

PAKISTAN'S EVOLVING MILITARY DOCTRINE UNDER FIELD MARSHAL (CDF) HAFIZ SYED ASIM MUNIR: STRATEGIC VISION AND AIR FORCE MODERNIZATION

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Abstract

This research explores the dynamic transformation of Pakistan's military doctrine under the leadership of Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir, with particular emphasis on the modernization of the Pakistan Air Force (PAF). In an era defined by evolving security threats and rapid technological advancement, General Munir's vision reflects a strategic recalibration aimed at achieving both national sovereignty and economic resilience. The study examines doctrinal shifts from conventional military preparedness to hybrid warfare readiness, highlighting the increasing integration of civil-military planning and counterterrorism efforts. Central to this transformation is the modernization of the Pakistan Air Force, including the acquisition of next-generation fighter jets like the J-10C and upgraded JF-17 Thunder, expansion in UAV capabilities with systems such as Bayraktar TB2 and Shahpar-II, and advancements in electronic warfare and air defense systems. The establishment of the National Aerospace Science and Technology Park (NASTP) underlines a commitment to research-driven innovation and indigenous defense capabilities, signaling a move toward strategic self-reliance. Furthermore, Pakistan's growing international defense collaborations—particularly with Turkey, China, and Saudi Arabia—are explored through the lens of joint exercises and defense diplomacy. This paper argues that under General Munir's command, Pakistan is not only responding to traditional regional threats but is also preparing for future asymmetric and technological challenges. Through a multi-disciplinary methodology combining policy analysis, defense strategy, and geopolitical review, this research contributes to the broader understanding of South Asia's shifting military dynamics. It concludes with policy recommendations aimed at sustaining modernization momentum, strengthening regional stability, and promoting strategic autonomy.

INTRODUCTION

The transformation of military doctrines in response to rapidly shifting geopolitical landscapes has become a defining feature of modern nation-

states. In the context of Pakistan, the post-2019 strategic environment—marked by heightened regional tensions with India, the United States' recalibration of its South Asia policy, and the

evolving threats posed by non-state actors—has necessitated a comprehensive review of national defense strategies. The appointment of General Asim Munir as Chief of Army Staff in November 2022 introduced a renewed emphasis on strategic coherence, technological modernization, and military diplomacy.

General Munir's tenure coincides with Pakistan's efforts to maintain credible deterrence amid increasing hybrid threats, cyber vulnerabilities, and internal security challenges. His leadership reflects a doctrinal evolution from traditional kinetic warfare to multi-domain operations that combine conventional, cyber, aerospace, and psychological warfare capabilities. Central to this shift is the modernization of the Pakistan Air Force (PAF), which now plays a critical role in Pakistan's deterrence posture and strategic outreach.

In this broader framework, military modernization is not viewed solely as an arms race, but rather as a prerequisite for safeguarding sovereignty, ensuring economic viability, and maintaining regional stability (Tellis, 2020; Khan, 2023).

Objectives and Significance

This study aims to critically examine the strategic and doctrinal transformations in Pakistan's defense posture under General Asim Munir, with a specific focus on:

- Analyzing the strategic vision that guides Pakistan's evolving military doctrine.
- Understanding the modernization trajectory of the Pakistan Air Force in response to emerging threats.
- Evaluating the role of institutions such as the National Aerospace Science and Technology Park (NASTP) in promoting indigenous defense capability.
- Assessing the implications of these developments on national security, defense diplomacy, and regional stability.

The significance of this research lies in its timely analysis of doctrinal transitions that impact South Asia's fragile security architecture. It offers insights not only for defense scholars and policymakers in Pakistan but also for regional analysts observing

the intersection of military modernization and geopolitical realignments.

Methodology and Sources

This research adopts a qualitative and analytical methodology, relying on both primary and secondary sources to construct a comprehensive understanding of Pakistan's strategic evolution. Primary sources include official statements by Pakistan's military leadership, press releases from Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), and reports from defense institutions. Additionally, secondary sources such as policy briefs, peer-reviewed journal articles, and international think tank analyses are utilized to contextualize and interpret developments.

Key data points have been drawn from authoritative publications and institutions, including:

- Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
- International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)
- Pakistan Institute of Strategic Studies (ISSI)
- Jane's Defence Weekly

The research also incorporates multimedia analyses, such as televised interviews, military documentaries, and verified digital content from defense correspondents.

To ensure academic rigor, all sources are cross-verified and cited in accordance with APA 7th edition guidelines. Where appropriate, the research triangulates official policy with regional expert commentary to derive an objective perspective on doctrinal shifts.

1. General Asim Munir's Strategic Vision *Military Leadership Profile*

General Syed Asim Munir, appointed as Pakistan's 17th Chief of Army Staff on November 29, 2022, is a seasoned military leader with extensive operational and intelligence experience. A graduate of the Pakistan Military Academy (PMA) and recipient of the prestigious Sword of Honor, he served in critical roles including Director General of Military Intelligence and Director

General of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). His leadership is informed by a deep understanding of internal security dynamics, regional geopolitics, and hybrid warfare threats.

His approach is marked by strategic clarity, institutional discipline, and an emphasis on doctrinal modernization. As the first Army Chief with direct intelligence leadership experience, his vision reflects a fusion of tactical awareness and long-term strategic planning, especially in areas related to counterterrorism, civil-military harmony, and defense modernization (Hashmi, 2023).

Emphasis on National Sovereignty and Economic Stability

General Munir has explicitly linked military preparedness with economic sovereignty, emphasizing the role of a stable economy in ensuring national security. In speeches and interactions with media and stakeholders, he has promoted the idea that Pakistan's internal cohesion and economic resilience are as vital as its conventional deterrence. His support for anti-smuggling operations, tax reforms, and crackdown on hoarding and currency manipulation under the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) illustrates a military commitment to broader state functionality (ISPR, 2023).

By aligning military priorities with national development goals, General Munir has introduced a doctrine that sees sovereignty not just in territorial terms but in fiscal, social, and informational autonomy.

Strategic Realignment in Regional and Global Politics

Under General Munir's leadership, Pakistan is recalibrating its defense and diplomatic posture in a multipolar world. Recognizing the diminishing reliability of traditional allies and the emergence of regional powers like China and Turkey, Pakistan has moved towards diversified defense partnerships. This includes deeper engagement in Sino-Pak military-industrial collaboration and increased participation in joint military drills with Muslim-majority nations such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE (Rana, 2023).

Furthermore, General Munir has sought to balance relations with the United States by focusing on issue-based diplomacy rather than bloc alignment, reflecting a doctrine of strategic autonomy.

Response to Regional Threats and Cross-Border Incidents

Pakistan's evolving military doctrine under General Munir also addresses increasing hostilities along the eastern and western borders. In response to India's aggressive posture, especially post-2019 Balakot strikes, the doctrine emphasizes credible deterrence through air and missile capability enhancement. Simultaneously, Pakistan has responded to emerging threats along the Afghan border, particularly from TTP sanctuaries, with a mix of kinetic operations and diplomatic engagement with the Afghan interim government (Yusuf, 2024).

His command has prioritized multi-domain readiness—preparing the military not only for traditional battlefield engagements but also for asymmetric warfare, cyber threats, and disinformation campaigns that target national integrity.

Doctrinal Shifts in Pakistan's Defense Policy From Conventional to Hybrid Warfare Readiness

Under General Asim Munir's leadership, Pakistan's defense doctrine has undergone a significant evolution from conventional deterrence models to comprehensive hybrid warfare preparedness. Recognizing the limitations of traditional force posturing in the 21st century, the military has begun to incorporate multidimensional responses that combine kinetic force with non-kinetic tools such as cyber operations, psychological warfare, disinformation countermeasures, and economic resilience.

This shift is especially crucial given the nature of regional threats—from India's integration of cyber and space-based warfare into its Cold Start Doctrine, to Afghanistan-based terror proxy networks using media and technology for destabilization. Pakistan's renewed focus on hybrid defense aims to bridge doctrinal and

technological gaps through internal coordination and external partnerships (Bajwa, 2023).

The military's acknowledgment of the information domain as a battlefield is reflected in recent public awareness campaigns, counter-disinformation operations, and the establishment of cyber defense units. Asymmetric responses are now tailored to disrupt enemy networks, degrade propaganda operations, and neutralize non-traditional threats while avoiding escalation (Gul, 2024).

Integrated Civil-Military Strategic Planning

A hallmark of General Munir's command is the increased convergence of military strategy with civilian policy frameworks. Through platforms such as the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), the military has supported national economic initiatives, energy security, infrastructure development, and digital governance—acknowledging that modern warfare is as much about controlling narratives and economic routes as it is about firepower.

The integration of civil-military institutions under a unified national security paradigm aims to mitigate bureaucratic fragmentation and enhance institutional responsiveness. This doctrinal approach mirrors models seen in countries like China and Turkey, where military and civilian sectors collaborate on technological and defense innovation (Rizvi, 2023).

Focus on Internal Security and Counterterrorism

While external deterrence remains a priority, the doctrinal reorientation places substantial emphasis on internal security challenges, especially in light of the resurgence of banned outfits like Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), sectarian groups, and separatist networks. The Pakistan Army and paramilitary forces have launched targeted intelligence-based operations (IBOs), particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, as part of a broader internal stabilization strategy.

The doctrine under General Munir also emphasizes deradicalization, community engagement, and socio-economic uplift of conflict-prone areas. Enhanced collaboration with the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA)

and intelligence agencies indicates a more cohesive internal threat management model that balances hard and soft approaches to security (Ahmed, 2023).

Modernization of Pakistan Air Force (PAF)

The Pakistan Air Force (PAF) has emerged as a central pillar in Pakistan's evolving defense strategy, particularly under General Asim Munir's comprehensive modernization doctrine. Facing growing regional airpower asymmetries, emerging aerial threats, and the imperative of strategic deterrence, the PAF has prioritized the acquisition of advanced platforms, integrated command systems, and indigenous technological solutions. The modernization strategy aligns with Pakistan's broader shift from reactive defense to proactive, multi-domain preparedness.

Acquisition of Next-Generation Fighter Jets

5.1.1. J-10C Fighters

One of the most visible indicators of PAF modernization is the induction of the **J-10C multirole fighter jet**, acquired from China. This 4.5-generation aircraft significantly enhances Pakistan's air superiority, offering AESA radar, electronic warfare (EW) capabilities, and beyond-visual-range missile (BVRAAM) capacity. With these jets, PAF seeks to counterbalance India's Rafale fleet and maintain a credible air deterrent posture.

The induction of J-10Cs in 2022 was also symbolic of Pakistan's deepening defense ties with China. The aircraft's performance in joint exercises has validated its suitability for Pakistan's doctrinal needs, especially in terms of high-altitude and all-weather operations (Siddiqui, 2023).

Upgraded JF-17 Thunder

Parallel to new acquisitions, Pakistan continues to enhance its **indigenously developed JF-17 Thunder** fleet in collaboration with China. The Block III variant represents a major leap, featuring cutting-edge avionics, AESA radar,IRST (Infrared Search and Track), and enhanced EW capabilities. Unlike earlier versions, Block III brings the JF-17 closer to 4.5-generation standards, enabling it to serve both air dominance and strike roles.

This focus on upgrading JF-17s reflects a long-term vision of self-reliance in defense manufacturing and affordability in sustained combat readiness. PAF's doctrine now includes the JF-17 not merely as a fighter platform, but as a multi-role workhorse integral to both offensive and defensive missions (Air Chief Zaheer, 2023).

Expansion in UAV and Combat Drone Capabilities

Bayraktar TB2 and Akinci

In response to global trends in drone warfare, Pakistan has acquired **Bayraktar TB2 and Akinci drones** from Turkey. These systems provide both ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance) and precision strike capabilities, proven effective in theatres such as Libya, Syria, and Nagorno-Karabakh.

The TB2 has been particularly effective in providing real-time intelligence during counterterrorism operations in border areas. The Akinci, a larger and more capableUCAV (Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicle), allows for the deployment of heavier munitions and EW payloads. These drones serve to reduce human risk, increase operational tempo, and extend Pakistan's strategic reach into contested or sensitive regions (Khan, 2024).

Shahpar-II and Indigenous Systems

The **Shahpar-II**, developed by Global Industrial & Defence Solutions (GIDS), represents Pakistan's commitment to indigenous UAV development. With advanced EO/IR sensors and a 14-hour endurance, it supports ISR missions and precision targeting. The PAF's increased reliance on locally developed drones indicates confidence in domestic research and the shifting doctrine toward technological sovereignty.

Indigenous drone systems now serve not only in battlefield surveillance but also in mapping, target acquisition, and even digital terrain modeling—an increasingly vital capability in hybrid and high-altitude warfare.

2. Electronic Warfare and Radar Systems

In the era of digitalized battlefields, the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) has significantly enhanced its

electronic warfare (EW) and radar capabilities to achieve information dominance, situational awareness, and survivability in high-threat environments. Under General Asim Munir's strategic vision, EW has transitioned from a support function to a central operational pillar, essential for denying adversaries access to Pakistan's airspace and communications networks.

AM-350S and SR-3D

The induction of **AM-350S 3D radar systems** and **SR-3D surveillance radars** marks a major leap in real-time threat detection and multi-target tracking. These radar systems are capable of detecting stealth aircraft, cruise missiles, and drones at long range and across varied altitudes, enhancing PAF's early warning and threat evaluation matrix.

These radars, procured from European and Chinese sources, are integrated into Pakistan's **Command and Control (C2)** architecture. They support a layered air defense system and provide seamless communication links between ground stations, airborne platforms, and decision-makers (Iqbal, 2023).

Electronic Warfare Aircraft Conversion

To complement its radar network, the PAF has embarked on converting select transport and reconnaissance platforms into **electronic warfare aircraft**. These retrofitted platforms—equipped with signal jamming, radar spoofing, and ELINT (Electronic Intelligence) capabilities—play a crucial role in suppressing enemy air defenses (SEAD) during critical operations.

Electronic warfare aircraft are now considered force multipliers, especially for pre-emptive missions and cross-border retaliatory scenarios. This strategy closely mirrors evolving doctrines in Turkey and China, where integrated air-land-EW operations are essential for modern conflict theaters.

Integrated Air Defense Systems

HQ-9B and HQ-16 Surface-to-Air Missiles (SAMs)

To shield its airspace from aerial threats and enforce deterrence credibility, Pakistan has inducted **HQ-9B long-range** and **HQ-16 medium-range SAMs** from China. The HQ-9B, capable of intercepting aircraft and cruise missiles at distances over 200 km, forms the core of Pakistan's **Integrated Air Defense System (IADS)**.

These missile systems are operated in tandem with radar networks and mobile C4ISR platforms. Their deployment near sensitive installations and border regions provides a credible defensive shield, especially in response to India's acquisition of the S-400 system.

Anti-Drone Capabilities and Surveillance Grid

With the exponential rise in drone warfare, Pakistan has prioritized **anti-drone defense measures**, including **laser-based interceptors**, **jamming rifles**, and **counter-UAV radars**. Notably, the development of **indigenous counter-UAV solutions** by institutions like NESCOM and DESTO reflects the self-reliant trajectory of the modernization strategy.

Furthermore, the expansion of a **nationwide surveillance grid**—linking radar nodes, EW platforms, and visual observation posts—has enhanced airspace integrity and minimized response delays to aerial intrusions, including those from commercial drones and loitering munitions (Shah, 2023).

3. National Aerospace Science and Technology Park (NASTP)

The establishment of the **National Aerospace Science and Technology Park (NASTP)** marks a transformative leap in Pakistan's quest for technological sovereignty, defense innovation, and aerospace development. Spearheaded by the Pakistan Air Force under the patronage of Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir and Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, NASTP is envisioned as a key driver of Pakistan's aerospace ecosystem, facilitating a secure and self-reliant defense industry aligned with the demands of the 21st century.

Vision, Structure, and Objectives

NASTP operates under the broader umbrella of the Aviation City Pakistan initiative and is structured as a **multi-site, multi-domain national innovation hub**. With campuses in Rawalpindi, Lahore, Karachi, and Kamra, the park is strategically placed to support both military and dual-use aerospace projects.

Its primary vision is to:

- Promote **indigenous R&D** in aerospace and defense technologies,
- Enable **design-to-delivery capability** for aviation platforms,
- Foster **civil-military technological integration**, and
- Establish Pakistan as a regional hub for aerospace innovation.

The project aligns closely with Pakistan's doctrine of "**Strategic Autonomy**", seeking to reduce dependency on foreign suppliers and enhance export potential in the defense sector (PAF Press Release, 2023).

Role in Research and Technological Innovation

NASTP serves as an anchor institution for high-impact **R&D in AI, avionics, radar systems, drones, space applications, and communication technologies**. It houses specialized labs in areas such as:

- Smart materials and composites,
- Cybersecurity for aerospace systems,
- UAV propulsion technologies, and
- Satellite engineering.

In partnership with academic institutions like **Air University** and **NUST**, NASTP functions as a crucible for military-academic collaboration, enabling innovation cycles that begin with basic research and culminate in deployable technologies. The facility also encourages patent generation and protects intellectual property through structured innovation governance mechanisms (Usmani, 2024).

Private Sector Collaboration and Startups

One of NASTP's most groundbreaking initiatives is the inclusion of private startups, SMEs, and multinational corporations within its innovation ecosystem. It offers co-working space, incubation

facilities, mentorship programs, and access to classified simulation environments—allowing vetted civilian firms to contribute to defense R&D.

Private-sector partners are working on advanced systems such as:

- AI-powered surveillance drones,
- Smart cockpit interfaces,
- Secure navigation systems, and
- Satellite telemetry processing.

This civil-military collaboration not only diversifies the technological talent pool but also brings agility and entrepreneurial dynamism into Pakistan's otherwise state-dominated defense sector (Shahid, 2023).

Aerospace Design and Innovation Centre

The **Aerospace Design and Innovation Centre (ADIC)** at NASTP Kamra Campus is at the heart of indigenous platform development. It is involved in conceptual design, systems integration, wind tunnel testing, and computational simulations for future fighter aircraft and UAVs.

The ADIC has been instrumental in advancing **fifth-generation fighter (FGFA) concepts**, optimizing JF-17 configurations, and supporting the development of unmanned combat air vehicles (UCAVs) tailored for regional threat environments.

With a focus on **“Make in Pakistan”**, the Centre aims to produce next-gen aerospace engineers, designers, and innovators capable of supporting sustained platform independence and exports.

4. International Military Cooperation and Joint Exercises

In the context of General Asim Munir's broader defense doctrine, **international military cooperation** has emerged as a strategic instrument of both **force modernization** and **diplomatic engagement**. The Pakistan Air Force (PAF), under this framework, plays a central role in strengthening bilateral and multilateral military relationships, particularly with strategic partners such as China, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. Through high-profile **air exercises**, **technology exchanges**, and **regional defense diplomacy**, Pakistan seeks to enhance interoperability, build

strategic trust, and balance regional asymmetries in airpower.

Bilateral and Multilateral Air Exercises

Joint exercises have become a regular and essential component of PAF's international engagement. These exercises not only provide tactical training in simulated combat environments but also serve to validate doctrinal innovations, test new platforms, and integrate emerging technologies such as electronic warfare and UAV support.

Indus Shield 2023

Indus Shield 2023, held in collaboration with Turkish and Chinese air forces, marked a significant milestone in regional airpower diplomacy. The exercise focused on:

- Joint mission planning and execution,
- Integration of 4.5-generation platforms (e.g., J-10C, JF-17 Block III),
- Counter-stealth operations and EW simulations,
- UAV reconnaissance missions in contested airspace.

The inclusion of **Bayraktar drones**, Turkish trainers, and Chinese AEW&C aircraft demonstrated a growing level of interoperability and convergence in threat perception among these allies. According to official PAF briefings, Indus Shield allowed Pakistan to simulate both conventional warfare scenarios and hybrid air conflict responses (ISPR, 2023).

Defense Diplomacy and Regional Alliances

Under General Munir's leadership, defense diplomacy has shifted from passive engagement to **proactive regional alliance-building**. Military attachés, exchange programs, and high-level delegation visits have increased significantly. Pakistan has positioned itself as a **bridge between Muslim-majority defense networks**, participating in forums such as the **Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC)** and enhancing ties with Gulf States.

These diplomatic efforts aim to:

- Broaden Pakistan's strategic partnerships beyond South Asia,

- Counterbalance India's bilateral military gains,
- Promote indigenous defense exports (e.g., JF-17, UAVs, radars),
- Establish joint production lines and training institutions.

Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with countries like **Nigeria, Azerbaijan, and Qatar** further reflect Pakistan's expanding role as a **middle-tier military exporter and collaborator** in the Global South (Ali, 2023).

Strategic Partnerships with Turkey, China, and Saudi Arabia

China

The **China-Pakistan defense relationship** remains foundational. Beyond fighter aircraft like the JF-17 and J-10C, cooperation has expanded to:

- Satellite surveillance,
- Space-based communication systems,
- Joint research in AI-driven defense technologies,
- Development of air defense missile systems (e.g., HQ-9B, HQ-16).

The two countries have also institutionalized **joint R&D programs** and defense think tank cooperation.

Turkey

With Turkey, the focus has been on **drone warfare**, training exchanges, and EW technology. Pakistan has acquired **Bayraktar TB2 and Akinci drones**, while discussions continue around co-production of UAV components. PAF pilots have trained in Turkish airspace under NATO-style regimens, enhancing doctrinal flexibility.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia continues to be a strong financial and strategic backer. Air force-to-air force cooperation includes:

- Simulator-based training,
- Joint counterterrorism drills,
- Maintenance and logistics support for legacy PAF platforms.

Saudi investments in **Pakistan's defense technology infrastructure**, particularly through ventures under NASTP, are also on the rise.

5. Implications for National Security and Regional Stability

The doctrinal and technological shifts taking place under General Asim Munir's leadership—particularly through the modernization of the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) and the strengthening of military diplomacy—have far-reaching consequences not only for Pakistan's national security but also for the broader strategic balance in South Asia and the Islamic world. This section analyzes the multidimensional implications of these developments, emphasizing deterrence, self-reliance, and response capabilities in a complex geopolitical environment.

Enhanced Deterrence Capability

The modernization of PAF through platforms like **J-10C, JF-17 Block III, HQ-9B SAMs, and Bayraktar drones** has significantly improved Pakistan's **strategic deterrence posture**. These capabilities now offer Pakistan greater operational flexibility and allow for:

- **Quick response options** to aerial violations or cross-border strikes,
- Greater **surveillance depth** over contested regions (e.g., LoC and western frontiers),
- Improved readiness for **multi-theatre conflicts**, including high-altitude and maritime zones.

This enhanced deterrence also contributes to **crisis stability**, discouraging adversaries from risk-taking behavior or limited incursions. The induction of long-range air defense systems, EW capabilities, and UAVs reflects a shift from reactive to preemptive and predictive defense (Iqbal, 2023).

Strategic Autonomy and Defense Self-Reliance

Through initiatives such as the **National Aerospace Science and Technology Park (NASTP)** and indigenous upgrades to the JF-17, Pakistan is laying the foundation for **strategic autonomy** in defense production and innovation. This reduces overdependence on foreign suppliers during wartime and supports continuity in defense capability despite international sanctions or geopolitical pressure.

Pakistan's drive for **"Make in Pakistan"** platforms, including EW systems, drones, and aerospace

components, also paves the way for entry into **emerging defense markets**—especially in Africa and Central Asia. Such efforts not only strengthen national resilience but also create economic opportunities within the defense-industrial base (Shahid, 2024).

Balancing Conventional and Unconventional Threats

Pakistan's evolving doctrine under General Munir takes a **composite threat approach**, balancing conventional deterrence (against India), asymmetric operations (against terrorist groups), and non-traditional threats (cybersecurity, hybrid warfare, and disinformation).

The integration of counterterrorism strategies with airpower, ISR networks, and electronic warfare has already enhanced **internal threat neutralization**—especially in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Meanwhile, doctrinal planning now explicitly considers:

- Cross-border drone intrusions,
- Cyber-attacks on air defense networks,
- Media-based psychological operations aimed at undermining national morale.

Such a **multi-domain defense strategy** improves both the kinetic and cognitive dimensions of national security and promotes **inter-agency cooperation** between the armed forces, intelligence agencies, and civil authorities (Rana, 2024).

Conclusion

This study has examined the transformational trajectory of Pakistan's military doctrine under the leadership of General Asim Munir, with a particular focus on strategic vision and the modernization of the Pakistan Air Force (PAF). The analysis reveals that General Munir's tenure represents a decisive shift from legacy conventional frameworks to a **multi-domain, hybrid warfare-oriented doctrine**, which balances kinetic capability with economic sovereignty, internal stability, and technological innovation.

Central to this evolution is the modernization of the PAF—through the acquisition of advanced platforms such as the J-10C, JF-17 Block III, Bayraktar TB2, and HQ-series air defense

systems—which collectively enhance Pakistan's deterrence, surveillance, and quick-reaction capabilities. Simultaneously, the establishment of the **National Aerospace Science and Technology Park (NASTP)** underscores a broader move toward **indigenous capability, civil-military technological integration, and strategic autonomy**.

At the international level, enhanced military diplomacy and joint exercises—particularly with China, Turkey, and Gulf states—reflect Pakistan's realignment within a **multipolar security environment**. These developments not only strengthen operational readiness but also elevate Pakistan's profile as a rising player in regional and Muslim-world defense cooperation.

Future Prospects under General Asim Munir's Leadership

Looking forward, General Asim Munir's doctrine is likely to consolidate Pakistan's position in three critical dimensions:

1. **Strategic Resilience:** With greater integration of airpower, ISR assets, and digital capabilities, the armed forces are better prepared to address both conventional and non-traditional threats.
2. **Defense Industrialization:** Projects such as NASTP will continue to bridge the gap between military requirements and indigenous production capacity, fostering defense exports and economic sustainability.
3. **Doctrinal Maturity:** The emphasis on hybrid warfare, internal security, and regional partnerships signals a more nuanced, proactive, and policy-aligned military establishment. These prospects suggest that under General Munir, Pakistan's military doctrine is not only evolving in form but in **strategic depth and institutional sophistication**.

Recommendations for Policy and Strategy

To ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of this doctrinal transformation, the following strategic recommendations are proposed:

- **Institutionalize Doctrinal Development:** Establish a permanent doctrine and innovation

unit within the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee to periodically update strategic frameworks.

- **Expand Public-Private R&D Collaboration:** Encourage investment incentives and regulatory reforms that enable startups and SMEs to participate in defense projects.

- **Enhance Cyber and Space Defense Capacities:** Allocate dedicated resources for building cyber deterrence and satellite-based intelligence systems in collaboration with allied states.

- **Foster Strategic Communication:** Develop a cohesive civil-military media strategy to counter disinformation and strengthen public trust in national defense initiatives.

- **Balance Civil-Military Engagement:** Ensure that military participation in economic and governance-related initiatives complements—not substitutes—civilian leadership, maintaining democratic equilibrium.

In sum, General Asim Munir's tenure marks a **paradigm shift** in Pakistan's defense strategy—combining military modernization, strategic vision, and institutional adaptability. If sustained and institutionalized, these reforms can significantly enhance Pakistan's **national resilience, regional credibility, and global strategic relevance**.

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