

Can South Asia Survive World War C?

By [Andrew Korybko](#)

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The planet's second-most populous region will struggle to survive World War C due to its largely dilapidated health infrastructure and widespread abject poverty, but its chances of success would greatly increase if the South Asian security dilemma temporarily disappeared in order for everyone to focus more closely on the common goal of making it through this crisis with the least amount of damage possible, though that's only possible if India puts its hegemonic aspirations aside for the time being by undertaking unilateral military steps that contribute to de-escalation and would prospectively be followed up by reciprocal ones by Pakistan.

South Asia is poised to be pummeled by the COVID-19 pandemic given its largely dilapidated health infrastructure and widespread abject poverty, which isn't helped any by the fact that this region is the planet's second-most populous and many of its people live in very densely populated settlements. [World War C](#) could therefore be utterly devastating and have unprecedentedly catastrophic consequences, be they in the obviously humanitarian sense or even in the indirect economic one (which could in turn catalyze similarly profound destabilization in this fragile part of the world) in spite of the region's states doing their utmost to lessen the latter's blow through various emergency policies. The aforementioned warning isn't to "fearmonger" as some critics might claim, but to simply convey the seriousness of the threat that lies ahead if the worst-case scenario even begins to remotely appear plausible, which will be discovered soon enough after the Indian media outlet [ThePrint](#) reported that current calculations predict a "conservative estimate" of at least 30,000 deaths in India by the end of May. Pakistan might not fare any better either, so two of the world's nuclear powers might be brought to the brink of collapse without a single bullet ever being fired if everything spins out of control.

There's no "silver bullet" solution for surviving World War C, especially given South Asia's poor preexisting socio-economic and healthcare situation, but its chances of success would greatly increase if the regional security dilemma temporarily disappeared in order for everyone to focus more closely on the common goal of making it through this crisis with the least amount of damage possible. That would require the [rogue state of India](#) putting its [American-backed hegemonic aspirations](#) aside for the time being and not attempting to exploit the pandemic through any [Pulwama-like false flag](#) attacks that it could conveniently blame on Pakistan in order to "justify" further saber-rattling or, in the worst-case scenario, another [Bollywood-like "surgical strike"](#) out of the misguided belief that its rival is "weakened" by the pandemic and could therefore "easily" be "paid back" for the [bloody nose](#) that it gave New Delhi last year. Since India is the regional aggressor, the responsibility falls on it to lessen the preexisting security dilemma with Pakistan by taking unilateral military steps that contribute to stability in South Asia, which could in turn be followed by reciprocal ones by Islamabad and thus improve the odds that both of them can instead focus their entire attention on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

It's of the highest importance that neither India nor Pakistan are destabilized by World War C, and under no circumstances should New Delhi even remotely consider the delusion that this would be an opportune moment to attack its neighbor since that would certainly push the world to the brink of World War III, so it would be helpful if other Great Power stakeholders got involved in ensuring that interstate relations in South Asia remain stable. This could realistically be achieved by the US, China, and possibly even Russia acting as guarantors of any prospective agreement that might be reached between these two rivals, especially if they do so under the aegis of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), but only in the event that India stops trying to politicize this regional bloc. As the author wrote in September 2016, "[India Split Up SAARC And Brought The New Cold War To South Asia](#)", but its [paltry \\$10 million donation](#) to this 1.7 billion-person organization (equivalent to approximately half a cent per person) as part of its over-hyped anti-COVID-19 efforts was [ridiculously misportrayed by one of RT's pro-BJP writers](#) over the weekend as an attempt to "counter" China. Although laughably ineffective, such information warfare doesn't inspire confidence about India's intentions.

In order for the author's proposed solution to have any feasible chance of ever working, India must commit to the depoliticization of SAARC, at least temporarily given the emergency conditions under which its requested unilateral military de-escalation measures would prospectively be commenced. Only then might Pakistan respond in kind, possibly formalize this new arrangement through SAARC, and then bring on board the three previously mentioned Great Power stakeholders as guarantors for what might potentially be a one-, two-, or three-month "trial period". There's no doubt that the [global pivot state](#) of Pakistan wants peace since nothing less than that can guarantee that it actualizes its geopolitical destiny as the "[Zipper of Eurasia](#)" and ultimately the "[Convergence of Civilizations](#)" through [CPEC+](#), but it's incumbent on India to make the first move in this direction since the South Asian security dilemma is entirely of its making. Neither India nor Pakistan can afford to become the next major victims of World War C, especially given the immense humanitarian stakes involved that might eventually lead to nuclear ones in the event that one or the other collapses in the worst-case scenario, so it's in both of their interests to do what's needed in order to focus solely on containing COVID-19.

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Andrew Korybko is an American Moscow-based political analyst specializing in the relationship between the US strategy in Afro-Eurasia, China's One Belt One Road global vision of New Silk Road connectivity, and Hybrid Warfare. He is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

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About the author:

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