



# Article A New Class of Strongly Asymmetric PKA Algorithms: SAA-5

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**Abstract:** A new class of public key agreement (PKA) algorithms called strongly-asymmetric algorithms (SAA) was introduced in a previous paper by some of the present authors. This class can be shown to include some of the best-known PKA algorithms, for example the Diffie–Hellman and several of its variants. In this paper, we construct a new version of the previous construction, called SAA-5, improving it in several points, as explained in the Introduction. In particular, the construction complexity is reduced, and at the same time, robustness is increased. Intuitively, the main difference between SAA-5 and the usual PKA consists of the fact that in the former class, *B* (Bob) has more than one public key and *A* (Alice) uses some of them to produce her public key and others to produce the secret shared key (SSK). This introduces an asymmetry between the sender of the message (*B*) and the receiver (*A*) and motivates the name for this class of algorithms. After describing the main steps of SAA-5, we discuss its breaking complexity assuming zero complexity of discrete logarithms and the computational complexity for both *A* and *B* to create SSK.

Keywords: public key exchange; cryptography; security

#### 1. Introduction

PKA algorithms play an important role in the protection of privacy in IoT. However, the standard key length of usual PKA algorithms such as Diffie–Hellman or RSA [1,2], typically 512 bit, is not safe with respect to the eavesdropper's computational power [3]. On the other hand, increasing the key length also increases the computational complexity of the algorithm, thus decreasing its performance. After 40 more years since discovering the Diffie–Hellman, the study of modern PKA algorithms is widely spread in various mathematical fields. PKA based on using matrices have been considered in the literature, and they are based on the difficulty of solving a system of multivariate polynomial equations [4,5]. A generalized PKA class based on lattices was proposed in [6–9] and is a matrix-based cryptographic system, the attacks of which are reduced to the shortest vector problem. The application of PKA over rings introduces the new class of cryptographic systems, such as a fully-homomorphic encryption contributing to the development of a secure searchable encryption [10].

In the papers [11,12], a new scheme of public key agreement based on non-commutative algebra called a strongly-asymmetric public key agreement (SAPKA) was introduced. This scheme is very general, and in order to perform computational or estimate breaking complexity, concrete realizations are needed. Concrete realizations of the above-mentioned general scheme, called strongly-asymmetric algorithm 3 (SAA-3) and strongly-asymmetric algorithm 4 (SAA-4), were constructed in the [13].

The algorithms 3 (SAA-3) and 4 (SAA-4) are based on a public parameter  $\alpha$ , and in them, a receiver (*B*) is required to send a matrix basket to a sender (*A*) consisting of matrices commuting with one of his secret keys  $x_B$ . *A* has to choose her secret key  $x_A$  from this basket.

The present algorithm is an improved version of SAA-3 and SAA-4, called SAA-5, and the new points in it with respect to the previous ones are:

- The public parameter *α* is removed;
- All constraints on the secret keys of *B* (see Conditions (1)–(4) in Section 1 of [13]) are reduced to the requirement that certain matrices should not be invertible;
- the attack developed in the remark after Equation (15) does not use commutativity assumptions;
- In [13], the secret key is a scalar. In SAA-5, this is replaced by a matrix, which makes exhaustive attacks impossible even in the case of low-dimensional matrices;
- all non-trivial constraints in the form of the secret key of *B* are removed;
- In SAA-5, the way to construct and combine the public and secret keys of both *A* and *B* is different from [13];
- In SAA-5, *B* does not need to send a matrix basket, thus decreasing the computational complexity;
- The important remark on the indeterminacy of the equations that condensate the attacker's information (see Theorem 2) is new.

Attacks are discussed in Section 4. The remark after Equation (15) explains the reason for the choice of the non-invertibility of some of the public keys of B.

Theorem 2 emphasizes another new feature of the present class of algorithms, namely that robustness against attacks is guaranteed not only by the difficulty of a problem, but also by its intrinsic indeterminacy: even if the attacker finds a solution, she still has to choose within a set of equivalent solutions obtained applying to it simple transformations. This set is so large so as to make exhaustive search impracticable.

An additional feature characterizing this class of algorithms is that the scheme on which they are based is not rigid, as in most PKA algorithms, but subject to an infinity of variations whose cryptographic merits are presently under investigation. An illustration of this statement is contained in the last section of the paper. In fact, for the simplicity of exposition, in all the previous sections, we have dealt with matrices with coefficients in a finite field (see the beginning of Section 2). However, looking at the proofs, it is clear that the whole construction works for matrices with entries in a ring  $\mathcal{A}$  provided that there is the possibility of constructing invertible matrices with entries in  $\mathcal{A}$ . This possibility exists for a multiplicity of interesting rings, and in the numerical example discussed in Section 4.2, this situation is illustrated choosing  $\mathcal{A} = \mathbb{Z}_{p-1}$  where p is a prime number of order 2<sup>32</sup>. Even if the example is simple and low-dimensional (d = 5), exhaustive search is impracticable, and we have not been able to devise an alternative breaking strategy for it.

# 2. Steps of SAA-5

#### 2.1. Public Parameters

The public parameters of the algorithm are:

- a natural integer  $d \in \mathbb{N}$ ;
  - a finite field  $\mathbb{F}$  (typically  $\mathbb{F} := \mathbb{Z}_p$ , where *p* is a large prime number);
- a finite set  $I \subset \mathbb{N}$ .

All scalar multiplications (in particular exponentiations) are meant in  $\mathbb{F}$ , and we use the convention:

$$0^x := 0$$
 ;  $\forall x \in \mathbb{F}$ 

The  $d \times d$  matrices with entries in  $\mathbb{F}$  are denoted  $M(d; \mathbb{F})$ , and the term *matrix* is used as a synonym of *element of*  $M(d; \mathbb{F})$ . Matrix multiplications are meant in the standard sense, while matrix

exponentiations are meant in the Schur sense, i.e., element-wise: if *c* is either an element of  $\mathbb{F}$  or a matrix  $c = (c_{ij})$  and  $M = (M_{a,b})$  is a matrix, the symbol  $c^{\circ M}$  denoting the matrix:

$$\left(c^{\circ M}\right)_{a,b} := \begin{cases} c^{M_{a,b}} \text{ scalar case} \\ c^{M_{a,b}}_{a,b} \text{ matrix case} \end{cases}$$
;  $a,b \in \{1,\ldots,d\}$ 

is called *the Schur exponentiation of c by M*. Similarly, the Schur logarithm (in any basis) of a matrix *M* is defined componentwise on the entries of *M*. Since in this paper, all logarithms considered are of the Schur-type, we simply write log to denote the Schur logarithm.

#### 2.2. Keys

2.2.1. Secret Keys of *B* 

They are matrices:

1. the main secret key of *B*:

$$x_B \in M(d; \mathbb{F})$$

2. additional secret keys of *B*:

$$\{A_j \in M(d; \mathbb{F}) : j \in I\} \quad ; \quad N_B \in M(d; \mathbb{F}) \quad ; \quad c \in M(d; \mathbb{F})$$

The only conditions to be satisfied by the secret keys of *B* are:

- *N<sub>B</sub>* must be invertible;
- $c = c_0^{\circ c_1} =: c_0^{\circ \log c}$  with  $\log c$  non Schur-invertible and:

$$c_{a,g} = c_{b,g} \qquad ; \qquad \forall a,b \tag{1}$$

• The  $A_j$  ( $j \in I$ ) are non-invertible (see the comments in Section 4).

#### 2.2.2. Secret Key of A

A chooses arbitrarily her secret key:

$$x_A \equiv (x_{A,j})_{j \in I}$$
 ;  $x_{A,j} \in M(d; \mathbb{F})$  ,  $\forall j \in I$  (2)

2.2.3. SSK

The SSK is:

$$\kappa := c^{\circ(Q(x_A)x_B)}$$

where  $Q \equiv (A_j)_{j \in I}$  is the linear map given by:

$$x \equiv (x_j)_{j \in I} \in M(d; \mathbb{F})^{|I|} \mapsto Q(x) := \sum_{j \in I} x_j A_j \in M(d; \mathbb{F})$$

where here and in the following, |I| denotes the cardinality of the set *I*. Thus, the coefficients of  $\kappa$  are:

$$\kappa_{a,g} := c^{[Q(x_A)x_B]_{a,g}} = \left(c^{\circ Q(x_A)x_B}\right)_{a,g} ; a,g \in \{1,\ldots,d\}$$

### 2.2.4. Public Keys of B

The public keys of *B* are given by the finite set of matrices:

$$\{y_{B,2;j} , \, y_{B,3;j} \in M(d;\mathbb{F}) \, : \, j \in I\}$$

constructed, using the secret keys of *B*, as follows.

For all  $j \in I$  and  $a, b \in \{1, \ldots, d\}$ :

$$y_{B,2;j;a,b} := c^{(A_j N_B)_{a,b}} = \left(c^{\circ A_j N_B}\right)_{a,b}$$
$$y_{B,3;j;a,b} := c^{(A_j x_B)_{a,b}} = \left(c^{\circ A_j x_B}\right)_{a,b}$$

2.2.5. Public Key of A

$$y_A := (y_{A;a,g}) \in M(d; \mathbb{F})$$
;  $y_{A;a,g} = c^{[Q(x_A)N_B]_{a,g}} = (c^{\circ Q(x_A)N_B})_{a,g}$ ,  $a, g \in \{1, \dots, d\}$ 

can be computed uniquely in terms of the public keys  $(y_{B,2;j})$  of *B* and of the secret key of *A* as follows. For each  $a, g \in \{1, ..., d\}$ , *A* computes:

$$y_{A;a,g} = \prod_{j \in I} \prod_{b \in \{1,...,d\}} (y_{B,2;j,b,g})^{(x_{A,j})_{a,b}} = \prod_{j \in I} \prod_{b \in \{1,...,d\}} (c^{(A_jN_B)_{b,g}})^{(x_{A,j})_{a,b}}$$
$$= \prod_{j \in I} \prod_{b \in \{1,...,d\}} (c^{(x_{A,j})_{a,b}(A_jN_B)_{b,g}}) = c^{\sum_{j \in I} \sum_{b \in \{1,...,d\}} [x_{A,j})]_{a,b}(A_jN_B)_{b,g}} = c^{\sum_{j \in I} [x_{A,j}A_jN_B]_{a,g}}$$
$$= c^{[\sum_j x_{A,j}A_jN_B]_{a,g}} = c^{[Q(x_A)N_B]_{a,g}} = \left(c^{\circ Q(x_A)N_B}\right)_{a,g}$$

# 3. Protocol

*B* computes the SSK using the public key of *A* and his own secret keys.

**First step**: *B* uses his secret key  $N_B$  to *clean the noise* calculating, for each  $a, g \in \{1, ..., d\}$ :

$$\prod_{b \in \{1,...,d\}} (y_{A;a,b})^{(N_B^{-1})_{b,g}} = \prod_{b \in \{1,...,d\}} \left( c^{[Q(x_A)N_B]_{a,b}} \right)^{(N_B^{-1})_{b,g}}$$
$$= \prod_{b \in \{1,...,d\}} \left( c^{[Q(x_A)N_B]_{a,b}(N_B^{-1})_{b,g}} \right) = c^{\sum_b [Q(x_A)N_B]_{a,b}(N_B^{-1})_{b,g}}$$
$$= c^{([Q(x_A)N_B]N_B^{-1})_{a,g}} = c^{(Q(x_A))_{a,g}} = \left( c^{\circ Q(x_A)} \right)_{a,g}$$
(3)

**Second step**: Starting from (3), *B* inserts his main secret key calculating, for each  $a, g \in \{1, ..., d\}$ :

$$\prod_{b \in \{1,\dots,d\}} \left( \left( c^{\circ Q(x_A)} \right)_{a,b} \right)^{(x_B)_{b,g}} = \prod_{b \in \{1,\dots,d\}} c^{Q(x_A)_{a,b}(x_B)_{b,g}} = c^{\sum_{b \in \{1,\dots,d\}} Q(x_A)_{a,b}(x_B)_{b,g}}$$
$$= c^{(Q(x_A)x_B)_{a,g}} = \left( c^{\circ Q(x_A)x_B} \right)_{a,g} = \kappa_{a,g}$$

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Using the public keys  $(y_{B,3;j})$  of *B* and her own secret key, *A* **computes the SSK** calculating, for each  $a, g \in \{1, ..., d\}$ :

$$\prod_{j \in I} \prod_{b \in \{1, \dots, d\}} (y_{B,3;j;b,g})^{(x_{A,j})_{a,b}} = \prod_{j \in I} \prod_{b \in \{1, \dots, d\}} (c^{(A_j x_B)_{b,g}})^{(x_{A,j})_{a,b}} = \prod_{j \in I} \prod_{b \in \{1, \dots, d\}} (c^{(x_{A,j})_{a,b}(A_j x_B)_{b,g}})$$
$$= \prod_{j \in I} \prod_{b \in \{1, \dots, d\}} c^{(x_{A,j})_{a,b}(A_j x_B)_{b,g}} = \prod_{j \in I} c^{\sum_b (x_{A,j})_{a,b}(A_j x_B)_{b,g}}$$
$$= \prod_{j \in I} c^{[x_{A,j}A_j x_B]_{a,g}} = c^{\sum_{j \in I} [x_{A,j}A_j x_B]_{a,g}} = \left(c^{\sum_{j \in I} x_{A,j}A_j x_B}\right)_{a,g} = \left(c^{Q(x_A) x_B}\right)_{a,g}$$

# 4. Attacks

In this section, we discuss the breaking complexity of the algorithm. We know that the eavesdropper (*E*) knows the public parameters, public keys, and the structure of public keys:

- $d, \mathbb{F}(p), I$
- *y*<sub>B,2;j</sub>, *y*<sub>B,3;j</sub>
- *y*<sub>A</sub>

Etries to recover the SSK:

$$\kappa_{a,g} = \left(c^{\circ Q(x_A)x_B}\right)_{a,g} \qquad ; \qquad a,g \in \{1,\ldots,d\}$$

In the following, all logarithms will be referred to a fixed, but arbitrary basis. Assuming zero cost logarithms, E computes for all  $a, g \in \{1, ..., d\}$ :

$$\log(y_A)_{a,g} = (Q(x_A)N_B)_{a,g}(\log c_{a,g})$$
$$\log(y_{B,2;j})_{a,g} = (A_jN_B)_{a,g}(\log c_{a,g})$$
$$\log(y_{B,3;j})_{a,g} = (A_jx_B)_{a,g}(\log c_{a,g})$$

Moreover, *E* knows that:

$$\log(\kappa)_{a,g} = (Q(x_A)x_B)_{a,g}(\log c_{a,g})$$

In matrix notations and recalling that all logarithms are Schur logarithms, i.e., matrix logarithms are meant entry-wise:

$$\log y_A = (Q(x_A)N_B) \circ (\log c) \tag{4}$$

$$\log y_{B;2;j} = (A_j N_B) \circ (\log c) \qquad ; \qquad j \in I$$
(5)

$$\log y_{B;3;j} = (A_j x_B) \circ (\log c) \qquad ; \qquad j \in I$$
(6)

$$\log \kappa = (Q(x_A)x_B) \circ (\log c) \tag{7}$$

**Theorem 1.** *Suppose that:* 

(*i*) for some  $j \in I$ ,  $A_j$  is invertible in the matrix sense,

(ii) for the same *j* as in (i),  $((\log c)^{\circ-1} \circ \log y_{B;2;j})$  is invertible in the matrix sense,

*(iii)* log *c* is Schur-invertible.

Then, the SSK satisfies the equation:

$$\log \kappa = \left( \left( (\log c)^{\circ -1} \circ \log y_A \right) \left( (\log c)^{\circ -1} \circ \log y_{B;2;j} \right)^{-1} \left( \log y_{B;3;j} \circ (\log c)^{\circ -1} \right) \right) \circ (\log c)$$
(8)

where  $(\log c)^{\circ-1}$  denotes the Schur inverse of  $\log c$ .

**Remark 1.** Since  $N_B$  is matrix-invertible by assumption, Condition (i) implies that the product  $A_jN_B$  is matrix-invertible. However, the product of a matrix-invertible and a Schur-invertible matrix need not be matrix-invertible. Therefore Assumption (ii) is necessary for the proof of (8).

**Proof.** Since by Assumption (iii) log *c* is Schur-invertible, (4) is equivalent to:

$$\log y_A \circ (\log c)^{\circ -1} = Q(x_A) N_B \iff \left( (\log c)^{\circ -1} \circ \log y_A \right) N_B^{-1} = Q(x_A)$$

Under Assumptions (i) and (ii), (5) is equivalent to:

$$\log y_{B;2;j} \circ (\log c)^{\circ -1} = A_j N_B \iff A_j^{-1} \left( (\log c)^{\circ -1} \circ \log y_{B;2;j} \right) = N_B$$
$$\iff \left( (\log c)^{\circ -1} \circ \log y_{B;2;j} \right)^{-1} A_j = N_B^{-1}$$

and combining the two results:

$$Q(x_A) = \left( (\log c)^{\circ -1} \circ \log y_A \right) \left( \left( (\log c)^{\circ -1} \circ \log y_{B;2;j} \right)^{-1} A_j \right)$$
$$= \left( (\log c)^{\circ -1} \circ \log y_A \right) \left( (\log c)^{\circ -1} \circ \log y_{B;2;j} \right)^{-1} A_j$$

Finally, from (6) and Assumption (i), we get:

$$\log y_{B;3;j} \circ (\log c)^{\circ -1} = A_j x_B \iff A_j^{-1} \left( \log y_{B;3;j} \circ (\log c)^{\circ -1} \right) = x_B$$

Inserting in (7) these two results, one gets

$$\log \kappa = \left( \left( \left( (\log c)^{\circ - 1} \circ \log y_A \right) \left( (\log c)^{\circ - 1} \circ \log y_{B;2;j} \right)^{-1} A_j \right) \left( A_j^{-1} \left( \log y_{B;3;j} \circ (\log c)^{\circ - 1} \right) \right) \right) \circ (\log c)$$

$$\left( \left( (\log c)^{\circ - 1} \circ \log y_A \right) \left( (\log c)^{\circ - 1} \circ \log y_{B;2;j} \right)^{-1} A_j A_j^{-1} \left( \log y_{B;3;j} \circ (\log c)^{\circ - 1} \right) \right) \circ (\log c)$$

$$\left( \left( (\log c)^{\circ - 1} \circ \log y_A \right) \left( (\log c)^{\circ - 1} \circ \log y_{B;2;j} \right)^{-1} \left( \log y_{B;3;j} \circ (\log c)^{\circ - 1} \right) \right) \circ (\log c)$$

which is (8).  $\Box$ 

**Corollary 1.** *In the assumptions of Theorem 1, suppose that the Schur products in (8) coincide with the matrix products. Then, the SSK satisfies the equation:* 

$$\log \kappa = (\log c)^{-1} \log y_A \log y_{B;2;j}^{-1} (\log c) \log y_{B;3;j}$$
(9)

Proof. Under the assumptions of the corollary, (8) becomes:

$$\begin{split} \log \kappa &= \left( \left( (\log c)^{\circ -1} \circ \log y_A \right) \left( (\log c)^{\circ -1} \circ \log y_{B;2;j} \right)^{-1} \left( \log y_{B;3;j} \circ (\log c)^{\circ -1} \right) \right) \circ (\log c) \\ &= (\log c)^{-1} \log y_A \left( (\log c)^{-1} \log y_{B;2;j} \right)^{-1} \log y_{B;3;j} (\log c)^{-1} \log c \\ &= (\log c)^{-1} \log y_A \log y_{B;2;j}^{-1} (\log c) \log y_{B;3;j} (\log c)^{-1} \log c \\ &= (\log c)^{-1} \log y_A \log y_{B;2;j}^{-1} (\log c) \log y_{B;3;j} (\log c) \log y_{B;3;j} (\log c)^{-1} \log c \\ &= (\log c)^{-1} \log y_A \log y_{B;2;j}^{-1} (\log c) \log y_{B;3;j} (\log c) \log y_{B;3;j} (\log c)^{-1} \log c \right) \\ &= (\log c)^{-1} \log y_A \log y_{B;2;j}^{-1} (\log c) \log y_{B;3;j} (\log c)^{-1} \log c \\ &= (\log c)^{-1} \log y_A \log y_{B;2;j}^{-1} (\log c) \log y_{B;3;j} (\log c)^{-1} \log c \\ &= (\log c)^{-1} \log y_A \log y_{B;2;j}^{-1} (\log c) \log y_{B;3;j} (\log c)^{-1} \log c \\ &= (\log c)^{-1} \log y_A \log y_{B;2;j}^{-1} (\log c) \log y_{B;3;j} (\log c)^{-1} \log c \\ &= (\log c)^{-1} \log y_A \log y_{B;2;j}^{-1} (\log c) \log y_{B;3;j} (\log c)^{-1} \log c \\ &= (\log c)^{-1} \log y_A \log y_{B;2;j}^{-1} (\log c) \log y_{B;3;j} (\log c)^{-1} \log c \\ &= (\log c)^{-1} \log y_A \log y_{B;2;j}^{-1} (\log c) \log y_{B;3;j} (\log c)^{-1} \log c \\ &= (\log c)^{-1} \log y_A \log y_{B;2;j}^{-1} (\log c) \log y_{B;3;j} (\log c)^{-1} \log c \\ &= (\log c)^{-1} \log y_A \log y_{B;2;j}^{-1} (\log c) \log y_{B;3;j} (\log c)^{-1} \log c \\ &= (\log c)^{-1} \log y_A \log y_{B;2;j}^{-1} (\log c) \log y_{B;3;j} (\log c)^{-1} \log c \\ &= (\log c)^{-1} \log y_A \log y_{B;2;j}^{-1} (\log c) \log y_{B;3;j} (\log c)^{-1} \log c \\ &= (\log c)^{-1} \log y_A \log y_{B;2;j}^{-1} (\log c) \log y_{B;3;j} (\log c)^{-1} \log c \\ &= (\log c)^{-1} \log y_A \log y_{B;2;j}^{-1} (\log c) \log y_{B;3;j} (\log c)^{-1} \log y_B (\log c)^{-1} \log c \\ &= (\log c)^{-1} \log y_B (\log c)^{-1} (\log c)^{-1} \log y_B (\log c)^{-1} (\log c)^{$$

**Corollary 2.** *If the conditions of both Theorem 1 and Corollary 1 are satisfied and, in addition,*  $(\log c)$  *commutes with*  $\log y_A \log y_{B;2;i}^{-1}$ , *then:* 

$$\log \kappa = \log y_A \log y_{B;2;i}^{-1} \log y_{B;3;j}$$
(10)

**Proof.** Under the given assumptions, Equation (9) becomes:

$$\log \kappa = (\log c)^{-1} \log y_A \log y_{B;2;i}^{-1} (\log c) \log y_{B;3;j} = \log y_A \log y_{B;2;i}^{-1} \log y_{B;3;j}$$

which is (10)

**Remark 2.** If log *c* is a scalar  $\neq 0$ , Condition (*iii*) of Theorem 1 and the conditions of Corollary 1 and Corollary 2 are automatically satisfied. Therefore, in this case, under Conditions (*i*) and (*ii*) of Theorem 1, Equation (10) says that the SSK is a function of the public parameters, i.e., the algorithm is breakable. However, it is easy for B to construct his secret keys so that either Condition (*i*) or (*ii*) of Theorem 1 is violated. For example, B can choose all the  $A_i$  ( $j \in I$ ) so that they are not matrix-invertible, thus violating Condition (*ii*).

If log c is a matrix, it is sufficient that it has a single zero entry to violate Condition (iii) of Theorem 1.

Equations (4)–(7) are 2 + 2|I| cubic matrix equations depending on the 5 + |I| matrix unknowns:

$$Q(x_A) =: x_1; N_B =: x_2; A_j =: x_{3j}; x_B =: x_4; \log \kappa =: x_5, \log \kappa$$

where the left-hand sides of Equations (4)–(6) are known to *E*:

$$\alpha_1 := \log y_A \quad ; \quad \alpha_{2;j} := \log y_{B,2;j} \quad ; \quad \alpha_{3;j} := \log y_{B,3;j} \tag{11}$$

With these notations, *E* finds the system of cubic equations:

$$\alpha_1 = (x_1 x_2) \circ \log c \tag{12}$$

$$\alpha_{2;j} = (x_{3;j}x_2) \circ \log c \quad ; \qquad j \in I \tag{13}$$

$$\alpha_{3;j} = (x_{3;j}x_4) \circ \log c \quad ; \qquad j \in I \tag{14}$$

$$x_5 = (x_1 x_4) \circ \log c \tag{15}$$

from which she wants to derive  $x_5$ .

**Remark 3.** Theorem 1 explains why it is convenient to choose the  $x_{3;j} = A_j$  not invertible for all  $j \in I$  and why it is convenient to choose log *c* to be a non-Schur-invertible matrix.

In fact, in this case, the direct attack to the SSK of Theorem 1 is not applicable, and *E* faces the problem of solving the cubic system given by Equations (12)–(15). Since the cubic non-linearity is given by matrix multiplication, the scalar unknowns are strongly entangled, and it is known that this brings the complexity of the application of Groebner-type algorithms near the upper bound, which is super-exponential.

In addition to this, there is another more substantial difficulty for *E* given by the fact that, as shown by the following theorem, the above-mentioned system is **intrinsically indeterminate**.

**Theorem 2.** Suppose that  $(x_1, x_2, (x_{3,j})_{j \in I}, x_4, \log c, x_5)$  is a solution of the system (12)–(15). Then, for any pair (u, v) of invertible  $d \times d$  matrices,  $(x_1u^{-1}, ux_2v^{-1}, (x_{3,j}u^{-1})_{j \in I}, ux_4v^{-1}, v \log c, x_5)$  is a solution of the same system.

**Proof.** It is sufficient to prove that the change of variables:

$$\begin{cases} x_1 \to x_1 u^{-1} \\ x_2 \to u x_2 \\ x_{3,j} \to x_{3,j} u^{-1} \\ x_4 \to u x_4 \end{cases}$$

leaves the right-hand sides of Equations (12)–(15) unaltered. In fact:

$$(x_{1}x_{2}) \circ \log c \to (x_{1}u^{-1}ux_{2}) \circ \log c = (x_{1}x_{2}) \circ \log c$$
$$(x_{3;j}x_{2}) \circ \log c \to (x_{3,j}u^{-1}ux_{2}) \circ \log c = (x_{3;j}x_{2}) \circ \log c$$
$$(x_{3;j}x_{4}) \circ \log c \to (x_{3,j}u^{-1}ux_{4}) \circ \log c = (x_{3;j}x_{4}) \circ \log c$$
$$(x_{1}x_{4}) \circ \log c \to (x_{1}u^{-1}ux_{4}) \circ \log c = (x_{1}x_{4}) \circ \log c$$

An additional indeterminacy, with respect to the one described by Theorem 1, is the one arising in Equations (13) and (14) from the non-invertibility of  $A_j = x_{3;j}$ . However, even neglecting this one, Theorem 2 means that, even if *E* finds a solution of the system (12)–(15), she has to choose among all the solutions obtained from it applying the transformations described in Theorem 2. Exhaustive search among these solutions, which are equi-probable for *E* given her level of information, are impracticable even for  $\mathbb{F} = \mathbb{Z}_p$  with *p* a relatively small prime (say of the order 2<sup>32</sup>) because their cardinality is of the same order as the cardinality of  $M(d; \mathbb{F})$ .

#### 4.1. Computational Complexity

The computational complexity for A is given by:

- computation of  $y_A$
- computation of the SSK

In the computation of  $y_A$ , A computes for each element  $a, g \in \{1, ..., d\}$ :

$$y_{A;a,g} = \prod_{j \in I} \prod_{b \in \{1,...,d\}} (y_{B,2;j;b,g})^{(x_{A,j})_{a,b}}$$

The number of total scalar exponentiations is:

exponentiations:  $d^3|I|$ 

and the number of total scalar multiplications is:

scalar multiplication: 
$$d^2(d-1)(|I|-1)$$

A computes the SSK as:

$$(\kappa)_{a,g} = \prod_{j \in I} \prod_{b \in \{1,\dots,d\}} (y_{B,3;j;b,g})^{(x_{A,j})_{a,b}}$$

The number of total scalar exponentiations is:

exponentiations:  $d^3|I|$ 

the number of total scalar multiplications is:

scalar multiplication: 
$$d^2(d-1)(|I|-1)$$

Therefore, the total number of exponentiations is:

$$2d^3|I| \sim d^3|I|$$

The total number of scalar multiplications is:

$$2d^2(d-1)(|I|-1) \sim d^3|I|$$

The computational complexity for B is given by:

- computation of  $y_{B,2;i}$
- computation of  $y_{B,3;j}$
- computation of the SSK

The calculation of each  $(y_{B,2;j})_{a,b} = c^{(A_jN_B)_{a,b}}$  or  $(y_{B,3;j})_{a,b} = c^{(A_jx_B)_{a,b}}$  requires  $d^2|I|$  scalar exponentiations and |I| matrix products.

The calculation for SSK has two parts. The first part is the calculation of:

$$(\kappa')_{a,g} = \prod_{b \in \{1,\dots,d\}} (y_{A;a,b})^{(N_B^{-1})_{b,g}}$$

The second part is given by:

$$(\kappa)_{a,g} = \prod_{b \in \{1,\dots,d\}} \left( (\kappa')_{a,b} \right)^{(x_B)_{b,g}}$$

Each part contains  $d^3$  scalar exponentiations and  $d^2(d-1)$  scalar multiplications. Therefore, the total number of scalar exponentiations is:

$$2d^2|I| + 2d^3 \sim d^2(d + |I|)$$

The total number of scalar multiplications is:

$$2d^2(d-1) \sim d^3$$

The total number of matrix multiplications is:

$$2|I| \sim |I|$$

#### 4.2. A Numerical Example

Here, we construct a numerical example of SAA5. The setting is the following:

- d = 5: (dimension)
- $\mathbb{F} = \mathbb{Z}_p$
- p = 4294967291: a prime number,  $2^{31}$
- c = 1234567891: a prime number such that g.c.d(c, p) = 1
- $I = \{1, 2, 3\}$ : a set, |I| = 3

Since g.c.d(c, p) = 1, the parameter *c* has period p - 1. Therefore, the function  $f_{c,p}(x) = c^x$  is periodic with period p - 1. Therefore, to avoid large numbers and keep the computations within the 32-bit domain, it is convenient to perform all operations that involve exponents of *c* modulo p - 1, while the multiplication of exponentials should be performed modulo *p*.

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To avoid the use of a double module, we choose the coefficients of all secret keys in  $\mathbb{Z}_{p-1}$ , and all operations are made in this ring. This has also the advantage that, since  $\mathbb{Z}_{p-1}$  is a ring and not a field, all invertibility issues become more difficult in this framework. This fact will be exploited in greater generality in a future publication.

Bob chooses the secret key  $x_B \in M(d, \mathbb{Z}_{p-1})$  as:

$$x_{b,3} = \begin{pmatrix} 1302223311 & 3036102706 & 1950911555 & 1588574439 & 4205392019 \\ 475199933 & 1588871204 & 3380984642 & 2028686256 & 1410372785 \\ 84237198 & 331418214 & 377622969 & 94920131 & 1897882575 \\ 1264609458 & 2047942517 & 2633489909 & 2475676273 & 3402425250 \\ 2609452388 & 906983806 & 438577591 & 1027462714 & 922571658 \\ \end{pmatrix}$$

and additional secret keys:

	0 3105694558	3788905542 0	2222785513 4265220769	2073815497 1017644232	3603745241 3445055000	
$A_1 =$	2572706715	3038815660	0	3146135139	4131986064	
1	1041303085	1727576570	148785315	0	3474561565	
	338748084	3560001775	248998463	2247690485	0	
	<b>X</b>					'
	( 0	4188102984	4261217150	3173675344	3453829986	
	2184532822	0	3044136815	1979293276	2532458993	
$A_2 =$	157875694	1185021703	0	2332943479	629241533	
	3487714523	4162196921	3314231639	0	1094496175	
	202417627	2856466936	1387021057	389944647	0	Ϊ
	( 0	3301308627	3171841047	1901994323	3927695075	)
	893545770	0	1019361737	3252355315	1995919988	
$A_3 =$	79669926	3071982	0	4219791915	1400948265	
	4212083462	3039196150	3154904801	0	1562880115	
	2140484588	4129219179	1060549870	4167897854	0	)
	/ 1914362363	1917061405	1176808279	648676785	1764822838	\
	4212500437	493998612	1018470348	659200518	4041739862	
$N_B =$	2425394518	1010843968	1551629103	3916843822	4115443575	
- 'D	480122131	3641672291	2759527160	1523231740	3385651728	
	3402493211	3829823144	1677835446	3072388584	1656686133	
	<b>\</b>					/

 $N_B$  is invertible in  $\mathbb{Z}_{p-1}$ , and  $N_B^{-1}$  is calculated as:

$$N_B^{-1} = \begin{pmatrix} 1056670352 & 1752780917 & 1091186792 & 249921880 & 484074830 \\ 2519741046 & 3121847791 & 2664334830 & 155918887 & 2564514478 \\ 2875916262 & 676103283 & 1301763609 & 2178347744 & 1367832327 \\ 4158981885 & 2063040371 & 953376899 & 2272312361 & 1874512565 \\ 2507129114 & 981826659 & 1817535756 & 699581298 & 2543768509 \end{pmatrix}$$

In fact,

$$N_B N_B^{-1} = I \mod p - 1$$

Bob calculates the public keys  $y_{B,2,j}$  and  $y_{B,3,j}$  for  $j \in I$ :

	( 520755896	2629144795	598609158	3930924878	565565295	
	1005048396	136057902	803662542	3450162971	1782017006	
$y_{B,2;1} =$	313572865	2862336142	532367644	2658869746	1063794269	
0 7 7 7	1133278001	514281167	3782874102	1501107275	2291906133	
	3747999327	958748864	4039733998	3623773602	221441433	)
	/ 1100675738	2377306807	320310045	4183872877	3094588329	
	1858941337	2590258583	3019711351	504050841	3545977310	
$y_{B,2;2} =$	871154770	3112430422	2991114005	2307732604	1533414277	
	2575749561	2383342108	3906470091	1327027748	1942980649	
	4177738145	351928788	3414324786	2101677812	3606279630	)
	( 1211352515	2267569344	1018962528	3323274536	1724991904	
	1276774275	972135244	799382061	2659295349	2254929026	
$y_{B,2;3} =$	595742140	3824016846	3562771239	2559354870	557977523	
	1828792733	3028675089	1029846831	445923660	1942381250	
	776947273	3890081018	1690304752	3535197303	3228614369	)
	/ 3192346363	3313915884	148849609	2067376731	1040074624	
	3767002677	4002437607	1213185627	2779519475	2749545589	
$y_{B,3;1} =$	1981484667	2883640587	1349676569	3826297559	1250751365	
0 11	3988510025	924511781	3273249165	3498236201	4112494691	
	2523966937	239944636	1780986054	2452246615	139198803	)
	( 3487972825	2059946345	4149166921	1468549539	547514569	
	2888355633	501003547	985587578	3425801686	2614575952	
$y_{B,3;2} =$	1865561822	2914838138	3935514555	1461994052	2528354877	
	2466289308	2410324226	622706326	1831851213	502543542	
	223847409	4254497091	2741822882	1862234570	4293984694	)
	( 1887865820	105467147	3788887540	769774167	1287602684	
	571995438	620356231	2831953178	3695422732	1184503561	
$y_{B,3;3} =$	834453900	1318534845	830504770	3499684766	2702832283	
	3297267532	3289783332	2224144356	978328852	3590377270	
	1613472801	3559725977	1198572164	728404861	2448481277	)

Alice calculates the public key  $y_A$  after receiving Bob's public keys  $y_{B,2,j}$ :

	2654282219	3218104680	1840335336	281612527	871286734
	3758875123	3123626985	1756470990	3091679784	3513893738
$y_A =$		2231283615	3496004106	51747848	2854303327
	4057281561	3744174842	2830691803	2886194642	1545723227
	3119611268	507195559	901862328	81086314	2422636784 /

In order to obtain the SSK, Bob first calculates  $x_B^\prime$ :

	/ 1568885684	464596335	2461272026	449127471	1783528355
	205414769	1535631617	1239746722	3825791910	317352834
$x'_B =$	253683714	144235286	3154427854	2969897183	3320441305
	559112875	2542680230	3384129982	3734459150	3827314646
	1283770816	2487602481	2851739705	3932446652	2790935753

Finally, Bob calculates his SSK  $k_B^{(SSK)}$  using Alice's public key  $y_A$ :

$$k_B^{(SSK)} = \begin{pmatrix} 4118803775 & 3024367129 & 2201420160 & 2335335312 & 46065376 \\ 1384844995 & 607556554 & 2645672430 & 4136350896 & 3596845616 \\ 4209215563 & 1529533803 & 1525531379 & 781854571 & 2723231816 \\ 1625920071 & 3671248796 & 1470525740 & 3884958370 & 1972389092 \\ 2062666758 & 774480666 & 1689604710 & 2098990694 & 1929943712 \end{pmatrix}$$

Alice calculates the SSK  $k_A^{(SSK)}$  using public key  $y_{B,3,j}$  as:

$$k_A^{(SSK)} = \begin{pmatrix} 4118803775 & 3024367129 & 2201420160 & 2335335312 & 46065376 \\ 1384844995 & 607556554 & 2645672430 & 4136350896 & 3596845616 \\ 4209215563 & 1529533803 & 1525531379 & 781854571 & 2723231816 \\ 1625920071 & 3671248796 & 1470525740 & 3884958370 & 1972389092 \\ 2062666758 & 774480666 & 1689604710 & 2098990694 & 1929943712 \end{pmatrix}$$

One can check that both secret keys  $k_B^{(SSK)}$  and  $k_A^{(SSK)}$  are same.

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