thus undermining its potential to perform as a significant power regionally and globally. Seen as an encounter involving opposing armies, military confrontation is usually preceded by militarisation, i.e., preparation of the society for military conflict. Militarisation is primarily related to the acquisition of weapons. Acquisition of military capability of a competitive nature between two or more countries is referred to as an arms race. Muhammad Tasleem Ashraf, Dr Ali Shan Shah and Dr Zil-e-Huma Rafique see the arms race between India and Pakistan as a threat to one another.⁸⁴ Jülide Yildirim and Nadir Öcal put up the idea of an arms race contributing to the retarded economic growth. The results of their study covering the period from 1949 to 2003 suggest a mutual causal relationship between the military expenditures of India and Pakistan, and military spending hinders economic growth in India in the long run.⁸⁵ In our view, this confirms that it could be advantageous to India to reduce the acquisition of weapons in case Pakistan takes the same course. However, Rafi Amir-ud-Din, Fatima Waqi Sajjad and Shazia Aziz conclude that military expenditure in India is not Pakistan-specific. At the same time, Pakistan spends a large share of its GDP to neutralise India's military advantage. They hint at the possibility of Pakistan exploring alternative relationships with India, which may help resolve their problems.⁸⁶

In a similar context, existing literature describes different types of challenges to security. In the case of India and Pakistan, Ahmed Usman, Shabbir Hussain, Aaisha Amjad, Jawad Tariq and Amal Sajjad identify the Kashmir dispute, water conflicts, and cross-border terrorism as major recent security challenges faced by them that need to be peacefully settled to avoid a war. The international community is encouraging the neighbours to build trust between them⁸⁷, which, in our view, may only be achieved by slowing down and eventually giving up militarisation on both sides. UN Secretary-

⁸¹ *Ibid*, p. 582 - 583

⁸² See *supra* note 28.

⁸³ See *supra* note 30.

⁸⁴ See *supra* note 24.

⁸⁵ See *supra* note 31.

⁸⁶ See *supra* note 3.

⁸⁷ See *supra* note 25.

General Antonio Guterres was quoted to have said that it is *essential* for India and Pakistan to discuss their problems, cautioning that any military confrontation would be a *disaster of unmitigated proportions*.⁸⁸ Elaborating on India's security challenges up to 2020, Varun Sahni concludes that a stable deterrence relationship with Pakistan would unlikely emerge if Pakistani policy is based on nuclear compellence.⁸⁹

In conclusion, in line with the *security dilemma*, India and Pakistan keep acquiring weapons and increasing their military strength. The arms race can potentially escalate to a military confrontation. The idea of giving up militarisation with a view of avoiding war and refocusing resources and efforts on economic development is put up for consideration. The realist approach to interstate wars, as described above, can easily be applied in the case of India and Pakistan as far as it seems that the political and military leaderships of the two countries are trying to advance their interests through preparation for the use of military power.

Operative determination of the subject of the research.

Factors of the research subject.

The India–Pakistan rivalry and its influence on India's involvement in the Indo-Pacific region will be examined in the research. The main factors of the research will, therefore, be, in the first place, the rivalry and the conflict between the two neighbouring countries as an element of their relations with a focus on militarisation, arms race and military confrontation. Secondly, India's involvement in the Indo-Pacific region and minilateral formats such as BRICS, SCO, and EAS as a manifestation of India's quest for a leadership role in regional and global affairs will be studied as well. Finally, the way the rivalry with Pakistan influences India's presence and positioning in the processes going on in the Indo-Pacific region and within the above-mentioned formats will also be scrutinised, where the economic performance of the country is to be in the highlights.

For the purposes of this research, military confrontation will be defined as a military encounter involving opposing armies.⁹⁰ It may be seen as synonymous with war or its initial stage. Militarisation is the process of preparation of the society for military conflict and violence.⁹¹ It involves many interrelated aspects, such as the acquisition of weapons, the growing impact of the military on society, etc. For the purposes of the research, the focus will only be on the acquisition of weapons. An arms race is defined as a pattern of competitive acquisition of military capability between two or more countries and refers to any spending increases by a group of countries or competitive military buildup reflecting an adversarial relationship.⁹² If speaking of the challenges to India's security, the focus in this research will only be limited to full-fledged armed conflicts, border skirmishes, cross-border violations, and cross-border terrorism.

Time framework of the research subject.

⁸⁸ “Any military confrontation between India, Pakistan would be disaster of unmitigated proportion: UN chief”, The Economic Times, 29 January 2021, Available at: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/any-military-confrontation-between-india-pakistan-would-be-disaster-of-unmitigated-proportion-un-chief/articleshow/80569163.cms>

⁸⁹ Varun Sahni, “India's security challenges out to 2020”, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 2005

⁹⁰ “Confrontation”, Vocabulary.com, Available at: <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/confrontation>

⁹¹ “Militarization”, Definitions, Available at: <https://www.definitions.net/definition/militarization>

⁹² “Arms race”, Britannica, Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/arms-race>

The research will cover the beginning of the 21st century, i.e., the period from the year 2000 until the present day. The motivation to choose this timeframe is related to India's ambition to establish itself as a regional and global power, which has been clearly spelt out by the country's current prime minister, Narendra Modi. His two terms in office will predominantly be in the focus.

Spatial framework of the research subject.

As could be implied from the topic, the research will mainly cover India and Pakistan. However, the countries of the Indo-Pacific region, major world powers USA and China, as well as regional and universal international organisations and formats, will be touched upon throughout the study.

Disciplinary framework of the research subject.

The disciplinary framework of the research subject is generally under the umbrella of the political sciences as it mainly analyses the political, military, and economic activities and behaviour of two neighbouring states and their governments. The study also refers to other scientific disciplines and subdisciplines, such as international relations, international security studies, war studies, international political economy, political history, international law, and demography.

Objectives of the research.

Scientific objectives of the research.

From a scientific point of view, the importance of the research should be sought in the clarification of the role of the India – Pakistan rivalry in relation to India's ambitions vis-à-vis and in the framework of the Indo-Pacific region. Understanding this role and the rationale behind it may well be of help in effectively managing or even shaping it, which would matter from the point of view of contemporary international politics.

One of the scientific objectives of the research would, therefore, be to describe the rivalry between India and Pakistan. Another objective would be to describe and discover new facts regarding India's involvement in the Indo-Pacific region and in some important modern formats. As a next step, the research aims to explain how the rivalry between India and Pakistan influences India's involvement in the Indo-Pacific region.

Finally, the research would be useful as it may give an answer to the question of how to boost India's economy, which is one of the major objectives of the central government in New Delhi. It may also help explain why demilitarising and cooperation are the preferable options when it comes to relations of tension and confrontation between neighbouring countries.

Social objectives of the research.

The social objective of the research would be to present possible ideas on how and by what means the rivalry as a major challenge and factor of instability India is currently exposed to should be tackled with a view of assisting the country in achieving its regional and global ambitions.

Hypothetical framework.

In line with the reasoning of the last paragraph of the section related to the formulation of the research subject, our initial assumption will be related to India – Pakistan rivalry (first variable) and the influence of that rivalry on India's involvement in the Indo-Pacific region (second variable).

General hypothesis.

The rivalry between India and Pakistan has a significant capacity to complicate India's efforts to pursue its ambitions to establish itself as a major political, economic, and military power regionally and globally.

Proving our hypothesis right and giving an affirmative answer to the research question, i.e., clearly confirming that this rivalry has a negative effect on India's activities and performance in the Indo-Pacific region, would be the expected contribution to the existing literature and knowledge.

First specific hypothesis.

India's domestic problems constitute a severe threat to this country's global ambitions and are strongly connected with India-Pakistan's historical and current ties. The rivalry between India and Pakistan is inherited from the colonial past but has preserved its destructive character throughout the years and remains a serious challenge to India nowadays.

Second specific hypothesis.

India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) enhances this country's global political, economic, and military role. It helps reduce the scale of the rivalry's capacity to contain that role.

Third specific hypothesis.

Though competing to some extent with India's own regional initiatives, its engagement in minilateral formats such as SCO, BRICS, and the East Asia Summit provides additional political, economic, and security leverage in its quest for strategic goals.

Methodological framework of the research.

The approach will be mainly qualitative. The method of content analysis of texts is seen as the most useful methodological tool and will be applied to conduct the research. These texts could be identified as primary and secondary sources containing secondary data. No primary data are collected and used. The approach would be to answer the research question and test and validate the research assumptions. The reason for choosing this method is related to the existence of many works that are related to the research topic and question but do not tackle them directly.

The research will be conducted by data analysis of existing literature and documents. Analysis, interpretation, synthesis, and comparison will be mostly applied. Secondary analysis, in the form of the author's own views, will also be added. No fieldwork is to be undertaken.

Building on existing literature, including conclusions regarding the causal relationship between the military expenditures of India and Pakistan and the economic growth of the two countries being hindered by their military expenditures, the objective is to collect information confirming that the militarisation of India is only counterproductive as far as it causes a slowdown of India's economy and a respective militarisation of Pakistan, and vice versa, instead of preventing the possibility of a new confrontation between them. The main aspects to be measured are militarisation, confrontation, and security challenges.

In line with the above, militarisation will be measured by the acquisition of weapons, which in turn can clearly be seen by data related to types and numbers of acquired weapons and by figures related to military budgets, e.g., volume and changes of volume. An increase in military power as the result of the acquisition of weapons can be demonstrated by relying on data related to military rankings where increasing, maintaining, or decreasing the gap between the two countries will be the criteria. Data related to the number of full-fledged armed conflicts, border skirmishes, cross-border violations, and cross-border terrorist attacks would be helpful in measuring the level of a challenge, including its existence or disappearance.

Next, if the military budget of India is maintained or increased, it would mean the acquisition of new or more weapons, which would result in an increase in its military power, where the latter is to be verified by the status of its military ranking worldwide, i.e., maintained or moving higher in the hierarchy. Then, if Pakistan's military budget is maintained or increased, this would also mean the acquisition of new or more weapons with a view of being able to counter India in the case of a confrontation. Respectively, the military power of Islamabad would also increase, which would be indicated by its military ranking, presumably maintained or risen. Should the increase in budgets, acquisition and power be complemented by increasing numbers of skirmishes, violations, etc., then it is logical to conclude that, first, we are exposed to an arms race which may lead to a war and second, challenges to India's security related to Pakistan still exist. This would mean that the continued militarisation of India does not diminish the possibility of a new war with Pakistan.

Regarding India's involvement in the Indo-Pacific region and some minilateral formats, the criteria to measure will be the number of activities and initiatives in which India has participated. Should the number be higher, the involvement is to be considered stronger. Concrete results of participation in activities and initiatives are another criterion to measure. Should such concrete results be there, then the involvement is to be considered not only as stronger but also as more effective and responsive to India's regional and global ambitions.

Finally, the relationship between the rivalry and the involvement of India in the Indo-Pacific region and in some minilateral formats can also be assessed. If the economy of India is slowing down and the militarisation, i.e., the acquisition of weapons, is increasing, and at the same time, the

involvement of the country and its performance regionally and globally is getting weaker and less effective, then the conclusion would be that the rivalry with Pakistan affects negatively India's involvement in the Indo-Pacific and some formats as well as this country's regional and global ambitions.

On the basis of the guidance described, we shall then do our research.

The paper will rely on data from numerous various sources, amongst them official websites, official documents, publications of think tanks, etc. Existing literature on India's ambitions regionally and worldwide and on India's relations with other countries will be reviewed.

Significance of the research.

Scientific significance.

The scientific significance of the present research is to study the relationship between India's rivalry with Pakistan and India's involvement in the Indo-Pacific region and some minilateral formats as an expression of this country's regional and global ambitions. The study will present some updated information on the latest developments related to the rivalry between the two neighbours and to the ongoing processes within the Indo-Pacific region and the formats referred to in the preceding sentence.

Overall, the scientific objective of the research is to add to the existing literature and deepen and expand the existing knowledge by providing a clearer confirmation that the rivalry between India and Pakistan negatively affects India's ambitions regarding the Indo-Pacific region and beyond it. The study may prove to be useful as well, not only in providing a clear perspective on why rivalry should be avoided, i.e., because it has a damaging effect, but also, possibly and being aware of the previously mentioned limitations of the study, on how this negative and damaging effect could be mitigated.

Social significance.

The social justification of the research would be to present the current and possible new perspectives on the developments in and around India, including on this country's relations with Pakistan but also with other major factors around the world. From that point of view, the study may be deemed as timely.

Another social justification is related to the achievements regarding some relevant global and regional issues. The paper may present options on how future developments would and should take place, thus adding to the efforts of producing more stability on the Indian subcontinent and in the adjacent regions, including by offering perspectives for cooperation in various areas and, amongst them, defence.

Last but not least, the results of the research may be useful from a practical point of view for countries in Southeast Europe to guide them in their political dialogue and cooperation activities with India.

Structure of the dissertation by chapters.

In accordance with the previously mentioned a brief outline of the content of the dissertation is put forward hereunder.

The introductory chapter considers the research problem, question, subject, objectives, and significance. It presents the theoretical and methodological framework as well as the general and specific hypotheses. As part of the introduction a thorough critical review of the existing literature about the topic of the thesis and its key themes is also included. India – Pakistan rivalry, India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region and in minilateral formats, impacts of the war in Ukraine and of India-Pakistan rivalry on India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region, India's economic development as well as theoretical debates of relevance to the research are in the focus. The review is aimed at helping identify the existing gaps and at explaining how to fill them with a view of answering the research question and proving our hypotheses.

The second chapter will be devoted to the India–Pakistan rivalry. The origins, evolution, and present state of the rivalry will be consecutively studied in depth. The key takeaways of our work will be highlighted at the end of this chapter.

The third chapter will deal with India's regional and global ambitions. More precisely, India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region will be the focus. The geographic scope of this region will be defined, followed by a comparative analysis of India's concept of the Indo-Pacific and the concepts of this region of the major powers. As a next step, the implications of the war in Ukraine for India's ambitions and its posture in the Indo-Pacific region will be examined. In conclusion, the third chapter will summarise the key takeaways of our analysis.

The fourth chapter will be a logical continuation of the third one, and it will study India's other ambitions as represented by this country's participation in minilateral formats. India's performance in the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the BRICS, and the EAS will be delved into. The key takeaways of New Delhi's engagement with each of the three formats will be presented at the end of the chapter.

The fifth chapter comes to us as the one of utmost significance. It will examine how the rivalry between the two neighbouring countries, India and Pakistan, influences the former's regional and global ambitions, as studied in the preceding two chapters. Starting with the implications of militarisation, arms race, and military confrontation for the Indian economy and going through the role of the Pakistan-based military groups, we shall then scrutinise the rivalry's influence on India's regional and global ambitions. The key takeaways will be put up for consideration at the end of the chapter.

Finally, the last chapter will contain our concluding remarks. It will summarise the main findings of the research as highlighted in the key takeaways part of each of the preceding chapters. In accordance with its limitations, the research would refrain from making major recommendations as to dealing with the damages caused by the rivalry.

Chapter 2: India – Pakistan rivalry: origins, evolution, present state

In the previous sections, we have underlined that one of the reasons behind the rivalry between the two neighbouring countries, India and Pakistan, is the dispute over Kashmir. We have also stated that this rivalry could be defined as an enduring one due to the existing power asymmetry and that it has led to military confrontation, arms race, conflicts, and wars, with the possibility of a severe confrontation presently remaining high and the option of a nuclear war inherently being on the table as well.

Having already defined the terms *rivalry* and enduring *rivalry*, in this chapter, we will focus more on the origins, evolution, and present state of rivalry to explain its reasons behind and enduring character.

2.1. Origins of the rivalry

Earlier, we quoted Narasingha P. Sil stating that “the bone of Indo-Pakistani contentions is the erstwhile princely state of Kashmir”⁹³. According to him, the two countries have come to a strong disagreement since the outset of their independent existence in 1947. Sil sees the conflict as a civil war and argues that though communalism, colonialism, and nationalism have contributed to the conflict, none of them on their own could explain the cause of this conflict. He further says that in the period from 1905, when the partition of Bengal took place, until 1947, when the British Indian Empire was partitioned, the three of them existed. The three of them had both their manifestations and subsequent implications, but Kashmir has remained “the prize coveted by Pakistan since 1947”⁹⁴. The author explains that the Indian Independence Act of 18 July 1947, by which India and Pakistan came into existence, respectively, on 15 August 1947 and 14 August 1947, has provided for the specific scheme of partition, giving Kashmir the option of accession to either of the two countries. This, in turn, triggered an adverse reaction on the part of the Muslim inhabitants of northern Kashmir, which resulted in the First Kashmir War during the autumn and early winter of 1947.⁹⁵ It may be concluded from the above that the scheme of partition, as provided for by the 1947 Independence Act and as giving Kashmir the right to choose which of the two countries to accede to freely, is based on the India-Pakistan conflict. It is interesting to note that, similarly to the agitation of part of the local population in

⁹³ See *supra* note 4.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

Bengal caused by the scheme of partition of Bengal in 1905 chosen by Lord Curzon⁹⁶, the scheme of partition of the 1947 Indian Independence Act related to Kashmir has caused the agitation of part of the local population in Kashmir that has eventually brought to the First Kashmir War and to the conflict still existing nowadays. In the case of Bengal, the Hindu population reacted negatively to the division. Muslims are, meanwhile, supposed to have benefitted from it. And, in the case of Kashmir, these were the Muslims of northern Kashmir supported by the tribes from the North-West Frontier who disagreed with Kashmir joining the predominantly Hindu-populated India. What we have in both cases is opposing Hindus to Muslims and eventually confronting them against each other. Summing the above up, the specific scheme of partition concerning Kashmir suggested by the 1947 Independence Act is, as a result of this, seen by us as the driving force of the rivalry and the conflict between India and Pakistan. Given the latter and in so far as the Independence Act was legislation passed by the Parliament of the United Kingdom⁹⁷, we can conclude that the rivalry between India and Pakistan is inherited from the colonial past by which conclusion we prove right this respective part of our first specific hypothesis.

Kashmir's role is viewed slightly differently in a publication of the Center for Preventive Action. In there, it does not speak directly of Kashmir as being at the basis of the conflict between India and Pakistan. However, as stated earlier, according to this publication, the territorial disputes over Kashmir have provoked two of the major Indo-Pakistani wars, namely the ones in 1947 and 1965, and a third war, defined as a limited one, the war in 1999.⁹⁸ Having triggered three of the four Indo-Pakistani wars is, according to us, just a different way of saying that the disputes over Kashmir are the main reason behind the conflict between the two countries. This, in turn, is a confirmation of the central role of Kashmir in the context of the Indo-Pakistan rivalry.

In the introductory section above, we mentioned several factors that underlie the rivalry between India and Pakistan, as follows: (1) the way India and Pakistan became two independent states; (2) the prehistory of the continent; (3) the dominant foreign management; and the existing (4) religious and (5) ethnic differences. We defined these factors as detrimental ones.

When speaking of the Kashmir issue in the first two paragraphs of this section above, we, in fact, touched upon the way India and Pakistan became two independent states. The latter has been defined and is to be seen here below as the first of the detrimental factors provoking and sustaining the rivalry between the two countries. To elaborate a little bit on that, the 1947 India Independence Act and its scheme of partition represent the way that has led India and Pakistan to their independent existence. And the Independence Act and the provisions therein made Kashmir the *bone of contention*. The Act resulted from nonviolent resistance and communal violence, and the partition scheme instigated the two newly born independent countries against each other.

The second detrimental factor we referred to is the prehistory of the subcontinent. The two countries' independence was preceded by the rule of the East India Company from 1757 to 1858 and the rule of the subcontinent by the British Crown, or the British Raj, which lasted from 1858 to 1947. The period from 1885 to 1947, coinciding with the second half of the British Raj, was the period of the Indian independence movement. These years were characterised by the drive to end the rule of the British Crown. In parallel to the strive for independence, the growing tension and mistrust between the

⁹⁶ Maren Goldberg, "Partition of Bengal", Britannica, May 24, 2023, Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Partition-of-Bengal>

⁹⁷ Adam Zeidan, "Indian Independence Act", Britannica, June 16, 2023, Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Indian-Independence-Act-1947>

⁹⁸ See *supra* note 5.

majority Hindu population and the minority Muslim population were the other main features of this period. They both were conducive to the communal violence that broke out immediately before the two countries' independence and to the rioting that followed shortly after the partition of the subcontinent, which resulted from the partition scheme we spoke of earlier. To sum it up, the immediate prehistory of the subcontinent, characterised by the strive for independence and the widely spread communal violence, was another factor promoting the rivalry between India and Pakistan.

Foreign domination was the third factor creating a favourable environment for the rivalry between India and Pakistan. The British foreign domination over India as a factor is very closely related to both the way India became independent and the immediate prehistory of the subcontinent concerning the year 1947. It is believed that British rule and its consequences provided the necessary conditions for developing a national movement in India.⁹⁹ The British rule and the consequences thereof are precisely the explanation for the rise of modern Indian nationalism, which in turn is also contributing to the rivalry between the Hindus and the Muslims, respectively, between the two countries.

Speaking of Kashmir, we inevitably come to the existence of religious and ethnic differences as the fourth and fifth factors standing behind the Indo-Pakistan rivalry. Focusing first on religion, the proper question would be whether religion can be a factor provoking rivalry. Elaborating on this, we need to note that violence is seen as an aspect of religion and that the correlation between religion and violence has been acknowledged.¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, rivalry is synonymous with conflict¹⁰¹, and conflict is associated with violence. The conclusion that could be drawn, therefore, is that religion can provoke violence and, respectively, conflict and/or rivalry. In "The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Violence", Mark Juergensmeyer, Margo Kitts, and Michael Jerrison explore violence in relation to many religious inheritances, including Hinduism and Islam.¹⁰² The latter is just another confirmation that neither of the two religions could be seen as deprived of violent potential. Even nowadays, Hinduism and Islam have a rather complicated coexistence, including within India proper. The complex character of the coexistence between these two religions is even more visible in the case of the India-Pakistan relationship. This line of reasoning brings us to the view that religious differences, as represented in practice by the fact that Hindus and Muslims live as neighbours, are indeed a factor which is detrimental to the relationship between the two countries and which is contributing to their rivalry. It is worth mentioning from this perspective that Narasingha P. Sil explicitly underlines the fact that the partition of India on a religious principle was propagated by leaders of both nationalist political parties, All-India Muslim League and Hindu Mahasabha, such as Mohammed Ali Jinna, Vinayak D. Savarkar and Lala Lajpat Rai.¹⁰³

In their turn, ethnic differences are also presumed to support rivalry. The definition of ethnic refers to large groups of people classed by common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin or background.¹⁰⁴ At first glance, in the case of India and Pakistan, at least two of the

⁹⁹ "Essay on Consequences of Foreign Domination over India during 1858-1905", Available at: <https://www.preservearticles.com/sample-essay/essay-on-consequence-of-foreign-domination-over-india-during1858-1905/11243>

¹⁰⁰ Mark Juergensmeyer, "Religious Violence", Oxford Academic, September 2, 2009, Available at: <https://academic.oup.com/edited-volume/34355/chapter-abstract/291454380?redirectedFrom=fulltext>

¹⁰¹ "Rivalry", Merriam-Webster, Available at: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/thesaurus/rivalry>

¹⁰² Phil Rose, Book Reviews: "The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Violence", Journal of Contemporary Religion, 2014, Vol. 29, No. 2, 331 – 370, Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/262579023_The_Oxford_Handbook_of_Religion_and_Violence_review

¹⁰³ See *supra* note 4, p. 9.

¹⁰⁴ "Ethnic", Merriam – Webster, Available at: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ethnic>

preceding six criteria could be defined as confirming the existing differences between the populations of the two countries. In other words, the populations of India and Pakistan are to be considered ethnically different. The next pertinent question to be asked about the above would be whether ethnic differences could be a reason for rivalry. We have already come to understand that religion, one of these six criteria, could be the basis of the rivalry. More than this, ethnic conflict is defined as usually being not about the ethnic differences themselves but over political, economic, social, cultural, or territorial matters.¹⁰⁵ The key word in the latter is territorial. In the case of India and Pakistan, we speak of territorial issues, including conflict, since the outset of the independent existence of the two countries. The logical conclusion of this reasoning is that ethnic differences also contribute to rivalry.

Having identified Kashmir as the bone of contention in Indo-Pakistan relations and the five factors detrimental to these relations, we may proceed further by focusing our attention on other aspects of the rivalry, which are of no less importance. It is to be noticed as well that, while recognising the central role of Kashmir in the relationship between India and Pakistan, Ahmed Usman, Shabbir Hussain, Aaisha Amjad, Jawad Tariq, and Amal Sajjad define the water dispute as another bone of contention between the two countries.¹⁰⁶ In line with the opinions of Narasingha P. Sil and the Center for Preventive Action, as referred to above, the five co-authors underline that Kashmir is behind the three wars between India and Pakistan, it is believed to spoil their bilateral relations in the future, and it represents a constant threat to the security of the entire South Asian region. Building upon that, they note that both countries want to have a bigger share of water, the water dispute is a hurdle in the peaceful bilateral civil-military relations, and it is crucial for Pakistan to settle the water dispute with India. They clarify that the water dispute started at the beginning of the partition and was supposed to end with the 1960 Indus Water Treaty. Then, they elaborate that the Treaty was signed with the assistance of the World Bank and Russia and was meant to avoid the armed conflict between India and Pakistan. Finally, a conclusion is drawn that breaches of the agreement are being observed in the 21st century. As a result, the water dispute is being dragged into the domain of the security dilemma.¹⁰⁷

Zahid Yaseen, Iqra Jathol, and Muhammad Muzaffar also highlight the importance of the water issue. They mention the fact that already in 1948, India cut off the supply of water to Pakistan; thus, in addition to the conflict in Kashmir, the disputes over water resources, numerous border issues, and allegations of ethnic minority movements. It is further explained that India is violating the Indus Water Treaty by building dams on the waters due to Pakistan. An amicable solution to the water issue is put up for consideration as far as peace between India and Pakistan is concerned for tranquillity and peace in South Asia.¹⁰⁸ The thoughts expressed by the authors quoted in the above two paragraphs confirm the importance of the water dispute as the second, after Kashmir, bone of contention in the India – Pakistan relations. Without neglecting the border issues, the cross-border terrorist activities by Pakistan-based groups, the Kargil conflict, etc., although they are representative enough of the Indo-Pakistan rivalry, we think it would be more appropriate to focus on them in the sections related to the evolution and the present state of the rivalry rather than in the present section.

To summarise the above reflections, Kashmir is the prominent bone of contention in Indo-Pakistan relations. The disputes over the former princely state represent the main reason behind the Indo-Pakistan conflict, and they play a central role in the rivalry between the two neighbours. The rivalry is inherited from the colonial past, as far as the 1947 India Independence Act, which gave birth to independent India and Pakistan and was passed by the UK Parliament. Its specific partition scheme

¹⁰⁵ “Ethnic conflict”, Britannica, Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/ethnic-conflict>

¹⁰⁶ See *supra* note 25.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ See *supra* note 26.

concerning Kashmir is the driving force behind the rivalry. The latter confirms the rightfulness of the respective part of our first specific assumption, namely the first part of its second sentence.

The water dispute, dating back to the early days of the partition, being managed under the Indus Water Treaty of 1960, allegedly violated by India, and coming nowadays to us as a severe threat to security and a precursor to potential future wars given the scarcity of the water resources worldwide¹⁰⁹, is the other bone of contention between India and Pakistan.

There are five factors which are defined as detrimental to India-Pakistan relations and which stand behind the rivalry, as follows: (1) The way India and Pakistan became independent, involving the Independence Act and the scheme of partition as regards Kashmir, being both, in their turn, at the basis of the conflict; (2) The immediate prehistory of the Indian subcontinent, characterised by communal violence and the rise of the efforts to achieve independence; (3) The foreign domination, in the face of the British rule, and the development of the national movement in India, respectively, the rise of nationalism as a result of this foreign domination; and (4) and (5) The religious and ethnic differences between the populations in India and Pakistan.

The above five factors are the reasons behind the rivalry between India and Pakistan and sustaining it. Kashmir and the water issue, the two “bones of contention”, are the two major manifestations of the rivalry at its initial stage.

2.2. Evolution of the rivalry

In this work section, we shall study the evolution of the India-Pakistan rivalry. Our focus will remain on its significant manifestations, namely the Kashmir conflict and the water dispute, defined so far as “the two bones of contention”, covering as well other examples and emanations of it, such as the Kargil conflict, the border issues, the cross-border terrorist activities by Pakistan-based militant groups, etc., that have emerged at a later stage of its existence. It would be useful to highlight, as well, the concrete events and developments related to these manifestations of the rivalry, e.g., the war activities and the full-fledged armed conflicts, the border skirmishes and the clashes, the cross-border violations, etc. Finally, identifying and clarifying the results of these events and developments, as well as the international community's involvement, including mediation efforts, initiatives, etc., would be useful in explaining the reasons behind the rivalry. We shall also study further the impact of the five factors identified as detrimental to the India-Pakistan relations to see to what extent they have kept influencing these relations.

In fulfilment of the above design, we start chronologically with the First Kashmir War. In the previous section, we mentioned the First Kashmir War, otherwise known as the First Indo-Pakistan War or the Indo-Pakistan War of 1947-1948. It started on 22 October 1947 and lasted formally until 5 January 1949. Speaking of it, Narasingha P. Sil explains that on 5 January 1949, the UN Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP), which was established by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) approximately one year before, on 17 January 1948, to mediate the dispute, came out with a proposal for a ceasefire, demilitarisation, and a plebiscite. On 27 April 1949, India and Pakistan signed the Karachi Agreement, by which a ceasefire line (CFL) alongside the international India-Pakistan border was established, and which line was to be supervised by the UN Military Observer Group in

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP). On 10 March 1951, the UNSC terminated the mandate of UNCIP while UNMOGIP continued its military observation task.¹¹⁰

By the time the Karachi Agreement was signed, Maharaja Hari Singh had already signed the instruments of accession of Kashmir to India, the Indian army had chased away the tribes that had forced the Maharaja to flee Kashmir, but the princely state had already been sliced into two parts. The ceasefire line was, in fact, a divide that later became the Line of Control (LOC). The Agreement was signed by military representatives of India and Pakistan and representatives of UNCIP. Article 2 thereof defines the geographic coordinates of the ceasefire line.¹¹¹ The part of Kashmir bordering Pakistan, including the northern region, went under the indirect rule of Pakistan. These territories covered more than five thousand square miles and encompassed a population of nearly one million.¹¹² They were later named Azad Jammu Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. The rest of the princely state, bigger as territory, went under the control of India.

To cut the story about the First Kashmir War short, this war was the first event, in chronological order, of the Kashmir conflict, which in turn is the primary manifestation of the India-Pakistan rivalry. The main result of the war was the division of Kashmir, where part of its territories went under the rule of Pakistan, and the rest went under the control of India. As far as India gained the bigger part of the territories, the latter could be considered the winner in this war. It is also worth noting that mediation by the international community was in place in the form of two UN bodies, namely UNCIP and UNMOGIP. And, as far as the five factors that were detrimental to the India-Pakistan relations are concerned, given the fact that this was the very beginning of the rivalry, they all played their role at that time.

The Second Kashmir War, also known as the Second Indo-Pakistan War or the Indo-Pakistan War of 1965, was shorter than the first. It lasted from 8 April till 23 September 1965. The defeat of the Indian army in the 1962 Sino-Indian border conflict and the severe sectarian disturbances in Kashmir in the period from 1962 to 1964 are presented by Narasingha P. Sil as being the basis of Pakistan President Ayub Khan's considerations regarding the possibility of recovering territories by force. The initiated Pakistan border skirmishes in the disputed zone of the Rann of Kutch escalated into a war in April 1965, which came to an end shortly after on 30 June. Terminating the war was possible due to the UK intervention. The United Nations (UN) was also involved, and on 14 December 1965, an arbitrary tribunal was formed under its aegis. Three years later, the court decided to award 350 square miles of the disputed land to Pakistan.¹¹³

Encouraged by the relatively weak performance of the Indian army, on 26 May, Pakistan launched on the territory of the Indian-controlled Kashmir the secret guerrilla operation with the code name "Gibraltar", which escalated on 15 August into a full-scale battle along the SFL. On their part, Indian forces entered Azad Kashmir. On 4 September, the UN called for a ceasefire, and the UN Secretary-General visited the Indian subcontinent and reported to the UNSC. On 20 September, the UNSC demanded a ceasefire and increased the number of UNMOGIP staff. A temporary body, the UN India-Pakistan Observation Mission (UNIPOM), was established to ensure supervision of the ceasefire and withdrawal of forces of both countries from the Rann of Kutch. The ceasefire was repeatedly violated by both belligerent countries, which necessitated several meetings of the UNSC and the active

¹¹⁰ See *supra* note 4.

¹¹¹ Shams Irfan, "Karachi Agreement", KashmirLife, January 10, 2012, Available at: <https://kashmirlife.net/karachi-agreement-12109/>

¹¹² See *supra* note 4.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

involvement of the UN special envoy. As a result, the ceasefire was finally achieved on 26 December. Following a meeting in Tashkent in January 1966, India and Pakistan agreed to withdraw their forces to the pre-war positions. The troops were withdrawn on 26 February, and UNIPOM was disbanded on 22 March 1966.¹¹⁴ At the meeting in Tashkent, the Prime Minister of India, Lal Bahadur Shastri, and the President of Pakistan, Ayub Khan, signed the Tashkent Declaration of 10 January 1966. Under Article II of this document, the two countries expressed their agreement regarding withdrawing the forces from the positions held before 5 August 1965, while Article V foresees the restoration of the normal functioning of their diplomatic missions. The Tashkent Declaration was signed with the mediation efforts of the then USSR, which is duly reflected in the concluding paragraphs of the document's text.¹¹⁵

According to other sources, the conflict started, without a formal declaration of war, on 5 August 1965 and ended on 22 September 1965. The publication “Indo-Pakistan War of 1965” of GlobalSecurity.org limits the duration of the war to the timespan of operation “Gibraltar” and refers its beginning to the date mentioned in Article II of the Tashkent Declaration. The interpretation contained in the publication as regards the motivation of Pakistan to go to war is similar to the views of Narasingha P. Sil on the same issue as discussed above. According to this interpretation, Pakistan initiated the war, believing that, after the defeat in 1962 by China, the Indian military would not be up to a quick military campaign in Kashmir. However, there are two more factors, mentioned therein, which have prompted the beginning of the war activities, namely, the increasing concerns of the Pakistani government as regards the efforts of India to integrate Kashmir within it and the perception of existing dissatisfaction of Kashmiri people with the Indian rule and their widespread support for Pakistani rule. It should be acknowledged that the publication mentions the war activities in the Rann of Kutch and defines Pakistan as successful in them. This success is also seen as a factor setting the scene for taking up the operation in August. What is worth mentioning as well is that the publication sees the war as inconclusive from a military point of view, whereas each side held some territory belonging to the other. Notwithstanding this, it is inferred that the continuation of the fighting would have led ultimately to the defeat of Pakistan. Another result of the war was the weakening of US-Pakistan relations as a consequence of the US taking a neutral position, with Washington withdrawing in July 1967 from its military assistance advisory group and Pakistan not renewing the lease on the Peshawar military facility. To make up for the US, China, Iran, and Indonesia were politically supportive of Pakistan during the war. On the other side, rather than standing with India, the Soviet Union adopted a neutral position, as did the US. The enmity between India and Pakistan over Kashmir remained unchanged.¹¹⁶

To sum it up, the Second Kashmir War was the second, in chronological order, event of the Kashmir conflict, as a major manifestation of the India-Pakistan rivalry. One of the results of the war is the decision taken by the UN arbitrary tribunal three years after the end of the war to award 350 square miles of the disputed zone of the Rann of Kutch to Pakistan. From a military point of view, while Pakistan is seen as successful in the war activities in the Rann of Kutch, the war activities from August to September are seen as inconclusive, with each side holding some territory of the other. It is worth noting that while the above-mentioned publication of GlobalSecurity.org hints at the possibility of a defeat of Pakistan in the case of a further continuation of the fighting, Narasingha P. Sil also speaks of

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ India - Pakistan Tashkent Declaration, Available at: <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%20560/volume-560-I-8166-English.pdf>

¹¹⁶ “Indo-Pakistan War of 1965”, GlobalSecurity.org, Available at: https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/indo-pak_1965.htm

the failure of Pakistan in the 1965 war¹¹⁷. The mediation efforts on the part of the international community played an evident role. The war activities in the Rann of Kutch were brought to an end with the UK mediation, the involvement of the UN, and the establishment of its arbitrary tribunal. The war activities from August to September 1965 saw the heavy involvement of the UN, including the UN Secretary-General, the UNSC, the UN special envoy and UNIPOM. There was a mediation effort on the part of the then Soviet Union as well, as a result of which the Tashkent Declaration was signed on 10 January 1966, and the status quo ante was restored. Regarding the five detrimental factors being at the basis of the rivalry between India and Pakistan, it may be concluded that the religious and ethnic differences, respectively the fourth and the fifth factors, undoubtedly played a role in the context of the Second Kashmir War, as evidenced by the above-mentioned interpretation in the publication of GlobalSecurity.org on the motivations of Pakistan to start the war. The consequences of the scheme of partition of Kashmir, related to the first factor, the communal violence and the strive for independence, being part of the second factor, and the nationalism, referred to as the third factor, were also felt in the introduction to and the conduct of the war.

The Third Indo-Pakistan War, the Bangladesh War, or the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971, lasted very shortly and was fought from 3 December to 16 December 1971. One of the main reasons behind the decision of India to declare war on Pakistan was the huge influx of Bengali Muslims into India as a result of the events that were taking place in East Pakistan after 1 March 1971. These refugees presented a serious threat to the security of India, and India was obliged to intervene. In the second place, given the long-standing demand of the Bengali Muslims for autonomy, the Indian leadership considered it expedient to help them secede from West Pakistan, thus making Islamabad weaker and demonstrating the inability of Islam to unite as a state. Thirdly, India felt stronger after signing the Treaty on Peace, Cooperation and Friendship with the Soviet Union on August 9, 1971.¹¹⁸

The performance of the Indian army on the battlefield proved its superiority, which led to the surrender of the Pakistani forces. On 16 December 1971, the Martial Law Administrator of East Pakistan Lieutenant-General A. A. K. Niazi signed in Dhaka the Pakistani Instrument of Surrender, in accordance with which 93 thousand soldiers of the Eastern Command of the Pakistan Armed Forces surrendered to the Joint Commander of the Indian and Bangladesh forces in the Eastern Theatre Lieutenant General Jagjit Singh Aurora. This marked the end of the war and the creation of Bangladesh. It was the biggest military surrender after the World War II.¹¹⁹

On 2 July 1972, India and Pakistan signed the Shimla agreement. According to this document, the two sides agreed that their forces should be withdrawn to their sides of the international border, the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir resulting from the ceasefire of 17 December 1971 shall be respected, and that modalities and arrangements will be discussed further with a view of normalisation of relations and establishment of durable peace, including restoration of diplomatic relations, repatriation of prisoners of war and a final settlement of Jammu and Kashmir.¹²⁰

Analysing the above information about the Third Indo-Pakistan War may lead us to several considerations. This is one of the events related to the Indo-Pakistan rivalry, though it could not be

¹¹⁷ See *supra* note 4.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Gloria Methri, "Vijay Diwas: Glimpse Of Pakistan's Instrument Of Surrender On 50th Anniversary Of 1971 War", RepublicWorld.com, December 16, 2021, Available at: <https://www.republicworld.com/india-news/general-news/vijay-diwas-glimpse-of-pakistans-instrument-of-surrender-on-50th-anniversary-of-1971-war.html>

¹²⁰ Agreement on Bilateral Relations between the Government of India and the Government of Pakistan (Shimla Agreement), Available at: https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/IN%20PK_720702_Simla%20Agreement.pdf

clearly and directly referred to as the Kashmir conflict, the latter being one of the rivalry's major manifestations. In our view, notwithstanding the attacks on targets in the Western part of the Indian territory and on Indian positions in Kashmir, the accent in the Bangladesh war was put on the Eastern border of India. The only significant link between this war and the Kashmir dispute may be found in the text of the Shimla agreement, which, as previously stated, envisages its settlement. One of the main results of the Bangladesh War was the creation of a new state – Bangladesh, after which this war was named. Former East Pakistan became independent, and Islamabad lost it. Another result is the replacement of the ceasefire line (SFL) in Kashmir with the Line of Control (LoC), with both sides retaining the captured territories. Militarily, a clear winner emerged as a result of the short-term war, and this was India. In a regional context, India gained a new friend and partner in the face of Bangladesh. The role of the international mediation efforts was not as eloquent and significant as in the case of the previous two wars between India and Pakistan. According to some sources, on 4 December 1971, the then US ambassador to the UN, George H. W. Bush, introduced a resolution to the UNSC calling for a cease-fire and the withdrawal of armed forces by India and Pakistan, but it was vetoed by the Soviet Union.¹²¹

It would be interesting to go back to the five factors detrimental to the India-Pakistan relations to see whether and to what extent they were in force in the case of the Bangladesh War. The first factor is the way India and Pakistan became independent. This factor played a significant role as far as, in accordance with the provisions of the India Independence Act of 1947, the Dominion of Pakistan consisted of two wings which were separated from each other. Stemming from that was the previously mentioned demand of the population of East Pakistan for autonomy, which is a confirmation that the second factor, related to communal violence and the efforts to achieve independence, also played an important role. The remnants of the foreign domination, the third factor, could be spotted in relation to the second factor and in the form of the nationalist trends amongst the population of East Pakistan. While the fourth factor, the religious differences, was not that determinant in the case of the Bangladesh War, the fifth one, the ethnic differences, did matter in the pre-war period of ethnic riots and during the war itself. The conclusion that could be drawn is that, overall, the action of the five factors in the framework of the Bangladesh War could be confirmed.

We have previously mentioned the Shimla Agreement of 1972 and highlighted its main elements. In addition to them, by virtue of this document India and Pakistan have committed themselves to putting an end to the conflict and confrontation and to working for friendly and harmonious relationship and durable peace in the sub-continent. The purpose of the latter is that they can devote their resources and their energy to the pressing task of advancing the welfare of their peoples.¹²² According to us, this text is another very important element of the Agreement. Its analysis is worth doing and clarifies several points. In the first place, the commitment to work for the pressing issue to advance the welfare of the people is a clear recognition of the existing domestic problems in India. Going another step into the same direction, in order to work for the welfare of its people India has committed to settling the Kashmir issue and ending the conflict and confrontation with Pakistan with a view of replacing them with friendly and harmonious relations with this neighbour. In its turn, this is a recognition that the domestic problems of India relate to its rivalry with Pakistan. And, yet another point, the commitment to end the conflict pursues the establishment of a durable peace in the sub-continent. That would mean that the rivalry of India with Pakistan, which stands behind the domestic problems in India, negatively impacts India's regional, and, respectively, global ambitions.

¹²¹ Claude Arpi, "1971 War: How the US tried to corner India", Rediff News, Available at: <https://www.rediff.com/news/2006/dec/26clauda.htm>

¹²² See *supra* note 120.

Summing it up, the analysis of this concrete text of the Shimla Agreement brings us to the conclusion that another part, namely the first sentence, of our first specific hypothesis is also proved right.

The next major event of the series of events, related to the India-Pakistan rivalry, is the Fourth Indo-Pakistan War of 1999. Before tackling it, it is to be mentioned that there were other developments within the relations between the two neighbours which cannot be omitted while analysing their thorny relationship. In 1984 India occupied the commanding heights of the Siachen glacier in Ladakh. In April 1990, military build-up alongside the border was in place, which did not bring to clashes eventually. In 1998, from 11 May to 13 May, India conducted five nuclear tests, which are known as the Pokhran tests and are considered to have changed India's image globally.¹²³ On 28 May Pakistan also conducted five nuclear tests, known as the Chagai-I nuclear test. That was the first public nuclear test of Islamabad. The silence of the Great powers after India's nuclear tests earlier in May is considered to have left the government and the defence forces of Pakistan with no choice but to reciprocate.¹²⁴ As a next step, on 11 April 1999 India test-fired its second-generation Agni missile, an intermediate/long-range missile¹²⁵, which reportedly travelled more than 1 250 miles, and which can carry a nuclear head. The missile was defined as able to hit deep into its neighbour's land.¹²⁶ Five days later India tested a surface-to-air missile.¹²⁷ On 14 and 15 April, in response to the Agni launch which took place on 11 April, Pakistan test-fired its Ghauri II, or Shaheen, medium-range missile.¹²⁸ The missile tests were conducted by the two countries in contradiction with the essence of the Lahore Declaration, signed by their prime ministers Atal Behari Vajpayee and Muhammad Nawaz Sharif on 21 February 1999. According to the text of this document the governments of India and Pakistan have agreed to work for reducing the risk of accidental or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons and for the elaboration of confidence-building measures aimed at preventing nuclear and conventional conflicts.¹²⁹ What is also important to mention about the Lahore Declaration is that, similarly to the Shimla Agreement of 1972, its text speaks of durable peace, stability, and harmonious relations and friendly cooperation between India and Pakistan, the establishment of which will serve the vital interests, progress, and prosperity of the peoples of the two countries, and will enable them to devote their energies for a better future.¹³⁰ Following the logic of the above analysis related to the Shimla Agreement, we may argue that such a text confirms once again the understanding that the rivalry and the conflict with Pakistan affect negatively the domestic development of India and this country's regional and global ambitions. In fact, the Lahore Declaration reaffirms the need to implement the Shimla Agreement¹³¹ and to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and improve their quality of life through accelerated economic growth¹³². And this is yet another confirmation of the respective part of our first specific assumption. If

¹²³ "How 1998 Pokhran tests changed India's image", The Economic Times, 12 May 2018, Available at: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/how-1998-pokhran-tests-changed-indias-image/Reactions-to-announcement/slideshow/64135028.cms>

¹²⁴ "Pakistan's Nuclear Tests 1998", historypak.com, Available at: <https://historypak.com/pakistans-nuclear-tests-1998/>

¹²⁵ Different sources refer to it in a different way.

¹²⁶ "India Tests Missile Able to Hit Deep Into Neighbor Lands", New York Times, April 12, 1999, Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/04/12/world/india-tests-missile-able-to-hit-deep-into-neighbor-lands.html>

¹²⁷ "India Fires a New Missile", New York Times, April 17, 1999, Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/04/17/world/india-fires-a-new-missile.html>

¹²⁸ "Hatf-3 / Shaheen-I / M-11", Federation of American Scientists, Available at: <https://nuke.fas.org/guide/pakistan/missile/hatf-3.htm>

¹²⁹ "The Lahore Declaration", Available at: https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/IN%20PK_990221_The%20Lahore%20Declaration.pdf

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*

speaking of the events from 1984 and 1990 and the nuclear and missile tests of 1999, they all are to be considered as related to the rivalry between India and Pakistan.

Against the background of the above-mentioned events, the Fourth Indo-Pakistan War, also known as the Kargil War or the Kargil Conflict, took place in the summer of 1999. It started on 3 May and lasted until 26 July. Hizbul Mujahideen, Kashmiri militant forces, supported by Pakistan, crossed the LoC, and occupied territories on the Indian side. Pakistani forces, disguised as Mujahideen, tried to sever the Srinagar-Leh highway at Kargil and alter the status of the LoC. Following this, on 6 June India launched its Operation Vijay. The Pakistani infiltrators started retreating from Kargil and on 12 July Pakistan proposed talks. It was believed that Pakistan was encouraged to initiate this conflict due to its nuclear shield.¹³³

According to Zahid Yaseen, Iqra Jathol and Muhammad Muzaffar, the Kargil conflict, or the Kargil issue, is not considered to be a complete war, but rather one of the serious conflicts between India and Pakistan. They see the region, i.e., Ladakh, as important in the context of the Kashmir issue, which confirms the relation of the Kargil War to the Kashmir issue. The authors further point to the intervention of the international community which brought the conflict to an end and prevented it from becoming a full nuclear war. The role of the United States in convincing India and Pakistan to come to the negotiating table is underlined. The objective of the negotiations is presented as discussing and resolving the unresolved issues, including the Kashmir problem. The authors moreover explain that the Kargil conflict highlighted the serious threat of a nuclear war, presenting the arguments that both countries tested nuclear weapons shortly before it and they afterwards fought at the edge of a nuclear war.¹³⁴ The role of the foreign factors is also touched upon by Narasingha P. Sil, who points out to the role of the US and then US President Bill Clinton in convincing the Pakistan leadership of the need to change mind.¹³⁵

The analysis of the information regarding the Fourth Indo-Pakistan War outlines the following outcomes. In a chronological order the Kargil War was the third event related to the Kashmir issue as one of the major manifestations of the India-Pakistan rivalry. There are no major results stemming out of this war except for the big numbers of human lives lost by both sides. According to some sources India reclaimed most of the area on the Indian side alongside the LoC that had been occupied by the Pakistani infiltrators¹³⁶ and having faced the international opposition Pakistan withdrew from the other captured by it Indian positions¹³⁷ which facts are probably used as arguments to claim that India won this war¹³⁸. If speaking of international mediation and involvement of the international community the review of the sources quoted in the preceding paragraph clearly proves the role of the US and its then president in bringing the conflict to a quick end. When it comes to the five factors, perceived as detrimental to the India-Pakistan relations and standing behind the rivalry between the two neighbours, over fifty years after the beginning of this rivalry their role is still not to be ignored in the context of the Kargil War of 1999. Situated closely to the LoC in Kashmir, Kargil has been the site of numerous border conflicts.¹³⁹ This fact, undoubtedly, is a consequence of the scheme of partition of Kashmir. And this scheme of partition has already been defined by us as related to the first factor, i.e., the way

¹³³ See *supra* note 4.

¹³⁴ See *supra* note 26.

¹³⁵ See *supra* note 4.

¹³⁶ "Kargil", Britannica, Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Kargil>

¹³⁷ "The Last War of the 20th Century", Vedantu, 11 October 2023, Available at: <https://www.vedantu.com/history/kargil-war>

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ "Kargil War", Britannica, Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Kargil-War>

India and Pakistan became independent. The involvement of the Kashmiri militant forces Hizbul Mujahideen in the conflict logically brings us to the ideas of communal violence, strive for independence, and nationalism, which have previously been characterised by us as elements of the second and the third factors, respectively the prehistory of the Indian subcontinent and the foreign domination as represented in practice by the British rule. And the terms *Mujahideen* and *Kashmiri* in the case of these militants forces clearly relate to the role of the religious and ethnic differences, respectively the fourth and the fifth factors.

Having largely delved into the Kashmir issue and the events related to it, we now proceed further with the second major bone of contention between India and Pakistan, namely the water dispute, as another important manifestation of the India-Pakistan rivalry. It was mentioned in the previous section that the water dispute had started with the beginning of the partition, with the supply of water to Pakistan having been cut off by India already in 1948, and that the 1960 Indus Water Treaty could not bring this dispute to an end due to its violation by one of the two sides. Amit Ranjan notes that this Treaty has been repeatedly under attack as many groups in both countries have appealed to their respective governments to terminate it. However, neither of the two states resorted to such a move and the Treaty has survived the wars of 1965, 1971 and 1999 as well as a series of political and military tensions between them such as those in 1987, 1989-1990, 2002 and 2008.¹⁴⁰

Ranjan further believes that the water disputes between India and Pakistan are reflective of their relationship since the partition as far as the partition broke the interdependent hydraulic system of the two countries. One of the consequences of the latter was the emergence of *water nationalism* in both countries in the following years.¹⁴¹ His thoughts confirm what has been said above about the time, associated with the start of the water disputes, giving, in addition, an explanation of the reason for the emergence and, to some extent, the persistence of this issue.

In their article “India’s Dams and Pakistan’s Water Crisis”, published in “The Diplomat” on 17 October 2022, Safina Nabi and Syeda Sana Batool shed light on the essence of the water issue. The authors state that Pakistan faces a chronic water shortage and quote data from a 2022 report of the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) according to which more than eighty percent of Pakistanis face *severe water scarcity* for at least once month per year and Pakistan ranks 14th out of the 17 *extremely high water-risk countries*. They further explain that as India’s lower riparian country Pakistan receives over 78 percent of India’s water inflows due to what the water shortage has the potential to worsen the tension between the two countries. This situation is seen by them as of geopolitical significance.¹⁴²

According to Safina Nabi and Syeda Sana Batool the overall understanding in Pakistan is that India is to be blamed for the water-related problems. They state that Pakistani politicians and government-based experts believe that whenever India stops the supply Pakistan faces water scarcity. Respectively, the conclusion of the authors is that the consequences of the *brutal partition in 1947* and the subsequent wars affect in a negative way the relations between the two countries. This is yet another confirmation that the partition is the reason for the emergence of the water issue. Nabi and Batool further refer to other experts who say that the negative public perception of India’s role in the water crisis is shaped by the nationalist right-wing Urdu media in Pakistan which is portrayed by one of

¹⁴⁰ Amit Ranjan, “Disputed Waters: India, Pakistan and the Transboundary Rivers”, Sage Journals, October 22, 2016, Available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/2321023016665529>

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² Safina Nabi and Syeda Sana Batool, “India’s Dams and Pakistan’s Water Crisis”, The Diplomat, October 17, 2022, Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2022/10/indias-dams-and-pakistans-water-crisis/>

these experts as *international geopolitical rhetoric*. In a third place, the authors present the opinion of another group of experts according to which the reason for the water crisis is to be found in the 1960 Indus Water Treaty, the water-sharing deal between India and Pakistan. The gist of this opinion is that the then Pakistani leadership *sold the rivers* and thus deprived Pakistan of water. One of the experts from this group, Mohammad Obhayo Khushk, is quoted to have said that the 1960 Treaty minimized the water flow of 73 million acre-feet of water from India to Pakistan that had been provided for by the preceding Indus Delta Treaty.¹⁴³

Finally, Safina Nabi and Syeda Sana Batool point to the link between the water issue and the Kashmir issue. They explain this link with the numerous river tributaries flowing along the Line of Control (LoC) and use this fact as an argument in favour of the existence of what they call *the water aggression theories*. Quoting a study by representatives of the Kabul University, they underline the threat presented to Pakistan by India preventing water from flowing through the territory of the former. Moreover, India repealing Article 370 of its Constitution in 2019 is presented as a reason for the rise of political instability between the two countries which in turn exacerbated the water crisis in Pakistan. India's plans to build seven new dams in the Kishtwar region of Indian-administered Kashmir are seen as having the potential to increase the tensions between India and Pakistan in the long term.¹⁴⁴

Coming again back to the five factors causing the deterioration of the India-Pakistan relations and provoking the rivalry between them, we need to revert to the thoughts of Ranjan related to the role of the partition in breaking the interdependent hydraulic system of the two countries and the emergence of water nationalism in both countries as the result of that. These thoughts clearly point to these five factors being in force in the case of the water disputes between India and Pakistan.

Summing up the reflections on the evolution of the water issue help us highlight several ideas. The water dispute started with the partition and presents itself as the second major bone of contention between India and Pakistan and the second important manifestation of the India-Pakistan rivalry. The partition broke the interdependent hydraulic system of the two countries and caused the emergence of water nationalism in them both thus provoking and sustaining the water dispute. The essence of the water issue lies in the facts that Pakistan faces water shortages on a constant basis and, as a lower riparian country of India, is at the same time substantially dependent on India's water inflows. The combination of water scarcity and dependence of water supplies from the other country creates the potential for aggravation of the tensions between them, which equation is of a geopolitical scale. The 1960 Indus Water Treaty has not brought the dispute to an end as of now. Though having repeatedly been under attack in both countries it has survived the Second, Third and Fourth Indo-Pakistan wars and the political and military tensions between them in 1987, 1989-1990, 2002 and 2008. The prevailing thinking in Pakistan is that the water-related problem is caused by India. There is a belief that the international geopolitical rhetoric of the nationalist right-wing Urdu media is the determinant factor for the negative image of India. According to other opinions the 1960 Indus Water Treaty is to blame for the water crisis in Pakistan as it decreased the quantity of the water supplies to Pakistan and the Pakistani leadership bears the responsibility for that. There is a link between the water issue and the Kashmir issue. The river tributaries flowing along the Line of Control (LoC) provoke the emergence of *the water aggression theories*. India's prevention of water from flowing through Pakistan's territory is a threat to the smaller neighbour. The repeal of Article 370 of India's Constitution in 2019 deepened the water crisis in Pakistan and increased the tension between New Delhi and Islamabad. India's plans

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

to build new dams on the rivers may further deteriorate the situation in the long run. The five factors deteriorating the India-Pakistan relations are in force in the case of the water issue.

We have studied the evolution of the Kashmir issue and the water issue as the two major bones of contention between India and Pakistan and, respectively, the two major manifestations of the India-Pakistan rivalry. We have also mentioned the existence of other examples and emanations of the rivalry, such as the cross-border terrorist activities by Pakistan-based militant groups. We think it expedient to focus in more details on the issue of cross-border terrorism to be able to study better and thoroughly the rivalry between the two countries. Narasingha P. Sil sees a kind of a link, indirect, between the Kargil conflict and the recognition of Pakistan as a state supportive of terrorism. According to him, Pakistan not winning the Fourth War with India prompted the toppling by the military, i.e., General Pervez Musharraf, of the government of Nawaz Sharif in a coup d'état on 14 October 1999. By that time, Lashkar-e-Taiba¹⁴⁵ was already active, and Jaish-e-Muhammed¹⁴⁶ had just come to existence, and they both joined efforts. The latter, namely, is seen by him as the indication for the establishment of Pakistan as a hub of terrorists.¹⁴⁷ To prove his idea of the rise of terrorism, as put up for consideration in this conclusion of him, Sil speaks of two events, namely of the attack by a suicide squad of the two Pakistan-based terrorist organisation on the Parliament House in New Delhi on 13 December 2001, just two months after, and, possibly, inspired by the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and of the terrorist attacks in Mumbai from 26 to 29 November 2008, including the bomb attack on the world-famous Taj Mahal Palace and Tower hotel. In a related vein, we have previously quoted Sil saying that open confrontation between India and Pakistan was prevented in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in New Delhi and Mumbai thanks to the sober behavior of the leaderships of the two countries.¹⁴⁸ And, we have concluded in this regard that the option of avoiding the war between the two neighbours does exist. And we have also quoted Soutik Biswas referring to the words of former US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo according to whom the nuclear confrontation between India and Pakistan was avoided in February 2019 due to the effective mediation efforts of the US diplomacy.¹⁴⁹ Respectively, we have come to conclude that nuclear war can be avoided should there be a will to achieve that. Overall, our conclusion in relation to the above said would be that open confrontation, including nuclear war, can be avoided should there be wise approach of the leaderships in New Delhi and Pakistan assisted by effective international mediation.

Coming back to the issue of terrorism, Zahid Yaseen, Iqra Jathol and Muhammad Muzaffar recognize South Asia as the most unstable region of the world from a political point of view due to terrorism, suicide attacks, target killings and assassination based on political, sectarian, and ethnic lines. They consider *the war on terror* as the most critical clash of the 21st century. And they also recognize 9/11 as the starting point of Pakistan becoming a war theater of *the blind war*.¹⁵⁰ This statement of the authors is seen by us as an indirect confirmation of Sil's belief that this period, i.e., the beginning of the 21st century, marks the establishment of Pakistan as a state supporting terrorism. On the other hand, Yaseen, Jathol and Muzaffar also believe that Pakistan is *the greatest victim* of this war. They present as an argument in support of this opinion of theirs the fact that being a frontline state Pakistan is at the same time friend and foe of the US.¹⁵¹ It is our understanding that such a line of reasoning aims at presenting Pakistan as a victim in the context of the war on terror. To substantiate

¹⁴⁵ Lashkar-e-Taiba, based in Pakistan Islamic terrorist and militant organization, was established in 1986.

¹⁴⁶ Jaish-e-Muhammad, based in Pakistan and active in Kashmir Islamist terrorist group, was established in 2000.

¹⁴⁷ See *supra* note 4.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ See *supra* note 6.

¹⁵⁰ See *supra* note 26.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

this opinion, we refer to the claim of the authors that fight against terrorism is a highest priority for Pakistan and, a step further in the same direction, that India must agree to control planning with various extremists, to share material on terrorist activities and to coordinate anti-terrorism policies.¹⁵²

Ahmed Usman, Shabbir Hussain, Aaisha Amjad, Jawad Tariq, and Amal Sajjad also speak of Pakistan's position on cross-border terrorism. In summing it up, the authors focus on the following main points related to this position: from the time of partition India has been working to destabilise Pakistan and to isolate it internationally, to achieve these objectives India has been using various tactics such as interference in internal affairs and supporting terrorist activities in Pakistan and falsely accusing them. The authors, however, present the contrary point of view, i.e., India's position, as well. By stressing the fact that India's narrative is totally different, they highlight its main elements as follows: Pakistan interferes in India's internal affairs, i.e., in Kashmir, Pakistan supports the freedom movement in Kashmir and terrorist activities in India, Pakistan trains militant groups to fight India's army and create anarchy in India.¹⁵³ What matters most in the analysis of Usman, Hussain, Amjad, Tariq, and Sajjad is, according to us, their conclusion that cross-border terrorism is not a contemporary challenge, but it has its roots from the time of partition.¹⁵⁴ This brings us directly to the five factors which we have defined as detrimental to India – Pakistan relations and allows us claim that the first three of them, namely the way India and Pakistan became independent, the immediate prehistory of the Indian subcontinent, and the foreign domination are prominently present amongst the main causes for the cross-border terrorism. Having said that, the role of the last two factors, the religious and ethnic differences, should be acknowledged as well.

Our analysis of the issue of cross-border terrorism, as another example of the India-Pakistan rivalry, helps us identify several main ideas. Pakistan has established itself as a state supportive of terrorism with the beginning of the 21st century being the starting point of that characteristic of Islamabad. The most prominent examples of the rise of terrorism are the 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament and the 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai. The two countries are accusing each other of supporting terrorist activities against each other. Though terrorist activities encourage the open confrontation, including a possible nuclear war, these can be prevented from happening in the case of appropriate behaviour on the part of New Delhi and Islamabad and efficient international mediation. The roots of cross-border terrorism go back to the partition and the five factors encouraging the rivalry between India and Pakistan are in force in the case of this emanation of the rivalry.

We may come now to the border issues, mentioned by Yaseen, Jathol, and Muzaffar as another emanation of the rivalry between India and Pakistan.¹⁵⁵ To begin with, we think it appropriate to start our analysis by defining the term *border issues*. A search of the available literature reveals that *border issues* are more often referred to as *cross-border issues*.¹⁵⁶ A general definition of *cross-border issues* is given by James Higginson. He sees them as challenges, decisions and responsibilities which are not to be encountered when movements of people and freight are entirely within one nation. Higginson also uses *cross-border issues* and *border issues* as synonyms.¹⁵⁷ Given the specifics of India-Pakistan relations, in the case of these two countries the cross-border issues are essentially reduced to terrorism, tensions, firing, and skirmishes, though trade is also there. As far as trade is not an example of a rivalry

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ See *supra* note 25.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ See *supra* note 26.

¹⁵⁶ "Border issue", Glosbe, Available at: <https://glosbe.com/en/en/border%20issue>

¹⁵⁷ "Cross-Border Issues and Research", ResearchGate, October 2013, Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/297612847_Cross-Border_Issues_and_Research

and terrorist activities have already been studied above, we shall focus here on tensions, firing, and skirmishes. These three, in their turn, are synonymous to each other and in most of the cases are either the prelude to the wars between India and Pakistan or the smaller-scale substitute of these wars. The significance of the cross-border tensions can easily be evaluated, including in qualitative terms. A confirmation of this claim is given by the Center for Preventive Action. According to it, in 2020 alone more than four thousand cross-border firings were reported along the Line of Control (LoC).¹⁵⁸ Given the scope of our definition of cross-border issues and following the logic of the analysis of the Kashmir issue and the issue of cross-border terrorism, our conclusion would be that the role of the five detrimental to the India-Pakistan relations factors is present in the case of cross-border issues.

Summing the above up, (cross)-border issues are one more example of the India-Pakistan rivalry. Generally defined as challenges, these issues cover, as per our considerations, tensions, firing, and skirmishes. Each of the latter is largely perceived as part, or a substitute, of the wars between the two neighbours, and the five factors play a role in respect of them.

In conclusion, in this section we studied the evolution of the India-Pakistan rivalry by focusing on its major manifestations and on other examples and emanations of it. We outlined the events and developments related to the manifestations, examples, and emanations of the rivalry, and the results of these events and developments, as well as the mediation efforts on the part of the international community. The impact of the five factors detrimental to the India-Pakistan relations was also highlighted. Two are the manifestations of the rivalry, namely the Kashmir issue and the water issues, and two are the examples and emanations of it, namely the cross-border terrorist activities by Pakistan-based militant groups and the other cross-border issues.

Starting with the first manifestation, the Kashmir issue, we went through the four Indo-Pakistan Wars, by making it clear that the third one is not directly and clearly referred to Kashmir and the fourth one is rather seen as a serious conflict than a complete war. Each one of them has got a specific result, i.e., the division of Kashmir was the main result of the First War, the return of some territories to Pakistan with each side holding some territory of the other were the main outcomes of the Second War, the creation of Bangladesh and the replacement of the ceasefire line (CFL) with the Line of Control (LoC) as both sides retained the captured territories were the results of the Third War, and big losses of human lives by both sides was the characteristic of the Fourth War. In each of the four wars there was a winner, namely, India in the first, Pakistan seen as successful in the first phase of the second with the war itself considered as inconclusive or as a victory for India, India in the third, and India according to some views in the fourth. In each of them there was a mediation effort by the international community, i.e., the UN in the first, the UK, the UN, and the Soviet Union in the second, limited involvement of the US in the third, and the US in the fourth. According to our analysis, the five factors, defined as detrimental to the India-Pakistan relations and sustaining the rivalry between the two countries, played their role to a bigger or lesser degree in each of the four wars. And, last but not least, three of the four wars ended with a treaty, to name them all as follows: the 1949 Karachi Agreement establishing a ceasefire line (CFL) alongside the international border, the 1966 Tashkent Declaration restoring the status quo, and the 1972 Shimla Agreement envisaging the settlement of the Kashmir issue, the establishment of friendly relations in order to devote resources and energy to the welfare of the two peoples, and the establishment of a durable peace in the sub-continent. The latter is, in our understanding, a recognition of the existence of domestic problems in India and of the link between these problems and India's rivalry with Pakistan. It is also a recognition of the fact that the rivalry impacts in a negative way the regional and global ambitions of India. By virtue of these two

¹⁵⁸ See *supra* note 5.

recognitions, we have confirmed right yet another part, namely the first sentence, of our first specific hypothesis. In this same context, the 1999 Lahore Declaration reconfirms what has been just said of the role of the Shimla Agreement in respect to our first specific hypothesis.

Next in this section we studied the water issue between the two neighbours as the second major manifestation of the rivalry. The water dispute has started with the partition and has triggered the water nationalism which in turn has sustained the dispute itself. Its essence is related to the constant water shortages of the lower riparian country Pakistan and the dependence of this country on water supplies from India. This combination has the potential for escalation of tension between New Delhi and Islamabad and creates an equation of a geopolitical scale. The 1960 Indus Treaty has been subjected to criticism by circles in both countries, has survived three wars between the neighbours and a series of tensions in 1987, 1989-1990, 2002 and 2008, and has not succeeded in resolving the water dispute as of now. India repealing Article 370 of its Constitution in 2019 aggravated the crisis and its plans to construct new dams create the potential for further worsening of the situation. The water issue is linked to the Kashmir issue given the river tributaries flowing along the Line of Control (LoC). The role of the five factors encouraging the rivalry can easily be noticed in the context of the water issue.

As a third step, we studied the issue of cross-border terrorism as an example of the India-Pakistan rivalry. We highlighted the fact of Pakistan establishing itself as a state supportive of terrorism in the beginning of the 21st century. We then noticed the rise of terrorism and the mutual accusations of support of terrorism of India and Pakistan against each other. Underlining the role of terrorism in encouraging the open confrontation and the possibility for a nuclear war between the two neighbours we however concluded that these two can be avoided in the case of responsible leadership and successful international mediation. The origins of the cross-border terrorism date back from the time of the partition and the five factors sustaining the rivalry between New Delhi and Islamabad are applicable in the context of the cross-border terrorism.

Last, the cross-border issues, as another example of the rivalry were focused on and defined as challenges and tensions with the character of parts of or substitutes to the wars between the two countries. The role of the five detrimental factors was confirmed in relation to the cross-border issues.

2.3. Present state of the rivalry

We have studied the origins and the evolution of the rivalry between India and Pakistan, delving into its major manifestations and into other examples and emanations of it. In this section we shall deal with the present state of the rivalry by covering the same manifestations and examples, i.e., the Kashmir issue, the water issue, the cross-border terrorism, and the cross-border issues. To prove the rightfulness of the logic of our analysis so far, i.e., in the preceding two sections of this chapter, it is worth mentioning that the first three of these four issues, defined by us as manifestations and examples of the rivalry, are seen by some scholars, in addition to the military conflicts, as the disputes, or the conflicts, India and Pakistan deal with.¹⁵⁹ We shall therefore look again at the events and the developments related to these manifestations and examples of the rivalry as well as at the results of these events and developments, and we shall also examine the role of the foreign mediation and of the five factors sustaining the rivalry.

¹⁵⁹ See *supra* note 25.

To begin with the Kashmir dispute, we have so far dealt with the four Indo-Pakistan wars, and we have referred as well to some political and military tensions between the two countries such as those in 1987, 1989-1990, 2002 and 2008. As far as the objective of this part of the work is not to list all examples of armed engagements between the two countries, what else needs to be mentioned, according to our opinion, are the Uri attack on 18 September 2016, followed by India's 29 September surgical strikes and the subsequent border skirmishes as well as the 14 February 2019 Pulwama suicide attack followed by border skirmishes and aerial engagement. Exchanges of gunfire and shelling took place also from November 2020 till February 2021. All these are events and developments related to the Kashmir dispute and there are no other wars between the two countries after the Kargil Conflict as of now. The available unclassified data only speak of killed and injured military personnel and civilians and information on damages to and destruction of infrastructure and on military airplanes shot down is either unclear or difficult to confirm. From this point of view the results of these events and developments are limited to the death and injured people. It seems not to be appropriate to make any conclusions as regards the winner and the loser in these events and developments since it would be difficult to identify one of the two countries as such. And there is no information about any involvement of the international community with a view to mediate between them. However, there are publications about an agreement on cross-border ceasefire with effect from 25 February 2021 following the exchanges of gunfire and shelling at the end of 2020 till early 2021.¹⁶⁰ Given the fact that the above-mentioned events and developments have taken place along or across the Line of Control (LoC), the first three factors, defined as detrimental to the India-Pakistan relations, namely the way India and Pakistan became independent, the immediate prehistory of the Indian subcontinent, and the foreign domination, can be considered as being in force in these cases. On the other hand, the involvement of Jaish-e-Muhammad and other Pakistan-based Islamist militant groups in the events is a proof of the role of the fourth and fifth factors, i.e., the religious and ethnic differences. Based on this reasoning, the conclusion that could be made is that the five factors are applicable in these cases as well.

Nowadays Kashmir remains a major issue between India and Pakistan. The importance of its geographical location for the security of both countries has been recognised by scholars. They see Kashmir as related to a threat to the security of each of the two countries. A common border between India and Kashmir was considered as being of help to protect India from Afghanistan, USSR, and China, while it was thought as well that Pakistan without Kashmir was not able to defend itself against India. The geographical position of Kashmir is thereby seen as a security dilemma for India and Pakistan. And this position is also seen as important for China and the Central Asian states as far as Kashmir belonging entirely to India would disengage Pakistan from China and vice-versa, Kashmir belonging entirely to Pakistan would disconnect India from the Central Asian countries.¹⁶¹ The essence of this security dilemma is related to the strategic importance of Kashmir and the involvement of three stakeholders, namely India, Pakistan, and Kashmir. India denies the right of self-determination to the Kashmiris because of them being Muslims and, respectively, potentially supportive of Pakistan. On the other hand, Pakistan supports the right of Kashmiris to self-determination. By using force and diplomacy India asserts control over Kashmiris and further fuels the conflict between India and Pakistan. In this regard, the Indian tactics in doing this are seen by Usman, Hussain, Amjad, Tariq, and Sajjad as the major causes for the security dilemma between India and Pakistan.¹⁶² And this is one of the viewpoints, which clearly favours the position of Pakistan on the Kashmir issue.

¹⁶⁰ "India, Pakistan militaries agree to cross-border ceasefire in rare joint statement", NEWS, February 25, 2021, Available at: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-02-25/india-pakistan-militaries-agree-to-stop-cross-border-firing/13194414>

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

Similar views are expressed by Zahid Yaseen, Iqra Jathol and Muhammad Muzaffar. While recognising the existence of various viewpoints due to the existence of different ideologies and interests, they see the Kashmir issue as a simple issue of the right to self-determination turned into a complex conflict because of India's approach to it. In their opinion Kashmir is part of Pakistan, the issue has remained unresolved as a result of the different views and demands of India and Pakistan, and this conflict has proved to be a serious threat in the region of South Asia. The struggle of the Kashmiri people for their basic right to self-determination is justifiable according to them and because of this the Kashmiri issue should not be the reason for wars between the two countries.¹⁶³ And this is yet another point of view in favour of Pakistan's stance on the conflict. The authors go even further and praise the flexible approach of President Musharraf and his quest for compromise by suggesting in December 2006 in an interview to the Indian television network NDTV a solution based on his Four-Point Formula. Amongst other points this formula envisages free movement across the Line of Control (LoC) without change in the borders and self-governance for the people of Jammu & Kashmir without independence.¹⁶⁴

Finally, we have mentioned in the preceding section the destructive character of India removing the special status of Jammu and Kashmir by revoking in August 2019 Article 370 of its constitution. What is also worth stressing here is that ever since Kashmir has become more dangerous. Though the earlier mentioned February 2021 ceasefire has since held, it is thought that India keeps working to bring under its control the Indian-administered Kashmir by attacking the independent media there, redrawing the electoral map in favour of Hindu-majority areas, and holding a G20 tourism working group meeting in Srinagar in May 2023. The foreign ministers of India and Pakistan used the May 2023 Shanghai Cooperation Organisation ministerial meeting in Goa, India to exchange criticism against each other over the Kashmir issue.¹⁶⁵

Summarising up the above thoughts on the present state of the Kashmir dispute, as a major manifestation of the rivalry between India and Pakistan, we may outline several ideas. The main events and developments related to this manifestation consist of the 2016 Uri attack and the subsequent developments related to it, the 2019 Pulwama attack and the subsequent developments caused by it, the revocation of Article 370 of India's constitution in 2019, the 2020 – 2021 exchanges of gunfire and shelling and the subsequent cease-fire agreement of February 2021, India's efforts of 2022 and 2023 to bring the Indian-administered Kashmir under its control, and the 2023 exchange of criticism over Kashmir in the framework of a high-level multilateral forum. The main outcomes of these events and developments are restricted to dead and injured military personnel and civilians and no winner can be identified. There is no evident foreign mediation in these events and the five detrimental to the bilateral relations factors are still in force. Kashmir remains a major issue in the relations between India and Pakistan and its important geographical position is at the heart of the security dilemma between the two countries while it matters, at the same time, to a significant degree to China and the Central Asian countries as well. The essence of this security dilemma is seen in India's denial of the right to self-determination to the Kashmiris. Though it is viewed as a simple issue of the right to self-determination, the Kashmir issue has been turned into a serious conflict with India considered as the country bearing the responsibility for this. The Four-Point Formula of former Pakistani President Musharraf, as presented by some scholars as a sign of flexibility and inclination for compromise, has not brought the two countries closer to the solution of this dispute.

¹⁶³ See *supra* note 26.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ See *supra* note 5.

We move on next to the second bone of contention between India and Pakistan and the second major manifestation of their rivalry, namely the water dispute. We have studied so far the origins and the evolution of this dispute that has been existing since the partition, has been sustained by the water nationalism, and has been managed by the 1960 Indus Water Treaty. We have outlined it as a serious threat to security and we deem it necessary to focus in more details on the conclusion that the breaches of the Indus Treaty in the 21st century have dragged the dispute into the domain of the security dilemma.

The geographical location of India makes it easy for it to control the river water flows to Pakistan and this is a major concern for Pakistan. Once perceived by Pakistan as a threat, nowadays the water related threat has become a reality for this country. The threat became real when India started constructing dams, such as Baglihar and Kishanganga, on the Chenab and Kishanganga rivers falling under the scope of the Indus Water Treaty. Moreover, India is storing water in violation of the Treaty by virtue of which India is not allowed to store water in dams for any purpose. These moves of India represent a serious threat to the economy of Pakistan and question the survival of the country itself. They therefore create tension in the relations between India and Pakistan and emerge as a security dilemma in the recent years. On the other hand, it is believed that in the context of the growing scarcity of water resources in South Asia the importance of the Indus Water Treaty in regard to urgently resolving the water dispute between India and Pakistan is also increasing.¹⁶⁶ In accordance with the provisions of the Treaty the control over some of the tributaries of the Indus River is given to India while the control over other tributaries goes to Pakistan. Though generally considered as a success and having survived a series of tensions between the two states, with the deepening of the conflict in the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir the Treaty is nowadays facing increasing challenges.¹⁶⁷

An event, related to the water dispute between India and Pakistan, is the Kishanganga Dam conflict. It started in 1980 and is still ongoing. Pakistan sought intervention from the World Bank to block the project. The Permanent Court of Arbitration issued an interim order in 2013 allowing India to divert water from the Kishanganga river under some conditions. Further action was requested by Pakistan from the World Bank to ensure that India abides by the Indus Water Treaty, but the response was limited to encouraging the two sides to resolve the problem amicably.¹⁶⁸ The analysis of this information shows that the result of this dispute in the form of a court decision can be considered as a limited success of India, and, respectively, that India can be seen somehow as the winner in this dispute. The Kishanganga River having its origin in the Indian-administered Kashmir and flowing into Pakistan-administered Kashmir hints at the five detrimental to India – Pakistan relations factors being in force in the context of this concrete dispute.

Summing it up, the water dispute comes to us as a real security threat to Pakistan. The construction of dams by India, allegedly in violation of the Indus Water Treaty, has turned the dispute into a security dilemma. Having survived a lot of tensions between the two countries, the Treaty is nowadays facing increasing challenges with the deepening of the Kashmir conflict. In the case of the still ongoing Kishanganga Dam conflict, a related to the dispute event, we have a court decision as a result, we can speak of India being the winner to some extent, there is a limited foreign mediation, and the five sustaining the rivalry factors are in force.

¹⁶⁶ See *supra* note 25.

¹⁶⁷ “Water conflict and cooperation between India and Pakistan”, Climate Diplomacy, Available at: <https://climate-diplomacy.org/case-studies/water-conflict-and-cooperation-between-india-and-pakistan>

¹⁶⁸ “Conflicts surrounding the Kishanganga Dam”, Climate Diplomacy, Available at: <https://climate-diplomacy.org/case-studies/conflicts-surrounding-kishanganga-dam>

We shall speak next of the cross-border terrorism, one of the examples of the rivalry. We shall see which are the events, related to this example, and what the results of these events are. We shall also try to eventually identify the winner in these events and to look at the foreign mediation efforts. At the end, we shall try to see what the role of the five factors is. Further to that, we shall look at the cross-border terrorism as a security dilemma.

To begin with the events, related to the cross-border terrorism. In the previous section, when studying the rise of terrorism, we have spoken of the 2001 attack on the Parliament House in New Delhi and the 2008 Mumbai attacks. Earlier in the present section, when studying the Kashmir issue, we mentioned the 2016 Uri attack and the 2019 Pulwama attack. These are, in fact, the main events, related to terrorist activities in the case of India-Pakistan relations. As a confirmation of such an assertion comes the fact that when speaking at UN Security Council briefing on Global Counter-Terrorism Approach on 15 December 2022 in New York Indian Minister for External Affairs Subrahmanyam Jaishankar used the 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai as an argument in support of his accusations of terrorism against Pakistan.¹⁶⁹ Though we have focused on some of them when touching upon another issue and though there are other terrorist activities that could also be mentioned, these four are seen by us as the major cross-border terrorism events. The main results of these events are reduced to killed and injured people as well as to tensions between the two countries which have provoked other developments. Looking for winner when it comes to terrorist activities is not seen by us as applicable, though some may believe that the side which has suffered a bigger number of dead and injured is the loser in this or that concrete event. And we deem it inappropriate to search for any kind of international mediation in events related to terrorism. Given the involvement of Pakistan-based Islamist terrorist groups and the places these terrorist attacks took place, we can argue that all five factors, identified as detrimental to India-Pakistan relations, have their role in the above-mentioned events, related to cross-border terrorism. Finally, Usman, Hussain, Amjad, Tariq and Sajjad claim that India's recent interference in internal affairs of Pakistan gave birth to another, contemporary, security dilemma between the two countries. Giving as an example the case of Kalboshan Yadv, also spelled Kulbhushan Jadhav, the authors conclude that it has become a major security dilemma for Pakistan to make the necessary to stop India's interference in its internal affairs.¹⁷⁰ The authors, however, do not say anything about the activities of the Pakistan-based terrorist and militant groups.

To cut the above short, according to us, four are the main events, related to the present state of the cross-border terrorism, as one of the examples of the India-Pakistan rivalry, as follows: the 2001 attack on the Parliament House in New Delhi, the 2008 Mumbai attacks, the 2016 Uri attack, and the 2019 Pulwama attack. The main results of these events are limited to dead and injured people and tension between the two countries, leading in most cases to other developments. In our view, it is inappropriate to speak of a winner and international mediation in these events. The five detrimental to the India-Pakistan relations factors keep playing their role in the context of present-day cross-border terrorism. In the case of India and Pakistan, cross-border terrorism of today is seen, one-sidedly and subjectively, as a contemporary security dilemma between the two countries, consisting of the need for Pakistan to take appropriate measures to prevent India from interfering in its internal affairs.

We come last to the cross-border issues as another example of the rivalry between India and Pakistan. Building on our analysis of this issue in the previous part, we need to focus on terrorism, and on tensions, firing, and skirmishes, with our understanding of the last three being that they are synonymous, and they present themselves as either a prelude to wars or a smaller-scale substitute of

¹⁶⁹ "India, Pakistan Ministers Trade Heated Accusations of Terrorism", The Diplomat, December 16, 2022, Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2022/12/india-pakistan-ministers-trade-heated-accusations-of-terrorism/>

¹⁷⁰ See *supra* note 25.

wars. When studying the present states of the Kashmir issue and of the cross-border terrorism we in fact exhausted the major events such as tensions, firing, and skirmishes. Furthermore, in addition to the example about cross-border firings along the Line of Control (LoC) in 2020 we have given in the previous section, it could be added that, as per a publications, on 24 June 2023 Indian military killed two civilians and injured another one in the Sattwal sector of the Pakistan-administered Kashmir in a cross-border shelling being the first violation of the February 2021 cease-fire agreement according to which the two nuclear-armed rivals agreed to fully adhere to the 2003 cease-fire along the Line of Control (LoC). It is also to be noted that according to the same source the 2021 truce has stopped the almost daily skirmishes the outcome of which was more than 70 people killed in 2020.¹⁷¹ To say in other words, the latter information comes to confirm that the cross-border issues are still present in the relations between the two countries and all relevant to them conclusions we have come to in the previous section and earlier in this section remain valid.

In conclusion, in this section we studied the present state of the rivalry by covering its major manifestations and examples, the related to them events and developments and results and foreign mediation, as well as the role of the five factors sustaining the rivalry.

Starting with the Kashmir dispute, as a major manifestation of the rivalry, we outlined the main events and developments related to it, such as the 2016 Uri attack and the 2019 Pulwama attack and the subsequent developments following them, the 2019 revocation of Indian Constitution's Article 370, the 2021 cease-fire agreement and the preceding to it events, and India's policy to get control of Indian-administered Kashmir in the period 2022 to 2023. We concluded that the main results of them consist of casualties, that no winner and foreign mediation can be identified, and that the five detrimental factors played their role in them. The part of the conclusion related to the casualties confirms the part of the second sentences of our first specific hypothesis according to which the rivalry has preserved its destructive character throughout the years. We concluded as well that Kashmir remained a major issue in India-Pakistan relations nowadays, thus confirming the other remaining part of the second sentence of our first specific assumption according to which Kashmir remains a serious challenge to India nowadays. By these two confirmations we prove right our first specific hypothesis entirely. Another important conclusion of us was that the geographic position of Kashmir is at the heart of a security dilemma between India and Pakistan and is also of importance for China and the countries of Central Asia. India's denial of the right to self-determination to the Kashmiri people is seen as reason for this security dilemma and for the serious conflict between the two countries. Though not successful in bringing the two countries to a solution of the dispute, the Four-Point Formula of former Pakistani President Musharraf, defined as an example of flexibility and willingness to reach for a compromise, is seen by us as a confirmation of the understanding that efforts can, and should, be taken, presumably by both sides, to resolve the conflict.

We dealt next with the water dispute, the second major manifestation of the rivalry. Our conclusion was that the dispute is seen by some scholars as a security threat to Pakistan and a security dilemma between the two countries due to the alleged violation of the Indus Water Treaty by India in the form of the construction of dams. Another conclusion of us was that against the background of the deepening of the Kashmir conflict the Treaty is presently facing increasing challenges. We finally looked at the ongoing Kishanganga Dam conflict as a related to this manifestation of the rivalry event and concluded that the five factors are in force in the case of this event and that there is a limited involvement of foreign factors with a view of seeking a solution.

¹⁷¹ "Pakistan: Civilians Killed in Kashmir in Indian Cross-Border Fire", Voice of America, June 24, 2023, Available at: <https://www.voanews.com/a/pakistan-civilians-killed-in-kashmir-in-indian-cross-border-fire-/7151330.html>

We went thirdly through the cross-border terrorism as another example of the rivalry between India and Pakistan and identified four main events related to its present state, as follows: the attacks in New Delhi, Mumbai, Uri and Pulwama, respectively in 2001, 2008, 2016, and 2019. Our conclusion was that the main results of these events consist of casualties, tension between the two countries, and subsequent developments provoked by this tension. We also concluded that the five detrimental factors play role in relation to the cross-border terrorism, while no international mediation efforts are involved in it. Another conclusion of importance was that present-day cross-border terrorism is defined by some scholars as a contemporary security dilemma between the two neighbours, the essence of which is seen in the need for Pakistan to make the necessary to prevent India from interfering in its domestic affairs. We qualified this approach to the issue of the security dilemma as one-sided and subjective. As an argument in support of this assessment of ours we think it appropriate to comment here that Usman, Hussain, Amjad, Tariq and Sajjad see the Kashmir issue, the water dispute, and the cross-border terrorism as security dilemmas between India and Pakistan.¹⁷² In each of the three cases the side to be blamed for the emergence of the dilemma is India according to their judgement. The fact that the authors avoid speaking categorically of Pakistan's contribution to the creation and the existence of the dilemmas and present Islamabad as the victim in these processes is namely the reason that substantiates our assessment.

We finally analysed the cross-border issues as another example of the rivalry. Our conclusions were that in the case of India and Pakistan such issues can be defined as challenges and tensions, firings, and skirmishes, and these in their turn can be characterised as parts of or substitutes to the wars between the two countries. Another conclusion was that cross-border issues still exist in the bilateral relations of India with Pakistan with the five detrimental factors having role in this and the main results of them consisting of casualties.

2.4. Key takeaways

In this chapter we studied the origins, evolution, and present state of the rivalry between India and Pakistan. Our objective was to explain the reasons behind this rivalry and its enduring character. Another objective of us was to check the rightfulness of our first specific hypothesis. In following this approach, we studied the two major manifestations of the rivalry, namely the Kashmir issue and the water dispute. We also studied two other examples of the rivalry, i.e., the cross-border terrorism and the cross-border issues. By doing this, we examined the main events and developments, related to these manifestations and examples, as well as the main results and outcomes of them. We tried to identify a winner and efforts of foreign mediation in each of the individual events and developments. We also analysed the role of five factors we have defined as detrimental to India-Pakistan relations and as provoking and sustaining the rivalry between the two neighbouring countries.

Two are the major manifestations of the rivalry at its initial stage, the Kashmir conflict, and the water dispute. These are referred to as well as the two bones of contention in India-Pakistan relations. Kashmir is the main reason behind the conflict between India and Pakistan and plays a central role in their rivalry. The 1947 India Independence Act and the scheme of partition of Kashmir therein were passed by the UK Parliament and they are the driving force of the rivalry. This confirms the part of the second sentence of our first specific assumption according to which the rivalry is inherited from the colonial past. The water dispute also dates back to the early days of the partition. Five are the factors that had brought about the rivalry, as follows: the way India and Pakistan became two independent

¹⁷² See *supra* note 25.

states; the prehistory of the continent; the dominant foreign management; and the existing religious and ethnic differences.

At a later stage, in the process of the evolution of the rivalry, two more examples of it have emerged in addition to its two already existing major manifestations. These are the cross-border terrorist activities and other cross-border issues. The Kashmir dispute has gone through four wars, one of them not directly linked to it. In chronological order the results of these wars include the division of Kashmir, the return of some territories to Pakistan, the two sides taking some territories of the other, the creation of Bangladesh, the replacement of the ceasefire line (CFL) with the Line of Control (LoC), and big numbers of casualties. India was the winner in most of the wars and the UN and individual countries were involved in these wars with mediation efforts. Three agreements marked the end of three of the wars, as the 1972 Shimla Agreement, as well as a document of a later stage, the 1999 Lahore Declaration, pointed to the need to resolve the conflict and establish peace, stability, and friendly relations to be able to focus on the interests, progress, prosperity, and welfare of the two peoples and on the establishment of peace in the sub-continent. In these texts we saw a confirmation for the existence of domestic problems in India, the link between these problems and the rivalry, and the negative impact of the rivalry on India's domestic development and its regional and global ambitions. They also prove the rightfulness of the first sentence of our first specific hypothesis which says that India's domestic problems constitute a severe threat to this country's global ambitions and are strongly connected with India-Pakistan historical and current ties. The water dispute itself, linked to the Kashmir issue, lies in the dependence of Pakistan on water supplies from India. Being sustained by the water nationalism and managed under the broadly criticised 1960 Indus Water Treaty, the dispute presents itself as a serious threat to security, a source of potential wars, and a problem of geopolitical scale. India's recent policy in relation to Kashmir, i.e., the 2019 repeal of Article 370 of the Constitution, and to the water supplies, i.e., the planned construction of new dams, contribute to the potential worsening of the water crisis with Pakistan and to shaping the dispute as a security dilemma. The emergence of Pakistan as a state supportive of terrorism in the beginning of the 21st century, the subsequent rise of terrorism the origins of which date back to the partition, and the mutual accusations of support to terrorism between the two neighbours established the cross-border terrorism as another example of the rivalry. Though encouraged by cross-border terrorism, open confrontation and nuclear war can be avoided should there be a responsible leadership in each of the two countries assisted by successful international mediation. The cross-border issues, one more example of the rivalry, presented themselves as challenges and tensions preceding or replacing a war between the two countries. The five detrimental factors played role within the evolution of the two manifestations of the rivalry and the emergence of its two other examples.

Finally, all four manifestation and examples of the rivalry still exist in the present time. The Kashmir dispute has not brought to new wars. However, there have recently been plenty of events and developments related to it and prompted by the one or the other side, all of them having as a result a big number of casualties. With no winner and foreign mediation identified, these events and developments were under the influence of the five detrimental factors. Two conclusions of ours, about the casualties and that Kashmir has remained a major issue in India-Pakistan relations in the present, were instrumental in confirming the remaining part of the second sentence of our first specific hypothesis, according to which the rivalry has preserved its destructive character throughout the years and remains a serious challenge to India nowadays. Other conclusions of ours of importance were that the geographical position of Kashmir and the denial of the right to self-determination to Kashmiris by India create one more security dilemma between India and Pakistan and that efforts can and should be taken by both parties to resolve this dispute, confirmation of which was the Four-Point Formula of former President Musharraf. Seen by some as a security threat to Pakistan, the water dispute also presents itself

as a security dilemma between the two countries, prompted by the alleged violation of the Indus Water Treaty by India. The Treaty is increasingly under threat, the international involvement is limited in this dispute, and the five factors play their role in sustaining it. The cross-border terrorism persists as an issue in the bilateral relations with several recent events, the main results of which are casualties, tensions, and related consequences. The five factors are on the basis of these events with no international mediation applicable to them. This example of the rivalry presents itself as another security dilemma of nowadays, seen one-sidedly as provoked by India. And last, the cross-border issues also persist as an example of the rivalry, caused by the five detrimental factors and having casualties as a main result.

In conclusion, the rivalry between India and Pakistan keeps existing nowadays. The reasons behind it lie in the way India and Pakistan became independent states and the other four factors that have provoked and keep sustaining it. These five factors explain the enduring character of the rivalry, which comes to us as a repeated conflict between the two neighbours.¹⁷³ Having confirmed the rightfulness of our first specific hypothesis we may now claim that though inherited from the colonial past the rivalry has preserved its destructive character throughout the period of its existence and remains a serious challenge to India nowadays. This challenge is objectively connected to Pakistan and its essence lies in the fact that the domestic problems of India caused by its destructive character negatively affect this country's regional and global ambitions.

Three of the major manifestations and examples of the rivalry, i.e., the Kashmir issue, the water dispute, and the cross-border terrorism, are identified as contemporary security dilemmas between India and Pakistan, though subjectively considered as India's sole responsibility.

Finally, as already mentioned, Sil hinted on the idea of the need for a rapprochement between India and Pakistan.¹⁷⁴ Amir-ud-Din, Sajjad and Aziz also suggest a change of the relationship between India and Pakistan.¹⁷⁵ And the Center for Preventive Action speaks of meaningful peace negotiation between the two countries, the hopes for which are only related to the Indian government.¹⁷⁶ Following such a line of reasoning, our understanding is that confrontation and wars between India and Pakistan can be avoided, and efforts should be taken in this regard. The conditions for success include according to us participation of both countries concerned, reasonable approach of the leadership in each one of them, and effective mediation efforts by external factors.

¹⁷³ See *supra* note 2.

¹⁷⁴ See *supra* note 4.

¹⁷⁵ See *supra* note 3.

¹⁷⁶ See *supra* note 5.

Chapter 3: India's regional and global ambitions

We stated earlier in the introductory part that after studying the rivalry between India and Pakistan, we will need to examine India's regional and global ambitions in depth. Two emanations of these ambitions, namely India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region and India's involvement in the activities of some minilateral formats, such as BRICS, SCO, etc., must be dealt with as the next steps in our research work. By doing so, we shall, in fact, outline India's weight and importance in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond.

Having already touched upon these themes, we shall build on our initial work and expand our analysis and conclusions further. The focus of this chapter will be on India's involvement in the Indo-Pacific region, where elaborating on the geographic scope of this region, comparatively analysing India's concept on it, and scrutinising the results of this concept's application will be taken up one after the other. This will be followed by efforts to identify the implications of the war in Ukraine on India's planning vis-à-vis its future positioning in the Indo-Pacific region with a view to adapting it to the newly established geopolitical environment.

By following the above-mentioned steps, we shall try to understand to what extent India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) enhances its global political, economic, and military role and helps reduce the capacity of the India – Pakistan rivalry to contain that role. Our objective will be to prove the rightfulness of our second specific hypothesis.

3.1. India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region

The Indo-Pacific region encompasses some of the most populous countries of the world, such as Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Japan, the USA, and Vietnam.¹⁷⁷ Moreover, this is the region with one of the biggest and strongest economic terms countries, where Australia, India, Japan, the USA, and Vietnam are to be compulsorily mentioned. Defence and military aspects should equally be considered when speaking of the Indo-Pacific, with the USA undoubtedly being in the lead. The Indo-Pacific is more and more in the highlights of world economics and politics.

Major conclusions to be drawn here from the preceding and other previous paragraphs are that the Indo-Pacific is an important region, including many countries, some of which have leading positions worldwide when it comes to population, economy, and military strength. There are many analyses devoted to this region and its processes, which is just another confirmation of the increasing significance of the Indo-Pacific region. Both India and the USA, as well as other *major powers*, presumably India being one of them, are part of it. From that perspective, it is well worth concentrating on their interaction in this specific regional framework and writing on their policies and approaches vis-à-vis it. Prior to that, and as a preparatory step to it, we shall focus our attention on the geographic scope of the Indo-Pacific region.

3.1.1. Defining the Indo-Pacific region: geographic scope

¹⁷⁷ Names of the countries are hereafter given in alphabetical order.

In the introductory part, we explained the need to define the geographic scope of the Indo-Pacific region with the argument that a clear definition would enable us to be more precise and accurate when analysing India's engagement within this region. We then stated that as per some sources, the Indo-Pacific consists of twenty-four countries, India included,¹⁷⁸ and that, according to other sources¹⁷⁹ the number of the countries of the Indo-Pacific is forty¹⁸⁰.

There are different views in the context of this region, not only when it comes to the number of countries included in it. Logically, the boundaries of the region are also defined in a different way by the different stakeholders. The comparative analysis of the different views shows that the Indo-Pacific is, in any case, a vast area, and it comprises the waters of the Indian Ocean, the Pacific Ocean and the seas connecting them around Indonesia. In the case of India, this notion is expanded to cover some additional countries like China, Indonesia, and Israel¹⁸¹, as well as Australia and the East Coast of Africa¹⁸². Given that the focus of our work is on India, we deem it appropriate to stick to India's understanding of the geographic scope of the Indo-Pacific region as explained by Huma Siddiqui and Imran Malik and summarised by us in the preceding sentence, which is wider than the one of the USA and includes countries of significant or vital interest to India. Moreover, this understanding puts the emphasis on belonging to the *Indo*.¹⁸³

While Huma Siddiqui and Imran Malik lead us to the conclusion that India has a wider scope definition of the region than the USA, other views see the two definitions as identical to each other. In an article published in "The Sidney Morning Herald" in September 2021, Anthony Galloway leaves us with such an impression of identity. What he says, in fact, is that India and the USA define the region as "the entire Indian Ocean region, extending to Africa's east coast".¹⁸⁴ He then quotes an EU Ambassador to Australia, Michael Pulch, according to whom the European countries see the region wider in scope. On the other hand, the article also says that though deeply and actively involved in the Indo-Pacific region, Russia and China do not accept the term as far as they see the enlarged definition as an attempt to bring it in and, respectively, contain more countries.¹⁸⁵ In our opinion, these examples prove the rightfulness of our decision to refer to India's definition of the geographic scope of the region in the course of our analysis.

Despite the existence of various views and approaches when it comes to the number of countries and the boundaries and despite being rejected by some major players, it is however to acknowledge that the term Indo-Pacific has imposed itself. Once initially used mostly by scientists, such as marine biologists and bio-geographers, nowadays this term is considered as a common parlance among diplomats, bureaucrats, and politicians.¹⁸⁶

¹⁷⁸ See *supra* note 8.

¹⁷⁹ See *supra* note 11.

¹⁸⁰ Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, *Mongolia*, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, *the Pacific Island Countries (14)*, Pakistan, People's Republic of China (PRC), the Philippines, Republic of Korea (ROK), Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Timor Leste, and Vietnam, *Ibid*.

¹⁸¹ See *supra* note 12.

¹⁸² See *supra* note 13.

¹⁸³ *Ibid*.

¹⁸⁴ Anthony Galloway, "What's the Indo-Pacific – and how does the Quad work?", September 16, 2021, Available at: <https://www.smh.com.au/national/forget-asia-pacific-it-s-the-indo-pacific-we-live-in-now-where-is-that-exactly-20210810-p58hku.html>

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid*.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*.

3.1.2. India's concept vs. concepts of *major powers*

Having dealt with defining the geographic scope of the Indo-Pacific region and having decided to refer in the context of our analysis to India's definition in this regard, we are ready to move forward and look at the individual concepts of India and some *major powers* in relation to their engagement in this region of interest to us. In the introductory part, we have already mentioned that India's concept of the Indo-Pacific region was presented by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in June 2018 and that its main features consist of the *free, open, and inclusive* region with *ASEAN centrality* and with this concept being *not directed against any country*. We have also presented examples of its practical application, such as the SAGAR concept, the annual Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD), etc.¹⁸⁷ We have pointed out as well that the concept was further developed when in 2019 Prime Minister Narendra Modi suggested the Indo-Pacific Oceans' Initiative (IPOI), comprising practical cooperative measures in the maritime domain in seven areas and coming to us as yet another emanation of the concept.¹⁸⁸ It was then outlined that while furthering its Indo-Pacific concept, India has, in parallel, joined and actively participated since 2017 in the Indo-Pacific Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD). We have finally come to conclude that India has been exerting active efforts to prove and impose itself as an important factor in the Indo-Pacific region in order to defend its national interests and pursue its respective ambitions by implementing its concepts for the Indo-Pacific and the Indian Ocean regions in parallel with initiatives for practical cooperation and dialogue and coordination.

The *major powers* and their positions vis-à-vis the Indo-Pacific region.

Before focusing in depth on India's concept of the Indo-Pacific region, we shall first look at the *major powers'* positions vis-à-vis this region. *Great powers, big powers, superpowers*, etc., are just a few of the terms used in international relations (IR) to refer to a limited number of countries around the world that are different to the rest, i.e. the majority of the countries worldwide, in what concerns their weight in global affairs and their abilities to influence events and processes. Over thirty are the synonyms for *major power*, according to the online Power Thesaurus.¹⁸⁹ The idea here is not to define the commonly used term *major powers*, nor is it to list the countries considered as *major powers*, but rather to identify to what extent significant factors show interest in and commitment to the Indo-Pacific region. We shall do that in accordance with the definition of *major power*¹⁹⁰ we have already quoted in the introductory part.

Let us begin with the USA, where in 2018, the then-US Secretary of State Mark Pompeo laid out the US Indo-Pacific Strategy. This strategy was the focus of the attention during his trip to the region from 30 July to 5 August. The initiative is centred around three areas, namely economics, governance, and security.¹⁹¹

We next move on to Russia. The recently published, at the end of 2021, "Russia in the Indo-Pacific", is intended to understand better Russia's role in this region, which in turn is supposed to

¹⁸⁷ See *supra* note 12.

¹⁸⁸ See *supra* note 16.

¹⁸⁹ "Synonyms for Big powers", Power Thesaurus, Available at: https://www.powerthesaurus.org/big_powers/synonyms

¹⁹⁰ See *supra* note 10.

¹⁹¹ L. Hartman, "What is the US Indo-Pacific Strategy?", ShareAmerica, U.S. Department of State, September 23, 2019, Available at: <https://share.america.gov/what-is-u-s-indo-pacific-strategy/>

confirm the existence of such a role and a respective commitment on the part of Russia.¹⁹² The military power of Russia in the Indo-Pacific and its role as a security factor in this region is also to be taken into account and cannot, therefore, be denied.¹⁹³ We have earlier in this chapter referred to Russia and China rejecting the term Indo-Pacific region.¹⁹⁴ More than this, Russia clearly rejects the US version of the Indo-Pacific concept, which is seen as being based on power and military strength.¹⁹⁵ While undoubtedly having a role in the Indo-Pacific, Russia has not come out yet with an official document outlining its strategy as regards this region.

Next, we turn our attention to the EU. In April 2021, the Council of the EU adopted conclusions on an EU Strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific covering a broad spectrum of areas¹⁹⁶ and the Joint Communication of the European Commission on the Strategy¹⁹⁷ was released in September 2021. At a later stage, the French Presidency of the Council of the EU announced its interest in implementing the Strategy and informed respectively of its plans to hold a ministerial forum in February 2022, bringing together the European Commission, the EU member states and the Indo-Pacific partner countries. The intention was to address the challenges related to security and defence, digital and connectivity issues, as well as the not less important global challenges such as health, climate change, biodiversity, etc.¹⁹⁸ The first ever Ministerial Forum for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific eventually took place on 22 February 2022 in Paris with the participation of representatives from the 27 EU member states and around 30 Indo-Pacific countries.¹⁹⁹ A publication on the European External Action Service website under the title of “EU Indo-Pacific Strategy” lists key examples of the progress achieved in the cooperation between the EU and its Indo-Pacific partners in seven priority areas since 2021.²⁰⁰

As far as China is concerned, there is an understanding that the rise of this country is behind the fear of its neighbours and that they “will do whatever they can to prevent it from achieving regional hegemony”.²⁰¹ The same idea was developed by Rodion Ebbighausen in his article “How China's Rise is Reshaping Indo-Pacific Security Order” from December 2022. According to the author, in response

¹⁹² G. Christoffersen, “Russia in the Indo-Pacific”, Routledge, November 24, 2021, Available at: <https://www.routledge.com/Russia-in-the-Indo-Pacific-New-Approaches-to-Russian-Foreign-Policy/Christoffersen/p/book/9781032012766#:~:text=Russia%20in%20the%20Indo-Pacific%20contributes%20towards%20a%20more,Indo-Pacific%20who%20want%20to%20better%20understand%20Russia%27s%20role>

¹⁹³ M. Sargeant, “Beyond Beijing: Russia in the Indo-Pacific”, Strife, December 22, 2021, Available at: <https://www.strifeblog.org/2021/12/22/beyond-beijing-russia-in-the-indo-pacific/>

¹⁹⁴ See *supra* note 184.

¹⁹⁵ I. Denisov, O. Paramonov, E. Arapova, and I. Safranchuk, “Russia, China, and the concept of Indo-Pacific”, Journal of Eurasian Studies, Volume 12, Issue 1, January 2021, Pages 72-85, Available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1879366521999899>

¹⁹⁶ “Indo-Pacific: Council adopts conclusions on EU strategy for cooperation”, Council of the EU, April 19, 2021, Available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/04/19/indo-pacific-council-adopts-conclusions-on-eu-strategy-for-cooperation/>

¹⁹⁷ “The EU Strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific”, Joint Communication, European Commission, September 20, 2021, Available at: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/jointcommunication_2021_24_1_en.pdf

¹⁹⁸ “Programme for the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union”, p. 17, Available at: https://presidence-francaise.consilium.europa.eu/media/qh4cg0qq/en_programme-pfue-v1-2.pdf

¹⁹⁹ F. Grare, “Will and intent: The Paris ministerial forum on the Indo-Pacific”, European Council on Foreign Relations, February 28, 2022, Available at: <https://ecfr.eu/article/will-and-intent-the-paris-ministerial-forum-on-the-indo-pacific/>

²⁰⁰ “EU Indo-Pacific Strategy”, European External Action Service, January 2024, Available at: <https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2024/EU%20Indo-pacific%20FS-01-24-V3.pdf>

²⁰¹ J. M. Smith, “China’s Rise and Balancing in the Indo-Pacific: Taking Stock in 2021”, The Heritage Foundation, July 16, 2021, Available at: <https://www.heritage.org/asia/commentary/chinas-rise-and-balancing-the-indo-pacific-taking-stock-2021>

to the challenges related to China's rise, the EU, Australia, Germany, India, and Japan have announced their own strategies for the Indo-Pacific region and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD), viewed by the Chinese Communist Party's tabloid Global Times as an "anti-China security group", has in recent years deepened the ties among its member countries.²⁰² On the other hand, the US Indo-Pacific strategy is equally seen "as a strategic countermeasure" against the 2013 Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), considered, in turn, as "China's global and grand strategy".²⁰³ To put it in a different way, China's regional and global ambitions have provoked the adoption of an Indo-Pacific strategy by yet another *major power*, the USA.

In his article, published in December 2022 and quoted in the preceding paragraph, Rodion Ebbighausen refers to Japan as one of the countries having announced its own strategy for the Indo-Pacific region.²⁰⁴ To elaborate on that, on 20 March 2023, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida delivered a policy speech in New Delhi in which he outlined Japan's "New Plan for a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)".²⁰⁵ In the text of this document of 14 pages the role of India as the place where the term FOIP has come into existence is recognized and India is seen as an indispensable partner for the achievement of the objectives of the plan.²⁰⁶

Another country mentioned by Rodion Ebbighausen with its own Indo-Pacific strategy is Australia. In 2016 and 2017, respectively, the Australian Government published a Defence White Paper and a Foreign Policy White Paper. This country's vision for the Indo-Pacific region is set out in the two documents. According to them, the Indo-Pacific should be "a region in which: (1) Disputes are resolved peacefully in accordance with international law and without the threat or use of force or coercion; (2) Open markets facilitate flows of goods, services, capital and ideas; (3) Economic integration is inclusive of and open to all the region's economies; and (4) Rights of freedom of navigation and overflight are upheld and the rights of small states are protected."²⁰⁷

And Germany is also referred to by Rodion Ebbighausen as a country with its own strategy on the Indo-Pacific. In 2020 the German Government adopted policy guidelines on the Indo-Pacific region. The then foreign minister of this country Heiko Maas is quoted to have said that the Indo-Pacific is the region where more than anywhere else "the shape of the international rules-based order of tomorrow will be decided".²⁰⁸

Finally, as mentioned previously, the Canadian government has also come out with a strategy on the Indo-Pacific region. This document speaks of the global importance of the region. Moreover, it

²⁰² R. Ebbighausen, "How China's rise is reshaping Indo-Pacific security order", DW, December 31, 2022, Available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/how-chinas-rise-is-reshaping-indo-pacific-security-order/a-64165164>

²⁰³ D. Akimoto, "China's Grand Strategy and the Emergence of Indo-Pacific Alignments", Institute for Security & Development Policy", April 14, 2021, Available at: <https://isdp.eu/chinas-grand-strategy-and-the-emergence-of-indo-pacific-alignments/>

²⁰⁴ See *supra* note 202.

²⁰⁵ "New Plan for a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, April 24, 2023, Available at: https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/page25e_000278.html

²⁰⁶ The Future of the Indo-Pacific — Japan's New Plan for a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" — "Together with India, as an Indispensable Partner", March 20, 2023, Available at: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/100477739.pdf>

²⁰⁷ "The Indo-Pacific: Australia's Perspective", Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, April 29, 2019, Available at: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/news/speeches/Pages/the-indo-pacific-australias-perspective>

²⁰⁸ "Germany – Europe – Asia: shaping the 21st century together": The German Government adopts policy guidelines on the Indo-Pacific region", Federal Foreign Office, September 1, 2020, Available at: <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/aussenpolitik/regionaleschwerpunkte/asien/german-government-policy-guidelines-indo-pacific/2380510>

is clearly recognized that “the Indo-Pacific region will play a critical role in shaping Canada’s future over the next half-century”.²⁰⁹

To sum up, at least six countries and one regional organization, namely Australia, Canada, Germany, India, Japan, the USA, and the EU, have strategic documents on the Indo-Pacific region. China has got a grand strategy in the face of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). And Russia has no strategy but plays a role in the region. In addition, *regional hegemony* is being spoken of, and security aspects are being considered in the context of the regional discussions. We see all this as well, and it proves that the *big* ones have turned their eyes to the Indo-Pacific, and a kind of competition game is already being played there.

Furthermore, the existence of ANZUS, a 1951 security agreement in operation for more than 70 years and signed in order “to strengthen the fabric of peace in the Pacific Area”²¹⁰, QUAD, a “diplomatic network” and a “positive, practical agenda to respond to the defining challenges of our time”²¹¹, AUKUS, a 2021 security pact for the Indo-Pacific, formed “at a time of rising tensions, especially over the South China Sea and Taiwan”²¹², etc., are some other examples of the complexity of the situation in the region and the need to follow it duly.

The US Indo-Pacific Strategy.

Having screened several major powers for the existence of strategies vis-à-vis the Indo-Pacific region, we deem it worthwhile to study in more detail the case of the USA. Given the growing importance of this region and the fact that the USA is evidently considered to belong to it, it could only be seen as natural for Washington to elaborate and pursue a strategy corresponding to its national interests and its understanding of contemporary international and global politics. When the strategy itself was presented in 2018 by Michael Pompeo, the former State Secretary spoke at that time of a *free and open* Indo-Pacific, claiming that the USA and the whole world have a stake in its peace and prosperity.²¹³ Moreover, Washington sees this strategy as an enduring commitment to the region.²¹⁴

As stated in the preceding section, the strategy targets cooperation in the fields of economy and business, security, and governance. The USA is the biggest investor in the region, and business engagement is at the centre of the idea of a *free and open* region. The private investment is reinforced by governmental support for various projects, including with other countries such as Australia, Japan, etc., with a view of spreading prosperity in the Indo-Pacific. In addition to business partnerships, another critical component of the strategy is security cooperation, in which training, joint exercises, and various other programs are carried out. The focus is on maritime security but also human trafficking

²⁰⁹ See *supra* note 11.

²¹⁰ “Security Treaty Between Australia, New Zealand, and the United States of America”, AustralianPolitics.com, Available at: <https://australianpolitics.com/1951/09/01/anzus-treaty-text.html>

²¹¹ “QUAD”, Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Available at: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/regional-architecture/quad>

²¹² J. Borger and D. Sabbagh, “US, UK and Australia forge a military alliance to counter China, The Guardian, September 16, 2021, Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/sep/15/australia-nuclear-powered-submarines-us-uk-security-partnership-aucus>

²¹³ In order to avoid any confusion, it is to be noted that while the details of the strategy were presented in 2018 by the former US State Secretary Pompeo, it was President Donald J. Trump who had made the US engagement in the Indo-Pacific region a top priority of his Administration and had outlined during his visit to Vietnam in November 2017 a vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific in which all countries prosper side by side as sovereign, independent states. See *infra* note 216, p. 4.

²¹⁴ See *supra* note 191.

and drug smuggling.²¹⁵ In terms of governance, the State Department's November 2019 implementation update on the strategy says that the Indo-Pacific Transparency Initiative, which focuses on anti-corruption, fiscal transparency, democracy assistance, media freedom, etc., was launched in November 2018.²¹⁶

In January 2021, the US Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific was declassified and made public. The document's text shows that the strategy's main objectives are to maintain the USA's strategic primacy in the region, prevent China from establishing new spheres of influence, and ensure North Korea does not threaten Washington and its allies. Cooperating with China is included when it benefits the USA's interest, and Russia remains a marginal player in the region relative to the USA, China, and India.²¹⁷

A very prominent place has been reserved in the document for India, which, if decisive and cooperating with like-minded countries, would act as a counterbalance to China. Furthermore, India's desired option is to be the USA's preferred partner on security issues, with the two of them cooperating to provide maritime security and counter the influence of Beijing in South and Southeast Asia and other regions of their competition. It is essential that India can maintain the capacity to counter border provocations by China and take the leading role in maintaining the security of the Indian Ocean, increase engagement with Southeast Asia, and expand its economic, defence and diplomatic cooperation with other US allies and partners in the region. The objectives in this regard are to accelerate India's rise and capacity to serve as a net provider of security and significant defence partner, to solidify the enduring strategic partnership with it, and for this partnership to be underpinned by a solid Indian military able to effectively collaborate with the USA and its partners in the region to address the shared interests.²¹⁸

Other objectives of the strategy are to create a quadrilateral security framework with India, Japan, Australia, and the USA as the principal hubs, strengthen the capabilities and will of Japan, the Republic of Korea, and Australia to contribute to the strategy's end states, and, most importantly, to make the strategy more attractive to India by aligning it with those of Australia, India, and Japan.²¹⁹

The release of the strategic framework was accompanied by a statement from National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien, the main accents of which could be summarised as follows: the framework was approved by President Trump in February 2018; it has served as strategic guidance for the implementation of the 2017 National Security Strategy within the Indo-Pacific; the free and open Indo-Pacific depends on the American leadership, the USA being the largest economy with the most potent military worldwide; and, in contrast to China, the USA is seeking to ensure its allies and partners can preserve and protect their sovereignty.²²⁰

In the same line of reasoning are the views of Roger Cliff, according to whom the Indo-Pacific presents major strategic opportunities for the USA, which enjoys significant strengths, namely, possesses more human capacity than any other country in the world and has the best technological capabilities and world's most capable military. What stands somehow different here is that India is not

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ "A Free and Open Indo-Pacific: Advancing a Shared Vision", US Department of State, November 3, 2019, p. 21, Available at: <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Free-and-Open-Indo-Pacific-4Nov2019.pdf>

²¹⁷ R. O'Brien, "US Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific", USNI News, January 15, 2021, Available at: <https://news.usni.org/2021/01/15/u-s-strategic-framework-for-the-indo-pacific>

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

explicitly mentioned in the group of the closest democratic allies, unlike Japan, South Korea, and Australia.²²¹

To sum it up, the USA is objectively compelled to adopt and follow a strategy for the Indo-Pacific. Amongst its main opponents in this region are China and North Korea, while Russia is probably and to some extent marginalised. Though not pointing to Pakistan for many inevitably objective reasons, the strategic framework sees India very positively and offers options that presumably match the latter's national interests.

For the sake of objectivity, it is fair enough to say that the US Indo-Pacific strategy has attracted some criticism. To be more precise, such criticism has recently been directed at President Joe Biden's Administration in relation to the latter's approach to the Indo-Pacific. On 11 February 2022, the White House published a Fact sheet on the United States' Indo-Pacific strategy.²²² Attached to the Fact sheet is the text of the Strategy, an unclassified document.²²³ As per the two documents, the USA will pursue an Indo-Pacific that is free and open, connected, prosperous, secure, and resilient. The ways to achieve this strategic end include strengthening the US role and building collective capacity with allies, partners, and regional institutions. As far as the means to achieve it are concerned, the documents speak of “modernized alliances; flexible partnerships, including an empowered ASEAN, a leading India, a strong and reliable Quad, and an engaged Europe; economic partnership; new US defence, diplomatic, development, and foreign-assistance resources; sustained focus on and commitment to the region at all levels of the US government”.²²⁴ As in the case of the Strategy of 2018, the one of 2022 also reserves a special place to India. In particular, one of the ten elements of the Indo-Pacific Action Plan, adopted to implement the Strategy of 2022, is focused on supporting India's continued rise and regional leadership.²²⁵

The main accusations against Biden's Strategy, formulated by Zenel Garcia in an article in "The Diplomat" of March 2022, are that the strategy and policy of Washington towards the region rely, supposedly, on old assumptions about trade, norms, and regional politics and that these assumptions are not suited for today's environment as far as they fail to account for the region's dynamics and complexity. Using his arguments and providing details about the latest regional developments, he speaks of recently weakened US economic positions in the region and of possible restrictions in terms of market access being faced by Washington over time.²²⁶

Garcia then comes to conclusions about some countries of the region not entirely sharing the norms related to the idea of a *free and open* Indo-Pacific, such as the promotion of democracy, good governance, rule of law, and strategic partnerships and alliances, in the first place, and about not all countries of the region sharing the same interpretations of these norms, secondly. Regarding the first, he argues that seemingly many countries of the region, but not all, agree with the US-proposed norms. However, even those attracted to such values tend to perceive outside influence as interference in their

²²¹ R. Cliff, “A New US Strategy for the Indo-Pacific”, NBR Special Report no. 86, June 16, 2020, Available at: https://www.nbr.org/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/publications/sr86_cliff_June2020.pdf

²²² “Fact sheet: Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States”, The White House, February 11, 2022, Available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/02/11/fact-sheet-indo-pacific-strategy-of-the-united-states/>

²²³ “Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States”, The White House, February 2022, Available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf>

²²⁴ See *supra* notes 222 and 223.

²²⁵ See *supra* note 223, p. 16.

²²⁶ Z. Garcia, “What the US Indo-Pacific Strategy Is Missing”, The Diplomat, March 22, 2022, Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2022/03/what-the-us-indo-pacific-strategy-is-missing/>

internal affairs, the latter creating some risk of alienation between the USA and its potential partners. If speaking of the second, Garcia affirms that the US norms are subjected to divergent interpretations. While some of the regional countries support the freedom of navigation and agree to the perception that China poses a threat to it, other countries of the same regional groupings, namely Quad and ASEAN, and amongst them India, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam, see these norms differently. According to him, proof for such a claim is that these four countries have views on key components of freedom of navigation, such as innocent passage of military vessels and surveillance operations in Exclusive Economic Zones aligning closer with those of China than those of the USA.²²⁷

Last but not least, the article says that the US strategy does not account for the divergence in interpretations of the geographic boundaries of the Indo-Pacific. While Japan has the most expansive interpretation of the region, spanning from East Africa to the US west coast, India has the most limited interpretation, focused primarily on the Indian Ocean region and the South China Sea. In addition to this, India's strategy supposedly involves more limited economic and security aims and lacks a coherent strategy for the region. Garcia's main conclusion here is that if the administration wants to implement the strategy and secure the US interests in the region, this strategy must be modified in such a way that it considers the region's dynamism and complexity.²²⁸

Reflecting on the above brings us to the following thoughts. To begin with, the US strategy is subjected to criticism, but criticism is not the most important thing. What matters more is that this criticism reveals some deficiencies of the concept, which are neither groundless nor to be underestimated. And here, we come to the idea that these deficiencies necessitate action in the direction of amending and updating the strategy. Finally, the adaptation of the document should be carried out in such a way that it becomes more acceptable and attractive to other partners in the region, including India.²²⁹

India's thinking on the Indo-Pacific.

We have already identified several major powers possessing their own strategies for the Indo-Pacific region and we have also scrutinized the US concept on this region. We can now proceed further by analyzing India's concept on the region.

We have, in fact, already done some work on this. Referring to an article by Huma Siddiqui, we have highlighted the main elements of India's concept of the Indo-Pacific, including those related to the geographic boundaries of the region and the individual countries included in it. We have presented several examples of the practical application of the concept in the form of *maritime cooperation, dialogue, and exercises* and in the framework of various initiatives and formats, such as the concept of SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region), the Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD), and the Malabar and Tiger Triumph exercises. In a related context, we have spoken of India's efforts to improve ties with China²³⁰, against the background of active trade relations between them and a standoff and a confrontation in the Doklam valley, including through New Delhi, avoiding taking part in some military and naval exercises in the region.²³¹ Elaborating on issues related to maritime

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

²²⁹ In the literature review summary, we have already discussed the need to rethink the US strategy given its China-centric character.

²³⁰ We have already referred to this development in the literature review summary.

²³¹ See *supra* note 12.

cooperation we have noted the importance of SAGAR for putting the maritime issues in the center of India's foreign policy and for creating a positive, favourable, and stable maritime environment as a prerequisite for furthering India's interests.²³²

The analysis of the main elements of India's concept on the Indo-Pacific, as presented in the article of Huma Siddiqui, published in November 2019 on the official website of the Ministry of External Affairs of India, reveals that these elements slightly differ from those of the US Strategy. In the first place, New Delhi and Washington have different views regarding the geographic boundaries of the region and the individual countries considered as belonging to this region.²³³ Secondly, as already mentioned in the introductory part, India expands the US formula of *free and open* by adding to it *and being inclusive*. In third place, also mentioned previously, in addition to *inclusiveness* and *openness*, India's perspective includes *ASEAN centrality* and *concepts that are not directed against any country*.²³⁴

As a next step, referring to an article by Subhasish Sarangi, we have reviewed the evolution of India's concept of the Indo-Pacific as represented by the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI). We have noted that IPOI, yet another framework of the type of SAGAR, was, in fact, a proposal of Prime Minister Modi aimed at implementing the concept into practice by translating it into *practical, actionable, and cooperative measures in the maritime domain*. We have noted the sectors of cooperation suggested by this initiative, pointing out its *open, cooperative, and inclusive character*.²³⁵ thus, we exclude any possible allegations of India's aspiration for influence and this initiative's widening the scope of cooperation *beyond security and geopolitics*. We have also noted that Australia, Japan, the Philippines, Vietnam, and other countries have supported the initiative, while underlining India's ambition to play a leading role regarding it.²³⁶

Building upon the above, what else needs to be done is to elaborate on the idea of Padmaja as regards SAGAR being *an important landmark in India's maritime diplomacy*. As already mentioned, there are seven arguments in support of such an assertion, according to him. These could be summarized as follows: (1) By demonstrating the linkage between cooperation, security and economic development²³⁷, SAGAR was presented as an inclusive and collaborative initiative for the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) which respects international law; (2) SAGAR provided a mechanism for India to expand strategic partnerships with other IOR littoral countries in addition to previously existing ones with Seychelles, Mauritius and Maldives; (3) SAGAR stressed the relevance of regional mechanisms such as the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA); (4) SAGAR highlighted the readiness of India to have a leadership role and take responsibilities in the Indian Ocean Region and prompted a number of bilateral visits by the Indian leaders to Indian Ocean

²³² See *supra* note 15.

²³³ The text of the US Indo-Pacific strategy of 2018 does not explicitly define a geographic scope. It rather refers to the following countries: Australia, Bangladesh, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, the Pacific Island Countries, People's Republic of China (PRC), the Philippines, Republic of Korea (ROK), Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam. Southeast Asia and ASEAN, as well as South Asia and Russia, are mentioned, and in comparison to the list of countries quoted above (see *supra* note 180), Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Timor Leste are not included. It is also to be noted that the geographic definition of Huma Siddiqui does not correspond to that of Zenel Garcia (see *supra* note 226). The Strategy of 2022 speaks of the Indo-Pacific region as stretching from the US Pacific coastline to the Indian Ocean.

²³⁴ See *supra* note 12.

²³⁵ The conclusion regarding the character of IPOI and India's role as a partner steering this initiative was drawn in the summary of the literature review part.

²³⁶ See *supra* note 16.

²³⁷ This idea was already noted in the summary of the literature review.

littoral countries; (5) SAGAR was preceded and followed by a number of landmark events, amongst them the Act East Policy, the Mausam project, the initiative to revive BIMSTEC, the AUSINDEX maritime exercise, the International Fleet Review (IFR), the SAGARMALA Plan, the Malabar naval exercise, etc.; (6) After launching the initiative India concluded a number of agreements on defence cooperation with Indian Ocean littoral states of Africa and vigorously pursued its program of capacity building in the Indian Ocean Region, including by commissioning capabilities, i.e., naval vessels, into its Coast Guard and the Coast Guards of Mauritius, Sri Lanka and Seychelles; and (7) SAGAR highlighted the role of the Coast Guards of Indian Ocean littoral states in ensuring their respective exclusive economic zones (EEZs), thus facilitating the blue economy based economic activities.²³⁸ To sum these up, SAGAR has given a strong push to India's bilateral relations with Indian Ocean littoral states, including increasing the exchange of high-level visits and the conclusion of defence agreements, as well as boosting defence cooperation and strategic partnerships. By proving the importance of regional mechanisms and accelerating capacity building with a focus on coast guards of India and other regional countries, it has encouraged the expansion of the blue economy. It has prompted a large number of initiatives, projects, plans and events, including military exercises. On the other hand, SAGAR has proven India's readiness to be a leader and act responsibly in the Indian Ocean Region while respecting international law and aiming at collaboration and inclusiveness. In line with the theoretical framework as suggested by us earlier, SAGAR having brought concrete results in the form of the increased number of activities, events, initiatives, exercises, etc., is an indication of more robust and more effective involvement of India in the Indian Ocean Region, which in turn is an indication of India's increasing role regionally and globally.

As far as IPOI is concerned, the maritime ecology and maritime resources pillars of this initiative are considered to be in line with the UNDP Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14), which is "focused on 'life below water' and the need to conserve oceans, seas and marine resources"²³⁹. In our view, this is yet another indication of India's global aspirations in the form of this country taking the lead in the efforts to implement this Goal in the framework of the Indo-Pacific region. In a related context, the Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR)²⁴⁰ could be seen as having an important role in the context of the maritime security and capacity building and resource sharing pillars of IPOI. As of the end of 2021, the Center collaborated with 21 partner countries and 22 multinational agencies worldwide in sharing information to increase maritime awareness, thus enhancing surveillance of maritime spaces and lanes of communication and enabling the deployment of forces as needed to prevent crises.²⁴¹ The latter could be seen as proof of the concrete practical results produced by the initiative, which in turn confirms India's stronger and more effective involvement in the Indo-Pacific region and, therefore, India's increasing role regionally and globally. Vice Admiral Muralidharan expresses similar views in the publication quoted earlier in this paragraph, according to whom, though still evolving and facing challenges, IPOI has a future and "would be another enabler for India to emerge as a major player in Indo-Pacific in the 21st century".²⁴²

²³⁸ See supra note 15.

²³⁹ MP Muralidharan, "Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative", Indian Defence Review, Vol. 36.4, Oct-Dec 2021, 06 Jan , 2022, Available at: <https://www.indiandefencereview.com/news/indo-pacific-oceans-initiative/>

²⁴⁰ The Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) is a regional maritime security centre working towards enhancing maritime security and safety in the Indian Ocean. It was launched in Gurugram in December 2018, a few months after the announcement of IPOI, and is hosted by the Indian Navy.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

²⁴² *Ibid.*

After analysing the preceding paragraphs of this section, what could be thought of is that India's thinking on the Indo-Pacific region is different from the American one in terms of geography²⁴³ and scope of cooperation. However, one should not claim any apparent confrontation or mutual exclusion between them. Such a claim is indirectly confirmed by the ideas of Hongsong Liu and Ahmed Bux Jamali, developed in an article of April 2021. According to them, without aligning formally with the USA and keeping in view the US Indo-Pacific strategy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is "pragmatically balancing" between Washington and Beijing. In fact, Prime Minister Modi is constructing a robust, proactive, and influential role for India in the Indo-Pacific region, thus achieving the desired foreign policy outcomes. Ensuring maximum strategic autonomy and building India's maritime security order in the Indian Ocean region are considered to be Modi's crucial policy outlooks.²⁴⁴ In our view, such thinking is being proved as correct by the outcomes achieved in the context of the implementation of the SAGAR and IPOI initiatives, where deepening relations with regional countries, boosting cooperation and partnerships with them, strengthening regional mechanisms, furthering capacity-building and blue economy, launching a lot of initiatives, projects, plans, events and activities, are just a few of the examples. These numerous concrete practical results attest to the positioning of India as a responsible leader sponsoring cooperation and inclusiveness, supporting the efforts to implement goals of a global scale, engaging stronger and more effectively in the Indian Ocean region, emerging as one of the major players in the Indo-Pacific region, and thus increasing its regional and global weight.

India and the *major powers* in the Indo-Pacific: friends, rivals, or foes?

Having reviewed the concepts of India and several *major powers* in the Indo-Pacific, it would be useful to see how they correspond to each other. Do they contradict each other, or is there some degree of harmony between them? To begin with, we shall look at the correlation between the concepts of India and the USA. Following this, we shall analyse the relationship between India's concepts and those of some other *major powers*.

India and the USA.

In theoretical terms, three are the main options regarding the approach that could be undertaken by India vis-à-vis the US Indo-Pacific strategy: to be the closest friend and collaborate, to remain independent and cooperate while competing simultaneously, and to fight. It is more than evident that New Delhi would never go for the last option, at least for now. It has never been the case historically. It is not going that way in the present. Furthermore, considering India's preoccupation with Pakistan and China, one could argue that it is highly probable that such a choice would never be on the table. What one needs to do next is to discover which of the first two options, i.e., friends or rivals, is the working and, therefore, the probable to be taken up the formula.

In an article published in June 2020 in "The Nation"²⁴⁵ Imran Malik presumes that Washington has succeeded in getting New Delhi to the cause of its strategy; however, the latter's total commitment

²⁴³ We have come to that understanding already in the summary of the literature review part.

²⁴⁴ H. Liu and A. B. Jamali, "India's Indo-Pacific Strategy: A Pragmatic Balancing between the United States and China", Pacific Focus – Wiley Online Library, April 15, 2021, Available at: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/pafo.12178>

²⁴⁵ See *supra* note 13.

to it remains questionable. To support his view, he presents three main arguments. In the first place, Malik speaks of the different definitions of the two countries regarding the geographic scope covered by the term Indo-Pacific region, a point we have referred to earlier in this chapter. It is worth remembering here that Huma Siddiqui makes the same assertion in the article, which was also mentioned earlier in the text of this work.²⁴⁶ According to Malik, these different views would bring divergences in perceptions, priorities, strategies, objectives, and adversaries. Secondly, the logic of India being preoccupied with its interests and worries related to the Greater Middle East Region, the western Indian Ocean region, Pakistan, and China. To sum it up, the strategic importance of its west and north would prevent New Delhi from fully committing to the Indo-Pacific. In Malik's view, India's inability to perform on two or more fronts makes a deal with the USA vulnerable. In third place, Malik sees the US Indo-Pacific strategy as China-centric and meant to limit China's further rise, and the only possible option left for Washington is to do this by war. Moreover, given the possible damages to be suffered, India would not be interested in waging war on somebody else's behalf.²⁴⁷ It is essential to mention that Mark Valenica also shares the idea that the purpose of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy is to contain China.²⁴⁸

At the end of his analysis, Imran Malik concludes that Washington needs to rethink its Indo-Pacific strategy. In the author's view, that statement also implies the need to amend it to make it possible to get India aboard. And last but not least, while being a strategic partner of the USA and not an ally yet, India, asserts Malik, would prefer to act in parallel rather than jointly, which would help it preserve its strategic autonomy while enjoying the benefits of the cooperation.²⁴⁹

In a similar approach, in an article of 14 January 2021 published in "The Diplomat"²⁵⁰, Abhijnan Rej says that Prime Minister Modi would not sign up for the US strategy as it is a project to maintain the US regional primacy. He further explains that the Indian prime minister has repeatedly explained that his vision for the Indo-Pacific is "inclusive" and not "directed at anyone" and that India's preference is for a "multipolar Asia in a multipolar world" rather than for a philosophy aimed at maintaining the US supremacy in the Indo-Pacific. This mismatch between the two concepts is even more apparent in the context of the US strategy, which speaks about alignment with India's. Such a line of reasoning would inevitably bring this analysis to the conclusion that the hint of alignment of the two concepts causes anxiety and even reluctance on the part of India to accept the US strategy and cooperate as part of it.

In conclusion, the analyses of Malik and Rej align with our initial general assumption regarding India's approach to the US Indo-Pacific strategy. In the first place, they confirm the existence of some discrepancies between the views of New Delhi and Washington. Furthermore, while admitting the possibility of cooperation between India and the USA in the framework of the Indo-Pacific, they exclude the option of joint activities. To say it differently, it is not entirely in India's interest to act in harmony with the fundamentals of the US Indo-Pacific strategy.

Though the implications of the war in Ukraine started in February 2022 on India's approach to and involvement in the Indo-Pacific region will be touched upon later on, already here, we can claim that this war has further strengthened the arguments in favour of such a conclusion. Nowadays, New

²⁴⁶ See *supra* note 181 and 182.

²⁴⁷ See *supra* note 13.

²⁴⁸ See M. Valenica, "US reveals true intent of its Indo-Pacific policy", Asia Times, January 28, 2021, Available at: <https://asiatimes.com/2021/01/us-reveals-true-intent-of-its-indo-pacific-policy/>

²⁴⁹ See *supra* note 13.

²⁵⁰ A. Rej, "The US Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific: 3 Curiosities", The Diplomat, January 14, 2021, Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2021/01/the-us-strategic-framework-for-the-indo-pacific-3-curiosities/>

Delhi has found itself in the awkward situation of having to choose between Russia and the USA. According to Lakhvinder Singh and Dalbir Ahlawat, in the near future, it will be more and more complicated for India to balance between China, Russia and the USA. What the authors suggest in these circumstances is that India should maintain sound relations with China, Japan, Russia, South Korea, the USA, and ASEAN and that the major regional powers should take the lead and play a more proactive role in building a new security architecture in the Indo-Pacific with the backing of the USA.²⁵¹ In other words, New Delhi needs to support a multilateral security arrangement in the region rather than the US Indo-Pacific strategy.

Going back to the understanding that the USA needs to introduce some amendments to the strategy with a view of making it more attractive to India, then, starting from the text of the US strategy itself, going through the analyses of Zenel Garcia and Imran Malik, and ending up with our own conclusions, it seems to be a correct guess that Washington has to align its strategy to make it more attractive to other partners, including India.

India and other *major powers* in the Indo-Pacific: friends, rivals, or foes?

We have already stated that at least six countries and one regional organization, which may be considered as *major powers*, have their strategic documents on the Indo-Pacific. Another has a grand strategy, yet another has no strategy but plays an important role in this region. We have also comparatively analysed the strategies of the Indo-Pacific region of India and the US and have come to the respective conclusions. We shall now proceed further with the comparative analysis of India's concept and the concepts of the remaining countries and organisations.

To begin with, China has a grand strategy. Given the character of the relations between India and China, these two countries are still away from being friends in the Indo-Pacific region. In the context of the efforts underway to avoid the option of being foes, as we have earlier referred to in our work, we tend to think that in the framework of the Indo-Pacific, India and China are rivals. Such a conclusion is supported by a report of April 2018 by the Congressional Research Service, where the competition between the two countries is explained by their economic rise and their dependence on seaborne trade and imported energy.²⁵²

In turn, Russia, which has no strategy for the Indo-Pacific but is actively involved in it, is a strategic partner of India. The commitment to special and privileged strategic partnership between the two countries was reaffirmed in a Joint Statement following the visit of the Russian President Vladimir Putin to New Delhi on 6 December 2021. As per the text of the document, the two sides "agreed to intensify consultations on complementarities between integration and development initiatives in greater Eurasian space and in the regions of Indian and Pacific oceans" and "underscored their recognition of the ASEAN centrality in the regional architecture of security and cooperation".²⁵³ The Joint Statement, therefore, endorses one of the main features of India's concept on the Indo-Pacific, namely the ASEAN

²⁵¹ L. Singh and D. Ahlawat, "India in Indo-Pacific: a way forward", Asia Times, June 13, 2022, Available at: <https://asiatimes.com/2022/06/india-in-indo-pacific-a-way-forward/>

²⁵² "China-India Great Power Competition in the Indian Ocean Region: Issues for Congress", EveryCRSReport.com, April 20, 2018, Available at: <https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/R45194.html>

²⁵³ "India - Russia Joint Statement following the visit of the President of the Russian Federation", Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, December 6, 2021, Available at: https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/34606/India_Russia_Joint_Statement_following_the_visit_of_the_President_of_the_Russian_Federatio

centrality. From that perspective, India and Russia could only be seen as friends in the framework of the Indo-Pacific, with the options of rivals and foes being totally excluded. From another point of view, the strategic partnership between New Delhi and Moscow is recognized as "key to Indo-Pacific stability" and even "complementary to President Joe Biden's Indo-Pacific strategy".²⁵⁴ The latter idea should mainly be viewed in the context of China's threats to India.

If speaking of the EU, the 10-page long document of the Council conclusions on the EU strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific of 16 April 2021 refers specifically to India only when it speaks of the EU's willingness to continue exploring opportunities to develop economic relations with this country (p. 6.3. b). However, it overall underlines that the EU's renewed commitment to the Indo-Pacific includes all partners wishing to cooperate with the EU (p. 5).²⁵⁵ Based upon that, it may be claimed that the EU is open to being a friend with India and undoubtedly feud and rivalry are not on the agenda of the EU when it comes to India.

In the case of Canada, the Indo-Pacific strategy of this country considers India as a critical partner in the pursuit of the objectives contained therein because of India's "growing strategic, economic and demographic importance in the Indo-Pacific". Based upon that, the document further says that Canada "will seek new opportunities to partner and engage in dialogue in areas of common interest and values".²⁵⁶ Moreover, the text of the strategy underlines that India's strategic importance across the region and globally will further increase with the continued growth of this country's economy and population.²⁵⁷

We will move on to the case of Japan next. We have earlier noted down that Japan's "New Plan for a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" of 2023 recognizes the role of India in this region and sees New Delhi as an indispensable partner for the achievement of the objectives of this plan. It is, therefore, to conclude that Japan and India can only act as friends in the framework of the developments and processes going on in the Indo-Pacific region.

For Australia, India is a "pre-eminent maritime nation in the Indian Ocean" that "will exert increasing influence as its economic and strategic reach grows."²⁵⁸ India's importance to Australia is defined by its "increasingly substantial bilateral relationship" and its status "as a partner in shared efforts to build a multipolar region rather than one dominated solely by China."²⁵⁹ These thoughts could suggest that India is neither a foe nor a rival, and in any case, Australia clearly recognizes its role in the region.

Regarding Germany, the understanding is that the Indo-Pacific provides opportunities for stepping up its cooperation with India, including by aligning their interests in the region. The latter could be achieved by establishing cooperation between the respective departments of their foreign services, by "coming up with a joint agenda outlining issues of mutual interest" and with "enhancing interoperability at sea, intelligence sharing and capacity building" being the "initial building blocks for

²⁵⁴ Joshy M. Paul, "The India–Russia strategic partnership is key to Indo-Pacific stability", East Asia Forum, December 27, 2021, Available at: <https://eastasiaforum.org/2021/12/27/the-india-russia-strategic-partnership-is-key-to-indo-pacific-stability/>

²⁵⁵ EU Strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific - Council conclusions, Council of the European Union, 16 April 2021, Available at: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7914-2021-INIT/en/pdf>

²⁵⁶ See *supra* note 11.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁸ See *supra* note 207.

²⁵⁹ See *supra* note 184.

the two countries”.²⁶⁰ Here again, the logical conclusion would be that Germany and India would opt for friendship as regards their approaches and engagement in the Indo-Pacific region, and rivalry and feud would not be the desired options.

Summing up the above, we conclude that all six countries but one and the EU see India as a partner or have a positive approach vis-à-vis their interaction with it in the Indo-Pacific region. Logically and for objective reasons, the only exception here is China. What is more important from our perspective is that all these *major powers*, including China, recognize de facto or officially India’s growing importance regionally and worldwide.

Involvement of India in the Indo-Pacific

It is important for our work to assess India's involvement in the Indo-Pacific region. By doing so, we shall be able to address and eventually prove or disprove the rightfulness of our second specific assumption. To achieve this objective, we need to resort to the theoretical framework we have earlier outlined in our work. According to this framework, we have to measure first, as a criterion, the number of activities and initiatives in which India participates. As a second criterion, we have to measure the concrete results of this participation. The logic would be that a higher number of activities and initiatives would mean a more substantial involvement of India, and concrete results of this participation would mean a stronger, more effective and more responsive to India’s regional and global ambitions involvement.

We have already done some work on this. In the section related to India's thinking on the Indo-Pacific, we have reviewed the implementation of the SAGAR and IPOI initiatives of the Indian government, and we have pointed to a number of concrete results achieved in the course of this implementation. We have afterwards concluded that these concrete results prove India's stronger and more effective engagement in the Indo-Pacific and its increasing regional and global weight. As a next step, in the section related to the possible options of interaction between India and the *major powers* in the Indo-Pacific, we have come to conclude that the USA, Russia, China, the EU, Canada, Japan, Australia and Germany recognize officially or de fact the growing importance of India regionally and across the world.

To build upon these, we will present more concrete examples in addition to what we have done so far. We will begin with the Tiger Triumph exercise. The first edition of this exercise was conducted in 2019 as an example of the USA and India strengthening their defence, security and diplomatic ties against the background of "increased Chinese naval presence in the Indian Ocean Region". The third of its iterations took place from 18 to 31 March 2024.²⁶¹ This, last so far, iteration is being presented as focused "on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief", as mirroring "anti-drone and anti-piracy scenarios" occurring in the Red and Arabian Seas, as an example of "increased naval cooperation" and "deepening ties" between the two countries, as taking place amidst "an increasingly assertive China" and "a deteriorating situation in the Red Sea". High-ranking US officials and official US documents are quoted as saying that by conducting this edition of the exercise, the USA and India keep building on their relationship "to maintain free and open Indo-Pacific" and that India "now conducts more exercises

²⁶⁰ Siddharth Tripathi, “Germany and India in the Indo-Pacific: United or Untied?”, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Facts & Findings, No 442/June 2021, Available at: <https://www.kas.de/documents/252038/11055681/Germany+and+India+in+the+Indo-Pacific+%E2%80%93+United+or+Untied+%28PDF%29.pdf/d6057b18-b769-5791-6e10-85738c1743ef?version=1.1&t=1622790725026>

²⁶¹ "U.S., India launch Exercise Tiger TRIUMPH 2024", Commander, US 7th Fleet, March 24, 2024, Available at: <https://www.c7f.navy.mil/Media/News/Display/Article/3717010/us-india-launch-exercise-tiger-triumph-2024/>

and personnel exchanges with the United States than with any other country".²⁶² According to another US official, India and the USA are "close friends that think alike" and "feel alike" and learn how to "move alike" in "times of emergency", and the integration of the "two different, great militaries" has deepened since 2019.²⁶³ Analysing this information allows us to highlight the following elements: (1) India and the USA deepen their cooperation and strengthen their relations; India is ahead of all other countries as per exercises and personnel exchanges conducted with the USA; The two countries practice various scenarios and their interoperability and integration has deepened since 2019; and (2) India and the USA counter China in the Indo-Pacific to maintain this region free and open and all of the preceding takes place in the context of a complex regional and global situation. In other words, in the example of the Tiger Triumph exercise, we have registered a higher number of activities in the Indo-Pacific in which India is involved, and we have identified plenty of concrete results from this involvement. Based on that, India is getting involved in the Indo-Pacific in a more robust, more effective, and more responsive way to its regional and global ambitions. It also attests to India's more critical role in this region and beyond.

Another random example we could elaborate on is related to India's relations with the Indian Ocean littoral states of Africa. In the section related to India's thinking on the Indo-Pacific, we have stated that after the launching of SAGAR in 2015, India has signed several defence cooperation agreements with these countries. The available information shows that in 2018, India and Madagascar signed an MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) on defence cooperation, and in 2021, Indian and Malagasy naval ships took up the first ever India-Madagascar joint patrolling of the Malagasy EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone). The number of Indian Navy ship visits to ports of Madagascar in the period from 2016 to 2023 is around fifteen.²⁶⁴ In 2019 India and the Comoros signed an MoU on cooperation in the field of defence and a credit line for 20 million USD for the procurement of boats by the Comoros was announced.²⁶⁵ In 2022, the defence ministers of India and Egypt signed an MoU on defence cooperation.²⁶⁶ Also, in 2022, a delegation of the Defence Industries System of Sudan visited India and signed three MoUs with the Indian companies Rashtriya Metal Industries Ltd (RIML), Advanced Weapons and Equipment India Limited (AWEIL), and Hyderabad Precision Manufacturing.²⁶⁷ In 2019, India and Mozambique signed an MoU on maritime security in the Mozambican EEZ, and in 2022, the Mozambican defence minister participated in the India – Africa Defence Dialogue and in the defence exhibition DefExpo 2022 in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.²⁶⁸ The thus presented information refers to 5 randomly chosen out of 13 African countries considered as Indian Ocean littoral states, and similar information could be found about other countries of this group as well. The synthesis of this information speaks of India and the Indian Ocean littoral states of Africa signing MoUs on defence cooperation and on maritime security, signing MoUs on cooperation between their defence industry companies, carrying out joint patrolling with the participation of their naval ships, as

²⁶² Aaron-Matthew Lariosa, "US And India Hold Largest Combined Amphibious Exercise To Date", Naval News, 27 March 2024, Available at: <https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2024/03/u-s-india-hold-largest-combined-amphibious-exercise-to-date/>

²⁶³ See *supra* note 261.

²⁶⁴ "India-Madagascar Unclassified Bilateral Brief", Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, Available at: https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Unclassified_brief_Madagascar_October_2023.pdf

²⁶⁵ "Brief on India-Comoros Relations", Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, Available at: https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Unclassified_Brief_Comoros_October_2023.pdf

²⁶⁶ "India-Egypt Bilateral Relations", Embassy of India, Cairo, Egypt, Available at: <https://www.eoicairo.gov.in/page/india-egypt/>

²⁶⁷ "Bilateral Brief: India-Sudan Relations", Embassy of India, Khartoum, Sudan, Available at: https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Bilateral_Brief_for_website_21.11.2022.pdf

²⁶⁸ "India-Mozambique Bilateral Relation", High Commission of India, Maputo, Mozambique, Available at: <https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Maputo2022.pdf>

well as of Indian ships paying visits to ports of such countries, India providing credit lines for procurement of naval capabilities to such countries and participation of officials from these countries in international defence related fora taking place in India. The analysis of the latter shows that India has increased its cooperation and dialogue with these countries in the area of defence and security, has contributed to the security in the EEZs of these countries and has contributed to the capabilities building of these countries. These are concrete results of India's engagement in the Indian Ocean region, which confirms, in its turn, the more robust and more effective engagement of India in the Indian Ocean and, respectively, this country's greater role regionally and globally.

Finally, we think it is also expedient to scrutinise India's participation in activities in the framework of QUAD. On the basis of concrete examples, we shall study and explain India's involvement in QUAD based on this country's Indo-Pacific concept. The idea here would be to identify the concrete results of this concept's application on the example of the developments within QUAD. In the literature review, we have already partially touched upon India's participation in QUAD. More precisely, we have pointed out India's *internationalist* foreign policy, which is characterised by this country's participation in summits of various formats, amongst which QUAD as well. We have underlined India's efforts to establish ties and engage with several countries to manage relations with neighbours and expand its neighbourhood policies.²⁶⁹ Apart from highlighting this in the summary part of the literature review section of our work, it is to be noted that we have come to a similar conclusion when studying India's engagement with the Indian Ocean littoral states of Africa in the preceding paragraph. We have also outlined India's policy to remain outside block politics by pursuing its strategic autonomy, thus serving its economic and security interests.²⁷⁰ Our conclusion was based on the idea that India's participation in multiple summits stems from the perspective of an Indo-centric multi-alignment.²⁷¹

As a next step, it would be useful for our work to focus now on India's engagement with QUAD from another perspective, namely, the number of initiatives within this format India has participated in and the concrete results achieved as a consequence of this participation. Pursuing this objective, we shall first examine India's participation in the QUAD Leaders Summits. The first such meeting took place virtually on 12 March 2021 and concluded with a joint statement.²⁷² India was represented by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who delivered remarks.²⁷³ The second summit was held at the White House in Washington on 24 September 2021, and its Prime Minister again represented India.²⁷⁴ A video conference call of the QUAD leaders was held on 3 March 2022²⁷⁵, followed by an in-person summit meeting in Tokyo on 24 May 2022²⁷⁶ Prime Minister Modi participated in both. The QUAD leaders met again on 20 May 2023 in Hiroshima, with Australian Prime Minister Anthony

²⁶⁹ See *supra* note 17.

²⁷⁰ This was also drawn as one of the conclusions in the summary of the literature review part.

²⁷¹ See *supra* note 17.

²⁷² Quad Leaders' Joint Statement: "The Spirit of the Quad", The White House, March 12, 2021, Available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/12/quad-leaders-joint-statement-the-spirit-of-the-quad/>

²⁷³ Remarks by President Biden, Prime Minister Modi of India, Prime Minister Morrison of Australia, and Prime Minister Suga of Japan in the Virtual Quad Leaders Summit, The White House, March 12, 2021, Available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/03/12/remarks-by-president-biden-prime-minister-modi-of-india-prime-minister-morrison-of-australia-and-prime-minister-suga-of-japan-in-virtual-meeting-of-the-quad/>

²⁷⁴ Fact Sheet: Quad Leaders' Summit, The White House, September 24, 2021, Available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/09/24/fact-sheet-quad-leaders-summit/>

²⁷⁵ Joint Readout of Quad Leaders Call, The White House, March 3, 2022, Available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/03/03/joint-readout-of-quad-leaders-call/>

²⁷⁶ Quad Joint Leaders' Statement, The White House, May 24, 2022, Available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/05/24/quad-joint-leaders-statement/>

Albanese formally hosting this third in-person summit meeting. The Indian Prime Minister took part in the meeting in Hiroshima, and he is supposed to host the 2024 summit meeting.²⁷⁷ Summing this information up would reveal that India has participated in all five summit meetings of QUAD that have taken place so far, two virtual and three in-person ones, and this country will be hosting the next such meeting. This is a confirmation of India's firm commitment to the objectives of QUAD, which, in turn, is clear evidence of its active engagement in this format. Having come to that conclusion, we shall further focus on the concrete results of India's involvement in the activities of QUAD. The format is seen as a balancing coalition against China's aggression in the region, which coalition is defined as "the very thing China fears". It also demonstrates resolve to other countries of the region facing China's threat. Responding jointly to the COVID-19 outbreak in India was a test successfully passed by the QUAD. Lastly, Australia rejoining the Malabar naval exercises in 2020 is considered to have "brought a military dimension to the group".²⁷⁸ All these are, according to us, examples of some of the concrete results achieved in the context of the QUAD activities with India's participation. In accordance with our theoretical framework, this allows for a conclusion to be made that India is strongly and effectively engaged in the Indo-Pacific region and it plays an important role in it which corresponds to this country's regional and global ambitions.

At the end of this section, we shall revert to our second specific hypothesis. The examples of involvement in activities and of concrete results achieved following this involvement we have referred to in the preceding paragraphs give us the right to claim that India is strongly and effectively involved in the Indo-Pacific region and the QUAD. This strong and effective engagement undoubtedly enhances India's role, in first place in the region but globally as well. Such a claim proves the rightfulness of the first sentence of our second specific assumption. More than this, supposing India's rivalry with Pakistan contains New Delhi's role in the region and worldwide, our logic is that India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific and the QUAD reduces the capacity of the rivalry to contain this role. By such a conclusion, we prove this second specific hypothesis's second part, and therefore the whole.

3.2. Implications of the war in Ukraine

We have already touched upon this theme briefly in the literature review part and in the section focusing on the possible options for interaction between India and the USA in the Indo-Pacific. In fact, we have deliberated on the implications of the war in Ukraine on India's involvement in this region. What we have come to by studying the existing literature on this theme is that India should rather support a multilateral security arrangement in the Indo-Pacific than the US strategy on it.²⁷⁹ What else we still need to do now is to deal with this issue from a slightly different perspective, i.e., to try to clarify whether the war in Ukraine increases further, or decreases, India's role and weight regionally and globally.

Our assumption related to such a question would be that by defending its national interests by pursuing its foreign policy objectives in the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine, India further increases its engagement and its role in the region and beyond it. One of the arguments in favour of such thinking is related to an example we have referred to in the previous section, i.e. India's participation in the QUAD Leaders Summits. The war in Ukraine started on 24 February 2022, and

²⁷⁷ Quad Leaders' Joint Statement, The White House, May 20, 2023, Available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/05/20/quad-leaders-joint-statement/>

²⁷⁸ See *supra* note 184.

²⁷⁹ See *supra* note 251.

ever since, India has participated in all virtual and in-person meetings of this format taking place at the summit level. Another argument we put up for consideration is that in March 2024, India took part, together with the USA, in the Tiger Triumph exercise. India also took part in the editions of the Malabar exercise in November 2022 in the seas off Japan²⁸⁰ and in August 2023, on the East coast of Australia off Sidney²⁸¹. To put it another way, India has not missed a single military exercise in any of the two formats after the beginning of the war. This, in turn, testifies to New Delhi's active involvement and, respectively, its further increasing role in the region and beyond it. A third argument, based on another example we have earlier referred to, is related to India deepening its relations in the defence area with the Indian Ocean littoral states of Africa. We have presented a lot of data showing that after the beginning of the war in Ukraine, India has continued to work actively on strengthening its relations with these countries. Among these data are those focusing on Egypt, Sudan and Mozambique. The latter is yet another confirmation that India is increasing its engagement and role in the region and worldwide. Having presented all these arguments, the war in Ukraine has further strengthened the involvement of India in the Indo-Pacific and this country's weight regionally and globally.

Having come to such a conclusion, it is expedient to find out and explain the reasons behind India's growing importance as a result of the war in Ukraine. The increasingly active engagement of New Delhi can easily be explained by the ambition to achieve some concrete objectives and results serving its own interests. Such an increasingly active engagement rises and expands, in turn, the role and the weight of India in the region and worldwide. Let us focus first on the objectives and results India seeks to achieve, and then we shall proceed further by presenting examples of its engagement and increased weight. While pointing out that the war in Ukraine has underlined the contradictions in the global vision of India, Emily Tamkin quotes Indian scholars to explain that New Delhi wants “more of a say in Western-led organizations such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and United Nations—particularly the UN Security Council, where New Delhi has long coveted a seat”.²⁸² Speaking of “New Delhi positioning itself as an increasingly important world power”, the author underlines that nowadays, the foreign policy of India is of increasing importance in comparison to the previous years, which is confirmed by facts such as India holding the SCO presidency, assuming the G-20 presidency in 2023 and using the latter's platform to present itself as a bridge for the West to the global south. If speaking of the growing self-confidence in India's foreign policy, the latter is explained by this country's increasing economic power and by the fact that other countries have acknowledged India's vision of being a global power. On the other hand, India's position of not joining the Western sanctions against Russia is explained by the motivation of the Indian government to improve the economic condition of the people and by the fact India has not publicly acknowledged the recent loss of several kilometres of territory to Beijing.²⁸³ While explaining India's refusal to join the sanctions with “shifting interests”, Teresa Mettela also speaks of India's size and power, i.e. India being the world's second-largest country and sixth-largest economy, “making it the most influential nation to remain neutral” on the war in Ukraine. Referring to the G20 foreign ministers meeting on 1-2 March 2023 in New Delhi, the author also draws attention to the facts of India holding the G20 rotating presidency and hosting a number of events with some of the world's key nations. As regards India's power and importance worldwide, the author refers to the expert's view according to which currently,

²⁸⁰ “MALABAR 22 CULMINATES”, Ministry of Defence, Government of India, 16 November 2022, Available at: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1876424>

²⁸¹ “Multinational Exercise Malabar-23 Concludes”, Naval News, 21 August 2023, Available at: <https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2023/08/multinational-exercise-malabar-23-concludes/>

²⁸² Emily Tamkin, “India Is Stuck in a New World Disorder”, Foreign Policy, June 1, 2023, Available at: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/06/01/india-g7-un-ukraine-russia-war-global-south/>

²⁸³ *Ibid.*

i.e., during the time of the war, India is the only country able to talk without any impediments to the leaders in both the

seen in the formula of the two concepts, where the US formula of *free and open* is expanded in the Indian one by adding to it *and inclusive*. However, these two concepts are not confronted with each other. What, in fact, matters for India in this context is to achieve its goals, to increase its role, and to build its security order in the region. This is being proved as the right approach by numerous concrete results achieved in the process of the implementation of SAGAR and IPOI. These results confirm that India is positioning itself as a responsible leader who engages itself stronger and more effectively in the region and emerges as a major player in this region and across the world. The thinking of the scholars in this regard is that Washington, therefore, needs to amend its strategy in order to get aboard India. Their understanding is that this document remains unchanged, and as New Delhi and Washington are strategic partners but not yet allies, India would opt to preserve its strategic autonomy and cooperate instead of acting jointly. This is furthermore explained by the fact that the US project to maintain the US regional USA and Russia. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is also quoted as having encouraged the G20 foreign ministers to "draw inspiration from India's civilizational ethos" and to focus on domestic issues and India's top priorities pertaining to the Global South.²⁸⁴ In summary, in the context of relations with Russia and the war in Ukraine, India is pursuing its objectives and interests, thus increasing its engagement and weight regionally and internationally.

3.3. Key takeaways

In this chapter, we studied India's involvement in the Indo-Pacific region and the implications of the war in Ukraine on this involvement. Our objective was to prove the rightfulness of our second specific hypothesis, i.e., to prove that India's engagement in the region enhances its global weight and reduces India's rivalry with Pakistan's capacity to contain that weight. To achieve this objective, we stepped on the conclusions from the summary of the literature review part, and we drew additional conclusions.

Acknowledging the growing importance of the Indo-Pacific region in terms of population, economy, and military strength, as well as the interest of India and other *major powers*, we first studied the existing views regarding the geographic scope of this region. We decided to stick to India's understanding of the scope, which includes countries of vital interest to it. By doing so, we have also acknowledged the fact that the term Indo-Pacific has already imposed itself.

We then analysed the concepts of the Indo-Pacific of India, the USA and other major players. We have come to conclude that all together, at least eight countries and one regional organisation have their strategies on the region or are actively engaged with it, competing amongst each other for a better position within it, with security issues having an important role. In the case of the USA, we came to know that this country is supposed to be compelled by objective reasons to adopt a strategy which sees China and North Korea as enemies and views India in positive terms. According to some considerations, the strategy needs to be amended in order to become more acceptable to India and other US partners in the region. As far as India is concerned, its concept of the Indo-Pacific is being implemented to assist the defence of its national interests and cater for the related ambitions as a result of what India imposes itself as an important factor in the region. This concept evolves and is being

²⁸⁴ Teresa Mettela, "What's behind India's strategic neutrality on Russia's invasion of Ukraine", ABC News, March 29, 2023, Available at: <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/india-remaining-neutral-russias-invasion-ukraine/story?id=97891228>

carried out in practice in the framework of initiatives such as SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region), the Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD) and The Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI).

As a next step, we made a comparative analysis of India's concept vis-à-vis the concepts of the USA and the other *major powers*. Our conclusion is that there are differences between the concepts of India and the USA, and these differences are related to the geographic boundaries of the region and the countries included in it. Another difference can be primacy does not correspond to India's vision of *inclusion* and is *not directed at anyone* concept, nor does it correspond to India's preference for *multipolar Asia* and a *multipolar world*. The start of the war in Ukraine in February 2022 has further strengthened the arguments in favour of a multipolar approach in the framework of the Indo-Pacific, with the regional countries taking the lead in the building of a multipolar security architecture. If speaking of the other major players, our conclusion was that they all, except for China, see India positively from the point of view of possible interaction with it in the Indo-Pacific region. On the other hand, all of them, including China, recognise, officially or de facto, the growing importance of India in the region and worldwide.

We then studied the results of India's implementation of its Indo-Pacific concept, i.e. the results of India's engagement in the region. On the basis of the analysis of two random examples, the Tiger Triumph exercise and the relations of India with the Indian Ocean littoral states of Africa, and in accordance with our theoretical framework, we discovered that India has participated in an increasing number of activities which has produced a big number of concrete results. On that basis, respectively, we concluded that India is engaging even more strongly and effectively in the Indo-Pacific region, the latter being, in turn, an indication of India's increasing importance and role in the region and globally in line with its regional and global ambitions. We also studied India's engagement with QUAD's activities in a related development. We came to conclude that India is firmly committed to the objectives of this format, and this commitment is being supported at the highest level, which is supportive of and confirms India's active engagement in the format. We also presented several concrete results achieved in the process of India's participation in QUAD, which gave us another argument in favour of the conclusions regarding India's stronger and more effective engagement in the Indo-Pacific and its growing importance and role in the region in accordance with its regional and global ambitions. It is to be noted as well that India's engagement in the region is aimed at establishing ties with a number of countries, managing relations with neighbours, expanding its neighbourhood policy and remaining outside block politics with the objective of pursuing its strategic autonomy and serving its economic and security interests.

We finally studied the implications of the war in Ukraine on India's planning vis-à-vis its future positioning in the Indo-Pacific region. Our conclusion was that the war has further strengthened India's involvement in the Indo-Pacific and its regional and global weight. We explained that with ambitions of India to achieve some concrete objectives and results with a view of serving its interests, the outcome of what is the increasingly active engagement of India in the region and, as a consequence, the increasing role and weight of this country in the region and beyond.

At the end of this section, we come back to our objective to prove the rightfulness of our second specific hypothesis, i.e., to prove that India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) enhances this country's global political, economic and military role and helps reduce the capacity of India's rivalry with Pakistan to contain that role. The examples of India's involvement in activities and of concrete results achieved following this involvement, which we have presented earlier in this section, gave us the right to claim that India is strongly and effectively involved in the Indo-Pacific region and the QUAD and that this strong and

effective engagement enhances India's role in the region and globally. By this claim, we proved the rightness of the first sentence of our second specific assumption. Other arguments in favour of India's increasing political, economic and military role and, respectively, of the rightfulness of the first part of the assumption can be found in the US Indo-Pacific concepts of 2018 and 2022, which reserve a prominent place for India and speak of a leading role for India in maintaining security of the Indian Ocean and of India's continued rise and regional leadership. Regarding the second part of this hypothesis, we assumed that India's rivalry with Pakistan contains New Delhi's role in the region and worldwide. India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific and the QUAD increases this role and, therefore, makes up for the damage suffered and reduces the capacity of the rivalry to contain this role. By this argument, we proved the second part, and therefore the whole, of this second specific hypothesis right.

Chapter 4: India's participation in minilateral formats

In this chapter, we shall focus on India's participation in some minilateral formats, i.e. on a theme we have earlier defined as a supplementary to the second central theme of India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region. We shall study three formats: the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the BRICS and the East Asia Summit (EAS). Our objective would be to check and prove the rightfulness of our third specific hypothesis, i.e., to prove right the assumption that though competing to some extent with India's own regional initiatives, such as SAGAR, IPOI, etc., this country's engagement in minilateral formats such as the SCO, the BRICS, and the EAS provides additional political, economic, and security leverage in the pursuit of its strategic goals. We shall refer to the sources mentioned earlier in the literature review part of our work to achieve this objective. Other sources shall also be used should there be a need. We shall scrutinise and analyse all these sources per the theoretical framework outlined in the introductory part of the work.

The starting point of our analysis would be that participating in various minilateral formats responds to India's interests and ambitions related to international status and helps manage relations with neighbouring countries. Another point in the same regard would be that India does not indiscriminately join various formats. We have come to these conclusions in the summary of the literature review part. Stepping on them, we shall try to understand how India's participation in the SCO, the BRICS and the EAS gives this country additional opportunities to achieve its strategic objectives.

Before going through each of the abovementioned minilateral formats, we should begin by taking up the first part of our third specific hypothesis. To say this more precisely, we shall check whether India's participation in these formats competes with this country's own regional initiatives. It is to be clarified here that these initiatives are being carried out in accordance with and in the implementation of India's concept of the Indo-Pacific. They can also be seen as an expression of India's engagement in this region.

India's participation in minilateral formats vs India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific: Is a competition underway?

To see whether India's participation in the SCO, the BRICS and the EAS competes with this country's engagement in the Indo-Pacific through the implementation of its regional initiatives, we need to ask ourselves and answer one general question. This question is related to the cost of India engaging in a concrete format or initiative. Any such engagement would require financial and human resources. It would require time as well, which is another important resource. We do not think it necessary to delve into concrete figures to prove our understanding that the competition under question is going on. General remarks and arguments would be enough to achieve this. Regarding funding, our claim is that the state budget is always limited. It is a universal practice to resort to restrictive budgets in times of economic disturbances. Another internationally recognised and applied rule is to allocate funds on one budgetary item at the expense of another one. In the case of India, preserving and rationally using the limited funding for the sake of engaging in this or that format or initiative is even more critical given the big population of the country and the objective of the central government to improve the economic condition of this population. From such a perspective, selecting this or that format or initiative instead of other ones to be able to stick to the available approved resources would mean, in turn, that these formats and initiatives are competing with each other.

Regarding human resources, the same logic would be in force, considering that streamlining by downsizing the administration is a task of each government worldwide. Based on that, we may claim that the various formats and initiatives also compete when allocating staff, presumably limited, to work on this or that format or initiative. Regarding time, the term *time management*²⁸⁵ gives us the argument to claim that two activities may have to compete if the same staff is to be allocated to work on one of them. The appointment of additional staff to carry out both may not be possible due to budgetary restrictions, which only strengthens our argument. Having gone through the three types of resources needed for participation in one format or initiative, we may now conclude that India's involvement in some minilateral formats competes with India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region through participation in various initiatives therein. By this, we have proved the rightness of the first part of our third specific hypothesis.

India's engagement in the minilateral formats: How does this country's participation in the activities and processes within the SCO, the BRICS, and the EAS provide additional leverage in pursuing its strategic goals?

Having proved the first part of the third specific assumption, we can now turn on its second part, i.e. to study whether and how India's participation in the above-mentioned minilateral formats increases its leverage as regards the possibility of achieving its strategic goals. To answer this question, we shall rely on our theoretical approach. As in the case of India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific, we shall look at whether India's involvement in the minilateral formats is getting stronger and whether this involvement is becoming more effective and more responsive to its regional and global ambitions. And, again, should the number of activities and initiatives within these formats India has participated in increase, then its involvement would be considered stronger, and should there be concrete results of this involvement. This involvement may be regarded as more effective and responsive to New Delhi's regional and global aspirations. Such an approach would be consecutively applied to each of the three minilateral formats mentioned: the SCO, the BRICS and the EAS.

4.1. India in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

We now study how India's participation in the first minilateral organisation, i.e., the SCO, increases New Delhi's potential to achieve its strategic objectives. We have done some preliminary work on this theme in the literature review part. Referring to an article in "Dawn"²⁸⁶, our analysis led us to conclude that India uses this format to try to normalise its relations with neighbouring Pakistan.²⁸⁷ Stepping on that, in this section, we shall continue studying India's performance in the SCO from a different perspective. We shall first outline the importance of this format. Then, we shall identify the respective importance of international relations, currently, of the countries concerned, including India. Finally, following our theoretical framework, we shall study how India's participation increases this country's regional and global weight under its ambitions and objectives.

²⁸⁵ As per a definition of The Berkeley Well-Being Institute, *time management* is "the act of intentionally planning out what you need to do and when you need to do it". For more information, see: Justine Saavedra, "Time Management: Definition, Examples & Tips", The Berkeley Well-Being Institute, Available at: <https://www.berkeleywellbeing.com/time-management.html>

²⁸⁶ See *supra* note 19.

²⁸⁷ The point was already highlighted in the second of the opening paragraphs of this chapter.

To begin with, the SCO is a permanent intergovernmental organisation that was established in 2001. The organisation includes nine member states, three observer states and 14 dialogue partners. The Secretariat of the SCO, one of its two standing bodies, is based in Beijing. The organisation maintains active cooperation with other international organisations, such as the United Nations Organisation (UNO), the Association of Southeast Nations (ASEAN), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), etc.²⁸⁸ The Council of Heads of State is the supreme body of the SCO, holding regular meetings annually.²⁸⁹ Meetings are held at the levels of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers), foreign affairs ministers and branch ministries.²⁹⁰ The member states appoint their permanent representatives to the SCO Secretariat.²⁹¹ All this information presents us with the features of a full-fledged international organisation that maintains active relations with other such organisations. Based on that, the SCO is a crucial multilateral format that has a significant role in the system of international relations.

Next, we shall look into the members participating in the SCO in more detail. The idea would be to identify the relative weight of the individual members of each of the three categories of states connected to this organisation, i.e. to see which countries are of greater importance from the point of view of contemporary international relations. We need to state first that three of the nine member states are Russia, China and India, with Iran and Pakistan, as well as four Central Asian countries, i.e., Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, holding the same status.²⁹² That would mean that amongst the nine members of the SCO, there are three countries that we have earlier referred to as *major powers*. Iran and Pakistan, as well as Central Asia, are also important and growing from the point of view of India and the region we are focused on in our work, as well as globally. We speak here of significance from the point of view of regional and global politics and also from the point of view of the size of the economy and population. Amongst the three observer states, without ignoring the role of Mongolia, we need to say that Belarus, currently following the procedure of upgrading its status to the level of a member state, and Afghanistan, undergoing turbulent domestic developments and facing a large number of challenges, attract the attention of analysts and scholars not only in the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine, in the case of the former, but also throughout the past several decades, in the case of the latter. For objective reasons, the accent here is put on international and regional politics, but in the case of Afghanistan, the size of the population also matters.²⁹³ As regards the dialogue partners, amongst these fourteen countries, we have countries that matter from the point of view of population size, and we have countries that are seen as significant from the point of view of economic size. In the first category, we can put Egypt, Turkey, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia and Nepal, ranking 14th, 18th, 27th, 40th and 49th worldwide²⁹⁴. In the second category, we have Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the United Arab

²⁸⁸ “General Information, Cooperation with International and Regional Organizations”, The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, Available at: <https://eng.sectsco.org/20170109/192193.html>

²⁸⁹ “The Council of Heads of State”, The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, Available at: <https://eng.sectsco.org/20220907/911928.html>

²⁹⁰ The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, Available at: <https://eng.sectsco.org/20220810/909141.html>

²⁹¹ “Permanent Representatives to the SCO Secretariat”, The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, Available at: <https://eng.sectsco.org/20220907/911976.html>

²⁹² Драгана Митровић, „Шангајска организација за сарадњу – настанак, циљеви и домети нове безбедносно-економске структуре (Централне) Азије“, Институт за политичке студије, Београд, стр. 219-242., *Српска политичка мисао*, бр. 1-2, Београд, 2007.

²⁹³ Afghanistan is ranking 36th worldwide by population. See infra note 294.

²⁹⁴ “Countries in the world by population (2024)”, Worldometer, Updated on July 16, 2023 with the latest July 2023 - July 2024 estimates from the 2022 U.N. Revision, Available at: <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/population-by-country/>

Emirates, and Egypt, ranking 17th, 19th, 28th, and 31st worldwide.²⁹⁵ The comparison of the two groups of countries, as divided by the criteria of population size and economy size, shows that three belong to Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Turkey²⁹⁶. The conclusion we could make here is that many countries from this minilateral format, i.e., the SCO, are of significant importance worldwide from a political point of view or the point of view of their population size and economic size. The latter is yet another confirmation of the importance of the format itself.

At this point, we shall continue our analysis by focusing on India's importance and relative weight amongst the countries from the three categories of association with the SCO. India joined the SCO in 2005 as an observer and became a full member in 2017.²⁹⁷ Let us first look at the criteria related to population size and economy. As per the sources we have referred to in the preceding paragraph, 2023 India will be the biggest country in the world regarding population, followed by China. This country has reached 1,428,627,663 people, 17.76 % of the world share.²⁹⁸ Thus, India has overtaken China as the world's most populous country.²⁹⁹ Going further on to the economic criteria, in 2022, India ranks fifth, followed by the USA, China, Japan, and Germany, with its nominal GDP worth USD 3,385,090,000,000, equivalent to 3.37% of the world share.³⁰⁰ These data correspond to the conclusion that India is one of the three *major powers* possessing the status of a member state of the SCO, as mentioned in the preceding paragraph. India is big in population and economic size. It is considered a *major power*, synonymous with India being of substantial importance and having considerable weight within the group of countries of the SCO format. In addition to trying to judge India's standing within the SCO by relying on statistical data, we may also resort to the views of scholars on this issue with the same purpose. In an article of August 2023 entitled "SCO under India's presidency", Ayjaz Wani claims that India's presidency of the SCO in 2023 assisted this country in gaining recognition as a crucial regional power and in establishing itself as a reliable partner for all member states of this organisation. The author also claims that the SCO allows India to advance its geostrategic and geoeconomics pursuits in Central and South Asia. He furthermore underlines that in its capacity as presidency India has relentlessly pursued the regional cooperation agenda of the SCO.³⁰¹

On the other hand, India's presidency of the SCO has provoked some positive developments in this country's relations with Pakistan, as the latter's foreign minister, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, visited it to participate in the meeting of the SCO's foreign ministers. That was the first high-level visit from Pakistan to India since 2011.³⁰² Finally, the results of India's presidency of the SCO are defined as "commendable" as India has adopted new initiatives and has provided "fresh energy and direction" for the growth and development of the organisation in the years ahead.³⁰³ To say this in other words, the

²⁹⁵ "GDP by Country", Worldometer, July 7, 2024, Available at: <https://www.worldometers.info/gdp/gdp-by-country/>

²⁹⁶ Names of countries are given here in alphabetical order.

²⁹⁷ "What is the Significance of SCO for India?", Vajiram & Ravi, Institute for IAS Examination, 26 August 2023, Available at: <https://vajiramandravi.com/upsc-daily-current-affairs/mains-articles/what-is-the-significance-of-sco-for-india/>

²⁹⁸ See *supra* note 294.

²⁹⁹ In the period preceding 2023, the theme of India overtaking China by population was a favourite topic among India's political circles.

³⁰⁰ See *supra* note 295.

³⁰¹ Ayjaz Wani, "SCO under India's presidency", Observer Research Foundation, Aug 14, 2023, Available at: https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/sco-under-indias-presidency?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAAR0K2W14rrdxHPbXNNO37xaK9PzvhVzqknBpel1SOgsHNWk0U19Bk2tbiwk_aem_a3WNaJxMWqESclAEuKPLMA

³⁰² "India's SCO Presidency: A Brief History And Timeline Of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation", Outlook India, 5 May 2023, Available at: <https://www.outlookindia.com/national/india-s-sco-presidency-a-brief-history-and-timeline-of-shanghai-cooperation-organisation-news-283749>

³⁰³ Ashok Sajjanhar, "India concludes a successful presidency with the SCO Summit", Firstpost, July 10, 2023, Available at: <https://www.firstpost.com/opinion/india-concludes-a-successful-presidency-with-the-sco-summit-12846792.html>

presidency of the SCO has allowed India to receive recognition as a regional power of crucial significance, to advance its strategic and economic objectives, to assist the growth and development of the SCO, to advance the regional cooperation within the SCO, and to make efforts to work on changing to the positive of its relations with neighbouring Pakistan. The conclusion we could make based on the latter is that India is an important regional factor with growing recognition and can advance the objectives of a crucial minilateral format.

Having come to the latter, we shall now study India's participation in the SCO and the concrete results thereof. We shall only concentrate on the period during which India was a full-fledged member of the organisation, i.e., the years from 2017 till now. The reason for such a decision should be sought in the understanding that the membership status provides more opportunities for engagement and performance compared to the statuses of a dialogue partner and an observer state. As the Council of Heads of States is the supreme body of the SCO, we shall first study India's performance at that level. As noted earlier, the Council meetings are held on an annual basis. It should be added that in the literature, these meetings are generally referred to as the SCO summits. According to a publication from 9 June 2017 in Mint, the 2017 SCO summit was held in Astana, Kazakhstan, and India and Pakistan were admitted as full members.³⁰⁴ As per the source, India was represented by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is also mentioned that 12 years before this summit, the two countries were admitted, together with Iran, as observers of the organisation, again at a summit meeting in Astana. One of the comments in the publication, related to the enlargement of the SCO with India and Pakistan, was that with this expansion, the organisation would represent over one-third of the world's population and around one-fifth of the global GDP. The expectations were that, as a member state, India would increase its leverage regarding security and defence issues in the region and its role in addressing the terror threat therein. It was clarified that this country is interested in deepening its cooperation in security with the SCO and with the Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS), its second standing body, the Executive Committee, which is based in Tashkent³⁰⁵. Another expectation was that India could get more extensive access to the oil and natural gas reserves of some of the SCO Central Asian countries. It was also noted that in its previous capacity as an observer, India was taking part in the ministerial-level meetings of the organisation, focusing mainly on security and economic cooperation in Eurasia.³⁰⁶ The analysis of this information reveals that India's joining the SCO as a member boosts the international weight of the grouping in the first place. It presents New Delhi with greater leverage and opportunities in the region regarding decision-making in security, defence, combatting terrorism, and oil and gas supplies. It also confirms that India was involved in the activities of the format in the areas of security and economy at the level of ministers before its full-fledged membership.

Since the 2017 Astana summit, India has represented at the highest levels at the SCO summit meetings. Prime Minister Narendra Modi took part in the meetings in Qingdao, China, in June 2018³⁰⁷

³⁰⁴ Manash Pratim Bhuyan, "SCO Astana Summit 2017: India, Pakistan become full members", Mint, 9 June 2017, Available at: <https://www.livemint.com/Politics/oKjzmgrZN8GvBcjDUzujFN/SCO-Astana-Summit-2017-India-Pakistan-become-full-members.html>

³⁰⁵ See *supra* note 288.

³⁰⁶ See *supra* note 304.

³⁰⁷ Vaibhav Tiwari, "Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Summit Highlights: Xi Jinping Accepts PM Modi's Invite For Informal Summit In 2019", NDTV, June 10, 2018, Available at: <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/narendra-modi-in-china-live-updates-pm-modi-reaches-qingdao-to-attend-sco-summit-1864853#:~:text=India%20was%20given%20the%20membership%20of%20the%20SCO,Xi%20Jinping%20on%20the%20sidelines%20of%20the%20event.>

and Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, in June 2019³⁰⁸, addressing both. He addressed the meeting hosted by Russia on 10 November 2020, which was held in a virtual format due to the COVID-19 pandemic.³⁰⁹ He also led the Indian delegation and virtually addressed the plenary session of the summit meeting held on 17 September 2021 in a hybrid format in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, where his country was represented by the Minister of External Affairs Subrahmanyam Jaishankar.³¹⁰ Prime Minister Narendra Modi further attended the summit in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, on 16-17 September 2022 and delivered a speech.³¹¹ He also hosted and addressed the meeting on 4 July 2023, which was held virtually.³¹² The 2024 SCO summit meeting occurred in Astana, Kazakhstan, on 4 July. The Indian delegation was led by the Minister of External Affairs, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, who delivered Prime Minister Modi's address.³¹³ The above summary says that India was represented at all seven summit meetings of the grouping after joining it as a member state. Prime Minister Modi addressed all of them. He took part in six of them, leading his country's delegation three times virtually and three times physically. Twice only India was represented physically by its External Affairs Minister Jaishankar, with Prime Minister Modi leading the delegation in one of the two cases. The conclusion from this analysis would be that India is firmly committed to the activities of the SCO, being generally present at the highest level at the summit meetings of this organisation. This strong commitment at the highest level speaks, in turn, to India's active participation in this grouping's activities.

The active participation of India in the format of the SCO summit meetings is also confirmed by the many ideas suggested by Prime Minister Modi during the plenary sessions' discussions during these summits and by the many bilateral meetings of the Indian Prime Minister with heads of other countries' delegations on the margins of the summits. Therefore, we shall look into these ideas and bilateral meetings to identify the concrete results they both have produced.

The summit in Qingdao, China, in 2018 was focused on "cooperation in tackling terrorism, security threats, drugs and organised crimes". Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a series of meetings, including with Chinese President Xi Jinping, with whom they agreed to have another informal summit in 2019 in India like the one held in Wuhan in April 2018, thus maintaining the momentum in their bilateral ties. He also met with the SCO Secretary-General Rashid Alimov, the discussion aimed at identifying ways for India to strengthen the organisation through its participation, as well as with

³⁰⁸ Prionka Jha, "SCO Highlights: Need Better Economic Ties With SCO Nations, Says PM Modi", NDTV, June 14, 2019, Available at: <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/live-updates-pm-narendra-modi-attends-shanghai-cooperation-organisation-meet-in-bishkek-2053020>

³⁰⁹ "PM's remarks at Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit 2020", Prime Minister of India, 10 November 2020, Available at: https://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/news_updates/pms-remarks-at-shanghai-cooperation-organisation-sco-summit-2020/

³¹⁰ Shailaja Tripathi, "PM Modi addresses SCO Summit 2021, says SCO must develop a shared template to fight radicalism and extremism", Jagran Josh, September 17, 2021, Available at: <https://www.jagranjosh.com/current-affairs/sco-summit-2021-prime-minister-modi-virtually-addresses-sco-meet-in-dushanbe-shanghai-cooperation-organisation-sco-members-1631860468-1>

³¹¹ "SCO Summit 2022 Highlights: India, China expressing concern about Ukraine war reflective of global worries, says Blinken", The Indian Express, September 17, 2022, Available at: <https://indianexpress.com/article/world/sco-summit-live-updates-pm-narendra-modi-putin-xi-jinping-samarkand-uzbekistan-8152043/>

³¹² Shubhajit Roy, "India and the SCO: Takeaways from the recent summit", The Indian Express, July 7, 2023, Available at: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-global/india-and-the-sco-takeaways-from-the-recent-summit-modi-xi-jinping-vladimir-putin-shehbaz-sharif-meet-8800270/>

³¹³ Aveek Banerjee, "SCO Summit 2024: Jaishankar delivers PM Modi's message on terrorism and respect for territorial integrity", India TV News, July 4, 2024, Available at: <https://www.indiatvnews.com/news/world/sco-summit-2024-jaishankar-delivers-pm-modi-s-message-on-terrorism-and-respect-for-territorial-integrity-climate-ai-updates-2024-07-04-940232>

representatives of the Indian diaspora in China.³¹⁴ According to other sources, Prime Minister Modi held several bilateral meetings on the margins of the summit³¹⁵ and spelled out his country's position on major issues such as the situation in the region, the impact of US sanctions on Russia, the Iran nuclear deal, fighting terrorism, and connectivity and boosting trade and investment in the region³¹⁶.

The summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, in 2019 was the first multilateral engagement of Prime Minister Modi after his re-election at the post. Discussions during the conference were centred around topical issues of international and regional importance, including global security, multilateral economic cooperation, and people-to-people exchanges. All attending leaders supported peace, development, and connectivity in the region. In his address, Prime Minister Modi stressed the importance of cooperation in the fight against terrorism, the commitment to developing solar energy and the need for better economic ties with the SCO countries. He had bilateral meetings with Russian President Vladimir Putin. They discussed strengthening the strategic relationship between New Delhi and Moscow with Chinese President Xi Jinping, with whom they discussed further strengthening the bilateral relations, and with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, focusing on India's contribution to an inclusive peace process in Afghanistan. The Indian Prime Minister also had bilateral meetings with the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, and the President of Kyrgyzstan, Sooronbay Jeenbekov, and he exchanged remarks with the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan. An India-Kyrgyz business forum was organised on the sidelines of the summit. In his speech at the event, Prime Minister Modi stressed the importance of Chabahar port, the launch of many business initiatives and the work on a bilateral treaty.³¹⁷

The summit in 2020 was held in a virtual format and hosted by Russia. Prime Minister Modi reported no bilateral meetings, but his remarks at the meeting presented the case of India eloquently. The Prime Minister of India spoke of the November 2020 meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of Government, to be hosted for the first time by his country, and New Delhi's proposal regarding the establishment of working groups on innovation and startups and on traditional medicine aimed at sharing India's experience and knowledge in these areas. He promoted the vision of a "Self-reliant India" in the post-pandemic world and the image of India as the world's largest vaccine-producing country, helping the world fight the Covid pandemic. The Prime Minister also promoted the achievements of India's culture, literature, and religious heritage and presented India's views on deepening connectivity based on respecting each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity. He asked for support for India's efforts to change the global governance process after assuming a non-permanent member status beginning in 2021. He finally reiterated India's views on fighting terrorism, illegal arms smuggling, drugs and money laundering, criticising the attempts to put bilateral issues on the agenda of the SCO.³¹⁸

We shall look at the 2021 summit, held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, in a hybrid format. As mentioned, Prime Minister Modi did not attend the meeting but addressed the participants virtually. Amongst the issues the leaders discussed were the Afghanistan crisis and regional security issues. In

³¹⁴ See *supra* note 307.

³¹⁵ "SCO Summit 2018: PM Modi departs from Qingdao, China after 2-day long summit", Times Now, Jun 10, 2018, Available at: <https://www.timesnownews.com/india/article/shanghai-cooperation-organisation-summit-2018-live-updates-narendra-modi-xi-jinping-penary-session-china-india-pakistan/238300>

³¹⁶ "PM Modi at SCO Summit 2018: 'Connectivity with neighbourhood and in SCO region India's priority'", India TV News, June 10, 2018, Available at: <https://www.indiatvnews.com/news/world-pm-modi-at-sco-summit-2018-live-updates-from-qingdao-china-xi-jinping-trade-talks-iran-nuclear-deal-terrorism-446472>

³¹⁷ See *supra* note 308.

³¹⁸ See *supra* note 309.

his address, Prime Minister Modi noted the 20th anniversary of the SCO and welcomed the new member Iran and the new dialogue partners Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar. When citing the anniversary, he suggested it was the right time to discuss the future of the SCO and defined the most significant challenges the organisation is faced with as those related to security, peace, trust deficit, and increasing radicalisation, the latter one being evidenced by the then-recent developments in Afghanistan. In this context, he urged the SCO to develop “a shared template to fight radicalism and extremism”.³¹⁹ He reiterated India’s commitment to increasing its connectivity with Central Asian countries, pointing to the benefits for these countries stemming from connecting with the vast market of his country. Referring to the challenge related to trust deficit, he asserted that mutual trust can be ensured by making the connectivity projects “transparent, consultative and participatory” and showing “respect for the territorial integrity of all the countries”.³²⁰ To promote India's role in emerging technology, he suggested connecting startups and entrepreneurs from the countries of the SCO. Due to his absence, Prime Minister Modi could not hold bilateral meetings. While representing him, External Affairs Minister Subrahmaniam Jaishankar met the President of Iran, Ebrahim Raisi and the foreign minister of Russia, Sergey Lavrov, discussing the latter important topical issues, including the situation in Afghanistan. According to the same source, Jaishankar attended a meeting of the leaders of the SCO and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation on Afghanistan.³²¹

The leaders' discussions at the 2022 SCO summit in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, focused on a wide range of topical regional and global issues, including challenges to regional peace and security, trade and energy supplies and connectivity, and culture and tourism. The meeting was attended by Prime Minister Modi, who, in his address, explored his idea to turn India into a manufacturing hub in the context of the disruptions in the global supply chains due to the Covid and Ukraine crises. He also stressed the need to tackle the challenge of food security and, respectively, India’s efforts to popularise millet. In 2020, Prime Minister Modi spoke of his ideas regarding establishing working groups for start-ups, innovation, and traditional medicine. He also praised his country's economy for being one of the fastest-growing economies among the world's largest economies, with an expected growth rate of 7.5% in 2022. In an apparent reference to, presumably, Pakistan’s Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Prime Minister Modi urged the SCO member countries to grant each other full right to transit to improve connectivity and help establish reliable and resilient supply chains in the region. He had many bilateral meetings with Russian President Vladimir Putin, with whom he discussed regional and global issues. As per the media publications, the Indian Prime Minister has told his counterpart that this was not the time for war in Ukraine, which has triggered positive reactions of appreciation in his regard. Against the background of the military standoff between India and China along the line of actual control in the Himalayas, Modi did not meet President Xi Jinping. He met with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, with whom they discussed bilateral relations, regional developments, and the situation in Afghanistan, and reviewed the progress in the development of the Shahid Beheshti terminal at the Port of Chabahar. Modi also met Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to discuss bilateral cooperation in various sectors, as well as Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev. India took over the SCO rotating presidency from Uzbekistan at the summit and joined the Samarkand declaration. However, this document did not refer to the goals and objectives of the UN Charter. However, the Joint Declaration expressed deep concern over the threat posed by terrorism, separatism, and extremism and strongly condemned terrorist acts committed around the world. The document's text underlined the member states' resolve to take measures to address the spread of terrorism. It is reported in this context

³¹⁹ See *supra* note 310.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*

³²¹ *Ibid.*

that the SCO has planned to prepare its own list of terrorist, separatist, and extremist organisations, the activities of which are to be banned on the territories of the SCO member states.³²²

India hosted the 2023 summit, which we will deal with separately in the context of India's SCO rotating presidency in 2023. We, therefore, come to the 2024 summit meeting of the SCO, which was held in Astana, Kazakhstan. The Indian delegation for this meeting was led by the External Affairs Minister Subrahmaniam Jaishankar, who delivered Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks. These remarks were focused on several important issues. Speaking of terrorism, the Indian Prime Minister called for combatting terrorism, preventing radicalisation, countering recruitment and financing of terrorism, and exposing and isolating countries that shelter and support terrorists. He also called for foreign policies of all member-states of the SCO to be based on "mutual respect for sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, equality, mutual benefit, non-interference in internal affairs, non-use of force or threat of use of force"³²³. Addressing the issue of climate change, Modi underlined that India has exerted efforts to meet the commitments to achieve reductions in emissions. On technology, he said that India would elaborate its national strategy on artificial intelligence (AI) and that his country was working with the other member states of the SCO to elaborate on a roadmap for AI cooperation. Modi also said that the SCO was taking a significant share of India's foreign policy activities.³²⁴ It is worth mentioning as well that the External Affairs Minister of India held several bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the summits, including with the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, with whom they discussed the reform of the UN Security Council, as well as with his counterparts from Belarus Maksim Ryzhenkov and Tajikistan counterparts Sirojiddin Muhriddin. The Indian External Affairs Minister also had a bilateral meeting with the Foreign Minister of China, Wang Yi, which was the first high-level meeting between Indian and Chinese officials after the formation of the third government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and they discussed the early resolution of the remaining issues in the India-China border areas.³²⁵

The analysis and synthesis of the above information would bring us to several conclusions. In the first place, many topical international and regional issues were discussed at all the meetings mentioned above of the Council of Heads of States of the SCO. Amongst them, we should, by all means, mention the global and regional security situation, the fight against terrorism, the situation in Afghanistan, multilateral economic cooperation, trade and energy supplies and connectivity, culture and tourism, people-to-people exchanges, the future of the SCO and challenges it is faced with. All these issues are of significant importance to India. Moreover, during their discussions, the leaders of the SCO countries expressed their support for peace, development and connectivity in the region, which coincides with India's position and reflects India's interests. Participating in discussions and listening to other leaders' remarks is the best way to learn about other SCO countries' positions and better present and defend one's own position. This leads us to a second conclusion, namely that by taking part in the discussions, Prime Minister Modi availed himself of the opportunity to express his country's positions on these important global and regional issues. More precisely, amongst others, he spoke of and expressed ideas on the latest developments and situations in the region, terrorism, respecting each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs, non-use of force or threat of use of force, avoiding putting bilateral issues on the SCO agenda, changing global governance process, climate change, connectivity in the region, increasing transparency in connectivity

³²² See *supra* note 311.

³²³ See *supra* note 313.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*

³²⁵ Aveek Banerjee, "Jaishankar meets Chinese FM Wang Yi in Kazakhstan, discusses early resolution of border dispute", India TV News, July 4, 2024, Available at: <https://www.indiatvnews.com/news/world/jaishankar-meets-chinese-foreign-minister-wang-yi-on-sidelines-of-sco-meet-in-kazakhstan-updates-2024-07-04-940182>

to increase mutual trust, consequences of the war in Ukraine. Expressing his views and ideas on all these issues was undoubtedly useful in defending India's positions and interests. We deem it useful to present several examples to illustrate this claim. Modi continuously stressed how important it is to fight terrorism. He promoted India's role as a non-permanent member of the UNSC. He also praised his country's economic development, underlining that India is one of the fastest-growing economies in the group and one of the largest economies in the world. In a related context, Modi promoted his government's concept of a powerful India and his idea to turn India into a manufacturing hub in the context of the disruptions in the global supply chains due to the COVID-19 and Ukraine crises. Explaining the need for better economic ties amongst the SCO countries, he urged the other SCO member countries to grant each other full right to transit to improve connectivity and help establish reliable and resilient supply chains. He also promoted the image of India as the biggest producer of vaccines and helper of the whole world, the role of India in emerging technology and its efforts in artificial intelligence, and the vast Indian market. Stressing the commitment to the development of solar energy, Modi highlighted his country's work to achieve the committed reduction in emissions. Finally, he promoted India's literature, culture and religious heritage, the need to tackle the challenge of food security and, respectively, India's efforts to popularise millets. Participating in the discussions, the Prime Minister presented India's proposals for establishing working groups to share India's experience in traditional medicine and in startups and innovation. In their turn, the bilateral meetings Prime Minister Modi had with his counterparts also presented him with good opportunities to express and defend India's positions on important global, regional, and bilateral issues and defend his country's interests. The same applies to the External Affairs Minister Jaishankar, who represented his Prime Minister at some of the meetings. Both Modi and Jaishankar held a large number of bilateral meetings. Improving relations and resolving the military standoff in the Himalayas and the remaining issues in the India-China border areas were the focus of the talks with the official representatives of China. Strengthening the strategic relationship and putting an end to the war in Ukraine were debated with the Russian leader. Meetings with the leaders of Afghanistan and Iran were respectively devoted to India's contribution to an inclusive peace process in Afghanistan and to taking stock of the progress achieved in the development of the Shahid Beheshti terminal at the Port of Chabahar. Last but not least, the reform of the UN system was touched upon during the meeting with the UN Secretary-General and India's contribution to the strength of the SCO, strengthening business relations, etc., were discussed with leaders of other SCO countries. As part of his active engagement with representatives of India's communities abroad, Prime Minister Modi also met with the Indian diaspora in China. Finally, the texts of the documents adopted at the end of the summits reflected some of India's positions, as was the case with mentioning the resolve of the SCO countries to address the challenge of terrorism. To put it in a nutshell, the above information confirms our view that the ideas expressed by Prime Minister Modi at the plenary sessions of the summits and during his bilateral meetings held on their sidelines are signs of India's active participation in the format of the SCO Heads of State meetings and, generally speaking, in the activities of the organisation itself as a whole. On the other hand, these ideas and discussions produced many concrete results. The general result is that they presented New Delhi with greater leverage and opportunities in the region in terms of decision-making in a large number of important areas, such as security, defence, combatting terrorism, connectivity, oil and gas supplies, etc. India taking over and performing as the SCO rotating presidency could also be a concrete result.

We shall conclude by studying India's participation in the activities of the SCO by focusing on India's SCO rotating presidency in 2023. During the presidency, India hosted 134 events, 14 of which were held at a ministerial level. All these events aimed to strengthen the ties between the member states of the SCO and promote unity within the grouping, thus pursuing the regional cooperation agenda.³²⁶

³²⁶ See *supra* note 301.

According to other sources, 140 meetings, conferences and programmes were hosted, with observers and dialogue partners being actively involved in 14 programmes. The ministers of the member states prepared several important documents, new initiatives were launched, and India established five new pillars of cooperation; two working groups were established, and the first tourism and cultural capital of the SCO was designated.³²⁷ The Islamic State of Iran was granted a full SCO member status. Agreements on counterterrorism, security cooperation, and defence were concluded between India and the Central Asian Republics. India invested in the Port of Chabahar and in the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), which is 7200 km in size. In 2020, India constructed the Dushanbe-Chortut highway in Tajikistan and provided Central Asian countries with a credit line worth 1 billion US dollars to develop infrastructure projects.³²⁸ The culmination of the presidency was the 23rd summit meeting, which was hosted virtually by India and chaired by Prime Minister Modi on 4 July 2023.³²⁹ The leaders of the SCO countries adopted the New Delhi Declaration (NDD) and two joint statements, respectively, on cooperation in countering the radicalisation leading to separatism, extremism and terrorism and on cooperation in the field of digital transformation.³³⁰ In his statement, Prime Minister Modi focused on important issues such as the terror threat, the situation in Afghanistan, connectivity, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, etc. He also reiterated India's support for the reform and modernisation of the SCO.³³¹ The analysis of the preceding information in this paragraph would allow us to assert that while performing its role as a presidency of the SCO India participated actively in the activities of the SCO. This active participation brought many concrete results, such as organising official and working events and fora, adopting official documents, launching initiatives, establishing work bodies, concluding agreements, new investments, and, most importantly, presenting and defending India's positions on regional and global issues.

Summing up our reflections on India's participation in the SCO and the concrete results thereof would bring us to several conclusions. India joined the SCO as a full member at the summit meeting in Astana, Kazakhstan, in 2017. Prior to that, India used to participate in ministerial-level meetings in the areas of security and economy. In its new capacity, India participated actively in the meetings of the SCO supreme body, the Council of Heads of States. A confirmation for this comes from the fact that India took part in all such meetings after joining the organisation as a member state and that Prime Minister Modi addressed all of them and participated in almost all of them. The latter is a sign of both a strong commitment at the highest level to the activities of the SCO and, respectively, of active participation in these activities. The active participation in the summit meetings is also confirmed by the many ideas put up by the Indian Prime Minister at the plenary sessions of the summits and during his bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the summits, which ideas brought many concrete results. These ideas are also a sign of active participation in the summit format and in the activities of the SCO in general. On the other hand, at the plenary sessions, a lot of global and regional issues of significant importance to India were discussed, and the leaders expressed support for many positions of India, reflecting India's interests. On his part, Prime Minister Modi presented India's positions on these topical global and regional issues, and this was useful for the sake of defending India's positions and interests. During the bilateral meetings on the margins of the summits, Prime Minister Modi and External Affairs Minister Jaishankar also expressed and defended India's positions on important global, regional and bilateral issues, thus defending the interests of their country. Not less importantly, the documents adopted at the summits also reflected some of India's positions. The suggested ideas and the

³²⁷ See *supra* note 303.

³²⁸ See *supra* note 301.

³²⁹ See *supra* notes 301 and 303.

³³⁰ See *supra* note 303.

³³¹ *Ibid.*

conducted discussions produced a lot of results, the general amongst which is that India got greater leverage and opportunities in the region in terms of decision-making in a big number of important areas, the latter in addition to India itself boosting the international weight of the grouping. Another result of India's performance within the SCO is that India carried out the rotational presidency of the SCO in 2023. During this presidency, India also participated actively in the activities of the SCO. This active participation also produced a lot of concrete results, the most important of which was presenting and defending India's positions on a large number of regional and global issues.

We come now to the final point of our analysis of India's participation in the SCO, namely studying how the active participation in the activities of the grouping and the concrete results of this participation, including the greater leverage in decision-making in many areas, increase India's role and weight regionally and globally. Here, we shall rely on the theoretical framework suggested in the introductory chapter. We have stipulated two criteria to measure and judge India's involvement in the Indo-Pacific and some minilateral formats. The first criterion was the number of activities and initiatives India participated in. We have already stated in this section that India participated in a significant number of activities and initiatives of the SCO. On that basis, we concluded that India's participation was active and its involvement in the SCO was, therefore, strong. The second criterion was the concrete results of participating in the activities and initiatives. Earlier in this section, we stated that India's participation in the SCO activities produced many concrete results. As an example, during the rotational presidency of 2023, we have only witnessed the conduct of many meetings and events, the adoption of several official documents, and the launch of new initiatives. In addition, new agreements were signed, working groups were established, and there were new investments.

Moreover, the Indian leadership presented and vigorously defended their country's positions on regional and global issues. On that basis, we can conclude now that after obtaining full-fledged membership, India's involvement in the SCO is not only getting stronger but is also becoming more effective and more responsive to India's regional and global ambitions. To cut it short, India's active participation in the activities of the SCO and the results thereof make this country's involvement in the grouping stronger and more effective, thus increasing its role and weight regionally and globally.

The SCO is an important organisation that plays a significant role in contemporary international relations. Many countries associated with it in one of the three existing statuses have a high standing worldwide from a political, economic, or population size point of view. India is increasingly recognised as a factor in the region and has the potential to assist in furthering the SCO's objectives. This country is firmly committed to and participates actively in the activities of the SCO. The active participation has brought many concrete results, the most important of which is India presenting and defending its positions on a large number of regional and global issues and India getting greater leverage and opportunities in the region in decision-making. This active participation and its results have led to India's involvement in the grouping getting stronger and more effective and India's role and weight regionally and globally increasing. The latter is followed by the ambitions and objectives of this country and increases New Delhi's potential to achieve its strategic goals. Based on that, we can conclude that the second part of our third specific hypothesis was proved right in the case of India's participation in the SCO.

4.2. India and the BRICS

We shall continue our work by studying India's participation in another minilateral format, i.e. the BRICS. The idea again would be to see how participation in the activities of this organisation

increases New Delhi's potential to achieve its strategic objectives. We have already analysed this theme in the literature review part of our work. We have, in particular, noted that, as per Abhijnan Rej, India's participation in the BRICS serves New Delhi's interests and ambitions related to international status.³³² We have also mentioned that India uses this format to manage its relations with China.³³³ Starting from that, we shall continue studying this issue, applying the same model and theoretical framework as in the preceding section related to India's participation in the activities of the SCO.

To begin with, we shall first look at how important BRICS is as a format. There is no official website for this organisation.³³⁴ A publication in Britannica defines it as an "informal grouping of countries that have developed into an intergovernmental organisation".³³⁵ The format started under the acronym "BRIC", including Brazil, Russia, India and China, with representatives of the four countries having their first informal meeting in 2006 on the margins of the UN General Assembly. The acronym changed to "BRICS" in 2011 when South Africa joined the organisation. Saudi Arabia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Argentina were admitted as new members at the BRICS summit in South Africa in 2023, and they were supposed to join the organisation in January 2024 officially.³³⁶ The member states established in 2014 the New Development Bank meant for providing funding and loans to emerging economies, and they also discussed the creation of a common currency for trading between themselves. The assessment is that in the aftermath of the beginning of the Ukraine war, the international profile of the grouping rose.³³⁷

Another publication, published on the BBC website in February 2024, is practical and helps us complete the picture. Regarding the last expansion of the grouping, it is to be noted that Saudi Arabia's membership was confirmed with a delay, while Argentina pulled out in December 2023. The new acronym used for the format is expected to be "BRICS +". The members set their priorities and make decisions at the organisation's annual summits, and they serve as presidents. The 2024 summit is to be hosted by Russia in October in Kazan.³³⁸ It is believed that the objective of the grouping is to unite the most important developing countries of the world and to give these emerging economies more influence in international politics in the form of "greater voice and representation", thus making it possible for them to challenge the power of the wealthier countries of North America and Western Europe, currently dominating the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, in the political and economic areas. The total population of the countries of the BRICS + is around 3.5 billion, equivalent to 45% of the world population. The economies of these countries are worth over USD 28.5 trillion, or around 28% of the global economy. And the BRICS + countries produce about 44% of the world's crude oil.³³⁹ While speaking of the BRICS + countries challenging the world's wealthiest countries of North America and Western Europe, the publication also raises the question of a possible rivalry between the BRICS + and the G20 group.³⁴⁰ To sum it up, the expanded grouping, i.e., the BRICS +, comprises ten countries altogether. Seeking to increase the power and influence of its members, it has established its own bank, the New Development Bank, and has discussed the introduction of its own currency. While by the end of 2022, the bank had provided funding worth around USD 32 billion for

³³² See *supra* note 18.

³³³ *Ibid.*

³³⁴ There is a website called the BRICS portal that provides information on the BRICS group of states, their cooperation, summits, economy, and society. For more information, see: the BRICS portal, Available at: <https://infobrics.org/>

³³⁵ Miles Kenny, "BRICS", Britannica, August 2, 2024, Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/BRICS>

³³⁶ *Ibid.*

³³⁷ *Ibid.*

³³⁸ "BRICS: What is the group and which countries have joined?" BBC, 1 February 2024, Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-66525474>

³³⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

the implementation of various projects in emerging economies, according to some estimates, the differences in the economies of the member states raise questions regarding the appropriateness of the introduction of a common currency.³⁴¹ In conclusion, BRICS has imposed itself as a minilateral format, having an important role in the system of international relations. The significance of the format is also confirmed by the fact that other countries also want to join it.³⁴²

Having outlined the importance of the BRICS, we shall now look at the respective importance of its members, including India, in the current international relations. Again, the idea would be to clarify the relative weight of the member states regionally and globally. The focus would be on their importance from the point of view of regional and global politics and the sizes of the economy and population. Amongst the ten members³⁴³ of the BRICS group, we have three countries, namely Russia, India, and China, which we have agreed to consider as *major powers earlier*. While not mentioning India, the BBC publication mentioned above also refers to China and Russia as “major world powers”. According to it, China uses the BRICS to increase its power and influence, especially in Africa, and to establish itself as a leader of the Global South. On its part, Russia relies on the BRICS to overcome the Western sanctions imposed on it after the beginning of the so called “special military operation” in Ukraine and to show the West it is not in total isolation yet. If speaking of the rest of the member states, then Brazil and South Africa are defined as “influential on their continent”, and Iran and the United Arab Emirates have been referred to as important from the point of view of crude oil production.³⁴⁴ Building on that, we could add that Brazil ranks 7th by population and 11th by the size of the economy worldwide, and South Africa ranks respectively 24th by population and 37th by the size of the economy³⁴⁵, which confirms the understanding of their being *influenced by their continent*. According to us, the exact definition could be applied to Egypt and Iran, as far as the former ranks 13th by population and 31st by size of economy, and the latter ranks 17th population-wise and 40th by economy.³⁴⁶

Moreover, each of these four countries is a factor from the point of view of regional politics and, to a relatively significant degree, from the point of view of world politics. If speaking of Ethiopia, this country ranks 10th by population³⁴⁷, which makes it an essential regional factor in the Horn of Africa. As regards the United Arab Emirates, apart from being important because of its crude oil production, it ranks 8th amongst the ten biggest crude oil producers of the world³⁴⁸; this country ranks 28th by size of economy³⁴⁹, which gives us reason to claim that it may be considered as an important factor of regional and even global magnitude. Finally, five of the BRICS member states, namely China, India, Russia, Brazil, and South Africa, are also in the G20. This also confirms their importance from

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*

³⁴² According to media publications Malaysia has placed a request for joining the group and a big number of other countries also want to join. For more information, see “Malaysia wants to join BRICS, China’s Xi an ‘outstanding leader’: Anwar”, Aljazeera, 18 June 2024, Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2024/6/18/malaysias-anwar-flags-brics-membership-praises-xi-as-outstanding-leader> and “Поредна голяма държава поиска да влиза в БРИКС”, Blitz, 29 July 2024, Available at: https://blitz.bg/ikonomika/poredna-golyama-drzhava-poiska-da-vliza-v-briks_news1031488.html.

³⁴³ According to a publication of Reuters Saudi Arabia has not joined the BRICS yet. For the sake of avoiding contradictions, we shall not refer to Saudi Arabia in our further analysis. For more information, see “Saudi Arabia has not yet joined BRICS - Saudi official source”, Reuters, February 1, 2024, Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/saudi-arabia-has-not-yet-joined-brics-saudi-official-source-2024-02-01/>.

³⁴⁴ See *supra* note 338.

³⁴⁵ See *supra* notes 294 and 295.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁷ See *supra* note 294.

³⁴⁸ Melissa Pistilli, “Top 10 Oil-producing Countries (Updated 2024)”, Investing News Network, May 23, 2024, Available at: <https://investingnews.com/daily/resource-investing/energy-investing/oil-and-gas-investing/top-oil-producing-countries/>

³⁴⁹ See *supra* note 295.

the point of view of global politics, speaking clearly of the importance of the grouping itself. The latter is being shared as a view by the BBC publication of 1 February 2024, which says that the BRICS “is compared as regards its power with the G20 group”³⁵⁰. Summing up, we may conclude that all countries using the BRICS minilateral format are of significant importance from the point of view of regional and world politics and the point of view of the population or economy. Such a conclusion confirms our claim from the previous paragraph that the BRICS is an important and influential format that, as Dragana Mitrovic put it, sends a powerful message to the Global North and its institutions.³⁵¹

Next, we shall examine India's importance and relative weight within the BRICS grouping. There are no different categories of association with this minilateral format. India joined it in 2006 and has been a member since the outset of its existence. In the previous section, we have outlined India's importance in population size and economy. India is one of the three *major powers*, together with Russia and China, that are members of the SCO. The same three countries are also members of the BRICS, and therefore, we can claim that India has significant weight and importance within this minilateral format. This conclusion, drawn based on the statistical data related to the size of the economy and population, is confirmed by scholars' views. For example, a paper by Deepali Singh confirms India's role in enhancing the economic growth and development of the BRICS member states.³⁵²

On the other hand, India is believed to prevent China from using the BRICS and its expansion to grow its influence within the developing countries.³⁵³ There are also views that India unsuccessfully resisted the efforts to expand the grouping undertaken during the August 2023 BRICS summit in Johannesburg, South Africa. This is seen as a sign of India's severely limited ability to counterbalance China and Russia in this organisation. However, the same author, Mohamed Zeeshan, acknowledges that given New Delhi's desire for multipolarity on the world stage. Currently, the BRICS and the SCO “sit more comfortably with India's own grand strategy ambitions than the Quad”.³⁵⁴ We consider the latter as clear evidence of the importance of India being involved in the activities of the BRICS and, vice versa, the significance of the BRICS keeping India aboard as a member. The conclusion we could make based on the preceding is that as a *potential major power*, India is an important member of the BRICS and plays an important role within it from a political point of view and in terms of the economic development of its member states.

Having come to this, we shall review India's participation in the BRICS and its outcomes. As in the case of the SCO, we shall look at New Delhi's participation in the summits of the BRICS and at the ideas expressed by India's representatives during the discussions at the plenary sessions of these summits as well as during their bilateral meetings with counterparts from other member states of the grouping on the sidelines thereof. India's presidency of the BRICS will also be dealt with. The first summit of the grouping was held in 2009 and was hosted by Russia. The last summit, the 15th, was held

³⁵⁰ See *supra* note 338.

³⁵¹ Dragana Mitrovic, Editors Word, *Asian Issues*, IAS, Vol.9, No. 1/2023, Vol.9, No. 1/2023, Belgrade

³⁵² Deepali Singh, “The Role of India towards Economic-Growth and Development of BRICS Member Countries”, *Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies*, March 2023, Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/368929615_The_Role_of_India_towards_Economic-Growth_and_Development_of_BRICS_Member_Countries

³⁵³ Armaan Mathur, “Why India Must Shape the New BRICS Moment”, *The Diplomat*, June 2, 2023, Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2023/06/why-india-must-shape-the-new-brics-moment/>

³⁵⁴ Mohamed Zeeshan, “India's Influence in BRICS Is Waning”, *The Diplomat*, August 28, 2023, Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2023/08/indias-influence-in-brics-is-waning/>

in 2023 and hosted by South Africa. Three summit meetings, respectively in 2020, 2021 and 2022, were held in a virtual format and hosted by Russia, India and China. India hosted two more meetings in 2012 and 2016.³⁵⁵ As per the texts of some official documents adopted at the summits, the countries are represented by their leaders³⁵⁶ or Heads of State or Government³⁵⁷. In the case of India, this is the Prime Minister, and therefore, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh attended the summit meetings in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013, hosting the 4th summit in 2012. On his part, Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended all summits from 2013 to 2023, hosting the 8th and 13th summits, respectively, in 2016 and 2021. The conclusion we could make based on the above information would be that India's representation of the Prime Minister at the summits of the BRICS is an expression of New Delhi's strong commitment to the activities of this organisation. It is also a sign of its active participation in the activities of this minilateral format. Following our approach from the preceding section, we shall now study the ideas expressed by India's prime ministers during the discussions that took place during the plenary sessions of the BRICS summits. To begin with, let us focus on the statement of former Prime Minister of India, Dr Manmohan Singh, at the 5th BRICS Summit in 2013. In his remarks, the then Prime Minister speaks of the intensified coordination and consultation within the BRICS across various areas. As a result, the more effective participation of the grouping in addressing the global challenges. Amongst these areas, people-to-people contacts, engagement between the business communities, and common efforts in promoting peace, stability and security are to be mentioned. The role of the New Development Bank is also praised in the remarks. Persisting to the weakness in the global economy, encouraging cooperation between the institutions in areas such as energy, food security, education, healthcare, etc., making the global economy more sustainable and enhancing political and social stability in vulnerable parts of the world, working more cohesively in international forums to advance the agenda of sustained global economy recovery, and addressing terrorism, piracy and the emerging threats from cyber-space, and fostering global peace, stability and security are amongst the objectives for the future. The urgent need to reform the global institutions of political and economic governance, particularly the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), is especially stressed to reflect contemporary realities and make them more effective in dealing with emerging challenges. The importance of the collective efforts for the benefit of Africa is also underlined.³⁵⁸ In another statement of his, this time at the Joint Press Conference at the BRICS Summit in China in 2011, the former Prime Minister of India, Dr Manmohan Singh, again raised important for his country issues, such as the need to reform the institutions of global governance and the need to respect the unity, territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of individual states. He also highlights concrete results achieved by the grouping, such as the adoption of the Sanya Declaration and an action plan on deepening the cooperation in security, finance, business, green economy, etc., as well as the signing of a framework financial cooperation agreement envisaging grant of credits in local currencies.³⁵⁹ In his turn, Prime Minister Narendra Modi also raised important issues for India and

³⁵⁵ "BRICS Summits", University of Toronto, BRICS Information Centre, Available at: <http://www.brics.utoronto.ca/summits/index.html>

³⁵⁶ "8th BRICS Summit: Goa Declaration", University of Toronto, BRICS Information Centre, October 16, 2016, Available at: <http://www.brics.utoronto.ca/docs/161016-goa.html>

³⁵⁷ "BRICS in Africa: Collaboration for Inclusive Growth and Shared Prosperity in the 4th Industrial Revolution, 10th BRICS Summit Johannesburg Declaration", University of Toronto, BRICS Information Centre, July 26, 2018, Available at: <http://www.brics.utoronto.ca/docs/180726-johannesburg.html>

³⁵⁸ "PM's statement at the Plenary Session of the 5th BRICS Summit", Former Prime Minister of India – Dr. Manmohan Singh, Government of India, Speeches, March 27, 2013, Available at: <https://archivepmo.nic.in/drmanmohansingh/speech-details.php?nodeid=1296>

³⁵⁹ "PM's statement at Joint Press Conference at the BRICS Summit", Former Prime Minister of India – Dr. Manmohan Singh, Government of India, Speeches, April 14, 2011, Available at: <https://archivepmo.nic.in/drmanmohansingh/speech-details.php?nodeid=1013>

presented and defended his country's positions and interests. Examples could be given based on his statements at the BRICS summits in 2022 and 2023, where he called for the reform of the UNSC, the multilateral financial institutions, and WTO and put up for consideration a lot of ideas, such as establishing a BRICS Space Exploration Consortium and a repository of traditional medicine amongst the countries of the grouping and promoting mobility amongst them. Apart from promoting the International Day of Yoga, the Prime Minister offered the BRICS partners access to Indian digital public infrastructure. What is also important is that he highlighted the achievements and the results of the cooperation between the members of the grouping, mentioning the institutional reforms in BRICS to increase its effectiveness³⁶⁰, the increase of the membership of the BRICS' New Development Bank, the establishment of a vaccine R&D centre and a shared satellite constellation, the conduct of BRICS Youth Summits and BRICS Sports, the mutual recognition of pharma products, the coordination among customs departments, and the increase in exchanges between the civil society organisations and think-tanks. Prime Minister Modi also called upon the grouping members to support the AU's permanent membership of the G20.³⁶¹ In conclusion, India is strongly committed to the activities of the BRICS and participates actively in them. The strong commitment and active participation are confirmed by the participation of India's Prime Ministers in the BRICS summits and by the many ideas they expressed in their statements during the plenary discussions. In their interventions at the BRICS summits, India's Prime Ministers expressed many ideas and raised important issues for India. More precisely, they presented and defended their country's positions on such issues as promoting peace, stability and security, addressing terrorism and respecting unity, territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of individual states, and reforming the UNSC and the IMF, thus defending their country's interests. They highlighted the results achieved in the course of the cooperation within the BRICS, such as the adoption of declarations and action plans, the signing of agreements, the implementation of institutional reforms and expansion of common institutions, the establishment of common facilities, the conduct of joint events, and the increase in coordination and exchanges. They also promoted India's civilisation and achievements.

As in the case of the SCO, India's Prime Ministers expressed many ideas during their bilateral meetings with counterparts from other members of the grouping held on the sidelines of the BRICS summit meetings. These ideas also confirm India's active participation in the activities of the BRICS, on the one hand, and bring concrete results, including presenting and defending India's positions and interests, on the other. For example, on the sidelines of the summit in 2023, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a bilateral meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping, and the two leaders agreed to task their subordinate officials to work hard to reach disengagement and de-escalation expeditiously.³⁶² Speaking of adopting official documents within the BRICS, we must stress two points again. The first is that these documents should also be seen as results achieved, and the second is that in the texts of these documents, India succeeded in including paragraphs expressing India's positions and defending India's interests. For example, the text of the 10th BRICS Summit Johannesburg Declaration affirms the commitment to mutual respect and sovereign equality and recommits to a world of peace and stability. It also deplores the continued terrorist attacks, including in some BRICS countries, and

³⁶⁰ Same idea was expressed by Former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Sing. See supra note 357.

³⁶¹ "English Translation of the Opening Remarks by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi at XIV BRICS Summit 2022", Press Information Bureau, Government of India, Prime Minister's Office, 23 June 2022, Available at: <https://pib.gov.in/pressreleaseshare.aspx?prid=1836583> and "Prime Minister's participation in the 15th BRICS Summit", Prime Minister's Office, 23 August 2023, Available at: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1951543>

³⁶² "BRICS Summit 2023 Highlights: BRICS invites Saudi Arabia, 5 other nation to join bloc, PM Modi congratulates new members", Mint, 24 August 2023, Available at: <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/brics-summit-15th-live-in-south-africa-pm-narendra-modi-vladimir-putin-xi-jinping-to-attend-the-summit-11692839413231.html>

condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, wherever committed and by whomsoever.³⁶³ Such positions are, of no doubt, identical to India's positions on these particular issues, and, respectively, they support New Delhi's national interests.

As mentioned, India hosted the BRICS summits in 2012, 2016, and 2021. As clarified by an official publication of India's Prime Minister's Office, the summit meetings are hosted and chaired by a member of the grouping as part of this member's chairing, i.e., the organisation's presidency.³⁶⁴ As already stated, performing the presidency and chairing the summit meetings provides a lot of visibility to the chairing and is conducive to its active participation in the organisation's activities. Moreover, this active participation produces many concrete results, i.e., events, documents, initiatives, etc., the most important of which is presenting and defending this country's positions on regional and global issues. A random choice example confirming our statement is the Delhi Declaration and the Delhi Action Plan of 29 March 2012, adopted at the 4th BRICS Summit.³⁶⁵ Both documents reflect India's official views on several regional and global issues.

Finally, we come to the fifth point of analysis within this section, i.e. how India's participation in the activities of BRICS and the results of this participation increase this country's regional and global role and weight following its ambitions and objectives. We shall carry out this analysis following our theoretical framework. The first criterion regarding India's involvement in the BRICS we will measure is the number of activities and initiatives India has participated in in its capacity as a member of the grouping. We have stated above that India joined this organisation in 2006 and, ever since 2009, has participated in all of its summits. We have also given examples of India participating in many initiatives, including establishing the New Development Bank and several common facilities. By itself, it would mean that India's involvement in the activities is getting stronger and stronger with the years going by. The second criterion we have to focus on is the results of India's participation in the activities of the BRICS. We have presented many examples of concrete results achieved by the grouping, including official documents and agreements, reformed existing and newly established institutions, increased coordination and exchanges, etc. Overall, the grouping has become more competitive and powerful in a global context. We have presented several examples of concrete results achieved by India in the framework of its involvement in the BRICS, including presenting and defending India's position on topical regional and global issues, the latter serving the defence of India's national interests. We could conclude that India's involvement in the BRICS region is also becoming more effective.

On the other hand, India achieving such results would mean, in turn, that India has acquired greater leverage within the organisation, regionally and globally, in terms of decision-making regarding topical regional and global issues. The latter would mean India has acquired a more significant role and weight worldwide per its strategic priorities and objectives. To sum it up, ever since the establishment of the BRICS, India's involvement in the activities of this organisation has been getting stronger and more effective, thus delivering on the ambitions of New Delhi related to establishing itself as a significant *power*. Referring to the second part of our third specific hypothesis, we could conclude, based on the previous two sentences, that India's engagement in the BRICS region provides additional

³⁶³ "BRICS in Africa: Collaboration for Inclusive Growth and Shared Prosperity in the 4th Industrial Revolution, 10th BRICS Summit Johannesburg Declaration", University of Toronto, BRICS Information Centre, July 26, 2018, Available at: <http://www.brics.utoronto.ca/docs/180726-johannesburg.html>

³⁶⁴ "13th BRICS Summit", Prime Minister's Office, 7 September 2021, Available at: https://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/news_updates/13th-brics-summit/

³⁶⁵ "Fourth BRICS Summit - Delhi Declaration", Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 29 March 2012, Available at: <https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/19158/Fourth+BRICS+Summit++Delhi+Declaration>

political, economic, and security leverage in pursuing its strategic goals. We can, therefore, claim that the second part of our third specific hypothesis was also proved right in the case of India's participation in the BRICS.

To summarise the above reflections, the BRICS has been recognised as a powerful and important grouping that has recently attracted new potential members. All current member states of this format, including India, are important regionally or globally regarding world politics and the sizes of economies and populations. Having an important political and economic role within the organisation, India demonstrates a strong commitment to it and actively participates in its activities. The latter is being confirmed by the participation of India's leaders in the grouping summits and by the ideas they have put up for discussion in their interventions at the plenary sessions and during their bilateral meetings with counterparts from other member states. The major results produced by these ideas are related to presenting and defending India's positions and defending India's interests. The adopted official documents of the BRICS and New Delhi performing the presidency functions and hosting annual summits of the format serve the same role. With the years going on, India's involvement in the BRICS is getting stronger and more effective, thus increasing the role and weight of India in the region and worldwide and delivering on its ambitions and strategic objectives, by which we prove right the second part of our third specific hypothesis.

Before concluding this section with the above, it is expedient to note one more important issue. Earlier, we referred to an expert consideration containing a hint regarding India giving up to China regarding influence and weight within the BRICS.³⁶⁶ In this context, we expressed our opinion that though such views exist, India is still a meaningful member of the grouping. At the same time, we also think that India's leadership should not underestimate China's ambitions related to increasing its power and influence, most visibly in Africa, and establishing itself as a leader of the global south³⁶⁷. Regarding China's growing power and weight, it should be noted that they are not limited to Africa and the global south. In confirmation of such a claim, Prof. Dragana Mitrović speaks of "new and dynamic bilateral relationships between the states in Central, Eastern, South-Eastern and Southern Europe" and China and of China's "strengthened presence in the Balkan states" in the context of the "Sixteen plus One" platform and the Belt and Road Initiative of Beijing.³⁶⁸ This development should be taken into account and followed with due attention by the central government in New Delhi, given their strategic objectives and the desire to be considered a *major power*.

Moreover, as presented above, China's ambitions are in conflict with India's aspirations and the interests of the EU. In another work, Prof. Mitrović says, "Chinese initiatives '16 + 1' and the Belt and Road Initiative, strategic in nature, boldly stepped into EU soil challenging Brussels economically, politically and geopolitically".³⁶⁹ This further necessitates New Delhi addressing Beijing's moves duly and seriously. To cut it short, in its quest for regional and global leadership, India is facing severe competition on the part of neighbouring China.

4.3. India at the EAS

³⁶⁶ See *supra* note 354.

³⁶⁷ See *supra* notes 338 and 344.

³⁶⁸ Dragana Mitrović, "The dynamics of the Republic of Serbia's cooperation with China via the Belt and Road Initiative and the "Sixteen plus One" platform", *Journal of Contemporary East Asia Studies*, Volume 12, 2023, 2 August 2023, Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/24761028.2023.2240999#abstract>

³⁶⁹ Dragana Mitrović, "EU–China—Failed Prospects of Win–Win Partnership", SpringerLink, 1 January 2022, Available at: https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-86122-3_9

Having studied India's involvement in the activities of two minilateral formats, i.e., the SCO and the BRICS, we shall now review New Delhi's performance within another significant grouping, i.e., the East Asia Summit (EAS). In the literature review part, we have referred to the publication "India at the East Asia Summit" on the website of the Ministry of External Affairs of India, noting that India's participation in this format responds to its interests and ambitions, thus explaining the rationale behind its engagement in it.³⁷⁰ We shall continue studying this theme by applying the same model and theoretical framework as in the preceding two sections, devoted to the SCO and the BRICS.

Our first point of interest will be the importance of the EAS as a format. In contrast to the SCO, which we saw as a full-fledged international organisation, and the BRICS, which started its existence as an informal grouping to transform into an intergovernmental organisation³⁷¹, the EAS is seen as a process referring to the meetings of the Heads of States and Governments of the participating countries which are being held on an annual basis. It dates back to 2005 when sixteen countries, namely the ASEAN member states, Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, and the Republic of Korea, took part in the first summit meeting, with the USA and Russia joining them in 2011. The process is also defined as a forum for dialogue and cooperation on strategic, political, and economic issues of common interest and concern, which we see as topical and essential, as its objective is to promote peace, stability, and economic prosperity in East Asia.³⁷² The EAS Chair is the incumbent ASEAN Chair, and its rotation follows the ASEAN Chairmanship's rotation.³⁷³ In addition to the summit meetings, the countries participating in the format meet at the minister's level. This mechanism involves six sectorial ministries: foreign affairs, environment, energy, education, finance and economy. Four of them, those in foreign affairs, environment, education, and economy, also hold meetings at the senior officials level. The energy ministries have established a task force on energy cooperation, and the ministries of foreign affairs have meetings at the level of their ambassadors in Jakarta.³⁷⁴ To conclude, the EAS Unit at the ASEAN Secretariat has existed in Jakarta since 2016 to support the EAS meetings, improve coordination and facilitate cross-sector cooperation within the EAS.³⁷⁵ Reviewing the above information helps us conclude that the EAS is an important regional format with ASEAN at its centrality, displaying the features of a full-fledged international organisation.

We will shift our focus to the countries participating in the EAS next. Starting with the ASEAN member states, we must note that these ten countries have a population of over 700 million and a total area of 4.5 million square km. With their combined GDP of USD 3.62 trillion as of 2022, ASEAN is considered one of the world's fastest-growing trade blocs, accounting for 8 per cent of global exports in 2023.³⁷⁶ These statistical data speak eloquently of the importance of this international organisation. Moving on to the other eight EAS countries, four are the *major powers*: China, India, Russia and the USA. If speaking of the remaining four countries, they all have substantial economic factors, with Japan, Australia, South Korea, and New Zealand ranking 3rd, 12th, 13th and 50th worldwide from the point of view of the size of the economy.³⁷⁷ These considerations indicate the significance of all eight countries of the EAS that are not members of ASEAN. The conclusion would, therefore, be that all

³⁷⁰ See *supra* note 64.

³⁷¹ See *supra* note 335.

³⁷² "About the East Asia Summit, Introduction, Objectives and Principles, Annual Summits", East Asia Summit, Available at: <https://eastiasummit.asean.org/about-east-asia-summit>

³⁷³ "EAS Participating Countries, Chair of the East Asia Summit", East Asia Summit, Available at: <https://eastiasummit.asean.org/eas-participating-country>

³⁷⁴ "EAS Mechanisms, Mechanisms Under the East Asia Summit", East Asia Summit, Available at: <https://eastiasummit.asean.org/eas-mechanism>

³⁷⁵ "About the EAS Unit", East Asia Summit, Available at: <https://eastiasummit.asean.org/eas-unit>

³⁷⁶ "ASEAN", Britannica, Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/ASEAN>

³⁷⁷ See *supra* note 295.

eighteen countries participating in the EAS minilateral format individually or as members of ASEAN have their undisputable importance regionally and globally.

Regarding the importance of India in international relations at the current stage, several points need to be mentioned as a member of this format. In the preceding paragraph, we noted that India is one of the significant *powers* participating in the EAS process. In the section related to the SCO above, we have pointed out India's power and weight from the point of view of the size of its population and economy. In the section related to the BRICS afterwards, we reiterated this argument. We outlined the significance of India from a political point of view, which is seen as a counterbalance to China and Russia. In the case of the EAS, we have the involvement in the processes of one more *major power*, the USA, in addition to the latter two. This additionally increases the role of India in the format, as the differing views and positions amongst the participating countries are further increasing within it compared to the BRICS group. The conclusion we could make based on the preceding remarks is that India is an important factor within the EAS format from the point of view of international politics and of the size of the economy and population.

The next point of interest will logically be India's participation in the EAS process and its outcomes. We shall conduct our analysis based on random choice examples. As per a publication on the website of the Ministry of External Affairs of India, this country's Prime Minister delivered a speech at the East Asia Summit on 4 November 2019.³⁷⁸ Another publication on the same website says that India's Prime Minister participated in the 18th East Asia Summit on 7 September 2023 in Jakarta.³⁷⁹ These two publications, which refer to India being represented at the level of Prime Minister at the two summit meetings, confirm India's strong commitment to the EAS process and its active participation in the activities of this format. The active participation is also confirmed by the Prime Minister's ideas expressed in his statements at the plenary sessions of the summits. The review of the information from the above-quoted sources shows that Prime Minister Modi has raised important issues, presenting India's views and positions on them, thus defending India's interests. At the summit in 2019, apart from referring to topics such as terrorism, climate change, and pollution, he shared India's vision of the Indo-Pacific, underlining the central role of ASEAN. He also suggested an Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative aimed at, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 14, creating a safe, secure and stable maritime domain.

Furthermore, he encouraged interested countries to engage in India's Initiative on maritime security and disaster risk reduction issues, starting in February 2020 with India, Australia, and Indonesia hosting the Fourth EAS Maritime Security Workshop. Another proposal he made was for India to organise an EAS Seminar on the Conservation of Migratory Wildlife species.³⁸⁰ At the summit in 2023, Prime Minister Modi reiterated India's vision on the Indo-Pacific, with ASEAN playing a central role in it and underlined the synergies of visions for this region between India and ASEAN. He also called for a joint effort to address global challenges such as terrorism, climate change and resilient supply chains and presented India's efforts in climate change.³⁸¹ As a next step, during his trips to the capitals of the ASEAN member states to attend the East Asia Summits, India's Prime Minister used to

³⁷⁸ "Prime Minister's Speech at the East Asia Summit, 04 November 2019", Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, Media Center, November 4, 2019, Available at: https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/32171/Prime_Ministers_Speech_at_the_East_Asia_Summit_04_November_2019

³⁷⁹ "Prime Minister's participation in the 20th ASEAN-India Summit and the 18th East Asia Summit", Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, Media Center, September 7, 2023, Available at: https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/37070/Prime_Ministers_participation_in_the_20th_ASEANIndia_Summit_and_the_18th_East_Asia_Summit

³⁸⁰ See *supra* note 378.

³⁸¹ See *supra* note 379.

have bilateral meetings with his counterparts whenever his tight schedule would allow for that. For example, Prime Minister Modi held such bilateral meetings during his visit to Singapore from 14 to 15 November 2018 to attend the 13th East Asia Summit.³⁸² These meetings presented additional opportunities for him to raise important topical issues and to express ideas on them.³⁸³ This confirms India's active participation in the activities of the EAS and the expressed views and ideas brought to concrete results, including voicing India's positions and defending India's interests.

Last but not least, following the discussions at the East Asia Summits, a considerable number of official documents were adopted, such as “the 2005 Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the East Asia Summit, the 2010 Hanoi Declaration on the Commemoration of the Fifth Anniversary of the East Asia Summit, the 2011 Declaration of the 6th East Asia Summit on the Principles for Mutually Beneficial Relations, the 2015 Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the 10th Anniversary of the East Asia Summit, and the 2020 Hanoi Declaration on the 15th Anniversary of the East Asia Summit”,³⁸⁴ as well as many others. These documents should be seen as results achieved, including for India, as far as they include paragraphs reflecting India's positions on topical international issues and, under this, they defend these positions and the interests of India. As an example, the Chairman's summary of the 16th East Asia Summit in 2021 contains a paragraph on countering violent extremism, radicalisation and terrorism, the text of which coincides with India's views and position on this issue.³⁸⁵ To sum up, India is strongly committed to the East Asia Summit process activities and actively participates in them. This country's active involvement is confirmed by the participation of its Prime Minister in the summit meetings and by the ideas expressed by him in his statements during the discussions at the plenary sessions and in the talks during the bilateral meetings with his counterparts on the margins of the summits. These ideas are conducive to several results, including adopting official documents and launching new initiatives and activities. The most important one is presenting India's views and positions and defending India's interests.

We finally come to the ultimate point of analysis, i.e. studying how India's participation in the EAS and its results help increase India's role and weight regionally and globally following New Delhi's ambitions, priorities and objectives. The information on India's participation in the EAS process we have reviewed above shows that India has joined this format since its existence. Participating in a large number of meetings, including all summit meetings and various and numberless meetings at the minister level, reveals, as per our theoretical framework, the strong involvement of India in this minilateral format. While elaborating on India's participation in the EAS process, we have underlined the large number of results achieved, amongst them events, initiatives, documents, etc. We have also highlighted the fact that India has been regularly presenting its views and positions on important interest issues, such as India's concept of the Indo-Pacific, the central role of ASEAN in the region, India's Indo-Pacific Oceans' Initiative, terrorism, maritime security, climate change, pollution, etc. We saw the latter as another significant concrete result. According to our theoretical framework, the many results achieved confirm that India's strong involvement in the EAS process is also effective.

³⁸² For More information see: “Visit of Prime Minister to Singapore (November 14-15, 2018)”, Ministry of External Affairs, November 12, 2018, Available at: <https://www.mea.gov.in/outgoing-visit-detail.htm?30586/Visit+of+Prime+Minister+to+Singapore+November+1415+2018> and “PM Modi participates in ASEAN-India Breakfast Summit in Singapore”, The Times of India, November 15, 2018, Available at: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/pm-modi-participates-in-asean-india-breakfast-summit-in-singapore/articleshow/66629399.cms>

³⁸³ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁴ See *supra* note 372.

³⁸⁵ CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT OF THE 16TH EAST ASIA SUMMIT, 27 October 2021, Available at: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/96.-FINAL-Chairmans-Statement-of-the-16th-East-Asia-Summit-on-27-October-2021.pdf>

In turn, India's solid and effective participation in the EAS process defends its interests. It increases its role and weight in the region and across the globe, thus serving the cause of this country's regional and global ambitions as a *major power*. Another strong argument favouring India's increased role and weight is that the EAS summits are usually combined with ASEAN–India summits.³⁸⁶ By this claim, we prove the second part of our third specific hypothesis right, according to which India's engagement in the EAS minilateral format provides additional political, economic, and security leverage in its quest for strategic goals.

In conclusion, the EAS process is an important minilateral regional format comprising altogether eighteen countries, all of them, including India, having their importance of regional or global scale from the point of view of international politics and/or of sizes of economy and population. Being firmly committed to the activities of the EAS, India is an active participant in them. The latter is confirmed by the ideas expressed by India's Prime Minister during the deliberations at the summit meetings and the bilateral meetings with his counterparts from other participating countries. Many are the results achieved as a consequence of the latter, the most valuable amongst them being presenting the views and positions of India and defending its interests. India's strong and effective involvement in the EAS increases its role and weight regionally and globally, serving its ambitions and strategic objectives. This assertion confirms the rightfulness of the second part of our third specific hypothesis in the case of India's involvement in the activities of the East Asia Summit.

4.4. Key takeaways

This chapter focused on the supplementary theme of India's participation in minilateral formats. We studied India's involvement in the activities of three such formats: the SCO, the BRICS, and the EAS. To do so, we focused on five points of interest as follows: the importance of the minilateral format, the relative importance of the participating countries, the relative importance of India as a participating country, India's involvement in the activities of the format and the results achieved, and consequences of the participation of India in the format for the achievement of its strategic goals. The analysis was based on the theoretical framework suggested in the introductory chapter. The objective was to prove the rightfulness of our third specific hypothesis, which stipulates that though competing to some extent with India's own regional initiatives, this country's engagement in minilateral formats such as the SCO, the BRICS, and the EAS provides additional political, economic, and security leverage in its quest for strategic goals. We therefore tried to understand how India's participation in the three formats presents further opportunities to achieve its strategic objectives.

Before going through each of the above-mentioned minilateral formats, we checked the first part of the hypothesis, i.e., whether India's participation in these formats competes with this country's own regional initiatives. Our approach was to analyse the availability of the three types of resources, financial, human, and time, needed for India's participation in a concrete format or initiative. Having done so, we concluded that India's involvement in some minilateral formats competes with India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region through participation in various initiatives therein. By this conclusion, we proved the rightness of the first part of our third specific hypothesis.

We then took up proving the second part of our third specific hypothesis by applying our theoretical framework, according to which the increase in the number of activities and initiatives within a format India has participated in would mean a more substantial involvement of this country in the

³⁸⁶ See *supra* note 379.

format and the achievement of concrete results would mean more effective and responsive to New Delhi's regional and global aspirations involvement in the format. This approach was consecutively applied to the three minilateral formats mentioned above: the SCO, the BRICS and the EAS.

Starting with the SCO, we concluded that this is an important organisation in the system of international relations, with many of the countries associated with it, including India, having an important status worldwide from a political, economic size or population size points of view. We also concluded that India shows a solid commitment to the activities of the SCO and participates actively in them. As a consequence of this, a lot of concrete results were achieved, the main amongst them being India presenting and defending its positions on a considerable number of issues, getting greater leverage in terms of decision-making, defending its national interests, increasing its role and weight regionally and globally and increasing its potential to achieve its strategic objectives following its ambitions. On that basis, we concluded that the second part of our third specific hypothesis was proved right in the case of India's participation in the SCO.

Going next to the BRICS, we came to the same conclusions. We proved the importance of the grouping, the importance of its member states, the important role of India within it and its strong commitment to and active participation in the activities of this format. We also proved that the main results of India's involvement in these activities are presenting and defending India's positions and defending India's interests and that this involvement is becoming more robust and more effective, which further increases the role and weight of India in the region and worldwide, thus delivering on New Delhi's ambitions and strategic objectives. Based on that, we concluded that the second part of our third specific hypothesis also proved right regarding India's participation in the BRICS.

Coming finally to the EAS, we again proved the importance of the format, the respective importance of the countries participating in it, including India, and the latter's strong commitment to and active participation in the activities of the format. We then outlined the results of this participation and identified presenting the views and positions of India and defending its interests as the main ones. We concluded that India's strong and effective involvement in the EAS increases this country's role and weight regionally and globally and serves its ambitions and strategic objectives by what we proved the rightfulness of the second part of our third specific hypothesis also in the case of India's participation in the EAS.

In conclusion, having proved the first part of the third specific hypothesis in the introductory part of this chapter, we then proved its second part in the case of all three minilateral formats, thus proving right the third specific hypothesis in its entirety.

Another conclusion that deserves attention is that India faces severe competition from its neighbour China in its quest for regional and global leadership.

Chapter 5: Influence of India – Pakistan rivalry on India’s regional and global ambitions

Having studied the India – Pakistan rivalry, India’s involvement in the Indo-Pacific region, the implications of the war in Ukraine on India’s objectives and interests, and India’s participation in some minilateral formats, we come now to the central theme of our research, i.e., the way the rivalry influences India’s regional and global ambitions. To do our research duly, we shall first analyse the consequences of militarisation, arms race, and military confrontation for the economy of India and the impact of the Pakistan-based military groups’ activities on India’s economic, political and security situation, what will be followed by the influence of the former and the latter on India’s ambitions. In the thesis part related to the formulation of the problem, we have already expressed our opinion that India’s ability to achieve its aspirations suffers from the negative impact of these two factors. The objective now will be to confirm it. In other words, we shall try to prove right our general hypothesis that the rivalry between India and Pakistan significantly complicates India’s efforts to pursue its ambitions to establish itself as a major political, economic and military power regionally and globally. Having focused in the second chapter on rivalry as a first variable, we shall now concentrate on its influence on India’s involvement in the Indo-Pacific region as a second variable. To achieve this objective, we shall use the sources referred to in the section related to the review of the existing literature and other sources, if needed. The analysis of the texts will be conducted in line with the theoretical and methodological framework suggested in the introductory chapter.

5.1. Militarisation, arms race and military confrontation and their implications for India’s economy

In this section, we shall study the impact of militarisation, arms race, and military confrontation on India's economy. In the introductory chapter, we stated that the rivalry between India and Pakistan causes a lot of negative consequences for each of the two countries. One of these consequences is that the rivalry often leads to confrontation, which on its part encourages their militarisation and the arms race between them due to what their economies suffer. The suffering is caused by the fact that the resources available are used for preparing for the next confrontation rather than being allocated to the development of the economy. We have also stated that as a result of the economic policies of the central government nowadays, India is one of the fastest-growing economies of the world, but also that the adversely affected by the rivalry Indian economy is at the basis of New Delhi’s diminished ability to achieve its regional and global ambitions. In the parts related to the formulation of the research problem and the literature review, we have referred to the sources focusing on this supplementary to the central theme of our research.

Moreover, in the summary of the literature review, apart from underlining the fact that India has joined the group of the fastest-growing economies of the world, we have also brought attention to the fact that the rivalry between India and Pakistan affects their development and that in the more prolonged run military expenditure of India, being in a mutually causal relationship with Pakistan’s military spending, hinders the economic growth of India. Stepping on that, we have to prove in this section, under our theoretical and methodological framework, that the militarisation of India does not prevent the possibility of new confrontations between India and Pakistan and only causes a slowdown of the Indian economy and the respective militarisation of Pakistan. To do so, we shall present information on militarisation, confrontation, and security challenges that confirm that claim. When speaking of the latter three and measuring them, we shall stick to the definitions provided in the parts of the introductory chapter related to the theoretical and operative determination, including the factors of the research subject and the clarifications further provided for in the methodological framework.

To begin with, the militarisation of India will be measured by the acquisition of weapons, data related to types and numbers of acquired weapons, and figures related to military budgets, such as volume of budget and changes of volume. We shall first take up weapons acquisition, and military budgets will be dealt with later. Information on India's acquisition of weapons is abundantly available. In December 2022, India's Defence Acquisition Council approved the purchase of major weapons and platforms worth over USD 10 billion.³⁸⁷ In March 2023, the Defence Acquisition Council approved another amount worth \$8.5 billion to purchase weapons such as missiles, helicopters, artillery guns, and electronic warfare systems. The explanation for such a move was that surrounded by nuclear-armed neighbours China and Pakistan, India was seeking to modernise its military equipment.³⁸⁸ Information regarding Pakistan acquiring new weapons is also available. The reasons behind such moves are explained by experts by Pakistan's willingness to demonstrate its credibility and resolve to deter crises and instabilities in the region of South Asia and also by the fact that they are in line with similar programs in India and other countries from the Ind-Pacific region.³⁸⁹ The conclusion which could be derived from the above information is that both India and Pakistan acquire new weapons. In the case of both of them, the acquisition of these new weapons is provoked by the moves of the other country. In the context of our objective as stated in the preceding paragraph, our understanding is that the militarisation of one of the two neighbouring countries causes the respective militarisation of the other one and vice versa.

As a next step, we shall check whether the acquisition of weapons by each of the two countries brings changes in their military power and, respectively, in their individual military rankings and the gap between them. As per the "2024 Military Strength Ranking" of Global Firepower, India ranks fourth worldwide, retaining its position from the previous year. Pakistan ranks ninth, obtaining a lower position than the previous year.³⁹⁰ As regards 2023, according to a publication, Pakistan was ranked seventh, obtaining a higher position than the country in 2022, when it was ranked ninth.³⁹¹ The analysis of the information from these two sources reveals that India retains its fourth position in 2023 and 2024. In three consecutive years, namely 2022, 2023, and 2024, Pakistan moved up from ninth position in 2022 to seventh position in 2023 and then again drove down from seventh position to ninth position in 2024. What is important to say about Pakistan is that throughout these three years, the country remained in the top ten countries worldwide due to its military strength. The changes in the position throughout these three years should not be seen as conducive to significant changes in Pakistan's military strength concerning India's military strength in the context of their rivalry. Indirect confirmation of the latter is that another country, the United Kingdom, ranked sixth in 2024, thus also

³⁸⁷ Vivek Raghuvanshi, "Indian weapons buyer approves \$10B fund to equip military", Defence News, December 23, 2022, Available at: <https://www.defensenews.com/global/asia-pacific/2022/12/23/indian-weapons-buyer-approves-10-billion-fund-to-equip-military/>

³⁸⁸ "India approves purchase of military equipment worth \$8.5 bln", Reuters, March 16, 2023, Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/india/india-approves-purchase-military-equipment-worth-85-bln-2023-03-16/#:~:text=India%20on%20Thursday%20approved%20purchases%20of%20missiles%2C%20helicopters%2C,sought%20to%20add%20more%20teeth%20to%20its%20military>

³⁸⁹ Usman Ansari, "Pakistan unveils aircraft and rocket programs, parades military tech", Defence News, March 27, 2024, Available at: <https://www.defensenews.com/global/asia-pacific/2024/03/27/pakistan-unveils-aircraft-and-rocket-programs-parades-military-tech/>

³⁹⁰ "2024 Military Strength Ranking", Global Firepower, Available at: <https://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing.php>

³⁹¹ Muhammad Estiak Hussain, "Global Firepower 2023 Military Strength Ranking: A Global Comparison", The Geopolitics, February 7, 2023, Available at: <https://thegeopolitics.com/global-firepower-2023-military-strength-ranking-a-global-comparison/#:~:text=In%20GFP%202023%2C%20the%20United%20States%20is%20ranked,which%20were%200.0791%20and%200.084%20last%20year%20respectively.>

moving one position down in comparison with the preceding 2023 before climbing up from eighth in 2022 to fifth in 2023. At the same time, in 2024, three countries, namely South Korea, Japan, and Turkiye, climbed up by one position compared to 2023.³⁹² To say that differently, moving up or down one or two positions over several consecutive years is to be explained not only by the country under consideration itself increasing or decreasing its military strength but also by other countries increasing or decreasing their military strength during the same period. The conclusion here would be that the acquisition of weapons by each of India and Pakistan, i.e., the militarisation of each of them, has not brought significant changes in the military power and the military ranking of each of them and the gap between their respective military rankings.

We shall now proceed further with focusing on the military confrontation between India and Pakistan and the challenges to India's security. We shall try to measure the level, including the existence or disappearance, of challenges to India's security by using data on the number of full-fledged armed conflicts, border skirmishes, cross-border violations, and cross-border terrorist attacks. In the segment related to the theoretical determination of the research subject, we have outlined the Kashmir dispute, water conflicts, cross-border terrorism, and nuclear weapons as significant security challenges to India's security currently. In the literature review part of the introductory chapter, we have highlighted, amongst other key takeaways, the need for a peaceful settlement of the longstanding disputes between India and Pakistan to avoid the possibility of a war which will affect both countries and the whole of South Asia. Also there, we have pointed to the fact that India and Pakistan came close to a nuclear war in February 2019 and that this war was avoided thanks to the US's effective mediation efforts. In a related context, another takeaway was that there is a need to minimise the potential of a nuclear war between India and Pakistan and, respectively, to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons in South Asia. All this bluntly speaks to the challenges India's security faces. In the second chapter, devoted to the origins, evolution and present state of the rivalry between the two neighbours, we have mentioned several events, such as the 2001 attack on the Parliament House in New Delhi, the 2008 Mumbai attacks, the 2016 Uri attack, the 2019 Pulwama attack, the cross-border firings along the Line of Control (LoC) in 2020 and on 24 June 2023, etc. All these events also prove the existence of challenges to India's security. According to another, more recent publication, India and Pakistan exchanged gunfire and shelling along their frontier in Kashmir in November 2023.³⁹³ This information confirms that border skirmishes and cross-border violations between the two countries continue to take place even nowadays, and it also suggests that they may take place in the future as well.

On the other hand, there are also views that a conflict with grave consequences may arise in 2024 in South Asia, where the growing tensions along the border between India and China and the still unresolved Kashmir issue are seen as possible reasons behind such an eventual development. As an argument in support of the second option, i.e. the Kashmir issue is highlighted by the fact that India has deployed over a hundred thousand soldiers in the disputed area.³⁹⁴ Such views also attest to the existence of challenges to India's security. Based on the above mentioned, the logical conclusion to make is that against the background of the continued militarization of India and Pakistan and the ongoing military confrontation between them, the challenges to India's security keep existing nowadays.

We will continue with the issue of India's and Pakistan's military budgets. According to a publication of the Press Information Bureau of the Government of India on 23 July 2024, the Ministry

³⁹² See *supra* notes 390 and 391.

³⁹³ "Indian and Pakistani soldiers trade fire in disputed Kashmir, killing 1 Indian soldier", Associated Press, November 10, 2023, Available at: <https://apnews.com/article/kashmir-india-pakistan-border-firing-d2a0841b9ddd32044478834aade8ee08>

³⁹⁴ Иван Бутовски, „Войните на 2024 г.“, 168 часа, 01.01.2024, Available at: <https://www.168chasa.bg/article/16706844>

of Defence of India was allocated Rs 6.22 lakh crore, i.e., USD 75 billion, for the 2024 – 2025 fiscal year. This represents the highest budget amongst all ministries of India as part of the country's national budget for this financial year.³⁹⁵ Two are the important things to note here. First, this budget is 4.79% higher than the budget for the preceding 2023 – 2024 financial year, and second, the amount of Rs 1.72 lakh crore, or around 28% of the whole military budget, is allocated for capital acquisition, and there is no item of the budget with bigger allocation.³⁹⁶ Therefore, we would conclude that India's military budget is increasing, and the biggest share of it is meant for acquisition. On the other hand, a publication of 13 June 2024 in the Pakistan Military Monitor reveals that the Pakistani government has proposed allocating Rs2.12 trillion for the military budget in the 2024 – 2025 financial year. This amount reflects a 17.6% increase in comparison to the previous 2023 – 2024 fiscal year's budget. The increase is also defined as a significant boost in defence spending and as the second year in a row of increased funding for the armed forces after a 15% increase in the preceding financial year, but also as the second largest increase in six years and as almost the same increase as the 18% increase in the 2017 – 2018 financial year. The publication further says that an increase of 11% in the military budget was traditionally observed annually over the past decade. Finally, it is believed that the increased budget will be used for major military acquisition and funding of nuclear weapons and missile programs, thus outlining Pakistan's priorities in the context of regional geopolitical tensions.³⁹⁷ The conclusion we could make here is that the defence budget of Pakistan is increasing and is to be used for the acquisition of weapons, including missiles and nuclear weapons. In a related context, the increase in the budget is explained by the tense from a political point of view situation in the region with India being part of this region.

Looking now at our conclusions in this paragraph so far through the prism of our theoretical framework, we could state that the increasing military budget of India reveals the acquisition of new and more weapons, and the result thereof is that India increases its military power and maintains its fourth position worldwide in the hierarchy of the military rankings. If speaking of Pakistan, the military budget of this country is also increasing, implying, in turn, the acquisition of more and new weapons with a view of this country being able to counter its neighbour India in the case of a confrontation and, respectively, Pakistan increasing its military power and maintaining its position in the top ten of the world's most powerful from a military point of view nations. Given that the increase in budgets, acquisition, and military power of the two countries is complemented by persisting skirmishes, cross-border violations and attacks, etc., our logical conclusion is that we are exposed to an arms race which may lead to a war between them. It is worth remembering that as per what we have stated in part related to the theoretical determination of the research subject, the arms race is seen as an acquisition of military capabilities of a competitive nature. In our view, a clarification on the arms race between India and Pakistan related to what we have stated therein is worth doing. We referred in that part, in particular, to views according to which, while Pakistan spends a significant share of its GDP to make up for India's military advantage, the military expenditure in India is not Pakistan-specific. Based on everything said so far above about the relationships of India with its neighbours, it is our understanding that, though not all acquisitions of weapons are meant for countering Pakistan, a relatively significant part of them performs precisely this role. Therefore, we argue that India's military expenditure is, to a considerable extent, Pakistan-specific. Another critical conclusion to be made by us is that as far as the challenges to India's security related to Pakistan still exist, then the continued militarisation of India

³⁹⁵ “Rs 6.22 lakh crore allocated to MoD, highest among Ministries, in Regular Union Budget 2024-25; 4.79% higher than FY 2023-24”, Ministry of Defence, Press Information Bureau, Government of India, 23 July 2024, Available at: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2035748>

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁷ “Rs2.12 Trillion Proposed for Armed Forces in FY 2024-25 Budget”, The Pakistan Military Monitor, June 13, 2024, Available at: <https://thepakmilitarymonitor.com/rs2-12-trillion-proposed-for-armed-forces-in-fy-2024-25-budget/>

does not diminish the possibility of a new war with it. At the end of our reflections on military budgets, we need to say, in line with our considerations contained in part on the theoretical determination, that in the currently existing international system, the political and military leaders of India and Pakistan are pursuing the interests of their countries by all possible means, including by preparing for the use of military power through their militarisation and the acquisition of weapons. The rationale of the security dilemma explains this approach, and these moves lead to an arms race between the two countries, with the arms race having the potential to bring the two neighbours to a military escalation and a war. The uncertainty about the intentions of the other side, i.e., the *security dilemma* and the escalating conflict provoked by it, are, in the case of India and Pakistan, the probable option for beginning a war between them. Apart from negatively affecting the security environment, they also negatively affect the economic development of the two countries, which will be dealt with in the next paragraph. The best way out of this escalating spiral, given that neighbours are compulsory to be accepted as such and cannot be replaced by other countries by our own will, is to reallocate funds, resources, and efforts from militarisation to economic development. Such a way out can only be achieved by establishing peace.

We finally come to the issue of the slowdown of India's economy caused by the militarisation of India, which will be followed in the last two sections of this chapter by studying and explaining how this slowdown prevents India from being a major player regionally and globally. In the segment related to the theoretical determination of the research subject, we have referred to a view that the arms race between India and Pakistan contributes to the retarded economic growth of India. In the preceding paragraph, we concluded that in the case of this arms race, the uncertainty about the intentions of the other side and the escalating conflict provoked by it negatively affect the economic development of the two neighbours. In this line of reasoning, we think it necessary to focus on the GDP growth of each of the two countries. In the part related to the research problem formulation, we have presented figures on India's GDP growth rate for 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020, showing a decrease in this rate over time. We logically admitted that this decrease was due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It is interesting to see how the GDP growth rate has changed in the years after 2020. According to available data from the World Bank Group, India's GDP growth rate was 9.7% in 2021, 7% in 2022, and 7.6% in 2023.³⁹⁸ According to other sources, i.e., the Macrotrends platform, the GDP growth rate of India was 9.05% in 2021, increasing by 14.88% in comparison to 2020, and it was 7.24% in 2022, decreasing by 1,81% compared to 2021.³⁹⁹ The analysis of these figures reveals that in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the GDP growth rate witnessed a significant increase in 2021 compared to the preceding year, 2020. This increase was followed by a decrease in the growth rate in the next two years, 2022 and 2023, to reach a level of around 7%. That was approximately the same level as for 2017 and 2018 before the pandemic. The conclusion could be made here: if it had not been for the spread of Covid-19, India would have maintained an annual growth rate of around 7% of the GDP, meaning a steady increase of the same. Let us now have a look at the case of Pakistan. According to data from the World Bank Group, Pakistan's growth rate was negative (-1.3%) in 2020, then rose to 6.5% in 2021 to fall again to 4.8% in 2022 and 0% in 2023.⁴⁰⁰ As per another source, *FocusEconomics*, the GDP growth rate of Pakistan was -0.9% in 2020, 5.8% in 2021, 6.2% in 2022, and -0.2% in 2023. The average real

³⁹⁸ "GDP growth (annual %) – India", World Bank Group, Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=IN>

³⁹⁹ "India GDP Growth Rate 1960-2024", Macrotrends, Available at: <https://www.macrotrends.net/global-metrics/countries/IND/india/gdp-growth-rate>

⁴⁰⁰ See *supra* note 398.

GDP growth rate for the past ten years is 3.9% annually.⁴⁰¹ The analysis of these data shows that the economy of Pakistan was also subjected to the negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and recovered afterwards in the years 2021 and 2022 to reach a level of 5 to 6% GDP growth rate. However, the growth rate fell again in 2023 to around 0%, with the average growth rate for the past ten years being around 4%. Based on that, we would conclude that Pakistan's GDP growth rate is generally lower than India's by around 2%. It marked a decrease during the Covid-19 pandemic and increased again after it. The comparative analysis of the cases of India and Pakistan helps us conclude that though the economies of India and Pakistan grow at different paces, there is something common between the individual growth rates of the two countries. This common thing is related to the negative impact of the militarisation on the economic development of each one of them. The negative impact has been referred to above as causing a slowdown in their economic growth. This slowdown comes to us either in the form of the two economies maintaining their growth rates within the period of the several past years or growing below the existing potential of each one of them and, respectively, slower than expected. Having thus defined the economy's slowdown, let us now try to clarify how militarisation causes the retardment of economic growth. As explained above, militarisation implies bigger military budgets and more money for the defence budget, which would probably mean more money for the domestic defence industry, which, as per the article by Vivek Raghuvanshi quoted above, is the case for India⁴⁰². At the same time, it would certainly mean less money for the other sectors of the Indian economy. The latter, in turn, would mean less investment in these other sectors of the economy, and therefore less production and less exports. Less exports, though compensated to some extent by a bigger domestic consumption, would compulsorily lead to a smaller or not increasing GDP and a slowdown of economic growth. Referring to a work by Professor Dragana Mitrovic, in the part on the theoretical determination of the research subject related to International Political Economy as a theoretical approach, we have spoken earlier of the three levels of analysis, namely individual, state and level of the international system.⁴⁰³ These reflections depict what exactly takes place at the national level in India. Building on it and referring to another publication by Professor Dragana Mitrovic, we may go further to say that such an approach is in line with realist thinking, according to which military power is the key factor when defending your country against the aggressive intentions of other countries.⁴⁰⁴ It is worth remembering that in the part on the theoretical determination of the research subject related to realism as a theoretical approach, we have already highlighted that the state's survival is the highest goal and responsibility.⁴⁰⁵ In our view, it would have been better for India to stick to the approach of the contemporary neo-mercantilists, according to which the major factor to guarantee and preserve the security and wealth of a country is the ability of this country to develop industrial capacities, including the military industry.⁴⁰⁶ In line with this approach and having acknowledged that India has developed its domestic defence industry, we now claim that India's focus on non-defence national industries better serves its interests and ambitions to become a major player, regionally and globally. Coming from the state level, we are now moving to the international system level. It is being argued that nowadays, the degree of political and economic interdependence in international relations is much bigger than it used to be and that all countries suffer from economic problems. On the one hand, this provokes the use of national protectionist measures as a result of what is thought that the market will remain under the influence of the state as long as the state will remain the highest source of

⁴⁰¹ "Pakistan Economy", FocusEconomics, Available at: <https://www.focus-economics.com/countries/pakistan/#:~:text=Pakistan%27s%20economy%20in%20numbers%3A%20Nominal%20GDP%20of%20USD,GDP%20growth%20of%203.9%25%20over%20the%20last%20decade.>

⁴⁰² See *supra* note 387.

⁴⁰³ See *supra* note 78.

⁴⁰⁴ Dragana Mitrovic, "Medjunarodna politicka ekonomija", pp. 28-43., FPN & Cigoja stampa, 2012.

⁴⁰⁵ See *supra* note 76.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

political authority.⁴⁰⁷ On the other hand, the interdependence and the link to competition in the form of protectionism lead us to the issue of *who gets what* order⁴⁰⁸, to which we have already referred in the section related to the theoretical determination of the research subject. The importance of this issue is linked to the existing global problems, the resolution of which requires a change of the existing order. Amongst these problems are economic development, power rivalry and labour migration.⁴⁰⁹ In our view, resolving the issue of power rivalry will help us resolve the issue of economic development and the related issue of labour migration. Resolving the first problem and the two other related problems would imply changing the existing order of *who gets what*., By resolving the discrepancies and the rivalry between them, the two countries may face new perspectives for their economic development and their positioning regionally and globally. The way to achieve that is to give up militarisation and focus instead on the non-defence industries. The outcome of that, in the case of India, would be that this country would better defend itself and establish itself as a major player in the region and worldwide.

To sum it up, in this section, we focused on the implications of militarisation, arms race, and military confrontation for India's economy. Our objective was to prove that the militarisation of India causes a respective militarisation of Pakistan and a slowdown of the Indian economy without preventing the possibility of new confrontations between the two countries. Having consecutively analysed the existing information and data on militarisation, acquisition of weapons, military budgets, military power and military rankings, confrontation, and challenges to security we concluded that India and Pakistan keep militarising with the militarisation of the first provoking the militarisation of the second and vice versa. We also concluded that the militarisation of the two countries has not resulted in considerable changes in their military power and rankings, nor has it changed the gap between these military rankings. Another conclusion of ours was that in the context of the ongoing militarization of each of them the military confrontation between them also continues and the challenges to the security of India keep being present nowadays. Reflecting on the issue of the military budgets of India and Pakistan, we concluded that the military budgets of each of the two countries are increasing, and the biggest share of them is meant to be used to acquire weapons to counter the other country. We also concluded that the ongoing arms race between them may result in a war and that, therefore, the challenges to India's security related to Pakistan keep existing. By this, India's militarisation does not diminish the possibility of a new war between the neighbours. We next concluded that the security dilemma in the form of uncertainty about the intentions of the other side and the escalating conflict provoked by it affect negatively both the security environment and the economic development of the two countries, where the best solution of this problem is the reallocation of funds, resources, and efforts from militarisation to economic development. We next focused on how do the militarization and the arms race cause slowdown of the economy and affect negatively the economic development. We first proved that the two countries' economies are affected negatively by the slowdown, which results in the two economies growing slower than what would have corresponded to their potential. We then focused on the case of India and revealed that the militarisation of the country retards its economic growth as far as the money from the budget is diverted to the defence budget rather than to the other sectors of its national industry. As a result, the national production and exports are decreasing, with the latter leading to a decreasing or not increasing GDP and, respectively, a slowdown of economic growth. We then concluded that such an approach, currently applied by India, is realist and that a neo-mercantilist approach, consisting of developing industrial capacities, including the military industry, i.e., focusing strongly on non-defence national industries, would serve better its interests and ambitions to be a major

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁸ See *supra* note 77.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

player regionally and globally, by guaranteeing and preserving its security and wealth. We afterwards moved from the level of the state to the level of the international system. Given the growing degree of political and economic interdependence in international relations nowadays and the related competition and protectionism, we dealt with the issue of *who gets what* order. Starting from the understanding that resolving the existing global problems requires changing the existing order, we concluded that resolving the issue of power rivalry will help us resolve the issue of economic development, thus changing the existing *who gets what* order. Stepping on that, we also concluded that by resolving the discrepancies and the rivalry between them, India and Pakistan may face new perspectives for their economic development and their positioning regionally and globally. Our logical next claim was that the way to achieve that is to give up militarisation and focus instead on the non-defence industries. The outcome of what, in the case of India, would be this country better defending itself and establishing itself as a major player in the region and worldwide. Having said that, we need to bear in mind that, as already stated in the summary of the literature review part, in the case of a mutual deterrence relationship, i.e., the case of India and Pakistan, neither party would be eager to make the concessions required to end the conflict. However, achieving that is also possible should, as stated in the literature review summary, India and Pakistan leave aside their differences, engage closely in areas of common interest, continue negotiations on conflicting interests, and continue the peace process at any cost. A confirmation that such a development is possible comes from another takeaway from the summary of the literature review, namely that in 2014, there were hopes that the government of Narendra Modi would pursue meaningful negotiations with the neighbouring country. To put it in a nutshell, India's militarisation does not prevent the possibility of a new confrontation with Pakistan and only causes a slowdown in the Indian economy. The slowdown consists of the economy growing slower than what corresponds to the country's potential. The way out is to apply a neo-mercantilist approach and reallocate funds, resources, and efforts from militarisation to economic development. This would guarantee India's security and wealth and better serve its interests and ambitions related to regional and global leadership. Applying such an approach would mean resolving the issue of power rivalry with Pakistan and changing *who gets what* order. Resolving the issue of rivalry is possible in case of meaningful negotiations between India and Pakistan.

5.2. Terror threat by Pakistan-based militant groups

In this section, we shall review the impact of the activities of Pakistan-based militant groups on India's economic, political, and security situation. This theme could be viewed as another supplementary to the central theme of our research, i.e. the influence of the rivalry on India's regional and global ambitions. Continuing what we have done in the preceding section, the focus will be on how terrorism hinders India's economic growth. In the part related to the formulation of the research problem, we have referred to an estimate of the Centre for Preventive Action, according to which the heightened threat of terrorist activity by Pakistan-based militant groups is, in addition to the continued violence in Kashmir, at the basis of the still existing severe concerns over a serious military confrontation between India and Pakistan.⁴¹⁰ In the literature review summary, he has underlined, as a key takeaway, that security and terrorism worsen the relations between India and Pakistan by increasing distrust, blocking the peace process, and seriously threatening the regional stability in South Asia. As we can see here, the scope of the negative impact of terrorism is further expanded from the purely bilateral context to the situation in the region. As a next step, in part on the theoretical determination of the research subject related to the interstate war theories, we have stated that the

⁴¹⁰ See supra note 5.

rivalry between India and Pakistan has led to military confrontation, conflicts, and wars. Finally, in the section of the second chapter devoted to the evolution of the rivalry, we have stated that, in addition to the two major manifestations of this rivalry, i.e., the Kashmir issue and the water issue, there are also other examples and emanations of it, one of them being the cross-border terrorism.

Moreover, in the key takeaways section of the second chapter, which is devoted to the rivalry, we have presented cross-border terrorism as one of the three major manifestations and examples of the rivalry, the other two being the Kashmir issue and the water dispute, underlining the fact that they all are identified as contemporary security dilemmas between India and Pakistan. Therefore, we have clearly pointed to this problem's existence and its negative role. Now, we will explain its impact on the situation in India in more detail.

Let us begin with the impact of cross-border terrorism on the security situation in India. The term “security” is defined as “the things that are done to keep someone or something safe”.⁴¹¹ It is logical to conclude that the terrorist activities of the Pakistan-based militant groups cause damage both to the civilian population and infrastructure. By doing so, they worsen the security situation in India. Plenty of data confirming such thinking are available. As an example, as per a publication in The New York Times of 14 February 2019, 40 soldiers were killed and two buses were destroyed as a result of the terrorist incident known as the Pulwama attack, responsibility for which was claimed by the militant group Jaish-e-Muhammad, operating on the territory of Pakistan though being officially banned by Islamabad.⁴¹² Therefore, the conclusion we could make is that the impact of the activities of the Pakistan-based militant groups on the security situation in India could only be negative.

We shall next look at the impact of cross-border terrorist activities on the political situation in India. We can assume that such activities may objectively cause political instability. As a term, political instability is associated with an uncertain environment for citizens, disruption of governance, decline of public order, etc.⁴¹³ According to us, any of these applies to some extent, for example, in the case of the Pulwama attack and its aftermath. There are views that this attack has provoked a lot of security and political challenges for the Indian government.⁴¹⁴ Having already dealt with the challenges to the security situation in the preceding paragraph, let us now concentrate on the challenges to the political situation. In addition to those already mentioned in this paragraph and related to the domestic dimension, other existing challenges are linked to the foreign policy dimension. In such a context, it is thought that the Pulwama attack precipitated a crisis between India and Pakistan and almost brought them to the brink of war. It is, moreover, argued that terrorist groups and their attacks influence foreign policy and the regional security of South Asia.⁴¹⁵ In the context of the above, we may conclude that the activities of the Pakistan-based militant groups have the potential to negatively impact the political situation in India, both from domestic and foreign policy perspectives.

And last, we turn now to the impact of cross-border terrorism on the economic situation of India. As stated above, our objective would be to check whether and how the terrorist activities of the

⁴¹¹ “Security”, Cambridge Dictionary, Dictionary, Available at: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/learner-english/security>

⁴¹² Sameer Yasir, Maria Abi-Habib, “Kashmir Suffers From the Worst Attack There in 30 Years”, The New York Times, February 14, 2019, Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/14/world/asia/pulwama-attack-kashmir.html#:~:text=AWANTIPORA,%20Kashmir%20%E2%80%94%20A%20vehicle%20filled%20with%20explosives%20rammed%20into>

⁴¹³ “Political instability”, Fiveable, Available at: <https://library.fiveable.me/key-terms/hs-global-studies/political-instability>

⁴¹⁴ Mohammed Sinan Siyech, “The Pulwama Attack: Significance, Implications and the Way Forward”, Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses, Vol. 11, No. 4 (April 2019), pp. 6-10, Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26631532?seq=5>

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Pakistan-based militant groups affect the economic growth of India. We have already presented random examples regarding the loss of human lives and the destruction of property. It is evident that generally the case, any terrorist act causes such victims and destruction. We would not deliberate in detail on the killings and injuries, as far as it needs not to be proved that the economy suffers as a result of them taking place. Human life is, by nature, considered priceless. However, the dead people mean a lack of human resources and a need to replace them with new trained and qualified personnel or workforce. The latter costs the economy, and the replacement would mean investing in it rather than expanding economic activities.

Regarding the infrastructure, restoring it and building a new one to replace the destroyed one is also at a cost to the economy. Respectively, it also implies investing in this replacement process rather than expansion. Therefore, human loss and destruction of infrastructure and property entail economic losses by investing in replacement rather than expansion. Further, preventing victims and destruction necessitates training and qualifying military personnel to counter terrorism efficiently. It would also mean militarisation, providing the necessary equipment and weapons, and engagement in other activities, such as cooperation with other countries, including sharing expertise and intelligence. All this is also costly for the economy, and we speak here again of a cost that could have been used for development and expansion. Lastly, preventing and countering terrorism would also mean articulating this problem's existence internationally and seeking support for the implementation of joint measures and steps in this regard. In the preceding chapter, related to India's participation and involvement in minilateral formats, we have presented several examples of India's leaders and high-ranking officials raising the issue of the need to fight terrorism jointly at international gatherings. It should be stated that this is not just pronouncing a combination of words and expressions on the topic as part of the official statements and remarks. For experts involved in preparing such statements, it is well known that reaching the audience and obtaining the desired effect requires a lot of work. The latter is also at a cost to the economy, as the work of the respective experts could have been devoted to initiating development projects rather than countering existing problems that prevent development and prosperity. In other words, it would mean that we have a case of investing in prevention rather than in developing and expanding economic activities. All of the above confirms that killings, injuries, and destruction related to terrorist activities present themselves as an additional burden for the economy. As a result of that burden, the effect again is a slowdown of the economy.

To sum the above up, in this section, we studied the impact on the economic, political, and security situation in India produced by the activities of Pakistan-based militant groups, focusing on how these activities affect India's economic performance. We based our analysis on our work in the preceding chapters and sections. Our first conclusion was that these activities negatively affect the security situation in India. We then concluded that these activities also negatively affected the political situation in India from both domestic and foreign policy points of view. We finally proved that the results of the terrorist activities in the form of killings, injuries, and destruction create an additional burden for the economy of India, the effect of it being again, as in the case of militarisation, a slowdown of this economy. Overall, we would conclude that cross-border terrorism negatively affects India's security, political situation, and economy.

5.3. Influence on the regional ambitions of India

In the preceding two sections, we studied the consequences of militarisation, arms race, and military confrontation for India's economy and the impact of the activities of Pakistan-based military groups on India's economic, political, and security situation. We outlined the slowdown of the Indian

economy caused by both of them. We shall look now at how these consequences and this impact influence India's regional and, afterwards, in the next section, global ambitions and how the slowdown of the country's economy prevents it from being a major player in regional and world affairs. Our objective would be to study how the retarded economic development and the worsened political and security situation of India affect negatively its regional and global ambitions. In the part related to the formulation of the problem, we have already expressed our opinion that India's ability to achieve its aspirations suffers from the negative impact of militarisation, arms race, and military confrontation and the related to the latter cross-border terrorist activities. In the theoretical determination part, we have also stated that the rivalry negatively affects India's economy, which in turn diminishes India's potential to perform as a significant power regionally and globally. Therefore, our objective now, to say that differently, will be to confirm these assertions.

To achieve this objective, we first need to formulate the regional ambitions of India. It comes naturally that India aspires for hegemony in South Asia. This aspiration can be explained by India's role as a regional power and by its strategic interests. Several are facts substantiating the aspiration as follows: India is the second-largest country in the world in terms of population⁴¹⁶, it is the second-largest country in terms of territory, the country possesses a significant military might, the economy of the country is booming, and its global influence is rising. The attempts to widen its sphere of influence are being carried out through diplomatic means, i.e., establishing diplomatic, economic, and strategic alliances, and through military means, i.e., power projection and border conflicts.⁴¹⁷ Therefore, India's regional ambitions stem from its diplomatic, economic, and military weight, and they serve the cause of establishing it as a leading regional player with significant influence.

Having said the above, we deem it appropriate to focus first on the diplomatic aspects of India's ambitions. These aspects are related to this country's diplomatic engagement and influence. Historically, India aimed to become a dominant force in the Non-Alignment Movement and successfully maintained an approach of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries, combined with a policy of peaceful coexistence. The latter is believed to have contributed to its establishment as "a responsible foreign actor" and "an authoritative voice in world politics".⁴¹⁸ On the other hand, having a greater role in Asian and world diplomacy is seen as one of the three major challenges India was facing at the beginning of this century, the other two being the expected shifts in domestic politics, first and the necessity to sustain and expand economic growth, secondly. It was believed at that time, i.e., the first decade of the 21st century, that India would acquire stronger influence in its region and across the globe, especially in Afghanistan, Central Asia, the Persian Gulf, Southeast Asia, and China. It was also thought that the aspiration to have a greater role in diplomacy in Asia was adversely affected by the tensions in the India – Pakistan relations.⁴¹⁹ Based on that, we could define achieving a more significant role in Asian and world diplomacy as another ambition of India of regional but also global character. In a related context, diplomacy is viewed as "the management of

⁴¹⁶ In 2024, India overtook China to become the largest country measured by population size. See *supra* note 294.

⁴¹⁷ Syeda Hibba Zainab, "The Ascent of India: Aspirations of Regional Hegemony", Policy Watcher, May 20, 2023, Available at: <https://policywatcher.com/2023/05/the-ascent-of-india-aspirations-of-regional-hegemony/#:~:text=The%20country%E2%80%99s%20economic%20growth,%20military%20capabilities,%20and%20soft%20power%20resources>

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁹ John H. Gill, "India, Regional Concerns, Global Ambitions", The National Bureau of Asian Research, Strategic Asia 2003 – 04, September 15, 2003, Available at: <https://www.nbr.org/publication/india-regional-concerns-global-ambitions/>

relationships between countries” and “the ability to control a difficult situation without upsetting anyone”.⁴²⁰

Other views present diplomacy as “the established method of influencing the decisions and behaviour of foreign governments and peoples through dialogue, negotiation, and other measures short of war or violence”.⁴²¹ Without neglecting or underestimating the rightfulness of these definitions, it is our view that, in addition to managing relations between countries, diplomacy is also about improving these relations. Next, in addition to controlling difficult situations, diplomacy is also about avoiding and resolving such situations and crises. Furthermore, in addition to influencing foreign governments and peoples by not using violence or war, diplomacy is about establishing peace to avoid wars and destruction and to give way to development and prosperity. Lastly, diplomacy is also about being present and active and establishing partnerships and alliances. In line with such reflections, it would be interesting to see what India has achieved from the viewpoint of diplomacy regarding the above-quoted and other countries, regions, and organisations. To begin with, India has a strong relationship with Afghanistan based on historical and cultural links and a Strategic Partnership Agreement. New Delhi has played a significant role in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Afghanistan.⁴²² Therefore, the assessment is that the relations are excellent, they are very active, and India’s presence in this country is strong. Regarding Central Asia, cultural and commercial relations have historically existed, including due to this region’s proximity to India. In recent times, India has increased its outreach to the region to improve its relations with those belonging to its countries, especially after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in 2021.⁴²³ This all speaks of good and active ties between India and the regional countries of Central Asia.

Relations between India and the Persian Gulf countries are described as “exceptionally significant” and “multifaceted”, with India developing cooperation with them in many areas, such as trade, energy, security, and strategic partnerships. The region is seen as of “immense significance” for India’s establishment “as a growing regional and global power”.⁴²⁴ Given these assessments, the relations between India and the countries of the Persian Gulf could also be defined as good, active, and aimed at strategic partnerships. Our next focus will be on the countries of South Asia, the immediate neighbourhood of New Delhi. We have already discussed the case of Afghanistan and excluding India proper; India has got and maintains close, active, and excellent relations with five out of the remaining six countries of this region with one exception. Historically, but also nowadays, the relations of New Delhi with Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka could predominantly be viewed positively. The only problematic case is Pakistan, to which our work is devoted.

⁴²⁰ “Diplomacy”, Cambridge Dictionary, Dictionary, Available at: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/diplomacy>

⁴²¹ “Diplomacy”, Britannica, Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/diplomacy>

⁴²² “India-Afghanistan Relations”, Vajiram and Ravi, 16 May 2024, Available at: <https://vajiramandravi.com/quest-upsc-notes/india-afghanistan/#:~:text=India%20and%20Afghanistan%20have%20a%20strong%20relationship%20based,vibrant%20and%20multi-faceted%20relations%20between%20the%20two%20countries>

⁴²³ “India – Central Asia Relations – Explained, pointwise”, Forum IAS, December 23, 2021, Available at: <https://forumias.com/blog/india-central-asia-relations-explained-pointwise/#:~:text=India%20has%20had%20a%20long%20history%20of%20cultural,their%20roots%20in%20Central%20Asia%2C%20including%20the%20Mughals>

⁴²⁴ Manjari Singh, “India-Persian Gulf Relations: From Transactional to Strategic Partnerships”, Research Gate, March 2020, Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/350400116_India-Persian_Gulf_Relations_From_Transactional_to_Strategic_Partnerships#:~:text=India's%20relations%20with%20the%20Gulf

Moving on to East Asia, the relations of New Delhi with the six countries of this region could be defined as a success story from a diplomatic point of view, again with one exception. Having discussed positively India's relations with Japan in the chapter related to India's involvement in the Indo-Pacific region, we can now confirm that India – Japan relations are very active, and they are defined as “cordial” by official Japanese sources. These relations were elevated 2006 to a “Global and Strategic Partnership”.⁴²⁵ Being the first country outside the former Soviet Bloc to establish diplomatic relations with Mongolia, India has upgraded its bilateral relations with Mongolia to the level of a strategic partnership.⁴²⁶ This is also indicative of good and active bilateral relations. India's relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea are good. In the case of the first one, India is viewed as one of the few countries maintaining long-term and close ties with Pyongyang.⁴²⁷ In the case of the second one, the agreement “to expand the scope of the relationship by enhancing trade and investment, cooperating in security and defence cooperation, collaborating in the field of S&T, and promoting cultural and people-to-people ties” was reached at the fifth round of the Foreign Policy and Security Dialogue (FPSD) in Seoul in January 2023, the year in which the two countries marked the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.⁴²⁸

Taiwan is important to India for political and economic reasons, reflecting the two countries' interest in preserving peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait and the Indo-Pacific. Because of that, India has a long history of relations with Taipei, and their interactions have grown steadily since the end of the Cold War.⁴²⁹ Such assessments are undoubtedly synonymous with good and active bilateral relations. We finally came to the last country of East Asia, China. In the third chapter above, related to India's involvement in the Indo-Pacific region, we have concluded that India and China are far from friends. The relations between these two states must be continuously and carefully managed, and efforts must be exerted to improve them.

Before concluding this review of the countries falling within the scope of India's regional ambitions, including the Persian Gulf, Central Asia, South Asia, and East Asia, we think it is appropriate to focus again on Australia. In the third chapter above, we have already concluded that in the context of the *increasingly substantial bilateral relationship*, Australia recognises India's role in the region. In addition, given the importance of QUAD and the interaction between the two countries within its framework, we may conclude that the relations between India and Australia are good and active.

⁴²⁵ “Japan – India Relations (Basic Data)”, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, August 19, 2024, Available at: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/india/data.html>

⁴²⁶ “India – Mongolia Relations”, Drishti IAS, 9 January 2021, Available at: <https://www.drishtiias.com/daily-updates/daily-news-analysis/india-mongolia-relations-1#:~:text=India%2C%20the%20first%20country%20outside%20the%20former%20Soviet,India%20%28a%20part%20of%20India%E2%80%99s%20Act%20East%20policy%29>

⁴²⁷ Vasudevan Sridharan, “The curious case of India-North Korea relations”, DW, June 1, 2018, Available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/the-curious-case-of-india-north-korea-relations/a-44042939#:~:text=India%20is%20among%20a%20handful%20of%20countries>

⁴²⁸ Sweta Kumari, “50 Years of Diplomatic Ties: Convergence and Challenges in India – South Korea Ties”, Vivekananda International Foundation, April 5, 2023, Available at: <https://www.vifindia.org/article/2023/april/05/50-years-of-diplomatic-ties-convergence-and-challenges-in-india-south-korea-relations#:~:text=India%20and%20South%20Korea,%20the%20two%20key>

⁴²⁹ Shivshankar Menon, “Taiwan: An Indian view”, Brookings, December 16, 2022, Available at: <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/taiwan-an-indian-view/#:~:text=India%20has%20a%20long%20history%20of%20relations%20with,Taiwan%20Strait%20and%20more%20broadly%20in%20the%20Indo-Pacific>

Moving now from the countries of the region to countries across the globe with significant engagement in the region and having an impact on India's regional ambitions, we shall continue our review with a focus on India's relations with the USA, Russia, and the EU. In the third chapter above, we underlined the existence of some discrepancies between the views of New Delhi and Washington as regards regional developments. However, official documents of the US Department of State recognise the importance of India for the USA. The relationship between them is seen as "one of the most strategic and consequential of the 21st century", and the US support for "India's emergence as a leading global power and a vital partner in promoting a peaceful, stable, and prosperous Indo-Pacific region" is underlined.⁴³⁰ All this speaks of active and excellent bilateral relations. Also, in the third chapter of our work, referring to the special and privileged strategic partnership between India and Russia, we spoke of friendly relations between them. Official documents of the Ministry of External Affairs of India define Russia as "a longstanding and time-tested partner for India" and the development of the relations with which is "a key pillar of India's foreign policy".⁴³¹ We can conclude that the relations between India and Russia are active, excellent, and highly important for both countries.

Speaking of the EU, we concluded in the third chapter above that the Union is open to friendly relations with India in the Indo-Pacific region. In addition, further strengthening the India-EU Strategic Partnership is a crucial objective as per the document "India-EU Strategic Partnership: A Roadmap to 2025", endorsed in July 2020 at the 15th India-European Union Summit.⁴³² These two moments confirm the active and excellent character of the relations between India and the EU.

Having thus reviewed India's bilateral relations with countries of importance for its regional ambitions, we may conclude that India maintains good and active bilateral relations with all these countries except for two of them, Pakistan and China. This would mean that though India presents itself as a factor with a significant role in the region and Asia in general from the point of view of diplomacy, this country still has not entirely fulfilled its ambitions in this regard due to the problematic relations with its two neighbours. In other words, India's ambition to achieve a more significant role in diplomacy throughout the region and Asia is negatively affected by the character of its bilateral relations with Pakistan and China.

In a related context, we have commented above that diplomacy also presumes the establishment of partnerships and alliances. In the course of the above review, we have mentioned a lot of countries in which India's level of bilateral relations has been elevated to a strategic partnership. This relationship status indicates excellent and very active diplomatic relations and could also be described as the highest possible form of mutually beneficial interaction. This, in turn, suggests achieving a greater role in diplomacy regionally and globally. Taking stock of that review will show that India has established

⁴³⁰ "United States-India Relations", U.S. Department of State, November 9, 2003, Available at: <https://www.state.gov/united-states-india-relations/>

⁴³¹ "India-Russia Bilateral Brief", Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, December 2022, Available at: https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/India-Russia_Dec_2022.pdf#:~:text=The%20major%20bilateral%20investments%20by

⁴³² "India-EU Strategic Partnership: A Roadmap to 2025", Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, July 15, 2020, Available at: https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/32828/IndiaEU_Strategic_Partnership_A_Roadmap_to_2025#:~:text=In%20a%20complex%20international%20environment

strategic partnerships with around thirty countries, including Australia, Japan, the Russian Federation, the USA, and the EU.⁴³³

Again, in a related context, when speaking of presence, we must remember that cultural influence may significantly reinforce the purely diplomatic presence. We should recognise in this context the efforts of India to strengthen its cultural presence in the region and beyond it by using the attractiveness of yoga practice for that purpose. A confirmation for the success of these efforts is the celebration since 2014 of the International Day of Yoga. Another example of successful efforts in the same regard is the increasing popularity of the Indian film industry. We could, therefore, claim that cultural influence also serves India's ambitions to have a more significant role in Asian affairs from the point of view of diplomacy.

Lastly, another form of diplomatic engagement of a country is its membership in an international organisation and, respectively, its participation in the activities and work within the framework of this organisation. We have dealt with this issue in the fourth chapter above, which is devoted to India's engagement in various minilateral formats. Referring to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), we have concluded that as a factor in the region, India participates energetically in activities in this format, thus furthering its objectives. We have also claimed that the active participation has brought many concrete results, which has increased India's leverage and opportunities in the region regarding decision-making. On that basis, we concluded that India's involvement in the grouping has become more vigorous and more effective. India's role and weight have increased regionally and globally, corresponding to India's ambitions and strategic objectives. Another way to express the above is that India plays an important role in the SCO. What, however, needs to be clarified is that the retarded economy of India, caused by the negative impact of the rivalry with Pakistan, diminishes the potential of India to play such an important role and, therefore, to have a more significant role in diplomacy in the region and Asia.

This could be explained, following our theoretical and methodological framework, by the fact that even if India has participated over the years in the same or more significant number of activities and initiatives of the SCO, which would mean more substantial involvement, and this participation has produced concrete results, which would mean the involvement is more effective, the effectiveness of the participation and the proactiveness would have been even more prominent, and more responsive to India's regional ambitions, in the case of faster-developing economy. In other words, this would mean, in its turn, that if the money from the state budget goes primarily for militarisation rather than for investment in other sectors of the economy, the participation of India in the SCO may be less active, remain at the same level, or even become more active. Still, the effectiveness of this participation would diminish. The rationale behind such a logic would be that more money for the military budget would mean less money for the preparation of the participation in the activities and initiatives of the SCO. The consequence would be weaker preparation for participation and unachieved or less achieved results and objectives. The conclusions to be derived from the preceding considerations would be that one of the implications provoked by the rivalry slowdown of the economy is that the role of India in diplomacy in the region and Asia diminishes, and its capacity to perform as a regional and global power also diminishes.

The same conclusions could be made for India's participation in the framework of the East Asia Summit (EAS), i.e., the role of India in regional and Asian diplomacy could have been more effective in the case of a faster-developing economy. On the other hand, the rivalry may have even more

⁴³³ "India's Strategic Partnerships", ResearchGate, Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Indias-strategic-partnerships_tbl1_302559073#:~:text=Thus,%20India%20has%20developed%20'strategic

significant adverse effects than unachieved or less achieved results. An example of such a case is India's participation in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and, in more general terms, the performance of this regional organisation as a whole. It is believed that the rivalry between India and Pakistan is one of the reasons for the failure of SAARC.⁴³⁴ The organisation's failure presumes a failure for India to achieve a more significant role in diplomacy in the region and Asia.

We move next to the economic aspects of India's regional ambitions. We have mentioned in the introductory chapter that after gaining independence, India changed its economic policies to encourage economic growth. The same view is expressed by other authors, according to whom, following its independence, this country focused on its economic policies to foster growth and development.⁴³⁵ The economic aspects of the regional ambitions are not limited only to the domestic policies of the Indian government. They also have regional dimensions, such as exerting common efforts through joint initiatives, projects, and existing formats, aiming to achieve prosperity and development. A typical example of such a format is The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), a regional organisation established in 1997 to promote economic cooperation between countries bordering the Bay of Bengal.⁴³⁶

Even with this, the achievement of ambitions related to the economy is impeded by India's rivalry with Pakistan. In the first section of this chapter, we have concluded that the economy of India is slowing down as a result of the continued militarisation and that this slowdown consists, in fact, of slower growth than what could have been achieved with the existing potential. We have also concluded that India continues its militarisation with the continued militarisation of Pakistan going on in parallel. Against that background, the performance of India in the region is getting, as per our conclusions from the preceding paragraph, less effective and, therefore, weaker. The diminished performance effectiveness comes out as achieving less or no results and objectives in New Delhi's participation in various regional formats to foster economic cooperation. Following our methodological framework, we may conclude that India's rivalry with Pakistan negatively affects India's involvement in the region and, respectively, India's regional and global ambitions in the field of economy. The latter is yet another confirmation of the rightfulness of our conclusion from the first section of this chapter that reallocating funds, resources, and efforts from militarisation to economic development would be an appropriate solution in this particular case. It is to be noted that India's ambitions for regional economic hegemony are faced with severe competition from China. In the first section of the preceding fourth chapter, devoted to India's involvement in the framework of the SCO, we pointed to the fact that in 2022, India ranked fifth worldwide by nominal GDP, being overtaken by China and Japan.⁴³⁷ Moreover, China has undertaken significant investments in infrastructure projects in South Asia, threatening India's ambitions for hegemony.⁴³⁸ Therefore, the negative implications of the rivalry with Pakistan for India's regional ambitions in the economic field are further aggravated by China's ambitions in this same field.

We finally come to the military aspects of India's regional ambitions. At the beginning of this section, we referred to the article of Syeda Hibba Zainab of 20 May 2023, entitled "The Ascent of India: Aspirations of Regional Hegemony". In this work of hers, the author speaks of the critical role of

⁴³⁴ Ankit Raj Pandey, "How did SAARC fail? Understanding the hindrances to its sustainability", Online Khabar, April 5, 2023, Available at: <https://english.onlinekhabar.com/saarc-fail-hindrances.html>

⁴³⁵ See *supra* note 417.

⁴³⁶ "History", Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Available at: <https://bimstec.org/history>

⁴³⁷ See *supra* notes 300 and 295.

⁴³⁸ See *supra* note 417.

the historical legacy in forming India as a global military power. She also speaks of the ongoing conflicts of India with its neighbours China and Pakistan, of the related battles, military standoffs, border skirmishes, and cross-border terrorist activities, as well as of the serious strategic challenges Beijing and Islamabad present to New Delhi.⁴³⁹ From the perspective of modern times, India has increased its military power by acquiring new military capabilities as part of its ongoing militarisation to protect itself and project power in the region. India has achieved a lot in this regard and positions itself among the top ten countries worldwide from the point of view of their military might. As mentioned in the first section of this chapter, India ranks fourth, thus being in one position after China and overtaking Pakistan, which ranks ninth.⁴⁴⁰ Despite a strong military, India cannot counter China and Pakistan decisively and ultimately win the battle. The confrontation continues, the militarisation consumes a lot of resources from the budget, and as a result, the country's economy suffers, the performance of New Delhi within the region is getting less effective, and the regional ambitions of India are not achieved. The reason behind such a development is to be sought in the rivalry of India with Pakistan and its complicated relations with China. The conclusion to be made here is that the rivalry with Pakistan negatively affects India's regional ambitions.

To sum it up, in this section, we studied how the slowdown of the economy and the worsened political and security situation of India, caused by its rivalry with Pakistan and the related militarisation, arms race, and military confrontation and activities of the Pakistan-based military groups, influence this country's regional ambitions. We started with identifying New Delhi's regional ambitions, first outlining the aspirations for hegemony in South Asia and focusing more on the efforts to achieve a greater role in Asian and world diplomacy and economic and military dominance in the region. Regarding India's diplomatic engagement and influence, we highlighted several criteria to use when judging New Delhi's achievements regarding countries, regions, and organisations of importance to its regional ambitions. We concluded that India maintains active and good relations with the countries of the Persian Gulf, Central Asia, South Asia, and East Asia, as well as with Australia, the USA, Russia, and the EU. The only exceptions to this rule are Pakistan and China. On that basis, we concluded that though India has established itself as an important diplomatic player in the region and in Asia as a whole, New Delhi has not achieved its ambitions in this regard entirely due to the problematic relations with its two neighbours and that this ambition for a more significant diplomatic role is negatively affected by the character of its bilateral ties with Pakistan and China.

In the same context, we noted that India has established strategic partnerships with almost thirty countries worldwide, including Australia, Japan, Russia, the USA, the EU, etc. Our conclusion in this regard was that strategic partnerships indicate the existence of excellent and active bilateral relations between India and the respective countries and contribute to India's achievement of a greater role in diplomacy regionally and globally. The cultural influence of India was also in our focus, and we concluded that it significantly reinforces this country's diplomatic engagement, thus serving its ambitions to have a more significant role in Asian affairs from the point of view of diplomacy. The membership of international organisations and the engagement in such formats was the last form of diplomatic engagement of India we dealt with. In the case of the SCO and the EAS, our conclusion, based upon our methodological framework, was that the effectiveness of India's participation in their activities, measured by the results and objectives achieved, would have been greater if it had not been for the slowdown of the Indian economy, provoked by India's rivalry with Pakistan. Respectively, the role of India in regional and Asian diplomacy would have been more significant as well. At the same time, the failure of another regional organisation, the SAARK, was explained by the rivalry between

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁰ See *supra* note 390.

India and Pakistan. We conclude that the provoked by rivalry failure of the SAARC contributed to the failure of India to achieve a greater role in diplomacy across the region and in Asia.

If speaking of the economic aspects of India's regional ambitions, we noted the efforts of India domestically and regionally to achieve more significant economic growth, development, and prosperity. However, based on previous considerations and following our methodological framework, we concluded that the rivalry with Pakistan negatively affects India's involvement in the region and this country's regional and global ambitions in the field of economy. The reasoning behind this conclusion was based on the link between militarisation, the slowdown of the economy, and the decreasing effectiveness of India's participation in the activities of the regional formats aimed at fostering economic cooperation. It was also concluded that China's economic ambitions further aggravate the negative implications of the rivalry with Pakistan for India's regional ambitions in the economic field.

We finally focused on the military aspects of India's regional ambitions. We concluded that though being a major military power, India cannot beat Pakistan and China entirely and forever and that the effectiveness of New Delhi's performance in the region is diminished as a result of the rivalry with these two countries, which in turn affects negatively the regional ambitions of India. Our overall conclusion would be that India's ambitions for regional hegemony, as represented by dominance in diplomacy, economy, and military power, are affected negatively by the rivalry between New Delhi and Islamabad. A solution to this negative development could only be achieved by the use of diplomatic means. Similar views regarding the latter are expressed by Syeda Hibba Zainab, according to whom India's economic growth, military capabilities, and soft power resources enable this country to pursue assertive foreign policy, leading to increasing involvement in regional and global affairs. Still, they also increase tension in the region and New Delhi's relations with Islamabad and Beijing, which may cause unrest and conflict. What the author suggests as a way out is to seek "diplomatic solutions that advance peace and stability for the benefit of everyone while respecting the sovereignty and interests of each nation".⁴⁴¹ Finally, by negatively influencing India's regional ambitions, the rivalry with Pakistan prevents this country from being a major player in regional and world affairs. Having categorically confirmed the latter by our above analysis, we, therefore, proved the rightfulness of our general hypothesis in the thesis' part related to regional affairs, namely that the rivalry between India and Pakistan has a significant capacity to complicate India's efforts to pursue its ambitions to establish itself as a major political, economic, and military power regionally.

5.4. Influence on India's global ambitions

This section will focus on the influence of the rivalry on India's global ambitions. We shall study how the consequences of militarisation, arms race, and military confrontation and the impact of the Pakistan-based military groups' activities influence these ambitions. Our objective will be to confirm that the influence is negative, and by doing so, we shall again prove right our general hypothesis, this time in the case of India's global ambitions.

As a first step, we need to identify India's global ambitions. Before that, it would be essential to note that India is recognised as *a regional power with global aspirations*. The arguments in favour of such a claim are that India is part of the region of South Asia, the country is ready to assume a leadership role, it displays the relevant capabilities to project power region-wise, it is influential in

⁴⁴¹ See *supra* note 417.

regional affairs, and it attempts to reserve a more prominent role for itself globally. As examples of the latter, India's attempts to be a global peacemaker during the Cold War and its membership in the BRICS are being considered.⁴⁴² The above way of defining *a regional power with global aspirations* is behind our logic, which frequently refers to the global level in the preceding section when studying India's regional ambitions and aspirations. It is also important to note that when discussing countries of this category, the authors of the quoted publication, Louise Fawcett and Sharinee L. Jagtiani, speak of size, population, GDP, global status, and reputation. They also underline the fact that such countries engage and interact not only within their regions but also at the global level.⁴⁴³ Having clarified that we have discussed the issues related to India's size, population, nominal GDP, and engagement in global affairs in this chapter and the preceding chapters, our conclusions confirm that, based on these criteria, India is rightly considered a regional power with global aspirations. Regarding the other two criteria, i.e., global status and reputation, examples such as the membership of the UN, the growing cultural influence, etc., referred to previously in our work, also confirm that India may be viewed as belonging to the group of such countries. What also seems to be worth mentioning is that the definition of Fawcett and Jagtiani corresponds to the definition of *major power* we have previously quoted in both parts, i.e. the country is “powerful” and the country “influences events throughout the world”.⁴⁴⁴

With that in view, we may now focus on India's global ambitions as a regional power with such ambitions. As stated above, Fawcett and Jagtiani present India's attempts to be a global peacemaker during the Cold War period as a global ambition. The country's membership in the BRICS is also mentioned in the same context.⁴⁴⁵ According to Aparna Pande, one of India's global ambitions would be a multipolar world order in which India is one of the poles, as India's diplomatic leverage is confirmed by this country's participation in the BRICS, SCO, and G-20.⁴⁴⁶ Another global ambition of India, according to us, is the country's bid for permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). India has been seeking a permanent seat in the UNSC, both as a member of the G-4 grouping and individually, since the early years of this century. The G-4 group comprises four countries aspiring to become permanent members of the UNSC and supporting one another's claims for permanent membership. These countries are Brazil, Germany, Japan, and India, and the Group was formed in 2005.⁴⁴⁷ The G-4 has been calling for the reform of the UN, especially the expansion of the membership of the UNSC, to reflect today's reality⁴⁴⁸ instead of the international power balance as it had existed in 1945.

Should such reform occur, a permanent UNSC status will be extended for the first time to a South Asian nation. In parallel to the efforts in the framework of the G-4, India has also been expressing its position vis-à-vis the permanent membership as an individual country during bilateral meetings of its leaders with foreign counterparts and through interventions within international fora.

⁴⁴² Louise Fawcett, Sharinee L. Jagtiani, “Regional powers, global aspirations: lessons from India and Iran”, Springer Link, 13 May 2022, Available at: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s41311-022-00374-z#:~:text=India%20is%20a%20more%20%E2%80%98obvious%E2%80%99%20regional%20power%20with%20global%20aspirations.>

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁴ See *supra* note 10.

⁴⁴⁵ See *supra* note 442.

⁴⁴⁶ Aparna Pande, “America Backs India's Global Ambitions”, Hudson Institute, September 8, 2023, Available at: <https://www.hudson.org/security-alliances/america-backs-india-global-ambitions-aparna-pande>

⁴⁴⁷ “The G4 Countries”, ClearIAS, December 1, 2022, Available at: <https://www.clearias.com/g4-countries/#:~:text=The%20G4%20is%20a%20group%20of%20four%20countries-.Council%20%28UNSC%29.%20The%20grouping%20was%20formed%20in%202005>

⁴⁴⁸ “What is the purpose of G4?”, Manorama Yearbook, Available at: <https://www.manoramayearbook.in/current-affairs/world/2021/09/23/what-is-G4.html>

Both former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and the current one, Narendra Modi, have raised the issue many times. For example, Modi has explained the need to reform this body and make it more “broad-based” with the argument that such a move would “maintain its credibility and legitimacy in the current world realities”.⁴⁴⁹ It would undoubtedly be a big success for India to become a permanent member of this body. However, the fact that India and Pakistan are involved in a conflict that frequently appears on the agenda of the UNSC is a problem for New Delhi. Anirbah Bhaumik underlines in a publication of December 2022 that, raising the issue of Kashmir at the UNSC, the Pakistani Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari opposed India’s bid for a permanent seat.⁴⁵⁰ In the same context, Dhananjay Tripathi speaks of four obstacles to India joining the UNSC, one of them being the challenges related to the regional situation in South Asia, including the rivalry between India and Pakistan.⁴⁵¹

Another global ambition of India is turning it into a global manufacturing hub. As it is well known, in 2014, Prime Minister Modi launched the “Make in India” campaign. Its main idea was for India to compete successfully with China in manufacturing. The objective was to attract new businesses from abroad, expecting this to generate employment and income. In 2016, there were already opinions that achieving these objectives would not be easy because the country is vast and complex.⁴⁵² We believe such opinions clearly indicate that the country’s economy is lagging behind expectations, which may result from the economy’s slowdown triggered by the rivalry with Pakistan. We believe Siddharth Venkataramakrishnan hints at the same when explaining that the lower-than-expected tax revenues deplete the coffers of the Indian government and raise the importance of outside sources, thus recommending the principles of the World Economic Forum, such as cooperation, innovation, and inclusion, as an appropriate basis for India’s quest to become a global power.⁴⁵³

The same idea is further developed from another perspective by Chietigj Bajpae, who argues that “much of the reason for India being unable to live up to its global potential is that economic reform has historically been the weakest link of New Delhi’s external engagement”. Using the case of India’s “Look East” / “Act East” Policy, the author further speaks of problems related to the slow pace of the domestic reform agenda, questioned ability to sustain growth and reform momentum, bureaucracy and poor inter-ministerial coordination, undermined competitiveness of Indian exports, concerns that Indian industries could not compete with their Asian counterparts, historically protectionist and conservative economic policies, economic disparities, etc. Explaining that India’s global ambitions begin at home, Bajpae concludes that “India’s emergence as a global power remains in its infancy”.⁴⁵⁴ Our interpretation of this kind of reasoning is that the slowdown of the Indian economy is at the basis of the deceleration in achieving India’s global ambitions, i.e., the slowdown of the economy negatively affects this country’s global ambitions. The arguments in support of this interpretation of ours would again come from our methodological framework.

⁴⁴⁹ “Full Text Of Narendra Modi’s Speech At The United Nations Sustainable Development Summit”, HUFFPOST, Updated 15 July 2016, available at: https://www.huffingtonpost.in/2015/09/26/narendra-modi-un-speech_n 8199442.html

⁴⁵⁰ Anirbah Bhaumik, “Pakistan raises Kashmir at UNSC, opposes India’s permanent membership bid”, Deccan Herald, 15 December 2022, Available at: <https://www.deccanherald.com/world/pakistan-raises-kashmir-at-uns-c-opposes-indias-permanent-membership-bid-1172098.html>

⁴⁵¹ Dhananjay Tripathi, “4 Obstacles to India Joining the UN Security Council”, The Diplomat, September 20, 2024, Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2024/09/4-obstacles-to-india-joining-the-un-security-council/>

⁴⁵² “India’s global ambitions”, Evolution, June 23, 2016, Available at: <https://evolution.skf.com/indias-global-ambitions/#>

⁴⁵³ Siddharth Venkataramakrishnan, “Why India’s global ambitions require more pursuit of WEF principles”, Financial Times, January 22, 2020, Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/284ec858-2197-11ea-b8a1-584213ee7b2b>

⁴⁵⁴ Chietigj Bajpae, “India’s Global Ambitions Begin at Home”, The Diplomat, December 23, 2022, Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2022/12/indias-global-ambitions-begin-at-home/>

Regarding the participation in various global formats and the successful implementation of multiple initiatives, programs, projects, etc., within their frameworks, the explanation would be that looking at the two criteria, respectively, the number of participants in activities and initiatives and the concrete results achieved from this participation, the logical conclusion to make is that should the number of such activities and initiatives remains the same or increases the effectiveness of the participation in them would have been more prominent in the case of a faster-developing economy. The smaller effectiveness of the involvement would lead to a diminished capacity of India to perform as a global power. The diminished capacity and decreased effectiveness result from the state budget being allocated in favour of the military and defence sector rather than other sectors of the economy, with such distribution being provoked by the rivalry between India and Pakistan. Moreover, when India's economy slows down, the acquisition of weapons and militarisation increases, and, at the same time, the country's involvement and its performance regionally and globally become weaker and less effective. The only logical conclusion would be that the rivalry with Pakistan negatively affects India's participation in regional and global affairs and its regional and global ambitions. Another argument in support of this conclusion of ours would be that all problems for India to be able to live up to its global potential, i.e., to achieve its global ambitions, as referred to by Bajpae, could be attributed to the fact that the money from the state budget goes predominantly to the defence sector. For example, investing in human resource factors, including education and training, would end the existing bureaucracy and poor inter-ministerial coordination. The same would apply to the domestic reform agenda's slow pace and other problems. Therefore, the rivalry with Pakistan negatively affects India's global ambitions.

To sum it up, in this section, we studied the influence of the rivalry between India and Pakistan on India's global ambitions. Our objective was to confirm that the rivalry negatively influences these ambitions. Before identifying India's global ambitions, we underlined that India is rightfully recognised as a regional power with global aspirations. We noted in this context that the characteristics attributed to such countries correspond to the characteristics of *major powers*. We then identified several global ambitions of India, as follows: being a global peacemaker during the Cold War period, establishing a multipolar world order in which India is one of the poles, obtaining a permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), and turning itself into a global manufacturing hub. The membership of the country of formats, such as the BRICS, the SCO, and the G-20 grouping, was also presented as an element of the global ambitions. It was then underlined that the rivalry between India and Pakistan and other challenges related to the regional situation in South Asia constitute a problem for India's bid for a permanent UNSC membership as one of this country's global ambitions.

We then focused on India's other global ambition to become a global manufacturing hub. Building on the existing knowledge, we concluded that achieving it would not be easy because of the slowdown of the Indian economy triggered by the rivalry with Pakistan. Applying our methodological framework, we concluded that this slowdown of the economy prevented India from achieving its global ambitions by negatively affecting them. More precisely, we claimed that the decreased effectiveness of India's participation in global affairs and its diminished capacity to perform as a global power resulted from the country's continued militarisation. We also claimed that given the slowdown of the economy, the continued militarisation, and the decreasing effectiveness of engagement, the rivalry between India and Pakistan negatively affects India's involvement in regional and global affairs and its regional and global ambitions. We finally explained all existing problems of the Indian economy with the ongoing militarisation, thus supporting our conclusion that the rivalry with Pakistan negatively affects the global ambitions of India. With this conclusion, we fulfilled our objective to confirm that India-Pakistan's influence on India's global ambitions is negative. By doing so, we again proved right our general hypothesis in the part of the dissertation related to India's global aspirations, i.e., we proved that the

rivalry has a significant capacity to complicate India's efforts to pursue its ambitions to establish itself as a major political, economic, and military power globally.

5.5. Key takeaways

In this chapter, we studied how rivalry, militarisation, arms race, and military confrontation, on the one hand, and Pakistan-based military groups' activities, on the other, influence India's economic, political, and security situation and its regional and global ambitions. Our objective was to prove our general hypothesis right.

In the first section, we studied the implications of militarisation, arms race, and military confrontation for India's economy. We proved that the continued militarisation of India provokes a respective militarisation of Pakistan without considerable changes in the military power and rankings of the two rivals. This militarisation does not prevent the possibility of a new confrontation between them and only causes the Indian economy's slowdown. We also concluded that the increasing military budgets of the two countries are predominantly meant for countering the other country, that the ongoing arms race may lead to a war between them with the Pakistan-related challenges to India's security persisting, and that, ultimately, the militarisation does not diminish the possibility of a new war.

We next explained that the *security dilemma*, a consequence of the militarisation provoked by the former escalating conflict, negatively affects the security environment and the economic development of India and Pakistan. We further explained that militarisation and the arms race negatively affect the two countries' economies. The consequences of these two are a slowdown of the two economies coming to us as slower economic growth than what would have corresponded to their potential. Explaining that the militarisation of India retards its economic growth and needed development, as far as the money from the budget is diverted to the defence budget rather than to the other sectors of the economy, we suggested a way out of India to apply a neo-mercantilist approach rather than the currently used and leading to the militarisation realist one and to reallocate funds, resources, and efforts from militarisation to economic development. We argued that such a move would guarantee India's security and wealth and better serve its interests and ambitions related to regional and global leadership. Moving finally from the level of the state to the level of the international system, we concluded that resolving the issue of power rivalry will help resolve the issue of economic development and change the existing order of *who gets what*. The latter would result in India and Pakistan facing new perspectives for economic growth and development and for positioning regionally and globally. It was also clarified that resolving the issue of rivalry would only be possible if the two neighbours gave up militarisation, focused on non-defence industries, and conducted meaningful negotiations between them. Our last conclusion in this regard was that the outcome of the latter, in the case of India, would be that this country would better defend itself and establish itself as a major player in the region and worldwide.

In the second section, we studied the impact of the activities of Pakistan-based militant groups on India's economic, political, and security situation. Our main objective was to explain how these activities affect the country's economic performance. We concluded that these activities negatively affect the security and political situation, both from domestic and foreign policy perspectives and the economic situation in the country. Regarding the latter, we concluded that the results of the terrorist activities, as represented by killings, injuries, and destruction, cause, as in the case of militarisation, a slowdown of the Indian economy.

In the third section, we studied the impact of the slowdown of the economy and the worsened political and security situation of India, both being caused by India's rivalry with Pakistan and the related militarisation, arms race, and military confrontation and activities of the Pakistan-based military groups, on New Delhi's regional ambitions. We first identified India's regional ambitions: the aspirations for hegemony in South Asia and the efforts to achieve a greater role in Asian and world diplomacy and economic and military dominance. Our conclusion regarding India's diplomatic engagement and influence, based on our methodological framework, was that though having established itself as an important diplomatic player in the region and Asia as a whole, New Delhi has not yet achieved its ambitions in this regard entirely due to the complicated relations with its two neighbours Pakistan and China and that its ambition for a greater diplomatic role is negatively affected by the character of these bilateral relations. In the case of the economic aspects of India's regional ambitions, we concluded that the rivalry with Pakistan negatively affects New Delhi's involvement in the region and its regional and global ambitions in the field of economy. In addition, China's economic ambitions further complicate India's achievement of its regional ambitions regarding economic engagement. Focusing finally on the military aspects of India's regional ambitions, we concluded that the effectiveness of New Delhi's performance in the region in this area is diminished due to the rivalry with Pakistan and China, which negatively affects India's regional ambitions. Accordingly, our overall conclusion was that India's ambitions for regional hegemony and dominance in diplomacy, economy, and military power are negatively affected by its rivalry with Pakistan. Avoiding such a negative development would only be possible by using diplomatic means. By this conclusion, we confirmed that negatively influencing India's regional ambitions, the rivalry with Pakistan prevents New Delhi from being a major player in regional and world affairs by which we proved the rightfulness of our general hypothesis in the part related to the regional affairs, namely that the rivalry between India and Pakistan has a significant capacity to complicate India's efforts to pursue its ambitions to establish itself as a major political, economic, and military power in the region.

In the last and fourth sections of this chapter, we focused on the influence of India's rivalry with Pakistan on New Delhi's global ambitions with the idea of proving that the rivalry negatively influences these ambitions. Having noted the fact that India is recognised as a regional power with global ambitions, the characteristics of which overlap with the attributes of a *major power*, we identified India's efforts to be a global peacemaker during the Cold War period, to establish a multipolar world order in which New Delhi is one of the poles, to obtain a permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), and to turn itself into a global manufacturing hub as this country's global ambitions. It was clarified that the membership of the BRICS, the SCO, and the G-20 grouping are elements of these global ambitions. In the course of our analysis, we concluded that the rivalry with Pakistan and other challenges coming from the situation in South Asia complicate India's global ambition for a permanent UNSC membership. We also concluded that achieving the global ambition to become a global manufacturing hub would not be accessible due to the slowdown of the Indian economy provoked by the rivalry with Pakistan. We further explained that this slowdown results from the continued militarisation decreases the effectiveness of the country's involvement in regional and global affairs, diminishes its capacity to perform as a power, and prevents it from achieving its global ambitions by negatively affecting it. We finally concluded that all existing problems of the Indian economy come as a consequence of the ongoing militarisation, supported by our claim that the rivalry with Pakistan negatively affects the global ambitions of India. We thus confirmed that the influence of the rivalry with Pakistan on India's global ambitions is negative, and we again proved right our general hypothesis in the part related to India's global ambitions. To say that differently, we proved that the rivalry has a significant capacity to complicate India's efforts to pursue its ambitions to establish itself as a major political, economic, and military power globally.

In conclusion, having proved our general hypothesis right in the last two sections of this chapter, we gave an affirmative answer to our research question. As stated in the introductory chapter above, confirming that the rivalry with Pakistan negatively affects India's efforts and ambitions to establish itself as a major political, economic, and military power regionally and globally is, in fact, our modest contribution to the existing literature and knowledge about the topic of our research. Stepping on the existing scholarship that, in the more prolonged run, military expenditure hinders the economic growth of India, we confirmed that the hindered economic growth and development of India hinders its involvement in regional and global affairs, thus providing a more evident confirmation that the rivalry affects negatively the country's regional and global ambitions and filling the gap in the existing knowledge.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

In this work, we sought an answer to whether the rivalry between India and Pakistan negatively affects India's efforts and ambitions to establish itself as a major political, economic and military power regionally and globally. This research is particularly relevant in the current geopolitical climate, where the Indo-Pacific region is gaining increasing importance. We argued that India's rivalry with Pakistan diminishes New Delhi's potential to perform actively in the Indo-Pacific region and world affairs due to significant resources being used to serve the cause of this rivalry. The rationale behind such an argument was that the rivalry provokes militarisation and acquisition of weapons, which may lead to a new military confrontation or a war between the two neighbouring countries and, without excluding Pakistan from the list of India's security challenges, causes a slowdown of the Indian economy. We studied the existing literature on our topic by focusing on three main themes, namely, the rivalry between India and Pakistan, the involvement of India in the Indo-Pacific region, and the influence of the rivalry between India and Pakistan on India's regional and global ambitions.

We also dealt with several supplementary themes, such as the implications of the war in Ukraine on India's involvement in the Indo-Pacific, India's participation in some minilateral formats, the repercussions of militarisation and the arms race for India's economy, and the impact of the activities of Pakistan-based militant groups on India's economy and its political and security situation. We based our research on realism and international political economy as the main theoretical approaches, with interstate wars theory and the *concept of security dilemma*. The research covered the period from 2000 until today and many countries and international organisations, including India, Pakistan, the USA, Russia, China, and the EU. Our main objectives were to study the rivalry between India and Pakistan and the involvement of India in the Indo-Pacific region, explain how the rivalry influences this involvement of India, and present ideas on how this rivalry should be tackled to assist India in achieving its regional and global ambitions. We formulated one general and three specific hypotheses, and each one of them was dealt with and proved right in a separate chapter. Our approach was mainly qualitative, and, studying primary and secondary sources containing secondary data, we used the content analysis of texts as a method to conduct the research. Interpretation, synthesis, comparison and the author's views as secondary analysis were also applied. In the first chapter of the dissertation, the introduction, we set the basis and established the framework for our research.

The second chapter of our work was devoted to the India-Pakistan rivalry. We thoroughly study the rivalry's origins, evolution, and present state. Two were our main objectives: to explain what causes the rivalry and its enduring nature and to prove the rightfulness of our first specific hypothesis. This hypothesis consists of two assertions, the first being that India's domestic problems constitute a severe threat to this country's global ambitions and are strongly connected with India-Pakistan's historical and current ties. According to the second one, the rivalry between India and Pakistan is inherited from the colonial past. However, it has preserved its destructive character throughout the years and remains a serious challenge to India nowadays. To achieve these two objectives, we examined all major manifestations and other examples of the rivalry, their main events and developments, and their main results and outcomes. Looking at who is a winner and what the foreign mediation efforts are in each particular event or development, we traced, as well, the role of five factors detrimental to the relations

between India and Pakistan and provoking and sustaining the rivalry between them. The two crucial manifestations of the rivalry are the Kashmir conflict and the water dispute, the so-called bones of contentions in the relations between the two neighbouring countries. At the same time, cross-border terrorist activities and other cross-border issues are two different examples of it. The first two have existed since the initial stage of the rivalry, and the last two emerged later in its evolution, with all of them, and the rivalry itself, persisting nowadays. Three out of all four of them, namely, the Kashmir issue, the water dispute, and the cross-border terrorism, have been identified by scholars as contemporary security dilemmas between India and Pakistan. The way India and Pakistan became two independent states, the prehistory of the continent, the dominant foreign management, and the existing religious and ethnic differences are the five factors that have provoked the rivalry. They have played their role in the emergence and evolution of the two crucial manifestations and the other two examples of the rivalry. And they keep causing, provoking, sustaining, and influencing them and the events and developments related to them nowadays. Focusing on the reasons behind the rivalry between India and Pakistan and its enduring character, we concluded that these five factors have caused and sustained the rivalry and that their role explains its enduring character. By this conclusion, we fulfilled our first objective, as stated above at the beginning of this paragraph.

Regarding the second objective, to prove our first specific hypothesis correct, we achieved that in several steps. We first concluded that the Kashmir issue is the main reason behind the India-Pakistan conflict, that it plays a central role in the rivalry between them, and that the 1947 India Independence Act and the scheme of partition of Kashmir therein, passed by the UK Parliament, are the driving force of this rivalry. By this, we confirmed this part of the second sentence of our first specific assumption, according to which the rivalry is inherited from the colonial past. Looking at the texts of the 1972 Shimla Agreement and the 1999 Lahore Declaration underline the need to resolve the conflict and establish peace to focus on the prosperity and welfare of the peoples of India and Pakistan and to establish peace and stability in the sub-continent; we concluded that such texts confirm the existence of domestic problems in India, the link between these problems and the rivalry, and the negative impact of the rivalry on India's domestic development and its regional and global ambitions.

By this conclusion, we proved the first sentence of the first specific hypothesis right, according to which India's domestic problems constitute a severe threat to this country's global ambitions and are strongly connected with India-Pakistan's historical and current ties. Reviewing the events and developments related to the Kashmir conflict, cross-border terrorism, and cross-border issues, we concluded that significant numbers of casualties are one of the main results thereof. Stepping on it and another conclusion of ours, namely that Kashmir has remained a major issue in India-Pakistan relations in the present, we proved right the remaining part of the second sentence of our first specific hypothesis, according to which the rivalry has preserved its destructive character throughout the years and remains a serious challenge to India nowadays. With this, we have entirely confirmed the rightness of our first specific hypothesis. Therefore, the rivalry between India and Pakistan is inherited from the colonial past but has preserved its destructive character and remains a serious challenge to India nowadays.

Regarding India's domestic problems nowadays, they are strongly connected with India-Pakistan's historical and current relations, i.e., the rivalry causes them, and they constitute a severe threat to India's global ambitions. As stated in the formulation of the problem part of the introductory chapter, the rivalry is of significant importance not only for the relationship between India and Pakistan but also for the developments in South Asia, Asia, the Asia-Pacific region, the Indo-Pacific region, and the whole world. Also, in the literature review part, we have referred to publications by Sil, Amir-ud-Din, Sajjad and Aziz and by the Center for Preventive Action, according to which there is a need for rapprochement, change of the relationship, and meaningful peace negotiation between the two neighbours, as there is a need to prevent proliferation of nuclear weapons, to minimise the potential of a nuclear war and to ensure stability in South Asia.⁴⁵⁵ Based upon that, and although the reference to T. V. Paul in the literature review part that the rivalry between two states, which are in an asymmetric dyad and engaged in conflict, can endure for a long time without a resolution,⁴⁵⁶ our conclusion regarding the future of the rivalry is that confrontation and wars between India and Pakistan, including nuclear war, can be avoided, and efforts should be made to prevent them. These efforts may only be successful in the case of active participation by both countries concerned, reasonable and responsible approach of their leadership, and practical mediation efforts by external factors.

In the third chapter of our work, we focused on two themes, namely, the involvement of India in the Indo-Pacific region and the implications of the war in Ukraine on this involvement. Our objective was to prove right our second specific hypothesis, according to which the engagement of India in the Indo-Pacific region and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) enhances its global political, economic, and military role and helps reduce the scale of the India-Pakistan rivalry's capacity to contain that role. To achieve this, we consecutively studied the existing views regarding the geographic scope of the Indo-Pacific region, the Indo-Pacific concepts of India, the USA and other major players, including by comparatively analysing India's concept vis-à-vis the concepts of the USA and the other *major powers*, the results of India's implementation of its Indo-Pacific concept, i.e. the results of New Delhi's engagement in this region, and the implications of the war in Ukraine on India's planning vis-à-vis its future positioning in it. By doing so, we stepped on our conclusions from the summary of the literature review part, and following our theoretical framework, we made additional conclusions.

We first noted the growing importance of the Indo-Pacific region in terms of population, economy and military strength, as well as the vital interest of India and other *major powers* in it, and the fact that the term Indo-Pacific has already imposed itself and in this regard, we decided to stick to India's understanding of the scope of the region which includes countries of vital to New Delhi interest. One of our conclusions was that eight countries and one regional organisation, at a minimum, either have strategies on the region or are actively engaged with it, that they all compete for better positions within it, and that security issues play an essential role in this context.

We also concluded that India implements its concept to assist its defence and national interests and to respond to the related ambitions, that by doing so, India imposes itself as a vital factor in the region, and that New Delhi's concept evolves and is being carried out in practice in the framework of

⁴⁵⁵ See *supra* notes 3, 4 and 5.

⁴⁵⁶ See *supra* notes 7 and 53.

initiatives such as SAGAR⁴⁵⁷, IPRD⁴⁵⁸, IPOI⁴⁵⁹. Analysing the currently existing concepts comparatively, we concluded that although differing in terms of geographic boundaries of the Indo-Pacific region, countries included in it, and their formulas, the concepts of India and the USA do not confront each other.

As regards the other *major powers*, all of them, apart from China, see India positively from the point of view of possible interaction in the region, and all of them, including China, recognise, officially or de facto, the growing importance of India in the region and worldwide. In this context, it was also concluded that the objectives of India are to achieve its goals, to increase its role, and to build its security order in the region; this is proved as the right approach by the concrete results achieved in the process of the implementation of SAGAR and IPOI, that these results confirm that India engages itself more potent and more effectively in the region and emerges as a significant player in this region and across the world, and that Washington needs to amend its strategy to get aboard India. The latter is being explained by many facts, such as New Delhi and Washington being strategic partners but not allies, India opting for preserving its strategic autonomy and cooperating instead of acting jointly, India's vision of *inclusive* and *not directed at anyone* concept and its preference for *multipolar Asia* and *multipolar world*. The war in Ukraine only strengthened the arguments in favour of a multipolar approach in the framework of the Indo-Pacific region.

Amongst our other conclusions were that in implementing its concept, India is firmly committed to and actively engaged in the activities and processes in the Indo-Pacific region and QUAD; it has participated in numerous activities which have produced a lot of concrete results, the engagement of New Delhi is getting more potent and more effective while increasing its importance and role in the region and globally in line with its regional and global ambitions. On the other hand, China's engagement with India in the region materialises its strategic intentions to establish ties with many countries, manage relations with neighbours, expand its neighbourhood policy, remain outside block politics, pursue its strategic autonomy and serve its economic and security interests.

We finally concluded that the war in Ukraine has further highlighted India's involvement in the Indo-Pacific and its regional and global weight. Returning to our second specific hypothesis, we concluded that the examples of India's participation in activities and the concrete results achieved therein prove that India is strongly and effectively involved in the Indo-Pacific region and the QUAD and that this robust and effective engagement enhances India's role in the region and globally. In addition, the US Indo-Pacific concepts of 2018 and 2022 reserve a prominent place for India. These documents speak of India's leading role in maintaining the security of the Indian Ocean and of its continued rise and regional leadership.

Through these arguments, we prove India's increasing political, economic, and military role as a consequence of its engagement in the region and, respectively, the rightfulness of the first sentence of this hypothesis. We then assumed that supposing India's rivalry with Pakistan contains New Delhi's

⁴⁵⁷ A backronym or reverse acronym which stands for Security and Growth for All in the Region.

⁴⁵⁸ The Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD) is the apex-level international conference convened annually by the Indian Navy.

⁴⁵⁹ Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) is an initiative of the Government of India that builds upon the SAGAR.

role in the region and worldwide. India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific and the QUAD increases this role and, consequentially, makes up for the damage suffered and reduces the capacity of the rivalry to contain this role. By this argument, we proved the second part, and, therefore, the whole of this second specific hypothesis, right. Given the latter, we can now claim that the engagement of India in the Indo-Pacific region and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) enhances its global political, economic, and military role and helps reduce the scale of the India–Pakistan rivalry's capacity to contain that role.

The fourth chapter dealt with India's participation in minilateral formats. Our objective was to prove right our third specific hypothesis, which though competing to some extent with India's own regional initiatives, the engagement of New Delhi in minilateral formats, such as the SCO, the BRICS, and the East Asia Summit, provides additional political, economic, and security leverage in its quest for strategic goals. To achieve this, we studied India's involvement in the activities of the three formats, and we tried to understand how this involvement presents further opportunities for the achievement of New Delhi's strategic objectives. To do so, we focused on five points of interest, such as the importance of the minilateral format, the relative importance of the participating countries, the relative importance of India as a participating country, India's involvement in the activities of the format and the results achieved thereof, and consequences of the participation of India in the format for the achievement of its strategic goals. We also stepped on the existing knowledge, as outlined in the literature review part, and based our analysis on the theoretical framework, as suggested in the introductory chapter, and we drew additional conclusions.

Proving the rightfulness of the third specific assumption was completed in two steps. To check the first part of the hypothesis, i.e., whether India's participation in the above-mentioned minilateral formats competes with its own regional initiatives, we studied the availability of the three types of resources, financial, human, and time, needed for India's participation in a concrete format or initiative. We concluded that India's involvement in minilateral formats competes with India's participation in initiatives in the framework of the Indo-Pacific region, thus confirming the rightfulness of the first part of our third specific hypothesis. To prove the second part of the assumption we applied in the case of each of the three minilateral formats, our theoretical and methodological framework, according to which the increase in the number of activities and initiatives within a format India has participated in indicates a more substantial involvement of this country in the format and the achievement of concrete results confirms a more effective and responsive to New Delhi's regional and global aspirations involvement in the format. Following our above-described model of five points of interest, we concluded that in the case of all the three formats, the SCO, the BRICS, and the EAS, we speak of an important organisation or grouping in the system of international relations, with many of the countries associated with each of the three formats, including India, having an important status worldwide from a political, economic size, or population size points of view.

We also concluded that India shows a strong commitment to the activities of these three formats and participates actively in them and that a lot of concrete results were achieved, the main amongst them being India presenting and defending its positions on a considerable number of issues, getting greater leverage in terms of decision-making, defending its national interests, and involving stronger

and more effectively in the formats. We then concluded that, as a logical consequence of the latter, India will increase its role and weight regionally and globally and its potential to achieve its strategic objectives following its ambitions. With this last conclusion, we proved that the second part of our third specific hypothesis is also right in the case of India's participation in all three formats, i.e., the SCO, the BRICS, and the EAS. Having thus proved right the two parts of the assumption, and, therefore, the whole of it, we can now state that though competing to some extent with India's own regional initiatives, the engagement of New Delhi in minilateral formats, such as the SCO, the BRICS, and the East Asia Summit, provides additional political, economic, and security leverage in its quest for strategic goals. Another essential conclusion is that India is challenged by severe competition from China in its pursuit of regional and global leadership.

In the fifth chapter, we looked in depth at the influence of the rivalry between India and Pakistan on India's regional and global ambitions. The objective was to prove right our general hypothesis, which stipulates that the India-Pakistan rivalry significantly complicates India's efforts to pursue its ambitions to establish itself as a significant political, economic, and military power regionally and globally. To achieve this objective, we studied the implications of militarisation, arms race, and military confrontation for India's economy, the impact of the activities of Pakistan-based militant groups on India's economic, political, and security situation, the impact of India's rivalry with Pakistan, as represented by the slowdown of the economy and the worsened political and security situation of India, on New Delhi's regional ambitions, and the influence of the rivalry on New Delhi's global aspirations. Building on what has already been done in the introductory chapter of our work and applying our theoretical and methodological framework, we aimed to prove that rivalry negatively influences these ambitions. In doing so, we concluded that the continued militarisation of India provokes a respective militarisation of Pakistan, does not prevent the possibility of a new confrontation or war between the two countries, sustains the Pakistan-related challenges to India's security, and only causes a slowdown of India's and Pakistan's economies. We then concluded that militarisation and the arms race provoke escalating conflict and a *security dilemma* between the two countries. This negatively affects the security environment and economic development of India and Pakistan. The slowdown of their economies consists of slower economic growth than what would have corresponded to their potential. The reason for that is that the money from the budget is diverted to the defence budget rather than to the other sectors of the economy.

We also concluded that India should reallocate funds, resources, and efforts from militarisation to economic development, applying thus a neo-mercantilist approach rather than the currently used and leading to the militarisation realist one and that this will guarantee its security and wealth and serve its interests and ambitions related to regional and global leadership. Moving on to the global level, we finally concluded that if the two neighbours give up militarisation, focus on non-defence industries, and conduct meaningful negotiations between them, they will resolve the issue of power rivalry and that resolving the issue of power rivalry will help resolve the issue of economic development and will change the existing order of *who gets what*, and also that as a result of the latter India and Pakistan will face new perspectives for economic growth and development and for positioning regionally and globally and that India will better defend itself and will also establish itself as a major player in the region and worldwide. Going further, we concluded that the activities of the Pakistan-based militant

groups negatively affect India's economic, political, and security situation and that the results of these terrorist activities, as represented by killings, injuries, and destruction, cause, as in the case of militarisation, a slowdown of the Indian economy. Having next identified India's regional ambitions, we afterwards concluded that India's ambition for a more significant diplomatic role in the region is negatively affected by its complicated relations with Pakistan and China, that the rivalry with Pakistan and China's economic aspirations negatively affects New Delhi's regional and global ambitions in the field of economy, that India's regional ambitions in the field of defence are negatively affected by its rivalry with Pakistan and China, and, respectively, that India's ambitions for regional hegemony and dominance in diplomacy, economy, and military power are negatively affected by its rivalry with Pakistan and that avoiding such a negative development would only be possible by the use of diplomatic means. These last conclusions of ours confirmed that the rivalry with Pakistan negatively influences India's regional ambitions and prevents New Delhi from being a major player in regional and world affairs, which confirmation we proved the rightfulness of our general hypothesis in the part related to the regional affairs, namely that the rivalry between India and Pakistan has a significant capacity to complicate India's efforts to pursue its ambitions to establish itself as a major political, economic, and military power in the region.

Having finally noted that India is recognised as a regional power with global ambitions and having identified these global ambitions, we concluded that the rivalry with Pakistan and other challenges emanating from the situation in South Asia complicate India's global ambition for a permanent UNSC membership, that India achieving its global ambition to become a global manufacturing hub would not be feasible due to the slowdown of the Indian economy provoked by the rivalry with Pakistan, that this slowdown results from the continued militarisation, decreases the effectiveness of the country's involvement in regional and global affairs, diminishes its capacity to perform as a power, and prevents it from achieving its global ambitions by negatively affecting it, and that all existing problems of the Indian economy come as a consequence of the ongoing militarisation. By the latter conclusions, we confirmed that the influence of New Delhi's rivalry with Pakistan on India's global ambitions is negative, thus proving right our general hypothesis in the theses part related to India's global ambitions, namely that the rivalry has a significant capacity to complicate India's efforts to pursue its ambitions to establish itself as a major political, economic, and military power globally. With this, we have confirmed the rightfulness of our general hypothesis in the cases of regional and global ambitions, meaning it in its entirety.

In conclusion, given that our approach was to validate our research assumptions and to answer our research question, we may now claim that, after having proved the rightfulness of our three specific hypotheses in the second, third, and fourth chapters of our work, and of our general hypothesis in the fifth chapter, we, gave an affirmative answer to our research question. We confirmed that the rivalry between India and Pakistan negatively affects India's efforts and ambitions to establish itself as a major political, economic, and military power regionally and globally. This explicit confirmation represents our modest contribution to the existing literature and knowledge about our research topic. Adding our work to the existing literature and deepening and expanding the existing knowledge by providing this incontestable confirmation explains the scientific significance of our research.

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