



RESEARCH PAPER

**The India- Israel- Afghanistan Strategic Nexus: Intelligence
Cooperation, Counter-China Containment, and Pakistan's Security
Dilemma**

Syed Rizwan Haider Bukhari

PhD Scholar, Department of Political Science, Islamia College University Peshawar, Khyt
Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

***Corresponding Author**

bukharipalmist@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the newly formed media nexus between India, Israel, and Afghanistan as a result of intelligence sharing, counter-terrorism, and geopolitical sidelining against the Chinese impact. The common interest in the fight against extremism and stability, including the Belt and Road Initiative, have resulted in a tacit yet effective partnership between these countries, changing the dynamics in the region. Using the theory of the regional security complex, a qualitative analysis is made based on defense alliances, intelligence sharing, and the implications of such partnership on regional security. The essay helps to point out the increased defense power and intelligence collaboration among the three countries that indirectly undermine the influence of China and increases the security dilemma of Pakistan. It is time that regional powers reevaluated the strategic implications of such an alliance, and Pakistan rethought their defense policies and reinforce their diplomatic acumen.

KEYWORDS

India-Israel Relations, Afghanistan Geopolitics, Intelligence Cooperation,
Counter-China Containment, Security Dilemma, Regional Security Complex,
Pakistan's Strategic Calculus

Introduction

The changing geopolitics of South and Central Asia have spawned new models of strategic alignment that are much broader than the context of traditional bilateral relationships and formal ways of forming alliances. The growing rivalry among great powers, technological change in warfare and securitization of infrastructure and connectivity initiatives have all served to reform the new security landscape in the region. In this evolving structure, states are increasingly turning to adaptable, problem-based and in many instances discrete alignments to protect national interests. The most promising and least studied phenomenon in this regard is the increasing convergence of India, Israel and Afghanistan. Although the states are geographically varied, politically diverse, and have immediate security priorities, these states have common areas of interest in the scope of militancy, instability in the region, technical vulnerability, and growing strategic presence of China. This overlap has over time turned into an operative yet typically low profile strategic nexus focused on intelligence sharing, defense coordination, cyber coordination, and diplomatic signaling (Muzaffar, et. al., 2018; Zarawar et al., 2024)

The strategic alignment of India, Israel and Afghanistan has become one of the key parameters in the transformation of the security relations in the region. This trilateral involvement is expected to counter the regional extremism as well as increase the Chinese influence in South and Central Asia through strengthening intelligence cooperation and

counter-terrorism. This change of strategic focus is essential because these countries collaborate to guarantee stability and enforce their security interests. (Bukhari et al., 2024)

To India, Israel has become one of the most important defence technology partners and intelligence partners in the last 20 years. The bilateral relations have increased beyond traditional arms shipments to advanced technologies like missile defense systems, drone aircraft, electronic warfare platforms, artificial intelligence based surveillance and collaboration on cyber-security. This strengthened alliance signifies the large-scale attempt of India to modernize its armed forces and improve counterterrorism and border-surveillance structures, especially on its western border. Especially in republican Afghanistan during the pre-Taliban rule before the Taliban's comeback in 2021 was an important venue of Indian strategic outreach. In the shape of developmental assistance, infrastructural backing, diplomatic participation and poor security coordination, New Delhi tried to build influence in Kabul and in addition to limiting the contravening power of bargaining (Muzaffar, et. al., 2019; Bibi, et. al., 2023). The triangular relationship between the high standard of cyber and intelligence in Israel, the regional ambitions and ability of the Indians in the region and the strategic base of Pakistan in Afghanistan provided a dynamic that transcended the conventional diplomacy and economical support. It is worth noting that such a shifting nexus is also perceived not within the confines of counterterrorist cooperation but as a broader balancing tool that indirectly constrains the China strategic expansion in South Asia and the broader Indo-Pacific (Yaseen, et. al., 2022). With Beijing expanding its influence through infrastructure investing, online accessibility, building of ports, and strategic paths through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) the necessity by the movers and shakers in the region reassessed their own strategic computations. Chinese presence in its periphery, such as China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to a greater movement in Central Asia and the Arabian Sea is perceived as a threat to its long-term strategic autonomy in India, particularly (Rahim, et. al., 2018; Shahet al., 2020). Here the tri-lateral intelligence and technological and technological cooperation acquires a new geopolitical turn. Higher situational awareness, better surveillance networks, cyber resiliency, and interoperability of countermeasures: It is not just applicable to immediate security demands but also to an architecture of moderate containment that would secure the degree of China in continental Asia (Khan et al., 2023).

Simultaneously, the US-Iran nexus offers some insightful inputs into the role of undercover intelligence affairs and geopolitical manipulation at the level of systemic power redistribution in the region. These dynamics emphasize the importance of intelligence exchange and military collaboration in determining geopolitics strategies in the long term, especially when it is necessary to deal with a mutual utility (Bukhari et al., 2024; Ain, et. al, 2024).

The balance of power has basically transformed because of the increased investments and security activities of China in the region. The digital Silk Road initiatives, infrastructural diplomacy, the role of the military, and the rise of security presence in regions with strategic transit routes have enhanced the power of Beijing. In the case of India, such developments heighten the issue of encirclement both in the maritime as well as in the continent. Thus, New Delhi has been working harder to build alliances that would allow it to develop intelligence powers, technology base and diplomatic influence. The base of this tripartite dynamic is intelligence sharing, defense procurement with technologically advanced partners, cyber coordination, counter-radicalization programs, and collaborative training programs. Even though the India-Israel-Afghanistan engagement has not been formalized as an alliance with institutional features or treaty bond, the trend of co-operation depicts some aspects of strategic alignment due to similarity in the perception of threats and similarity in interests (Lamichhane, 2025).

Intelligence cooperation is at the center of this nexus at the operational level. Counterterrorism databases, transnational extremist networks, electronic surveillance technologies and cyber threat analysis platforms contribute to working together to monitor non-state actors and address asymmetric threats. The skills in signal intelligence, cybersecurity technology, and counterinsurgency doctrine possessed by Israel supplement the regional intelligence networks provided by India and the experience of on-ground human intelligence that is offered by Afghanistan. This has in the past enabled the better coordination on countering militant groups that operate along porous borders. However, intelligence alignment, in addition to having tactical value, has strategic signaling value. Through the combination of technological and informational capabilities, the three actors enhance the credibility of deterrence and decrease the informational asymmetries, which affect the overall calculations in the region. This nexus is further aggravated by the present security situation in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, which adds strategic layers to it. After handing Kabul to the Taliban in 2021, the border militancy between Islamabad and the Afghan interim government has deteriorated with the resurgence of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and constant cross-border armed engagements along the Durand Line. Cross border strike on the militant sanctuaries has also been employed by Pakistan and the Afghanistan government has termed the Islamabad government to be violating the sovereignty. These deepening enmities characterized by border shutdowns, artillery fire and diplomatic indignations- have constituted a dynamic sub-regional war. In this case, external foreign spying units, which encompass Afghanistan, and more so India linked with them, are viewed by Pakistan as the source of internal insecurities in Pakistan. Although the current Afghan officials may not be officially engaged in the previous trilateral trends, the past history of Indian influence in Afghanistan and the threat of re-established covert alliances add to the threat inflationist and strategic panic in Islamabad. The constant unstable situation is virtually turning Afghanistan back into a geopolitical battleground, which strengthens the image in Pakistan of its western border being securitized in a wider competitive context (Muzaffar, et. al., 2021). This relation is an example of the classical security dilemma: actions by one state (or a group of states) to improve security are seen by others as offensive or destabilizing and lead to retaliatory measures that end up undermining collective security. On the part of Islamabad, the trilateral intelligence coordination has the potential to provide greater monitoring of the internal politics of Pakistan, subvert strategical depth, and curtail maneuverability in the regional theatres. As a result, Pakistan has become more strategically dependent on China as a counter balancing partner to strengthen China-Pakistan strategic axis. Such a mutual orientation drives the polarization of alliances and the possibility of an escalation of competition on a diplomatic, technological, and military level (Nandy et al., 2025; Yaseen, et al., 2016).

In order to base this phenomenon analytically, this study puts the India-Israel-Afghanistan convergence in the context of the regional security complex theory (RSCT) and classical concept of security dilemma. RSCT assumes that geographically proximate states tend to be the states that experience the highest levels of security interdependence as their local threat perceptions and power asymmetries influence the tendency towards alignment and rivalry. South Asia, which has had a history of India-Pakistan rivalry and the superposition of great-power rivalry is a typical example of a regional security complex. In such an environment, even less formal or restricted security coordination can have systemic effects (Batool & Muzaffar, 2024). The nexus between India-Israel-Afghanistan is not established on a formal basis, but it has a significant impact on the perception of threats in the region and rebalances the issues of deterrence by changing the balance of intelligence and technological capacities.

This paper claims that although the nexus is being presented by its members as cooperative and stabilizing in an effort to curb and deter terrorism, technological modernization, and strategic coordination its overall impact could be an addition to mistrust, alliance polarization, and competitive security postures in South Asia. In specific terms, intelligence cooperation enables the force multiplier. It boosts the tactical potentials and at the same time creates an illusion of strategic conglomeration among the enemy. Through the analysis of the intelligence-sharing processes, defense-industrial networks, cyber collaboration systems and geopolitical signaling, this work aims to respond to three key questions: How significant is the India-Israel-Afghanistan strategic nexus? How much and to what extent does it help in balancing the regional influence of China? And what does this change the perceptions of threats and strategic calculus of Pakistan? (M. N. Khan, 2025)

In answering such questions, the article adds to the larger discussions on new minilateral alignments, shadowy security alliances, and the changing geopolitics of Asia. The current security cooperation is becoming more flexible and issue oriented and less structured around blocs of alliances. Informal strategic triangles especially those based on intelligence cooperation and exchange of technology can greatly play a role in creating deterrence relationships in the region without necessarily having formal treaty obligation. (Hassan and Ali, 2025)

This research highlights the interplay between overlapping. partnerships within South Asia and great-power rivalry by predicting the India-Israel-Afghanistan nexus as a case study, which redefines the calculations of balance of powers and aggravates the security dilemma facing Pakistan. In this manner, it also brings into focus the intricate relationship between intelligence collaboration, balancing of geopolitics, and instability in the region in an age of ongoing cross-border warfare and increasing strategic rivalry.

Literature Review

The changing strategic relations involving the four countries of India, Israel, and Afghanistan are a cross-over into several longstanding bodies of academic work, such as the research on Indo-Israeli defense allocations, Indian involvement in Afghanistan, the expansion of China in the region, minilateral balancing approaches, and the long-standing security predicament of Pakistan. Despite both of these themes having been analyzed together at length, relatively little has been conducted on integrating them into a working strategic nexus and into their larger geopolitical effects. A lot of the available literature is still compartmentalized because they discuss bilateral defense partnerships, developmental diplomacy or great-power rivalry but fail to connect intelligence cooperation to technological alignment to regional balance-of-power changes. (Waseem, 2025)

The scholarly literature documents the evolution of the India-Israel relations as the level of uncertain diplomatic involvement at the beginning of the 1990s into the establishment of the flourishing and multi-dimensional strategic collaboration. According to scholars, defense procurement, missile systems including air-defense systems, unmanned aerial vehicles, electronic warfare systems, cyber-security cooperation and counterterrorism coordination are considered pillars of this relationship. The superior surveillance systems, the border surveillance and intelligence capabilities possessed by Israel have been quite useful to India in the operation of counterinsurgency and in cross-border threat detection. The partnership is usually perceived by analysts as practical, self-serving, and based on overlapping threat perceptions- in particular, in the areas of terrorism and instability in the region. Nevertheless, even though extensive information on

bilateral depth of Indo-Israeli relations has been presented, much of it is limited to dyadic understanding. It seldom goes further to understand how the Indo-Israeli intelligence cooperation may overlap into the broader regional alignments, especially in South and Central Asia, where Afghanistan acts as a strategic linkage between competing security complexes. (Haider and Khan, 2025)

The specifics of Indian involvement in Afghanistan have been the subject of parallel research efforts which have mainly concentrated on developmental aid, reconstruction and projection of soft power and outreach. The Indian activities on infrastructure development (dams, highways, learning institutions and parliamentary buildings) have often been seen in the context of strategic leverage to generate goodwill and provide a conducive political dispensation to have amicable relations with Kabul. Security-centered criticisms also observe how India has been training Afghan security staff, supplying some defense equipment and even sharing of intelligence to ensure that extremist safe havens are not threatening Indian land. However, even with repeated mentions of intelligence coordination between agencies in India and Afghanistan at the policy level, there is comparatively little systematized scholarly investigation at the level of well-structured scholarly scrutiny into the range, institutionalization, and strategic purpose of that collaboration. What remains un-investigated is the indirect or technological role that the Israeli expertise could have played in enhancing the Afghan intelligence and surveillance capacity channeled through India. Therefore, the triangular implication of these overlapping relationships is underestimated in the literature (Yadav, 2025; Muzaffar, et. al., 2021a).

This body of research has been further complicated by the reemergence of Taliban to power in 2021. Recurring research analyses the recalibration of the Afghanistan policy by the Indian government in the changed political context and includes apprehensive diplomatic re-engagement and measures to stay on the strategic radar amidst no official recognition. Concurrently, the study on tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan has increased in response to increasing cross-border militancy, contention over Durand Line, as well as Pakistani military operations against Taliban Pakistan, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) refuge. These changes have worsened the situation in the western frontier of Pakistan and have cemented the view of Islamabad that Afghanistan is a contentious strategic space. Nevertheless, these dynamics are usually considered detached in current research, in addition to the Indo-Israeli cooperation issues. Whether or not intelligence networks and technological infrastructures, evolved at earlier stages of trilateral interaction, will persist in influencing regional perceptions - even under new regimes - is not adequately theorized. A second important body of work is dedicated to the growing presence of China in South and Central Asia. Beijing is reported on investing in infrastructure, opening up connection lanes, energy ventures, digital Silk Road ventures, and security interactions as part of a larger approach to improve economic impact and attain geopolitical leverage. In realist and neorealist approaches, these have often been viewed as stimulating balancing efforts on the part of regional actors who fear relative power changes. A lot of the literature on balancing China focuses on maritime alliances, the Indo-Pacific construct and initiatives like the Quad. In comparison, less focus is given to continental balancing policies based on the coordination of intelligence, technological cooperation, and informal trilateral understandings. It has not been fully explored that India, Israel, and Afghanistan cooperation may work, whether directly or indirectly, as a counter-China alignment that acts within the continental sphere. (Verma, 2024)

Meanwhile, the existing literature on the strategic culture in Pakistan, its strategic competition with India, and its widening strategic alliance with China is abundant and longstanding. Historical antagonism with India and concern with Indian influence in

Afghanistan is often noted by scholars as a source of the perception of encirclement in Pakistan. This understanding has influenced the defense policy, coalition actions, and the nuclear policy of Pakistan. The idea of the security dilemma is widely used in studies of South Asian security relations where one state views defensive actions of another state as offensive actions that create cycles of suspicion and heightening of tension. In this context, the presence of India in Afghanistan has been frequently characterized by Islamabad as an effort by India to impose strategic pressure on the west frontier of Pakistan. To a large extent, however, this analysis focuses upon open diplomatic activity, building of infrastructure, or traditional military aid. Hypothetically little has been discussed on the role of intelligence co-operation, especially with an advanced partner like Israel to augment the threat perceptions of the Pakistani leader to enhance dependence on China to balance its strategic level. (Shafeeq, 2025)

Moreover, though current literature recognizes Indo-Israeli military relationships and Pakistan concerns over them the little incorporation of Afghanistan as a principle of operation and symbolism of a larger strategic triangle has taken place. The net effect of the sharing of intelligence, utilizing computer technologies, coordinating counterterrorism, and aligning diplomacy among these three actors has not been conceptualized in a systematic way as nexus with balancing implication. Majority of the studies are still divided: Indo-Israeli relations are studied as bilateral technological cooperation; India-Afghanistan are discussed as developmental diplomacy or soft balancing and relations between Pakistan and China are considered as counter-alignment. What is missing is the integration of a detailed structure bridging the micro-levels of data sharing on the intelligence practices, integration of the cyber systems and surveillance interoperability with macro-level geopolitical changes in South and Central Asia. (Chakraborty, 2026)

Furthermore, modern analysis of minilateralism and informal security arrangements implicates that much of the new architectures of security is also moving towards operating at more flexible and partially opaque networks as opposed to fixed treaty alliances. Getting intelligence collaboration, especially in relation to formal military outlooks, frequently follows or replaces formal military partnerships, modifying the sense of convergence in strategies minus formalization. However, this analytical prism has not been fully applied to the India-Israel-Afghanistan situation. The three-way communication is not very often evaluated as an instance of continental minilateralism that affects deterrence and regional security complexes by means of technological integrations and intelligence synchronization and not direct military agreements.

The paper fills these gaps by reviewing the lessons of security literature, regional politics, intelligence literature, and balance-of-power theory to explore the potential application and perception of an India-Israel-Afghanistan strategic convergence. The study goes beyond the broken bilateral narratives by locating the intelligence cooperation in the analytical core and identifying it with wider counter China politics and the security dilemma in Pakistan. It brings together advances in Indo-Israeli military technology, the adaptive policy of India in Afghanistan, the expansion of China across the continent, and the narratives of encirclements by the Pakistani perspective into one conceptual system.

By so doing, the paper contends that more informal and partially obscured security connections can dramatically reframe the way local threats are perceived, alliance actions and balance of power calculations. The ability of intelligence cooperation to disproportionately impact systemically due to its discrete and technologically hidden nature may be accurate. This study provides important input to a more functional view of the overlapping resonance of coordinated alignments in South and Central Asia to change the nature of deterrence, increase the security dilemma, and alter the emerging geopolitical

architecture of the continent through conceptualizing the India-Israel Afghanistan interaction as a functional strategic nexus, not as a series of disjointed partnerships (A. H. Khan and Khan, 2025).

Material and Methods

The research design applied in this study is a qualitative research based on realist security theory to analyse the new convergence between India, Israel, and Afghanistan and its effect on Pakistan in the wider context of the rising of China in the region. The study uses qualitative content analysis of secondary data, which will be represented by official policy documents, defense agreements, parliamentary statements, strategic communiques, think-tank publications, scholarly literature, and credible media reports. Such fundamental themes as intelligence cooperation, technological cooperation, balancing, containment discourses, and encirclement perceptions are coded and examined to find patterns of strategic coincidence. The process tracing is referred to trace the development of the trilateral relationships at the most significant geopolitical turning points, especially changes in the political situation of Afghanistan and the times of the severe Sino-Indian tension. The work combines the logic of balance-of-power and the security dilemma logic to determine the role that defensive cooperation by aligned actors can have in creation of counterbalancing reactions, which in turn induce a restart in regional perceptions of threats and alliances in South and Central Asia.

Results and Discussion

This increasing engagement between India, Israel and Afghanistan is a pointer to an incremental yet noticeable geopolitical intersection induced by the similarity in the perception of threat, technological advantage and changing regional balance of power. India wants to cement its power in South and Central Asia and restrain its opponents on its western front, especially with years of traditional rivalry with Pakistan and rising competition with China. In its turn, Israel has been progressively projecting its strategic reach beyond the Middle East, to India, a large market in terms of defense, as well as a technology partner and a developing global force with geopolitical power continuing to grow. Afghanistan particularly under former republican governments had been pursuing diversifiable partners of security to reduce excessive reliance on one of the regional blocs and also to improve its underdeveloped internal security system. These drivers have formed a sort of informal but practical strategic triangle that is not grounded on an ideology but on practicality and overlapping interests (Ihtisham, 2025; Krishnan, n.d.).

This convergence is not more of an alliance structure but operates on a complex interaction in the fields of defence purchasing, intelligence modernization, cyber collaboration, diplomatic coordination and signaling. This is because its nature of growth has allowed it to grow without necessarily resulting in the institution backlash that might have led to its impact but cumulatively it has had a significant impact on the calculus of security within the region. In this context, where perception is often as important as the capability (highly securitized South Asian setting) any minor adjustments can result in a major systemic effect. India-Israel-Afghanistan nexus reveals that informally established triangles of strategies can affect deterring relations, alter relative power relations and re-establish alliance actions without a treaty being signed.

The most effective aspect of this nexus is cooperation on intelligence and counterterrorism. India and Israel have close cooperation in the surveillance technology, cyber security, training in counter-insurgent activities, modernizing intelligence and electronic warfare. Israeli signal-intelligence, border-monitoring, drone technology, and

cyber defense have intensified the Indian ability to control the active borders and deal with asymmetric warfare. High-level reconnaissance, unmanned aerial vehicles and electronic warfare equipment improved the situational awareness and accuracy of operations in India. At the times of significant Indo-Afghan cooperation, the components of this expertise were transferred in an indirect way, in the form of training programs, exchange of advisors, and security coordination systems to support Afghanistan with the development of institutional capacity. Cooperation of the intelligence enables states to institutionalize strategic trust in a subtle way, forming networked interactive information channels less evident when compared with the conventional military affiliations. But it is also because the darkness of intelligence networks also breeds suspicion among the opponents especially in areas that have a history of mistrust. Intelligence networking can be as decisive as defensive real-estate agreements in a delicate security setting like South Asia, and this is precisely because of the fact that it recreates the informational and technological bases of power (Usman, 2025).

This shifting orientation is further supported by the military-technological aspect. Israeli arms sales have greatly enhanced the qualitative military positions of India, especially in the air defense weaponry, precision-guided anti-rockets, spy radars, cyber-defense equipments and integrated command and control systems. This is a kind of internal balancing in that, India has been compensated by external technological assistance by Israel in terms of balance of power. The procurement of new missile defense systems and improved border surveillance infrastructure changes the deterrence balance in the region because it makes India more defensive and increase her intelligence penetration. Although these capabilities are formally explained by the need to counterterrorism or modernize on the defensive side, such potential implementation even in relation to contested borders such as those with Pakistan still affects the strategic calculations. When these technological improvements are viewed to have an indirect influence on the security situation in Afghanistan or enhance the ability of India to act on multiple fronts, they increase the anxieties in capitals in rivalry. Material enhancements in surveillance, cyber war, and precision-striking capabilities can be defensive when employed in its declared intent, and when used in aggregate, they change relative power perceptions throughout South Asia (Singh, 2025).

These trends are happening in the context of a large geopolitical environment that is influenced by the growing regional presence of China. The Belt and Road Initiative has facilitated infrastructure diplomacy, economic corridors, and digital connectivity projects as well as strategic partnerships that have boosted the influence of China in South and Central Asia. In a certain way, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor have widened the interdependence of China and Pakistan and transformed the patterns of connections in the region. It is on this basis that the alliances of India such as its alliances with Israel serve to increase its ability to counter perceived strategic encirclement and technological asymmetry. Even though the cooperation between India, Israel and Afghanistan is not often discussed in the terms of anti-China, it is still active on the grounds where logic balancing cannot be overlooked. The geographical location of Afghanistan between South Asia, Central Asia and western China makes it a continental equation. The building of stronger intelligence services, better cyber operations, and better surveillance systems may work as indirect balancing measures through limiting maneuverability in strategy and increasing monitoring abilities in nearby theaters. Although these relations lack formal statements of containment, the strategic signaling within these alliances helps to form a larger competition dynamic, which overlaps with the interests of China in the regional space (H. U. Khan et al., 2025).

In the case of Pakistan, this changing nexus affirms the old views of encirclement and strategic vulnerability. Traditionally, Islamabad has seen the involvement of India in Afghanistan especially the governments that have been perceived to be too close to the New Delhi as a move to pressure the Pakistani western frontier. These concerns are enhanced by the fact that Israel has been integrated into this equation considering its advanced intelligence and cybers. Part of the modernization actions and intelligence coordination that India and its supporters describe as a defensive stabilization programme can be understood in Islamabad as elements in an offensive containment architecture as part of a security dilemma. The fact that India is building technological advantage with foreign assistance increases the vulnerability of the threat by Pakistan. This leads to increased counterbalancing responses such as increased strategic dependence on China, increased military preparedness, and strengthening of intelligence holdings. The dynamic cycle outlined by the classical theory of security dilemma is then observable: the increase in the security of one party leads to the creation of insecurity in another, and the countermeasures that are introduced to restore the security level can only decrease the stability of the situation (Nawaz, 2024).

These perceptions are further enabled by the visits of the Indian leadership to Israel in high levels. The publication of defense contracts, ductal research work, intelligence liaison systems and counterterrorism debates are symbolic and practical at the same time. The very same visits that are conducted under the eyes of the Pakistani are not considered as simple routine diplomatic relations but rather as the mutual exchange of institutionalized strategic depth between India and a technologically boosting partner. The politics of collective press releases and the announcements of military collaboration and high profile transfers of technology allow Pakistan forces through the Pakistani strategic talk that India is establishing qualitative advantage through external assistance. These symbolic gestures are significant since these generate images among the elite and the masses in favor of the argument that India is making inroads into broader security alliances beyond South Asia (Bukhari et al., 2025).

These developments can be threefold and interrelated in the eyes of Islamabad. To start with, as capability enhancement: enhancing the Indian surveillance, missile defense architecture, cyber infrastructure, and electronic warfare capability. Second, as a sign of diplomatic independence: showing that India can be strategically independent and shift its partner bases outside its conventional alliances. Third, because Pakistan and China were targeted in a strategic message at the same time, it implied that India is ready to work within a region that overlaps with extra-regional security structures. Even though a significant portion of the cooperation may be defensive in its formal expression, this will be visible and will affect the perception of threats and impact the strategic calculus of Pakistan. The technological cooperation, especially concerning cyber and intelligence, is securitized which raises the worries that the next crisis can develop through more complicated and multi-dimensional paths than the military conflict (Hussain et al., 2024).

The extended regional implication of the India-Israel-Afghanistan nexus is the aspect of perception-based escalation and formation of a bloc. The issue of informal security cooperation, particularly in the field of intelligence and cyber, can redefine the balance of power without the need to establish the form of alliances. The integration of sophisticated technologies into the national security systems has both short-term and long-term consequences on the deterrence credibility and the threshold level. Even though the nexus has the potential to increase the counterterrorism capability or capacity, institutional durability and technological advancement amongst its members, it also creates issues of mistrust in an area that has already been characterized by nuclear competition and decades-old war. In the case of Pakistan, convergence enhances anxiety on strategic

enclosures; in China, it is an indicator of the possibility of continental balancing nodes that overlap extended Indo-Pacific rivalry.

Finally, the strategic triangle explains how informal congruencies superimposed over established rivalries may further escalate the security dilemma and make chances of achieving regional stability more complicated. Mechanisms of intelligence collaboration and military-technical fusion are not neutral tools but they contain inherent strategic implications which are influenced by context and historical memory. Even defensive modernization will serve to be construed as pre-positioning to take coercive leverage in a region where the mistrust has been deep rooted. The India-Israel-Afghanistan nexus thus both illustrates the positive aspects of the contemporary security networking, that is, an increased tactical capacity and strategic coordination of the involved parties, and at the same time is partially a source of polarization of alliances, recalibration of deterrence, and increased strategic competition in South and Central Asia (Bhamidipati, 2025).

Discussion

This analysis has shown that interaction between India, Israel and Afghanistan is not a formalized military alliance, but a workable strategic nexus that has quantifiable regional implications. It unites not due to some treaty commitment or institutional trilateralism, but by parallel threat perceptions, technological or technology complementarities, and concomitant geopolitical calculations. The main motives of cooperation are counterterrorism requirements, intelligence modernization, and general strategic balancing especially with the changing power dynamics in Asia. This nexus is therefore not declarative but functional: a kind of efficiency, rather than a kind of alliance form is implicit in the relationship of intelligence, defense-technical coordination and control over signals in an ideal diplomatic fashion.

One of the key discoveries is that intelligence cooperation is the structural essence of such alignment. The partnership of surveillance technologies, cyber defense systems, unmanned aerial platforms, electronic warfare tools, and counterinsurgency training have gone a long way in enhancing India internal and external security structure. The comparative technological edge of Israel gives India both qualitative military and informational superiority especially in areas that promote situational awareness and rapid response capacity. When there is a high level of Indo-Afghan interaction, elements of this security know-how were spread out in advisory systems, training flows, and coordination systems, which in effect enhanced the informational reach of the nexus to the west. Though a significant portion of such interaction is not transparent and cannot be properly examined by a general audience, its overall impact is the redefinition of the perceived threat of the region, as the technological level of power changes.

The paper also concludes that the nexus plays an indirect role in balancing with China. Although the concept of cooperation is seldom articulated in the stiff terms of containment, the higher the Indian intelligence capacities and the technological modernization, the stronger the New Delhi against the strategic pressure, even on the disputed boundaries and in the neighboring geopolitical scenes. The geographic position of Afghanistan in western China provides symbolic and strategic significance to this kind of coordination especially in the dynamic security environment of the continent of Asia. Nonetheless, this balancing role is not formalized and automatic. It is still dependent on the inner political course of Afghanistan, the sustainability of Indo-Afghan relationship during the shift of the government, and the further direction of Sino-Indian rivalry. Therefore, the counter-China dimension is working more as latent strategic potential as opposed to explicit coalition behavior.

In the light of Pakistan, the nexus exacerbates the situation of security dilemma that is already established. The strategic culture of Pakistan that has been heavily shaped by historical conflict with India and fears of being surrounded views increased Indo-Israeli relations and the involvement of India in Afghanistan as one interaction with strategic pressure. The fact that India-Israel engagements are on a high level, that defense relationships are well-publicized, and that intelligence cooperation can be observed supports the view that the integration of the military is institutionalized. Although the modernization initiative of India is explained as a defensive and anti-terrorist one, it is often seen as a way of changing the balance of deterrence in the region by Islamabad. This attitude spawns a sense of counterbalancing behavior, the most salient of which is a greater strategic rapport with China, continued investment in military capabilities, and the attempts to counterbalance perceived technological asymmetries.

One more important conclusion is that the perception is often more influential than institutional structure at the regional level. Lack of trilateral treaty is no mitigation of the psychological and strategic effects of observable collusion. The intelligence sharing, cyber integration, and defense-technical transfers albeit less visible than a troop deployment or alliance announcement- are much more far-reaching in their implications to deterrence credibility and the relationship between escalation and deescalation. The South Asian security conditions (weak and the weakening of its aggressiveness- weak) where mistrust is traditionally rooted in its history generates skewed strategic anxiety at the earliest shift in technological potential. Therefore, informal security networking can have polarizing and non-strategic trust effects though no bloc may be formed.

The fluidity of the nexus is also discussed in the analysis. Even though the relations between India and any state of Israel are organized and technologically-grounded, the Afghan aspect is changing and depends on politics. The resurgence of the Taliban and poor Pakistani-Afghan relations have complicated the agenda making it apparent that a overt trilateral coordination cannot take place and doubles the importance of perception driven insecurity at the same time. The future axis of the strategic triangle will be defined by political stability of Afghanistan, the future of Sino-Indian relationship as a contender, stability of Indo-Israeli military relations and strategic response of Pakistan.

In general, the results show that the India-Israel-Afghanistan nexus is a subtle, yet consequential alignment, which improves the qualitative security capacity of India, and adds to the tendencies of greater balancing in continental Asia. But it also contributes to the feeling of encircling Pakistan, aggravating the dilemma of security in the region. The nexus is an example of how informal cooperation based on intelligence may readjust the work of deterrence and make the perspectives of long-term stability in South and Central Asia more difficult.

Conclusion

The analysis of the changing relationship between India, Israel and Afghanistan shows that albeit there have been no formal alliances, functional and strategically relevant nexus has been created through the intelligence collaboration, the defense upgrading as well as the careful diplomatic coordination. This convergence is based on pragmatic security interests counterterrorism, technological development and positioning based on geopolitics as opposed to ideological affinity. The backbone of the wider triangulation is the highly institutionalized India-Israel association, specifically in intelligence-sharing, cyber acumen as well as sophisticated defense systems, which gives the framework of the greater triangulation. The discussion shows that the nexus has an indirect role in balance mechanism amidst the growing regional presence of China. The alliance helps in

empowering the strategic independence and deterrence policy of New Delhi by improving qualitative military and intelligence capacity of India. The geographical position of Afghanistan at the border of South and Central Asia includes symbolic and strategic significance, but the extent of Afghanistan involvement is still subject to change based on the domestic political changes and turmoil in the region.

To Pakistan, the consequences are both short term and long term. The combination of Israeli knowledge in the security system of India, and the involvement of India in Afghanistan, support the old traditions of encirclement vision. In a classical security dilemma system, a defensive modernization is understood as offensive positioning, with further suspicion and proving a counterbalancing action especially towards coming nearer to China. Finally, the India-Israel-Afghanistan nexus suggests that informal, intelligence-based associations can transform the deterrence relationship in the area without any formal agreements. Its long-term implications are not the explicit face-off, but the accrual of the cumulative psychological and strategic impact, which makes it difficult to maintain cooperative security and strengthen polarization in South and Central Asia.

Recommendations

Considering the changing environment of India-Israel-Afghanistan strategic nexus and its effect on the Pakistan security environment, high-impact and strategically viable measures are suggested as follows:

- **Intelligence Capability Modernization and Integration.** Pakistan should emphasize the overall intelligence modernization especially in cyber intelligence, electronic surveillance, artificial intelligence-based data analysis and coordination of counterterrorism. Instead of reacting to perceived encirclement, Islamabad needs to improve predictive and analytical ability to effectively gauge the progress in emergent regional alignments. Improved border surveillance systems, civil-military intelligence fusion centers and cyberspace defense infrastructure would enhance early warning systems. The modernized intelligence system lowers the unpredictability level, it decreases the threat exaggeration, and it supports measured, but not escalatory reactions- making the security dilemma more effectively dealt with.
- **Calibrated Deterrence Stability Defense Modernization.** In the event of Pakistan, qualitative defense needs to be enhanced and destabilizing force postures should be avoided. Precision capabilities, air defense capability, cyber defense, electronic warfare, and surveillance systems should be prioritized in the form of investments, as opposed to massive offensive deployments. It will be credible minimum deterrence, backed by technological parity when possible, and make strategic stability stable without causing any spiral of an arms race. A disciplined effect of modernization strategy enhances credibility of deterrence but sends a signal of defensive purpose thereby diminishing chances of miscalculation over a technologically changing security environment.
- **Differentiation Strategic Diversification outside China.** Although the China-Pakistan alliance is at the core, excessive reliance may reduce the diplomatic leeway. Pakistan must expand strategic relations with the Gulf countries, Turkey, Central Asia, ASEAN countries, and some of its western partners in the field of defense training, cyber cooperation, trade, and energy security. Diversification promotes strategic independence, eliminates susceptibility to geopolitical jolts, and eliminates the internalization of Pakistan into a narrow block framework by external actors. Middle ground diplomacy enhances bargaining power and decreases polarization.

- **Preemptive Regional Diplomacy towards Afghanistan and the Neighbours.** With any form of tension between Pakistan and Afghanistan border, Islamabad should focus on institutionalized diplomatic relations with Kabul in order to deal with cross border militancy, border control and intelligence coordination. Western frontier stabilization diminishes the space of external influence and undermines the encircling discourses. Simultaneously, the development of cooperative security structures in parallel interaction with Iran and the Central Asian states will de facto water down the competition in zero sums. The positive diplomacy directly eliminates the strategic weaknesses that are exaggerated by triangular alignments.
- **Enhance Domestic Resilience and Strategic Communication.** The internal stability relates to long-term security. To minimize internal weakness that can be exploited by outside forces, Pakistan ought to invest in counter-radicalization, economic resilience, reform governance, and technological innovation. At the same time, strategic communication that is skillfully calculated in advance, that is, the clear articulation of defensive postures, regional cooperation goals, etc., will allow avoiding the development of misperceptions into tensions. Stable and economically strong Pakistan improves bargaining power and redirects attention to the reactive security rivalry to the strategic confidence.

Combined, they allow Pakistan to handle the changing nexus without panicking, maintain a stable deterrence and diminish the severity of the security dilemma in the region..

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