



Old enemies make new friends: Caucasus and India-Pakistan rivalry

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Armenia and India can no longer depend on Russia's arm supplies. Their problem is not exceptional. Russia cannot both fight the West in Ukraine and act as a security guarantor of global consequence. Not even in the region it regards as the 'Near Abroad' across its Eurasian frontier. Nowhere is the Russian vacuum more pronounced than defence procurement. With a 16 per cent share of the global military procurement market, Russia is an arms dealer second only to the United States. Moscow expected a 26 per cent drop in arms sales revenue for 2022, but the trend is accelerating.² With shortages in its arms inventory, Russia's military value chains are withering.³ As the war in Ukraine is protracted, the world is divided between those who side with Russia, oppose Russia, or unapologetically put their national interests first. Those previously reliant on Russia for their security are in need of new friends.

Armenia has more than an 80 per cent dependency on Russian military platforms and is playing catch up in an enduring arms race with Azerbaijan. Stepping in to fill the Russian vacuum, Pakistan

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² Jennifer Kavanagh and Frederic Wehrey, Russia can't fight a war and still arm the world, *Foreign Affairs*, August 2022, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/russian-federation/russia-cant-fight-war-and-still-arm-world?check_logged_in=1&utm_medium=promo_email&utm_source=lo_flows&utm_campaign=registered_user_welcome&utm_term=email_1&utm_content=20230201; Defence News, Russia forecasts drop in arms export revenue, August 2022, <https://www.defensenews.com/global/europe/2022/08/29/russia-forecasts-drop-in-arms-export-revenue/>

³ John Ismay, Russian cruise missiles were made just months ago despite sanctions, *The New York Times*, December 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/05/us/politics/cruise-missiles-russia-ukraine-sanctions.html>; BBC, War in Ukraine: Is Russia's stock of weapons running low?, October 2022, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-63247287>

and India have become stakeholders in the Caucasus. This paper is founded on interviews with ten discussants of Pakistani, Indian, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Iranian, Turkish, and US origin, who have largely guided my exploration of secondary sources. The main purpose of this analysis is to assess the 'systemic significance' of Indian and Pakistani involvement in the Caucasus as a case study of a more systematically disruptive process, namely the emerging competition to fill the Russian security vacuum.

The paper initially examines the significance of Pakistani engagement in Karabakh, then looks at the emerging Indian-Armenian security partnership. Last but not least, we review the new dangers emanating for Euro-Atlantic security in this emerging security landscape.

Timeline of events discussed:

2019

- **July:** Turkey receives delivery of the Russian-made S-400 surface-to-air missile system, triggering its removal from the US F-35 jet fighter programme; and Washington blocks Turkish attack helicopter deal with Pakistan.
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2020

- **September:** Kavkaz Military War Games in the Russian Caucasus; Azerbaijan and India withdraw their participation; and an Azerbaijani offensive starts the second Karabakh War.
 - **November:** The second Karabakh War ends with a Russia-mediated ceasefire agreement.
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2021

- **April:** Turkey receives official notification of its removal from the US F-35 programme.
 - **May:** First reports of Azerbaijan entering South Armenian territory.
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2022

- **February:** Russia invades Ukraine (24); Pakistan's PM is visiting Moscow; and Pakistan formally cancels Attack Helicopter deal with Turkey.
- **July:** Turkey mediates the Black Sea Grain deal between Russia and Ukraine; and Romney-Shaheen Bill tabled in the US Senate, requiring the Biden Administration to develop a Black Sea Strategy.
- **September:** India and Armenia announce major defence deal; PM Nikol Pashinyan meets Modi in New Delhi; and violent clashes between Armenian and Azerbaijani troops in Syunik, Southern Armenia.
- **December:** Joint Azerbaijani-Turkish Military Exercises.

The friend of a friend is a friend: Turkey, Azerbaijan and Pakistan

Pakistan's security relationship with Azerbaijan is of tactical rather than strategic significance. According to a former RUSI analyst that closely tracks Pakistan's military partnerships, Umer Karim, it appears that Islamabad dispatched military advisors to Azerbaijan during the 44-day war in Karabakh, passing on mountainous warfare experience acquired during its counter insurgency operations in the Swat Valley and the broader Malakand division. The geography of that terrain is directly comparable to Nagorno-Karabakh.

Secondary sources suggest Pakistan has been training Azerbaijani military units since 2016, well in advance of the conflict in Karabakh.⁴ From a military perspective, the significance of the Karabakh conflict is the tactical enactment of Turkey's Network-Centric strategic concept (NCW), providing an opportunity to pilot the tactical integration of new command and control, military, and intelligence systems.⁵ In Umer Karim's words, "the new interface of technology, the human factor, and the terrain in Karabakh is likely to be studied for years to come and has in that sense marked a 'Spanish Civil War moment'."

For Azerbaijan, Turkey is a crucial defence partner, both in preparation for the Karabakh war, during the conflict, and thereafter. Ankara extended to Baku an all-inclusive defence package:⁶ training, planning, consulting, procurement, and a theoretically temporary but continuously renewed presence of a military base.⁷ This turn-key solution neatly fits the 'one nation two states approach'.⁸

Azerbaijan's partnership to Turkey is unique but not exclusive. Turkey has developed partnerships of similar significance with Qatar and Pakistan. Turkey has deployed troops in Qatar since 2017 as a deterrent force designed to discourage Saudi and Emirati intervention.⁹ This defence relationship has deepened with the direct incorporation of Turkish troops in the monarchy's military and Qatari investment in defence systems development.¹⁰ Pakistan is a special partner but not for the same reasons as oil-rich Azerbaijan and Qatar. For historical reasons, Pakistan has an outsized military-industrial complex that vastly outpaces the country's development. This military establishment has found a strategic partner in Turkey for the development, co-production, and marketing of an ever-expanding range of strategic air, land, and sea defence systems.¹¹

⁴ Mona Kanwal Sheikh, New conflict lines in Pakistan's tribal areas, Danish Institute for International Studies, July 2018, <https://www.diiis.dk/en/research/new-conflict-lines-in-pakistans-tribal-areas>; See also: Shuja Nawaz, Learning by Doing: The Pakistan Army's Experience with Counterinsurgency, Atlantic Council, February 2011, https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/126743/020111_ACUS_Nawaz_PakistanCounterinsurgency.pdf

⁵ The International Institute for Strategic Powers, The Nagorno Karabakh conflict: military lessons for middle powers, YouTube, December 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xf8f26mY9fs>

⁶ Botakoz Kazbek, The Turkish 'All-Inclusive' Package of Military Service in the Nagorno Karabakh Case of 2020, The Defence Horizon, January 2022, <https://www.thedefencehorizon.org/post/the-turkish-all-inclusive-package-of-military-service-and-the-nagorno-karabakh-case-2020>

⁷ TRT World, Turkiye extends mandate of troops deployed in Azerbaijan for one more year, November 2022, <https://www.trtworld.com/turkey/t%C3%BCrkiye-extends-mandate-of-troops-deployed-in-azerbaijan-for-one-more-year-62149>; Aza Babayan, Russia warns of response to Turkish military base in Azerbaijan, Azatutyun, June 2021, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31314958.html>

⁸ Cavid Veliyev, Azerbaijan-Turkiye military cooperation, Daily Sabah, December 2022, <https://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/op-ed/azerbaijan-turkiye-military-cooperation-one-nation-one-army>

⁹ Economist Intelligence Unit, Qatar and Turkey pledge closer defence ties, September 2019, <https://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=1758481359&Country=Qatar&topic=Politics&subtopic=Forecast&subsubtopic=International%20Relations&u=1&pid=1858473769&oid=1858473769>

¹⁰ Zoltan Barany, Foreign Contract Soldiers in the Gulf, Carnegie Middle East Centre, February 2020, <https://carnegie-mec.org/2020/02/05/foreign-contract-soldiers-in-gulf-pub-80979>; Engin Yuksel and Hasim Tekines, Turkey's love-in with Qatar, Clingendael, January 2021, <https://www.clingendael.org/pub/2021/drivers-of-turkish-qatari-relations/>

¹¹ Muhammad Akmar Zahir, Pakistan and Turkey are Shaping New Era of Cooperation, Pakistan Today, June 2022, <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/06/22/pakistan-and-turkey-are-shaping-new-era-of-cooperation/>; Burak Ege Bekdil, BMC moving ahead on Altay tank for Turkey amid supply chain questions, Defence News, October 2022, <https://www.defensenews.com/global/2022/10/31/bmc-moving-ahead-on-altay-tank-for-turkey-amid-supply-chain->

Beyond procurement, what is important to note is that the states forming deep security partnerships with Turkey acquire a *de facto* systems interoperability between them, of the kind analysts have come to expect by countries dependent on Russia or the United States. This also lays the foundations for broader diplomatic cooperation. For instance, Turkey's much-acclaimed Bayraktar drone system now lays the foundations for a deeper relationship between Pakistani and Azerbaijani forces that train together under the stewardship of the Bayraktar-Akinci corporation.¹² Ankara can also expect diplomatic alignment.

Islamabad has recently been taking a leaf out of Ankara's foreign policy playbook, emerging as the most significant source of military procurement for Ukraine outside NATO, providing Kyiv with rockets, ammunition, and critical logistical support in the war against Russia.¹³ Very much like Turkey, Pakistan is also sure to counterbalance this outreach with gestures of goodwill towards Moscow.¹⁴ For its part, Turkey is taking a leaf from Pakistan's post-colonial insistence on self-reliance, claiming the exceptional status of a so-called 'middle power,' whose alliances cut across NATO policy lines.¹⁵ For years, Ankara's relationship to Russia has been framed by a 'Turkey first' rationale, without regard for US interests.¹⁶ The most frequently cited example is Turkey's decision to procure the Russian-made S-400 surface-to-air missile system, which triggered Ankara's exclusion from the US F-35 jet fighter programme. This Turkish-American standoff echoes the parallel erosion of the Pakistani-American partnership, as Islamabad moves ever closer to China.¹⁷

questions/; The Express Tribune, Turkey pledges all support to boost Pakistan's military infrastructure," May 2022, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2357514/turkey-pledges-all-support-to-boost-pakistans-military-infrastructure>; See also: Franz-Stefan Gady, Turkey to Upgrade Pakistan Navy Attack Sub, March 2018, The Diplomat, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/03/turkey-to-upgrade-pakistan-navy-attack-sub/>; Franz-Stefan Gady, Pakistan's New Main Battle Tank? Turkey's Altay Tank Enters Mass Production, The Diplomat, March 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/03/pakistans-new-main-battle-tank-turkeys-altay-tank-enters-mass-production>; Franz-Stefan Gady, Pakistan's New Main Battle Tank? Turkey's Altay Tank Enters Mass Production, The Diplomat, March 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/03/pakistans-new-main-battle-tank-turkeys-altay-tank-enters-mass-production/>

¹² Valius Venckunas, Has a Bayraktar TB2 been spotted in Pakistan?, Aviation News, June 2022, <https://www.aerotime.aero/articles/31212-bayraktar-drone-spotted-pakistan>; Daily Pakistan, Pakistan tests Turkish-made Bayraktar TB2 drone in latest air exercise, September 2022, <https://en.dailypakistan.com.pk/29-Sep-2022/pakistan-tests-turkish-made-bayraktar-tb2-drone-in-latest-air-exercise>; Sakshi Tiwari, 1st Customer of 'Super Bayraktar UAVs,' Pakistan Completes Training on Turkish 'Cutting Edge' Akinci Drones, The EurAsian Times, October 2022, <https://eurasianimes.com/1st-customer-of-super-bayraktar-uavs-pakistan-completes-training/>

¹³ Chatham House, Russia's War: how will it affect the region's future, December 2022, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/events/all/conference/russias-war-how-will-it-shape-regions-future>; Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, Pakistan set to dispatch 159 containers of ammunition to Ukraine, The Economic Times, January 2023, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/pakistan-set-to-dispatch-159-containers-of-ammunition-to-ukraine/articleshow/96837448.cms?from=mdr>; Elisabeth Goselin-Malo, Pakistan, Ukraine, and the Race for Third-Party Ammunition, The War Zone, October 2022, <https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/pakistan-ukraine-and-the-race-for-third-party-ammunition>; Ahmed Saxena, Twitter, August 2022, <https://twitter.com/AskAnshul/status/1564958969185316865?s=20&t=nv0XFK1iDDHzyRvJmiGMkg>

¹⁴ Asad Hashim, Pakistani PM Khan meets Putin amid Ukraine Invasion, Al Jazeera, February 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/25/pakistan-imran-putin-russia-ukraine-invasion>; Shamil Shams, Why Imran Khan's Russia trip will further isolate Pakistan, DW, February 2022, <https://www.dw.com/en/ukraine-crisis-why-imran-khans-russia-trip-will-further-isolate-pakistan/a-60916130>

¹⁵ Lerna K. Yanik, The Making of Turkish exceptionalism: the west, the rest and unreconciled issues from the past, Turkish Studies, December 2022, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14683849.2022.2159816>; See also: Melha Benli Altunisik, The trajectory of a modified middle power: an attempt to make sense of Turkey's foreign policy in its centennial, Turkish Studies, November 2022, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14683849.2022.2159816>

¹⁶ Congressional Research Service, Turkey (Turkiye): Background and Turkish Relations in Brief, January 2023, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R44000>; TRT World, US Formally Removes Turkey from F-35 Programme, April 2021, <https://www.trtworld.com/turkey/us-formally-removes-turkey-from-f-35-programme-46112>

¹⁷ Benjamin Brimelow, The US and China are picking sides in one of the world's most dangerous rivalries, Insider, March 2022, <https://www.businessinsider.com/us-and-china-pick-sides-in-tense-india-pakistan-rivalry-2022-3?r=US&IR=T>

Washington increasingly sees Turkey and Pakistan as part of the same problem. As soon as Turkey concluded the S-400 deal with the Kremlin, the US blocked a \$1.5bn Pakistani-Turkish procurement deal for attack helicopters, withholding access to the US-made LHTEC engine. While the press would often describe the event as “an American reprisal,” the US underscored its fear of technology contagion from Turkey to China via Pakistan. The Atlantic Council’s senior fellow Kamal Alam recalls that this is a well-founded threat, as Pakistan facilitated Chinese access to the debris of a Black Hawk attack helicopter wrecked during the special operation to capture Osama Bin Laden in Afghanistan.¹⁸ Meanwhile, Umer Karim suggests that Pakistan considers Azerbaijan as a possible client for the JF-17 co-developed by Pakistan’s Aeronautical Complex (PAC) and China’s Chengdu Aircraft Corporation (CAC).¹⁹ He also notes that Turkey is also in the market for a jet fighter. Crucially, Pakistan adds to the Turkish power consortium the threats and opportunities that come with Chinese cooperation.

This Chinese threat is more significant following the 2016 coup attempt in Turkey, when a circle of ‘Eurasian officers’ in Turkish naval and army circles advocated for a new policy vis-à-vis Russia, one that would be more informed by national interests rather than a broader Euro-Atlantic security narrative.²⁰ There is pushback in Washington, with former Supreme Allied Commander James Stavridis going as far as to publicly contemplate membership eviction from NATO.²¹ However, Washington’s tribes are divided and some analysts suggest that Turkish aspirations need to be accommodated as they are coextensive to Washington’s strategic objectives.²² In an interview with James Carafano, a research fellow at Heritage Foundation, I was told that the July 2022 Romney-Shaheen Bill reflects a bipartisan school of thought that considers Turkey and Azerbaijan as indispensable partners.²³

The verdict is out as to the alignment of Turkish and NATO interests. However, the war in Ukraine appears to provide Turkey with more scope to negotiate from a position of power. During a recent Chatham House event dedicated to ‘Russia’s War in Ukraine,’ Turkey was widely recognised as a strategic beneficiary.²⁴ Turkey’s middle-of-the-road positioning is challenging, precarious, but increasingly tenable.

On the one hand, Turkey is a key economic partner for Russia, in sectors such as energy, aviation, tourism, construction, food and beverage.²⁵ When dealing with the West, there are people in Ankara

¹⁸ Chris McGreal and Saeed Khan, Pakistan let China examine helicopter used in Bin Laden raid, says US, *The Guardian*, August 2011, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/aug/15/us-helicopter-pakistan-china-wreckage>

¹⁹ Parth Satam, Pakistan’s JF-17 Block-3 Fighter Surfaces With Deadly Upgrades; German Expert Compares With India’s LCA Tejas, *The Eurasian Times*, January 2023, <https://eurasianimes.com/pakistans-jf-17-block-3-fighter-surfaces-with-deadly-upgrades/>

²⁰ Ihsan Degi, Turkey’s division between East and West, *IPS*, April 2022, <https://www.ips-journal.eu/topics/democracy-and-society/turkeys-divided-public-between-the-west-and-russia-5886/>

²¹ BNE Intel, Kick Turkey out of NATO? Members will start considering it warns ex-commander, January 2023, <https://intellinews.com/kick-turkey-out-of-nato-members-will-start-considering-it-warns-ex-commander-267639/>

²² Paul Globe, Joint Azerbaijani-Turkish Military Exercises a Warning to Both Tehran and Moscow, *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol 19, Issue 184, December 2022, <https://jamestown.org/program/joint-azerbaijani-turkish-military-exercises-a-warning-to-both-tehran-and-moscow/>

²³ Shaheen, Romney Unveil New Bipartisan Bill to Establish U.S Strategy Toward Black Sea Region, July 2022, <https://www.shaheen.senate.gov/news/press/shaheen-romney-unveil-new-bipartisan-bill-to-establish-us-strategy-toward-black-sea-region>

²⁴ Chatham House, Russia War: How will it shape the region’s future?, December 2022, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/events/all/conference/russias-war-how-will-it-shape-regions-future>

²⁵ Fatma Tanis, Turkey plays a tough balancing act as it strengthens ties with Russia, *NPR*, December 2022, <https://www.npr.org/2022/12/10/1142099362/turkey-plays-a-tough-balancing-act-as-it-strengthens-ties-with-russia;> Hannah Notte and Chen Kane, Russia-Turkish Relations and Implications for U.S Strategy and Operations, *CNS Occasional Paper*, Middlebury Institute for International Studies at Monterey, November 2022, <https://nonproliferation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/op56-web-version.pdf>; David MacDougal and Rita Palfi, Despite diplomacy, Hungary & Turkey still blocking Sweden and Finland from NATO, *Euronews*, November 2022,

that would scoff at the notion of Turkey being exceptional in defying sanctions, as a number of allies allow their corporations to operate in Russia, including Unilever, Barilla, BMW, and hundreds of others.²⁶ The threat of sanctions is not credible and Ankara has been clear on its intention to pursue a ‘Turkey first’ policy in Ukraine, as indeed elsewhere. This diplomatic positioning is unsavoury for the West but entirely consistent. For instance, Turkey’s 2020 participation in Russia’s Kavkaz wargames raised eyebrows, not least because the conflict in the Donbass was ongoing.²⁷ However, Turkey reserves the right to frame its foreign policy not by reference to common liberal values but rather Islamic solidarity, Turanic brotherhood, and the national interest. That is little more than the virulent articulation of Ahmet Davutoglu’s ‘strategic depth’ theorem that characterises Turkish foreign and security policy for more than two decades.

On the other hand, Turkey has made itself indispensable to its western partners by arming Ukraine with strategic systems – particularly drones and armoured vehicles – and brokering the Black Sea grain deal.²⁸ Pakistan is adding to the Turkish offering. This new power consortium is a new player in the Caucasus, the Middle East and Africa that is likely to gain ground as their value chains evolve to fill the Russian vacuum.

Old friends and new partnerships: Armenia and India

Mirroring the Pakistan-Azerbaijan defence relationship, an Indian-Armenian partnership is emerging, largely because of the war in Ukraine. This asymmetrical relationship is once again emerging as a response to the Russian procurement vacuum but also in response to the Turkish-Pakistan power consortium in Eurasia.

Russia’s economic vacuum is clearly an opportunity in the Caucasus. In addition to taking advantage of opportunities for transit trade or securing energy at discount rates, countries like Georgia and Armenia have been able to benefit from the relocation of Russian professionals, particularly from the IT sector, who bring with them networks, infrastructure, know-how, and capital. Because these states do not have India’s or Turkey’s diplomatic clout, they face the prospect of western sanctions and entry to a new power consortium is their only chance of accommodation.²⁹

India pursues a nation-first policy trajectory in Eurasia. In an interview with Ameya Pratap Singh, an Area Studies Specialist and Managing Editor of the Statecraft, I was told that Russia continues to be the sole European power that does not suffer from the “imperialist bias,” a major advantage in Indian foreign policy discourse. Moscow and New Delhi are currently relaunching their vision of the International North South Trade Corridor (INSTC), a project that India views as an alternative to

<https://www.euronews.com/2022/11/04/hungary-and-turkey-are-the-last-two-roadblocks-to-nato-membership-for-finland-and-sweden>; Laura Pitel, Amy Kazmin, Aliz Hancock and James Politi, Alarm mounts in western capitals over Turkey’s deepening ties with Russia, Financial Times, August 2022, <https://www.ft.com/content/00badf9e-f0d9-417f-9aec-9ac1c2207835>

²⁶ BNE Intel, Less than 9% of foreign companies pull out of Russia, January 2023, https://intellinews.com/rexit-refusniki-gmbh-less-than-9-of-foreign-companies-pull-out-of-russia-267519/?source=russia&utm_source=Newsletter&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=Edpicks&_eid=0c0979498d6865e8ab5f169a587e0c62

²⁷ John C. K. Daly, Russia’s Kavkaz 2020: International Participation and Regional Security Implications, Eurasia Daily Monitor, Volume 17, Issue 126, September 2020, <https://jamestown.org/program/russias-kavkaz-2020-international-participation-and-regional-security-implications/>

²⁸ Sibel Duz, Unpacking the Debate on Turkish Drones, SETA Report, April 2022, <https://setav.org/en/assets/uploads/2022/04/R196En.pdf>

²⁹ Ani Mljumyan, Armenian trade with Russia raises questions about re-exports, Eurasianet, August 2022, <https://eurasianet.org/armenian-trade-with-russia-raises-questions-about-re-exports>; JAM News, Can Armenia and Russia be sanctioned for helping Russia bypass international sanctions?, July 2022, <https://jam-news.net/op-ed-can-armenia-and-georgia-be-sanctioned-for-helping-russia-bypass-international-restrictions/>

China's Belt and Road Initiative.³⁰ This project has more political than business support, a fact that reflects a broader diplomatic consideration in New Delhi. As argued by Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence Coordinator in India, Gulshan Sachdeva, India is still trying to assimilate the aftershocks of NATO's withdrawal from Afghanistan, which happened with little regard for New Delhi's interests. Subsequently, India is unapologetic about reaping the benefits of new opportunities to cooperate with Russia, securing oil and gas at discounted rates and stepping in to carve out a bigger share of the Russian export market in pharmaceuticals, food and beverage, and other sectors.³¹

However, the Russian power vacuum presents both a threat and an opportunity for India. A 2020 working paper analysing India's military platforms indicated a 70-to-80 per cent dependency on Moscow for anything from AK-47 and AK-203 assault rifles to tanks, air defence systems, helicopters, fighter jets, frigates, submarines, and an aircraft carrier.³² For New Delhi, the Russians were a trusted defence partner offering cheaper systems, on better financial terms, and were open to technology sharing. As a major client accounting for just under ten per cent of the global procurement industry (2016 to 2020), India has for decades secured privileged access to Russia's most sophisticated systems, retaining its ambition for an indigenous military-industrial complex on track.³³ Russia's forced retreat from the global procurement market is therefore a challenge for India's military-industry, calling for the accommodation and evolution of its arms systems.

India's emerging relationship to Armenia provides a picture of a different kind of foreign and security policy, in which the indigenous military-industrial complex will be seeking to play a global role rather than merely regimenting traditional self-reliance. Russia has historically been the main supplier of defence systems to post-Soviet states, including Armenia and Azerbaijan. This legacy partnership has been neither symmetric nor founded on the 'neutrality' of Moscow as a collective security provider.³⁴ Russian arms supplies have been an indication of a broader power relationship to Moscow. In Russia, various oligarchic and intelligence groups will typically lobby for a better deal and, on occasion, they will succeed. For instance, since 2013 Yerevan was able to secure military systems on prices at par with the Russian Armed Forces and on Russian credit.³⁵

Even after the devastating Armenian defeat in the 44-day Karabakh War, the substance of this partnership with the Russian 'elder brother' remained unchallenged, until the war in Ukraine exhausted the Russian inventory.³⁶ There is evidence to suggest that arms paid for by Armenia have

³⁰ Global Infrastructure Connectivity Alliance, International North South Transport Corridor, <https://www.gica.global/initiative/international-north-south-transport-corridor-insta>

³¹ Gulshan Sachdeva, India-Russia Ties: time to go back to the rupee-ruble arrangement, Moneycontrol, March 2022, <https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/opinion/india-russia-ties-its-time-to-go-back-to-the-rupee-ruble-arrangement-8256051.html>

³² The Economist, India is cutting back its reliance on Russian arms, April 2022, https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2022/04/14/india-is-cutting-back-its-reliance-on-russian-arms?utm_medium=cpc.adword.pd&utm_source=google&ppccampaignID=18156330227&ppcadID=&utm_campaign=a.22brand_pmax&utm_content=conversion.direct-response.anonymous&gclid=CjwKCAiA5sieBhBnEiwAR9oh2o9EgLNSOIXapeGgDQDIITzfSf_C_CBT7F9Z7Ca-3cZp9zL5Wt3QHxoCRIMQAvD_BwE&gclid=aw.ds

³³ Outlook India, Ukraine Crisis: India's defence dependence on Russia complicates calls for realignment, March 2022, <https://www.outlookindia.com/national/india-s-defence-dependence-on-russia-complicates-calls-of-rebalancing-news-184764>; Christophe Jaffrelot and Aadil Sud, Indian Military Dependence on Russia, Institut Montaigne, July 2022, <https://www.institutmontaigne.org/en/analysis/indian-military-dependence-russia>

³⁴ Lynn Berry, Russia defends selling arms to both Azerbaijan and Armenia, AP News, April 2016, <https://apnews.com/article/21dd4e22cf944d95867c6102dfe783a7>

³⁵ Robert M. Cutler, Russian Arms Sales to Armenia and Their Geopolitical Effects, Geopolitical Monitor, September 2020, <https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/russian-arms-sales-to-armenia-and-their-geopolitical-effects/>

³⁶ Sargis Harutunyan, Russian Official Says Armenia Signs Arms Supply Contracts in Moscow, Azatutyun, August 2021, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31428119.html>

been diverted to the Ukrainian front.³⁷ That delay is not merely an inconvenience, but presents an imminent threat to the country's national security as Yerevan faces the incursion of Azerbaijani troops as deep as 140 sq/km in the country's southern Syunik region. The Azerbaijani demand is the creation of a corridor linking Baku to its Nakhchivan exclave, and thereon, Turkey. Armenia cannot face up to this demand militarily, at least not as long as Russia remains its sole arms supplier.³⁸ Furthermore, Armenia cannot access state-of-the-art systems available to Azerbaijan as long as Russia's military-industrial complex is hit by successive waves of sanctions.³⁹

In this Armenian crisis India has found an opportunity. New Delhi's military-industrial complex can step in and deliver state-of-the-art Russian military platforms with minimum disruption, snatching the Kremlin's procurement clientele in every continent, from Uganda and Malaysia to Venezuela and Armenia.⁴⁰ From an Indian perspective, a client like Armenia is perhaps not a game-changer but if you are aiming to maintain, upgrade, and evolve Russian platforms indigenously that is a step in the right direction.⁴¹ Indeed, Armenia is accessing a range of strategically significant platforms such as howitzers, rocket launchers, and surface-to-air missile defence systems, some of whom India has developed with Israel or France.⁴²

Even prior to the 2020 War in Nagorno-Karabakh, Yerevan identified India as a partner that could facilitate a qualitative upgrade of its systems at cost-effective prices, placing an order for Indian radars and, more recently, the first-ever international order for Indian drones.⁴³ Turkey claims that France has been supplying Armenia with arms, but there is little evidence of a significant deal.

³⁷ Zaman, Amberin, Turkey rises, Russia fades as Iran and Azerbaijan clash over Armenia, Al-Monitor, January 2023, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2023/01/turkey-rises-russia-fades-iran-and-azerbaijan-clash-over-armenia>

³⁸ Laurence Broers, Is Azerbaijan planning a long-term presence in Armenia, Chatham House, September 2022, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2022/09/azerbaijan-planning-long-term-presence-armenia>; Arshaluis Mgdesyan, Attacks on Armenia highlight ongoing disputes over 'corridor' for Azerbaijan, Eurasianet, September 2022, <https://eurasianet.org/attacks-on-armenia-highlight-ongoing-disputes-over-corridor-for-azerbaijan>;

Massis Post, Armenia in Search of Modern Weaponry, October 2022, <https://massispost.com/2022/10/armenia-in-search-of-modern-weaponry/>

³⁹ Press Statement, US Department of State, Targeting Russia's Global Military Procurement Network and Kremlin-Linked Networks, Anthony Blinken, Secretary of State, November 2022, <https://www.state.gov/targeting-russias-global-military-procurement-network-and-kremlin-linked-networks/>; Armen Mitzoyan, US Sanctions Armenia-Based Company for Aiding Russia's Military, heqt, September 2022, <https://hetq.am/en/article/148842>

⁴⁰ OP India, Russia asks Indian companies to provide parts and services to their defence equipment customers amid Ukraine crisis and sanctions, August 2022, <https://www.opindia.com/2022/08/russia-asks-indian-defence-companies-for-spare-parts-and-servicing-help/>; Snesh Alex Philip, As Russia-Ukraine war lingers, India goes for indigenisation of imported defence spares, The Print, March 2022, <https://theprint.in/defence/as-russia-ukraine-war-lingers-india-goes-for-indigenisation-of-imported-defence-spares/886916/>; JAM News, Our ally isn't fulfilling its obligations to supply weapons – Prime Minister of Armenia, September 2022, <https://jam-news.net/our-ally-isnt-fulfilling-its-obligations-to-supply-weapons-prime-minister-of-armenia/>

⁴¹ Paul Iddon, India as an ideal candidate for improving Armenia's Su-30 fighter jets, Forbes, January 2023, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/pauliddon/2023/01/11/india-is-an-ideal-candidate-for-improving-armenias-su-30-fighter-jets/?sh=2aeadd973403>

⁴² Aditiya Bhan, Armenia-India relations: Budding partnership benefits New Delhi, ORF, December 2022, <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/armenia-india-relations/>; Vijaiinder K. Thakur, At par with Himars! IAF veteran decodes why Armenia opted for Pinaka MBRLS to fight Azerbaijan, The Eurasian Times, October 2022, <https://eurasianetimes.com/at-par-with-himars-iaf-veteran-explains-why-armenia-pinaka/>; Christos Ktenas, Armenia talks to India for the procurement of the Barak-8 surface-to-air missile system («Η Αρμενία μιλά με την Ινδία για την αγορά αντιαεροπορικών Barak-8»), Ptisi (Πτήση), January 2023, <https://www.ptisidiastima.com/armenia-discusses-barak8-sale-with-india/>

⁴³ Ministry of External Affairs – Government of India, India wins USD \$40mn defence deal with Armenia, March 2020, <https://indbiz.gov.in/india-wins-us40mn-defence-deal-from-armenia/>; Jam News, Will Armenia buy military drones from India? Yerevan and Delhi in negotiations, July 2022, <https://jam-news.net/will-armenia-buy-military-drones-from-india-yerevan-and-delhi-in-negotiations/>

However, the defence partnership with India is transparent and Armenia may well become the first overseas country to co-produce Indian systems domestically.⁴⁴

This emerging procurement partnership is providing Armenia with diplomatic options that are transforming the security landscape. Public opinion in Yerevan is less than impressed with the benefits of the Russia-led Collective Security Treaty Organisation.⁴⁵ Naturally, Armenia is still looking to Russia to retain a peacekeeping force in Nagorno-Karabakh and counts on Iran to secure the supply of the very drone systems used by Russia in Ukraine.⁴⁶ But the Pashinyan government is making an almost theatrical display of its distancing from Moscow.⁴⁷

When looking at India's engagement in the Caucasus, there is a popular culture tendency in Armenia to evoke the 'enemy of my enemy is my friend' dictum. Undoubtedly, Indian security analysts view pan-Turkism and pan-Islamism as detrimental to New Delhi's security agenda in Eurasia.⁴⁸ Coextensively, one is reminded that Pakistan has not recognised Armenia or the Armenian genocide and votes with Azerbaijan and Turkey on nearly every UN General Assembly resolution, particularly on the question of Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan and Turkey have reciprocated, lending their support to Kashmir, and this diplomatic fellowship has been branded as 'the three brothers.' Most recently, the three brothers are considering the *en bloc* recognition of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.⁴⁹ Indian diplomacy tends to respond in kind, coordinating with Armenia at the UN General Assembly.⁵⁰ In an interview with the Issam Fares Institute fellow, Yeghia Tasjian, I am told that Indian analysts echo the view that Karabakh is a potential "dress rehearsal" for Kashmir.

This kind of rhetoric may be overstated. Pakistan's economy is in tatters and there is now a school of thought that sees head-to-head strategic competition with India as a lost cause.⁵¹ Nonetheless, India may fear the enduring 'instrumentality' of the dispute in Kashmir, particularly as Pakistan brings China into the fold of the 'three brothers.' For instance, Beijing can capitalise on Islamabad's

⁴⁴ Aditi Bhatnari, India's defence partnership with Armenia is a step in the right direction, India Narrative, October 2022, <https://www.indianarrative.com/opinion-news/indias-defence-ties-with-armenia-are-a-step-in-the-right-direction-63692.html>

⁴⁵ Daniel W. Drezner, Why is Armenia so close to Russia and Iran?, Foreign Policy, August 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/08/11/armenia-russia-iran-azerbaijan-turkey-nagorno-karabakh-security-small-states/>

⁴⁶ Daniel Boffey, Putin's grip on regional allies loosens again after Armenian snub, The Guardian, November 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/25/putinsgrip-regional-allies-loosen-again-after-armenia-snub-csto-summit>

⁴⁷ Baker Sinead, Putin was repeatedly snubbed at an international summit of countries meant to be Russia's friends, Insider, November 2022, <https://www.businessinsider.com/putin-snubbed-by-armenia-pm-at-meeting-of-allies-2022-11?r=US&IR=T>; Also see: TASS, Turkey claims Russia, US, France are supplying weapons to Armenia, October 2020, <https://tass.com/world/1213497>

⁴⁸ Aditya Bhan, India's PINAKA export to Armenia positions it against Pan-Turkism, Observer Research Foundation, November 2022, <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/indias-pinaka-export-to-armenia-positions-it-against-pan-turkism/>

⁴⁹ Tahsin Ertuğruloğlu, Özbekistan'ta Türkiye, Azerbaycan ve Pakistan Dışişleri Bakanları ile görüştü," Kıbrıs Postası, January 2022, https://www.kibrispostasi.com/c35-KIBRIS_HABERLERI/n457038-tahsin-ertugruloglu-ozbekistanta-turkiye-azerbaycan-ve-pakistan-disisleri-bakanlari-ile-gorustu

⁵⁰ Muhammad Fahim, Pakistan and the Question of Recognising Armenia: Pakistan-Armenia relations, the Issue of Kashmir and Nagorno-Karabakh, Journal of South Asian Studies, 08 (02), 2019, pp. 39-45, <https://esciencepress.net/journals/index.php/JSAS/article/view/3276/1785>

⁵¹ Al Jazeera, Pakistan's rupee plunges as IMF says mission to visit next week, January 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/1/26/pakistan-rupee-plunges-imf-visit>; Hamid Mir, Twitter post, Twitter, January 2023, <https://twitter.com/HamidMirPAK/status/1612313458598612994?s=20&t=XT8cM4FOvgHuvRgJkAhWRw>

influence over the Taliban regime and its 'soft power' vis-à-vis Takfiri networks.⁵² In the current context there is a greater threat for India; as Russian military power is spread thin in Ukraine, China will only need to stand still to advance its position in Eurasia. India needs new partners and the cultivation of a strategic partnership with France seems to be following this rationale.⁵³ Two Armenian sources with first-hand knowledge of security affairs suggest that the bridge between India and Armenia was France, which would be consistent given the antagonistic relationship between Paris and Ankara.⁵⁴

Rethinking dividing lines

The advent of India and Pakistan in the Caucasus is the direct result of the Russian vacuum of power. Moscow's hard power is consumed in the Ukrainian battlefield, disrupting traditional military procurement partnerships and creating opportunities for emerging Middle Powers, such as India, France, Pakistan, and Turkey. As these powers develop their procurement networks, they are in effect honing strategic and industrial partnerships that cumulatively have a disruptive effect on regional and international governance.

Pakistan's advent to the Caucasus is linked to the development of the Turkish military-industrial complex. India is 'stepping in' to cover for Russia but is likely to pursue more strategic objectives, not least holding in check Chinese influence. In this scheme, a significant challenge is the issue of technology leakage. For instance, there are now reports of a Chinese clone of the Turkish best-selling 2B2 drone.⁵⁵ Because in a truly multipolar environment there is no neat strategic-military polarisation, it is conceivable that countermeasures designed to counter or copy 2B2 technology in Armenia will spill over in Ukraine. The fact that military alliances and procurement patterns do not coincide is a security liability for status quo powers, particularly the Euro-Atlantic community.

US sanctions towards Turkey may be seen as an attempt to prevent technology contagion. However, these US reactions may not be perceived as entirely strategic and may be guided by political or tactical considerations. Clearly, there is a need for a broader rethink of how the Russian power vacuum is likely to catalyse the re-organisation of military-procurement networks. Two issues merit closer consideration:

- a) First, military-industrial value chains cut across collective security blocks: NATO, CSTO, SCO, and NAM. Clearly, the reshuffle of regional procurement markets eludes broader strategic reference documents such as the UK's 2021 Integrated Review, NATO's 2022 Strategic Concept, and the EU's 2022 Strategic Compass.⁵⁶

⁵² Rudra Chaudhuri, Shreyas Shende, *Dealing with the Taliban?: India's Strategy in Afghanistan After U.S. Withdrawal*, Carnegie India, June 2020, <https://carnegieindia.org/2020/06/02/dealing-with-taliban-india-s-strategy-in-afghanistan-after-u.s.-withdrawal-pub-81951>

⁵³ Clea Calcut, *France aims to lure India from its main arms dealer: Russia*, Politico, November 2022, <https://www.politico.eu/article/france-eyes-opportunity-for-geopolitical-realignment-in-india-indo-pacific-russia-arms-modi-macron-putin-g20/>; Business Insider India, *France wants to be India's best partner in defence manufacturing: French envoy Lenain*, October 2022, <https://www.businessinsider.in/international/news/france-wants-to-be-indias-best-partner-in-defence-manufacturing-french-envoy-lenain/articleshow/94740730.cms>

⁵⁴ Arab News, *Egypt, UAE, France, Greece and Cyprus condemn Turkey's actions in Libya*, May 2020 <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1673176/middle-east>

⁵⁵ Army Recognition, *CETC from China develops its XY-I drone using Turkish Bayraktar TB2 UAV design*, November 2022, https://www.armyrecognition.com/weapons_defence_industry_military_technology_uk/cetc_from_china_develops_its_xy-i_drone_using_turkish_bayraktar_tb2_uav_design.html; Clash Report, *Twitter post*, Twitter, November 2022, <https://twitter.com/clashreport/status/1589997830709874693>

⁵⁶ UK Integrated Review 2021, <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/the-integrated-review-2021>; NATO 2022 Strategic Concept, <https://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/>; EU Strategic Compass, March 2022, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/03/21/a-strategic-compass-for-a-stronger-eu-security-and-defence-in-the-next-decade/>

- b) Secondly, the review of Euro-Atlantic industrial strategies is urgent as 'the community' envelops military-industrial complexes with competing and conflicting aspirations such as Turkey and France.

The broader issue here is the correspondence between value chains and competitive globalisation projects. India and Pakistan, as much as Armenia and Azerbaijan, are developing their defence resilience on the assumption of a lesser role for Moscow. In doing so, they become geopolitical stakeholders in the European periphery. In this scheme, rather than moving towards a multipolar system that is exclusively focused on regional veto powers, we are witnessing the development of parallel and competing globalisation regimes in terms of logistics, financial transactions, and the production of military platforms. These value chain disruptions and the re-globalisation of security partnerships is likely to accelerate as the war in Ukraine is prolonged.