



RCAS Commentary

The US Discriminatory Sanctions

Zafar Nawaz Jaspal

Nonresident Senior Fellow, The Hong Kong Research Center for Asian Studies
(RCAS)

May 5, 2024

About RCAS

香港亞洲研究中心| The Hong Kong Research Center for Asian Studies (RCAS) is a nonprofit research organization focusing on Asian affairs. It is a newly established institution founded in February 2022 by Dr. Nian Peng in Haikou and subsequently moved to Hong Kong in September 2023. We currently have an international research team with nearly 100 resident/nonresident researchers from China and other countries.

RCAS aims to become a leading research institute and think tank on Asian affairs in the Indo-Pacific region. To date, RCAS has conducted research programs on maritime disputes in the South China Sea (SCS), China's relations with the Indo-Pacific states, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), terrorism/counterterrorism in the Afg-Pak region, and so on. It is committed to promoting maritime cooperation, regional integration, and regional peace in the Indo-Pacific region at large.

RCAS has published nearly ten books in Chinese and English and more than 20 papers in SSCI/SCOPUS/CSSCI-indexed journals. Recent English publications include *Populism, Nationalism and South China Sea Dispute: Chinese and Southeast Asian Perspectives* (Singapore: Springer Nature, 2022); *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: Contemporary Developments and Dynamics* (London: Routledge, 2022); *Crossing the Himalayas: Buddhist Ties, Regional Integration and Great-Power Rivalry* (Singapore: Springer Nature, 2021); *The Reshaping of China-Southeast Asia Relations in Light of the COVID-19 Pandemic* (Singapore: Springer Nature, 2021); *Territorial Disputes, The Role of Leaders and The Impact of Quad: A Triangular Explanation of China-India Border Escalations* (2023); *Managing the South China Sea Dispute: Multilateral and Bilateral Approaches* (2022); *China-Pakistan Cooperation on Afghanistan: Assessing Key Interests and Implementing Strategies* (2022); *Hedging Against the Dragon: Myanmar's Tangled Relations with China since 1988* (2021); and *China-Pakistan Conventional Arms Trade: An Appraisal of Supplier's and Recipient's Motives* (2020).

RCAS has also published hundreds of articles, and its researchers have been interviewed in various local and international media outlets, such as *The Diplomat* in the United States, *East Asian Forum (EAF)* in Australia, *Bangkok Post* in Thailand, *Jakarta Post* in Indonesia, *Lian He Zao Bao*, *Think China* in Singapore, *South China Morning Post (SCMP)*, *China-US Focus* in Hong Kong, *CGTN*, *Global Times*, *World Affairs* in China. RCAS researchers have actively participated in international conferences or study visits in the United States, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Myanmar, Cambodia, and other places.

Welcome to visit our website: <http://www.rcas.top>.

Address: 1507B, EASTCORE1, No.398, Kwun Tong, Kooloon, Hong Kong
Ph: 00852 2397 7886|Email: hkrcas@163.com|Web: www.rcas.top

The US Discriminatory Sanctions

Zafar Nawaz Jaspal

Americans are accustomed to exercising sanctions to coerce adversaries and also foster a change in allies' behavior. However, these sanctions' execution criteria lack uniformity. Washington gives a waiver or makes exceptions while imposing strict sanctions in identical cases. This discriminatory approach testifies to considering strategic interests rather than legal, moral, and ideological norms and customs in real politik.



▲ Pakistan Test-Fires New Shaheen 1A Ballistic Missile-NBC News

The Americans defend the sanctions strategy by claiming that these are strategic tools designed to ensure compliance with international norms, particularly non-proliferation. However, in reality, they only levy sanctions to pursue their strategic objectives in global politics rather than strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime. In South Asia, it bluntly supported India's membership of the Nuclear Supplier Group. It opposed Pakistan, which asked for a criteria-based rather than a state-specific approach in granting the NSG membership. Precisely, these discriminatory approaches and double standards undermine the credibility of non-proliferation regimes.

Pakistan is struggling to improve its relationship with the United States. However, the transformation in global geopolitics, increasing China-U.S. strategic competition, and evolving threshold alliance between New Delhi and Washington obstruct the positive trajectory in bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and the United States.

Global geopolitical trends, especially Sino-U.S. security competition, have pushed Washington to back New Delhi as a counterpoise to Beijing's steady rise in Asia and beyond. India's leaders, aspiring that the country would become a great power, have cemented a strategic partnership with the United States by shelving their decades-long non-alliance external policy.

India-United States' strategic partnership has evolved from an episodic cooperation to a 'threshold alliance' since the dawn of the twenty-first century. Forming a threshold alliance involves developing military-technical interoperability. The disturbing factor is that India has received generous supplies of advanced conventional and non-conventional weapons, technologies, and platforms from the United States. The transfer of sophisticated lethal weapons amplifies the arms race in South Asia.

The United States and Western allies did not object to the S-400Triumph air defense system trade between India and Russia. Washington did not levy sanctions on India under the 'Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act' (CAATSA). The U.S. sanctioned Turkey for purchasing the S-400 missile system from the Russian Federation in December 2020.

Washington imposed sanctions on four companies for their alleged role in supplying missile-applicable items to Pakistan's ballistic missile program on April 19, 2024. The U.S. identified the alleged suppliers to Islamabad's ballistic missile program as China-based Xi'an Longde Technology Development Company Limited, Tianjin Creative Source International Trade Co. Ltd., Granpect Company Limited, and Belarus-based Minsk Wheel Tractor Plant. Previously, in March 2023, a few Pakistani firms were put on the U.S. Commerce Department's 'entity list,' allegedly for contributing to ballistic missile programs of concern, including Pakistan's missile program, and for involvement in unsafeguarded nuclear activities.

Pakistan immediately censured the sanctions by claiming that technology was imported purely for socio-economic development pursuits. On April 20, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said, "Such listings of commercial entities have taken place in the past as well on allegations of links to Pakistan's ballistic missile program without sharing any evidence whatsoever." Islamabad reiterated its willingness to discuss end-use and end-user verification mechanisms with Washington so that the discriminatory application of export controls does not hurt legitimate commercial users.

Importantly, targeting Pakistan's ballistic missile program manifests Americans' desire to cap and roll back Pakistan's missile program while encouraging India's missile program's modernization. India has introduced new missile systems, such as hypersonic cruise missiles, hypervelocity-gliding projectiles, and anti-satellite kill

vehicles, into its arsenal. These developments added a new strategic instability variable in the South Asian strategic environment.

Ever since independence in 1947, Pakistan has encountered military threats from the eastern neighbor. The unsettled border with Afghanistan and territorial dispute with India have compelled Pakistan to maintain and continuously advance its armed forces. Though after the nuclear tests on May 28, 1998, Islamabad offered a nuclear restraint regime in South Asia, India rejected the proposal.

India's aggressive military doctrine and modernization of armed forces, with the generous assistance of technologically advanced nations, including the U.S., oblige Pakistan to modernize its missile inventories for the sustainability of Full Spectrum Deterrence. Thus, despite the U.S. sanctions on dual-use technologies, Pakistan needs to advance its indigenous ballistic and cruise missile production within the precincts of credible minimum nuclear deterrence.

The article was first published at Pakistan Observer, Pakistan, May.1, 2024, <https://pakobserver.net/the-us-discriminatory-sanctions/>.

About Author



Prof. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal is an Nonresident Senior Fellow of the Hong Kong Research Center for Asian Studies (RCAS), Hong Kong. He is also Professor and Dean Faculty of the Social Science, Quaid-I-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan, where he teaches various aspects of Global Politics, Nuclear Studies, Conventional/Nuclear arms control, Demining, Pakistan's National Security, Hybrid warfare, etc. Prof. Jaspal also served as Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences in 2021 and a Course Coordinator at the Foreign Services Academy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamabad. Email: znjaspal@qau.edu.pk.