

# China's Hypersonic Missile Dominance

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*The People's Republic showed off its state-of-the-art DF-17 hypersonic glide vehicle during this week's military parade celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Chinese Communist Revolution, which was meant to send a message not just to the superpower's American adversary, but also to its southern US-allied neighbor India as well.*

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The world got its first glimpse of China's [DF-17 hypersonic glide vehicle](#) earlier this week when the People's Republic showed it off during a military parade celebrating the [70th anniversary of the Chinese Communist Revolution](#). Commentators noted how this fearsome munition could strike the US [within 30 minutes](#) of launch, but practically no one noted how it could reach China's southern [American-allied neighbor](#) of India in a fraction of that in the event that the two notional BRICS and SCO "[frenemies](#)" ever conventionally clash. This is exceptionally important to point out because it completely changes the balance of power between the two, as well as strongly implies that the balance between the Chinese-allied [global pivot state](#) of Pakistan and India is forever altered as a result as well, thus humbling India despite its leadership's warlike rhetoric ever since their "[Israeli](#)"-like unilateral annexation of [Kashmir](#).

Pakistani Prime Minister Khan warned the world about [the 21st-century's Munich moment](#) in his speech at the UN General Assembly last week, vowing that his country would fight to the end with all that it has in the event that it's forced to choose between that and surrendering to India should the current Kashmir Crisis lead to yet another war between the two. No responsible member of the International Community would ever want it to get to that point, yet the many of the most influential Great Powers are [reluctant to pressure](#) India into de-escalating the dangerous situation that it provoked because of their long-term economic interests in what will soon become the world's largest marketplace. Russia's [regional "balancing" act recently faltered](#) but has since shown signs of an [earlier than expected return](#), while the US is also playing its [own "balancing" game](#). China, however, is the only relevant Great Power decisively taking a stand in support of Pakistan and the Kashmiris.

Beijing took the issue of New Delhi's annexation of Kashmir up [with the UNSC](#) in an informal meeting in mid-August and has also repeatedly condemned India's unilateral moves towards that internationally recognized disputed territory. It did this because it's also a party to the Kashmir Conflict due to its control over [Aksai Chin](#), which India claims as its own per its maximalist approach to the Kashmir Conflict. Furthermore, the flagship project of China's global [Belt & Road Initiative](#) (BRI) is the [China-Pakistan Economic Corridor](#) (CPEC) that provides the People's Republic with its only reliable non-Malacca access route to the Afro-Asian ("Indian") Ocean Rimland through which most of its Eastern Hemispheric trade traverses. An Indian-initiated nuclear apocalypse in South Asia would result in the

“containment” of China for centuries to come by cutting off CPEC and therefore making the country forever dependent on the increasingly militarized South China Sea and the Strait of Malacca chokepoint that are both controlled by the unrivaled US Navy.

It's therefore in China's grand strategic interests to deter India's ruling ultra-nationalist and fascist-inspired Hindu extremists from unleashing Armageddon for ideological reasons, which could most credibly be accomplished by hinting to them that they'd stand a chance of being destroyed the moment they took any steps in that direction should Beijing intervene on Islamabad's side by deploying the DF-17 hypersonic glide vehicles that could [cut through the S-400 missile shield](#) that India is poised to receive from Russia in the next couple of years. In fact, considering how close China and Pakistan are in all respects, the elder “iron brother” might even help his junior develop its own hypersonic glide vehicle technology in order to restore the regional balance of power that's slated to be disrupted through India's S-400 purchase from Russia. That could in turn enable China to remain “ambiguous” about its speculative intent in any possible Indo-Pak conflict and thus save it the trouble of getting too diplomatically or even militarily involved in deterring that scenario.

In accordance with the Neo-Realist paradigm of International Relations that most accurately describes the complex processes influencing the ongoing global systemic transition, it's only natural for India to seek its own hypersonic glide vehicle technologies in order to counteract China's and even possibly some day Pakistan's as well. It's unclear what the state of India's research and development is on this piece of military equipment that's just as much of a game-changer as it is a status symbol among Great Powers nowadays, but given the country's tendency to seek arms from abroad, it can't be discounted that it'll approach both Russia and the US in soliciting assistance or outright purchases of these vehicles in an attempt to play the two off against one another for this sale. Each of them might be reluctant to transfer technology out of fear that India could then proliferate it to third countries in pursuit of profit and prestige, but both might still be interested in a deal.

It's difficult to predict the exact details which is why it's better to simply analyze the trend itself, which is that hypersonic glide vehicles were first developed by Russia in order to retain the strategic nuclear parity that was disrupted by the US' global rollout of anti-missile technology. China needs these munitions first and foremost because of the threat that the US poses to it, but it can't be discounted that its leadership also had an eye on India's impending import of the S-400s, especially in regards to how they'll change the balance of power in South Asia vis-a-vis Pakistan. India might still continue spewing bellicose warmongering rhetoric against Pakistan for domestic consumption, but its strategists must certainly be humbled by how quickly China was able to develop its own hypersonic glide vehicle technology and the credible prospects that it'll share its experiences with Pakistan. Even if the latter doesn't transpire (or at least not anytime soon), the S-400s have already become outdated even before India received them since China can always hint at their use to support Pakistan.

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