

# IDSA

## *Issue Brief*

# South Asian 'Zombie': The futility of reviving SAARC

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## **S***ummary*

Fragile structure, weak mandate, mistrust and misperceptions, and conflict among member countries have impeded SAARC from fostering regional socio-economic and cultural cooperation and from achieving its political objective of creating a durable, stable, and peaceful regional order. Even if reinvigorated through structural reforms, the organisation will not be able to contribute to regional cooperation and development.

Nepal Prime Minister K P Oli's visit to India not only refreshed bilateral relations but also contributed to the resumption of discussions on South Asian regionalism. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's response on the 19<sup>th</sup> South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Summit in Islamabad, an issue raised by his Nepali counterpart, conveys that India is not keen on reviving the now-defunct SAARC. Citing cross-border terrorism perpetrated by Pakistan, Modi is reported to have indicated that it is difficult to proceed with SAARC in these circumstances.<sup>1</sup>

The 19<sup>th</sup> SAARC Summit was originally scheduled to be held in Islamabad in November 2016. However, following the pull-out of India and three other countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Afghanistan) after the Uri terrorist attack, the Summit was postponed indefinitely. In March 2018, during his visit to Kathmandu, Pakistan Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi sought the help of Nepal, the chair of SAARC, to revive the organisation by convening the pending Summit in Islamabad.<sup>2</sup> Pakistan has also solicited the support of Sri Lanka in this regard.<sup>3</sup>

Two major factors, cooperative outcomes and socialisation of member states, determine the vitality and necessity of international organisations. In the case of SAARC, both these factors have been in short supply. The organisation "continue[s] to operate, but without making any progress toward its mandate", akin to a 'zombie'.<sup>4</sup> Given the structural fragility of SAARC and its inability to promote South Asian regional integration, an attempt to reboot the organisation would be futile.

### **SAARC: An example of retarded regionalism**

SAARC was founded in 1985 with seven South Asian countries — Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The membership grew to eight when Afghanistan joined in 2007. The organisation aims to achieve peace, freedom, social justice, and economic prosperity by promoting a shared understanding, good neighbourly relations, and meaningful cooperation.<sup>5</sup> Improving the quality of life in the member countries by fostering self-reliance, promoting mutual assistance, and strengthening collaboration with other regional and international organisations are its core objectives.

However, the mismatch between SAARC's ambitions and achievements has been profound. No tangible economic or political benefits have been realised by SAARC,

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<sup>1</sup> Transcript of Media Briefing by Foreign Secretary on the visit of Prime Minister of Nepal, April 08, 2018, [http://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/29799/Transcript\\_of\\_Media\\_Briefing\\_by\\_Foreign\\_Secretary\\_on\\_the\\_visit\\_of\\_Prime\\_Minister\\_of\\_Nepal](http://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/29799/Transcript_of_Media_Briefing_by_Foreign_Secretary_on_the_visit_of_Prime_Minister_of_Nepal)

<sup>2</sup> 'Abbasi, Nepali leaders discuss BRI, Saarc,' <http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2018-03-07/abbasi-nepali-leaders-discuss-bri-saarc.html>

<sup>3</sup> Tweet of Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, March 09, 2018, [https://twitter.com/pid\\_gov/status/972161410515062784](https://twitter.com/pid_gov/status/972161410515062784)

<sup>4</sup> Julia Gray (2018), 'Life, Death, or Zombie? The Vitality of International Organizations,' *International Studies Quarterly*, 62, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> See 'Charter of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation', <http://saarc-sec.org/saarc-charter>

with analysts terming its performance as a case of 'retarded regionalism'.<sup>6</sup> SAARC occupies a land area larger than the European Union (EU) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). In terms of population as well, it is superior with approximately 22.5 per cent of the world populace. Nonetheless, despite such statistics, it has failed to achieve a majority of its stated objectives. South Asia, at present, is "one of the least integrated regions" in the world.<sup>7</sup> Promoting intra-regional connectivity through trade is one of the primary focus areas of SAARC. However, even after three decades of existence, intra-SAARC trade stands at a meagre five percent of South Asia's total trade.<sup>8</sup>

International Relations literature describes three different types of regional and international organisations — alive, dead, and zombie. The first refers to organisations that are alive and functioning. The second type consists of those that have died, though this happens rarely. Finally, 'zombie', organisations are those that continue to operate but without making any progress toward their mandates.<sup>9</sup> Zombie organisations maintain "a level of semi-regular operation, but output in terms of progress on their goals falls below expectation."<sup>10</sup> This type of organisation may accomplish some of its goals. SAARC is a case in point. The agreements on free trade (2006) and preferential trade (1993) are accomplishments, but these are ranged against SAARC's failure to attain productive cooperation in the field of security and development.

### How and why SAARC became a 'zombie'?

A range of factors including the motives of an international organisation's formation, its structure, mandate, working methods and the relationship among member states have undeniable sway on the outcomes it produces and the success it attains. In the case of SAARC, all these contribute to its zombie status in varying degrees. First, for the member countries, SAARC was an unwanted child. Secondly, various structural and organisational issues make SAARC not only vulnerable but reforms implausible as well. Finally, conflict and power asymmetry among members impede it from making any progress in regional cooperation.

#### ***An Unwanted Child***

The motives that trigger the creation of a regional organisation play a significant role in its success. Theories of regionalism identify four principal motives that individually or collectively work as catalysts in the creation of regional organisations:

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<sup>6</sup> P. V. Rao (2012), 'South Asia's retarded regionalism', *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, vol. 8, no.1, p. 37.

<sup>7</sup> The World Bank (2017), 'One South Asia', <http://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/south-asia-regional-integration>

<sup>8</sup> In contrast, intra-regional trade constitutes 35 per cent of East Asia's total trade, and 60 per cent of Europe's. See, 'The Potential of Intra-regional Trade for South Asia', <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/infographic/2016/05/24/the-potential-of-intra-regional-trade-for-south-asia>

<sup>9</sup> Note 4, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

functional, instrumental, normative–contractual and solidarist.<sup>11</sup> The functionalist logic that technical and economic cooperation will lead to political harmony played a vital role in the development of regionalism in Europe. The EU was an outcome of intense longing for political rapprochement and rebuilding through economic integration after the devastation of the Second World War.<sup>12</sup> In contrast, the instrumental, security motive – a wish to dampen intra-regional differences and band together to deal with an external security threat – drove cooperation in South East Asia.<sup>13</sup> While the formation of the Economic Commission for Latin America illustrates the normative–contractual rationale,<sup>14</sup> the African Union is an example of the role played by shared identity (solidarist) in forging regional integration.<sup>15</sup>

In the case of South Asia, however, the need to evade the embarrassment of being a region devoid of a regional entity was the principal instigator for the formation of SAARC. South Asia was one of the few regions that did not make any attempt to build a regional organisation until the 1980s and the idea of SAARC was borne out of this dilemma. This perceived lacuna, not a genuine concern for economic or security cooperation or shared identity, pushed South Asian countries to create an institution.<sup>16</sup> In other words, it was not the pursuit of economic and developmental cooperation as a means to lift the region out of poverty<sup>17</sup> or shared threat perception or even shared identity<sup>18</sup> that pushed South Asian countries to establish a regional organisation.

In short, for member countries, SAARC was an unwanted child not only when it was conceived but after its birth and adolescence as well. In the last 33 years, SAARC has held only 18 Summits, and many have been postponed or cancelled due to various issues.<sup>19</sup> Further, in the last decade, the frequency of summits has also reduced compared to the first two decades. While the first decade witnessed eight

<sup>11</sup> Sarah Eaton and Richard Stubbs (2006), 'Is ASEAN powerful? Neo-realist versus constructivist approaches to power in Southeast Asia,' *The Pacific Review*, vol.19, no.2, pp: 135-155; Also Andrew Hurrell (1995), 'Explaining the Resurgence of Regionalism in World Politics,' *Review of International Studies*, vol. 21, no. 4, pp: 331-358; Rick Fawn (2009), 'Regions' and Their Study: Wherefrom, What for and Whereto?' *Review of International Studies*, vol. 35, no.1, pp: 5-34

<sup>12</sup> Ernst B. Haas (1970), 'The Study of Regional Integration: Reflections on the Joy and Anquish of Pre-theorizing' *International Organization*, vol.24, no.3, PP: 607-646. Also see David Mitrany (1968), 'The Prospect of Integration: Federation or Functional?' in Joseph S. Nye Jr. ed., *International Regionalism: Readings*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company; Rajeesh Kumar (2011), 'Memories and Myths/illusions: Historical (De) Construction of European Union Identity and the Politics of Exclusion/Inclusion,' *Area Studies*, vol.5, no.2, pp: 102-139.

<sup>13</sup> Kripa Sridharan, (2008), 'Regional Organizations and Conflict Management: Comparing ASEAN and SAARC,' *LSE Crisis States Working Papers Series No. 33*, p. 1. Also see Shaun Narine (2002), *Explaining ASEAN: Regionalism in Southeast Asia*, Bolder: Lynne Rienner.

<sup>14</sup> Bjorn Hettne (1999), 'Globalization and the New Regionalism: The Second Great Transformation,' in Bjorn Hettne, Andras Inotai, and Osvaldo Sunkel eds., *Globalism and the New Regionalism*, New York: St. Martin's Press.

<sup>15</sup> Tim Murithi (2007), 'Institutionalising Pan-Africanism: Transforming African Union values and principles into policy and practice,' <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/98931/PAPER143H.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Note 13, p. 13.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p.14

<sup>18</sup> S D Muni (1996), 'Regionalism Beyond the Regions: South Asia Outside SAARC,' *South Asian Survey*, vol.3, no.1&2, pp: 327-338

<sup>19</sup> Manzoor Ahmad (2017), 'SAARC Summits 1985-2016: The Cancellation Phenomenon,' *IPRI Journal*, vol, XVII, no.1, p.45.

Summits, the second had six, and the third only four.<sup>20</sup> The cancellation and postponement of regular meetings embody the persistence of this indifference today as well.

### **Structural Problems**

SAARC's emphasis on the principle of unanimity for decision making and exclusion of contentious bilateral issues from deliberations makes the organisation fragile and vulnerable. Its Charter says: "decisions at all levels shall be taken on the basis of unanimity" and "bilateral and contentious issues shall be excluded from the deliberations."<sup>21</sup> While the unanimity clause enables any member at any time to veto any proposal, the prohibition on the raising of bilateral issues reduces the possibility of solving conflicts among, and addressing concerns of, the member states. Given the level of suspicion, power asymmetry and persistence of bilateral conflicts, it has seemingly proven hard for SAARC countries to come to a unanimous agreement on vital issues.<sup>22</sup> The trans-South Asian road connectivity project is a case in point of how one member could hinder a regional initiative that was supported by the rest.<sup>23</sup>

Contrasting SAARC's decision-making process with those of the EU and ASEAN, which employ the qualified majority and consensus procedures, respectively, shows how the decision making procedure of an organisation influences its success and failure. In the EU, one of the most successful cases of regional integration, a decision requires only 55 per cent of member states (16 out of 28) to vote in favour. Besides, to block a decision at the European Council, four members representing at least 35 per cent of the EU population is necessary.<sup>24</sup> These structural characteristics not only make the decision-making process in the EU relatively easy but vetoing a decision hard as well.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, though ASEAN employs consensus to arrive at decisions, unanimity is not an absolute in decision-making. Additionally, to circumvent the painstakingly slow consensus process, ASEAN developed a new stipulation, 'ASEAN minus X', which allows members to opt-out.

Similarly, barring discussions on contentious bilateral issues also contributes to making SAARC a zombie. South Asian countries are beset by many inter-state and intra-state conflicts. It is a region that has "witnessed five full-scale inter-state conflicts, and some of its states have earned the distinction of becoming a part of the hub of global terrorism."<sup>26</sup> There is no doubt that these conflicts, especially hostile bilateral relationships, affect the regional integration process. Unless and until all

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 47.

<sup>21</sup> Article X of the SAARC Charter, See note 5.

<sup>22</sup> People often use *consensus* and *unanimity* or *unanimous consent* synonymously. While *consensus* denotes general agreement or agreement of the majority, *unanimity* means the agreement of all.

<sup>23</sup> Harsh V. Pant (2016), 'Once Again, Pakistan Scuttles South Asian Regional Connectivity,' <https://thediplomat.com/2016/03/once-again-pakistan-scuttles-south-asian-regional-connectivity/>

<sup>24</sup> Council of the European Union, 'Voting System', <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/voting-system/qualified-majority/>

<sup>25</sup> See Elizabeth DeGori (2008), 'Majority Voting in the EU: Beneficial or Just Equally Harmful,' <http://scholarship.claremont.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1018&context=urceu>

<sup>26</sup> S.D. Muni (2013), 'Conflicts in South Asia: Causes, Consequences, Prospects,' *ISAS Working Paper* No. 170, p.2

members discuss bilateral disputes with an intention to resolve them, the chances of enhancing regional cooperation will remain dim. By prohibiting the discussion of bilateral issues at its summits, SAARC has crippled itself.

### ***Conflicting interests of members***

To be sure, violent conflict among members does decrease organisational vitality.<sup>27</sup> Since its inception, the regular activities of SAARC have been restrained by the tense bilateral relationships including violent conflicts among its members. Scholars contend that two factors, power-asymmetry and lack of common strategic thinking, make South Asia an unusually fragile strategic environment where genuine cooperation is impossible.<sup>28</sup> When one of the constituents is too big and powerful compared to the rest, it will naturally affect the progress of cooperation.<sup>29</sup> In the region, the basis of power-asymmetry is India's preponderance, which represents more than “two-thirds of the region’s area and more than three-fourths of the region’s population, GDP, and military strength.”<sup>30</sup>

India’s dominance causes mistrust and suspicion about its motives in the smaller South Asian countries. As Bimal Prasad had noted, the smaller states consider India as the “main source of threat to their security” even if they continue to express “interest in maintaining friendly relations with India.”<sup>31</sup> While India considers its neighbours as an integral part of its security system, the latter perceive it as a threat to their security. This perception among the smaller countries of South Asia has enabled external powers such as the United States and China to acquire a role in the region, which, in turn, introduces a further stumbling block for regional cooperation.

India has been particularly chary of the idea of a Chinese role in South Asia since that would severely restrict its own influence in the region.<sup>32</sup> For their part, India's neighbours have “always tried, and often succeeded, in evading Indian pressure, by internationalising their bilateral conflicts by turning to either great powers or international organisations for support.”<sup>33</sup> Thus, while China has been a key security concern for India, others, particularly Pakistan and Nepal, have for long viewed China as a balancer against Indian preponderance.<sup>34</sup> And with China emerging as the principal trading partner of many countries in the region as well as the leading

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<sup>27</sup> Note 4, p. 5.

<sup>28</sup> Kanti Bajpai and Stephen Cohen (1993), *South Asia after the Cold War: International Perspectives*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, p. 4.

<sup>29</sup> Partha S. Ghosh (2013), ‘An Enigma that is South Asia: India versus the Region,’ *Asia-Pacific Review*, vol.20, no.1,p.106

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Bimal Prasad (1999), ‘Prospects for Greater Cooperation in South Asia’, in Eric Gonsalves and Nancy Jetly, eds., *The Dynamics of South Asia: Regional Cooperation and SAARC*, New Delhi: Sage, p. 72.

<sup>32</sup> Note 29, p. 115.

<sup>33</sup> Christian Wagner (2016), ‘The Role of India and China in South Asia,’ *Strategic Analysis*, vol. 40, no.4, p. 314.

<sup>34</sup> Kanti Bajpai (1999), ‘Security and SAARC’, in Eric Gonsalves and Nancy Jetly, eds., *The Dynamics of South Asia: Regional Cooperation and SAARC*, New Delhi: Sage, p. 77.

supplier of arms to Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka,<sup>35</sup> the issue of granting China membership in SAARC has gathered momentum. While India opposes the move, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and the Maldives are all in favour.<sup>36</sup>

But the most important factor for making SAARC dysfunctional is the conflict between India and Pakistan. While SAARC has survived various Indo-Pak crises, the organisation could not isolate itself from their ill effects completely. In particular, the lingering Kashmir dispute has become a significant obstacle to regional integration, with Pakistan insisting on a settlement before normalisation of the bilateral relationship with India and greater bilateral and regional cooperation. Further, this state of affairs keeps the threat of open conflict a possibility, as the Kargil War demonstrated and is also contributing to the persistence of cross-border terrorism and tensions along the Line of Control.

Though SAARC has made some progress in the last three decades, India-Pakistan bilateral issues have hampered meaningful regional cooperation. For instance, even 22 years after India granted Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status to Pakistan, the latter has not reciprocated citing pending bilateral disputes. India perceives Pakistan's conduct in SAARC as obstructive as well as a means to restrict Indian influence in the region. According to New Delhi, Islamabad has a history of obstructing significant initiatives under SAARC. It has opposed connectivity initiatives and pulled out of the SAARC satellite project a well.<sup>37</sup> Pakistan's dilemma in SAARC is apparent. It realises the impossibility of avoiding development cooperation with other countries in the region, but fears genuine integration in a group where India is the dominant actor. It also fears that greater cooperation with India would imperil its political and strategic identity as the not-India.<sup>38</sup> But, at the same time, Pakistan continues to blame India for the failure of SAARC. According to Islamabad, it was New Delhi's unwillingness to develop the SAARC satellite as a collaborative project that led to Pakistan's exit from the project.<sup>39</sup>

### **Is revival realistic and possible?**

Two questions are pertinent for any discussion on reviving SAARC: Is it realistic? And, is it possible? International organisations achieve cooperative outcomes through the transmission of information<sup>40</sup> or socialisation.<sup>41</sup> States use organisations

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<sup>35</sup> Manoj Joshi (2018), 'Expect greater rivalry between India and China in South Asia,' <https://www.orfonline.org/research/expect-greater-rivalry-between-india-and-china-in-south-asia/>

<sup>36</sup> Tanvi Madan (2014), 'China's role in SAARC,' <https://www.brookings.edu/research/chinas-role-in-saarc/>

<sup>37</sup> Note 18.

<sup>38</sup> S.D. Muni, (1999), 'Regionalism beyond the Region: South Asia outside SAARC,' in Eric Gonsalves and Nancy Jetly, eds., p. 123.

<sup>39</sup> Record of the Press Briefing by Pakistan Foreign Office Spokesperson on 05 May 2017, <http://www.mofa.gov.pk/pr-details.php?mm=NDk3Nw>

<sup>40</sup> Note 4.

<sup>41</sup> Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink (1998), 'International Norm Dynamics and Political Change,' *International Organization* vol. 52, no.4, pp: 887-917.

to both reduce transaction costs and create information, ideas, norms, and expectations. States also legitimise or delegitimise particular ideas and practices and enhance their capacities and power through international organisations.<sup>42</sup> These functions constitute “international organizations as agents, which, in turn, influence the interests, inter-subjective understandings, and environment of states.”<sup>43</sup> An organisation can only be useful if member states share the view that it meets, or at least has the potential to meet, their respective interests.

In the case of SAARC, a fragile structure, weak mandate, mistrust and misperceptions, and conflict among member countries have impeded it from performing any of the above mentioned functions smoothly. For instance, SAARC has two sets of goals. First, the immediate and non-political aims such as national development through regional socio-economic and cultural cooperation. Second relates to the long-term, political objective of creating a durable, stable, and peaceful regional order.<sup>44</sup> The organisation was a product of the functionalist optimism that economic cooperation will circumvent political issues. However, it could contribute to solving neither economic problems nor political issues. Further, it has also failed to modify the perceptions and conduct of its members. At this juncture, the idea that economic integration will lead to peace and that the ‘peace dividend’ will bring progress and development to the whole region is far from reality. Therefore, even if reinvigorated through structural reforms, the organisation will not be able to contribute to regional cooperation and development.

But can the structural and other issues be fixed? First, the likelihood of amending the SAARC Charter to make the organisation’s structure and mandate effective is limited due to the conflicting views of member countries to structural reforms. For instance, India “remains convinced that more harm than good would come from amending the Charter.”<sup>45</sup> In contrast, Pakistan argues for Charter reform and especially amending the provision pertaining to the discussion of bilateral security issues in the regional platform.<sup>46</sup> While Bangladesh shares India’s position, Sri Lanka supports Pakistan’s viewpoint.<sup>47</sup> Since the unanimity principle of the organisation provides veto power to each member, amending the Charter will be extremely difficult.

Second, the chances of resolving India-Pakistan conflict, the prominent factor behind the comatose status of the organisation, are limited. Kashmir is the bone of contention between these two leading South Asian powers. On the one hand, neither the use of force nor diplomacy is expected to bring peace to Kashmir in the near

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<sup>42</sup> Kenneth W. Abbott and Duncan Snidal (1998), ‘Why States Act Through Formal International Organizations,’ *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 42, no. 1, pp:3-32.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. p. 8.

<sup>44</sup> Ross Masood Hussain, (1999), ‘SAARC 1985-1995: A Review and Analysis of Progress’, in Eric Gonsalves and Nancy Jetly, eds. p. 27.

<sup>45</sup> Note 11, p. 12.

<sup>46</sup> Parvaiz Iqbal Cheema (1999), ‘SAARC Needs Revamping,’ in Eric Gonsalves and Nancy Jetly, eds., p. 103; Also see, Arndt Michael (2013), *India’s Foreign Policy and Regional Multilateralism*, London: Palgrave, p. 97.

<sup>47</sup> Laurie Nathan (2010), ‘The Peacemaking Effectiveness of Regional Organisations,’ *LSE Crisis States Working Papers Series* no. 81, p. 12.



future. On the other, the likelihood of India-Pakistan relationship deteriorating further appears high. The steep increase in ceasefire violations in recent months and the recurrence of Pakistan backed terrorist attacks on Indian soil have intensified tensions. Since India's decision to boycott the Islamabad meeting of SAARC and its cancellation, more than 350 ceasefire violations have been reported in Jammu and Kashmir.<sup>48</sup> The year 2017 has been the “bloodiest on the LoC, and the international border in the Jammu sector since the ceasefire agreement (CFA) was agreed to in 2003” with more than 160 soldiers losing their lives.<sup>49</sup>

Finally, since India-Pakistan rivalry has been the primary factor hampering the process of regional integration, many analysts have proposed a SAARC minus one.<sup>50</sup> This could be a SAARC without India or without Pakistan. Both prospects, however, have serious drawbacks. First, without involving Pakistan, the possibility of integrating South Asia and resolving the economic and security challenges that the region faces will be almost impossible. The most pressing issue in the region is terrorism and Pakistan stands at its core as both perpetrator and victim. Moreover, the other members of the organisation, who have a good relationship with Pakistan, are not likely to favour the idea of a SAARC minus Pakistan. The consequence of an Indian exit from SAARC<sup>51</sup> is likely to be worse. It would possibly cause the death of the SAARC ‘zombie’. India enjoys substantial regional influence across South Asia due to its size, population, and economic might. Without India, meaningful regional cooperation in South Asia would not be possible.

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<sup>48</sup> Ceasefire Violations Data, Indo-Pak Conflict Monitor, 13 April 2018, <http://indopakconflictmonitor.org/cfv.php>

<sup>49</sup> Happymon Jacob, ‘The unquiet front,’ *Indian Express*, February 8, 2018.

<sup>50</sup> C Raja Mohan (2016) ‘Raja Mandala: SAARC minus one’, *Indian Express*, September 29, 2016; Manjari Chatterjee Miller and Bharath Gopalaswamy (2016), ‘SAARC Is Dead; Long Live SAARC,’ <https://thediplomat.com/2016/11/saarc-is-dead-long-live-saarc/>; Akhilesh Pillalamarri (2016), ‘One Step Further: It's Time for SAARC to Expel Pakistan’, <https://thediplomat.com/2016/09/one-step-further-its-time-for-saarc-to-expel-pakistan/>

<sup>51</sup> Chandan Mitra, (2016), ‘India Should Not Just Boycott SAARC, But Exit It Completely,’ <https://www.ndtv.com/opinion/india-should-pull-out-of-saarc-lead-new-organization-1434635>

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