

《Pakistani Ambassador: Indian belligerence endangering south》

By CGTN 's The Point

Indian belligerence is endangering security and stability in South Asia and its military drive could soon ignite an arms race, Pakistan's ambassador to China warned.

India's Army Chief, General Bipin Rawat, said in late June that India was ready for a "two and a half front war," referring to Pakistan, China and internal conflicts.

"Such hawkish and belligerent statements are not at all conducive to peace and stability in our region," Pakistan's ambassador to China Masood Khalid told CGTN's The Point.

"Such statements are irresponsible. And as far as Pakistan is concerned, I can assure you that our armed forces are fully prepared to meet any eventuality," Khalid warned.

On Monday, the Pakistani military said its forces had destroyed two Indian posts and killed four soldiers in retaliation for India's "unprovoked firing" along the Line of Control in Kashmir. Over the weekend, clashes between the two sides left seven civilians dead and several others wounded. Both sides blame the other for opening fire.

Speaking to The Point, Khalid argued that India introduced nuclear weapons to the region in the 1970s and "has engaged and indulged in excessive use of force" in Indian-occupied Kashmir.

Now New Delhi is equipping its air, navy and land forces with advanced weaponry from the US, Russia, Israel and so on. During Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the US last month, the Trump administration approved the sale of 22 naval surveillance drones to India.

These developments are "negatively affecting the strategic stability in the region," Khalid insisted. "I do not understand the psyche and mindset for this kind of frenzied military expending on the part of India."

India is keen to join the Nuclear Suppliers Group and if this happens "it will not only alter the strategic balance in South Asia, it will ignite an arms race," Khalid warned.

"I do not understand that while there are millions of people who deserve a better way of life, yet there has been a 10-percent increase in the defense budget by our eastern neighbor."

"The priorities need to be set right. We need to focus on the development of our region, to bring prosperity and progress to our people, and should not be engaged in an arms race," Khalid urged.