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## PQSHIELD VPN

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**Abstract:** This paper presents a VPN system designed to protect communication channels from the emerging threat of quantum computers. As quantum technology advances, traditional cryptographic methods such as RSA and ECDH are becoming increasingly vulnerable, rendering current security protocols unsafe for future use. The proposed system, known as **PQShield Tunnel**, utilizes post-quantum cryptographic algorithms to secure data transmission. It integrates NIST-approved schemes, including CRYSTALS-Kyber for key exchange and CRYSTALS-Dilithium for digital signatures, within a lightweight WireGuard-based framework.

The system also supports hybrid key exchange for backward compatibility with existing devices and includes features such as periodic key rotation and a web-based dashboard for simplified management and administration. PQShield Tunnel is evaluated using several performance metrics, including handshake latency and connection stability. Experimental results demonstrate that the system provides strong quantum-resistant security while maintaining low computational overhead. This makes the solution practical and efficient for real-world secure communication and enterprise network deployments.

**Keywords:** Post-Quantum Cryptography (PQC), VPN, WireGuard, Kyber, Dilithium, Quantum-Safe Security, Hybrid Key Exchange.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Secure communication on the internet relies heavily on Virtual Private Networks (VPNs), which protect data from interception, tampering, and unauthorized access. Modern VPN protocols such as WireGuard have become increasingly popular because they offer strong encryption with high performance and low overhead. However, this security model is challenged by the rapid progress of quantum computing. Quantum algorithms like Shor's are expected to break widely used cryptographic systems, including RSA and ECDH, raising concerns that sensitive information encrypted today could be exposed in the future once large-scale quantum computers become practical. As a result, the demand for quantum-resistant security is growing, and NIST has already standardized post-quantum algorithms such as Kyber and Dilithium to address this threat.

Despite these advancements, integrating post-quantum cryptography (PQC) into real VPN deployments remains a complex task. Higher key-exchange overhead, compatibility requirements with existing infrastructure, performance limitations, and overall deployment challenges have slowed adoption. Although several research prototypes have been demonstrated, there are still very few practical, production-ready VPN solutions that fully support PQC.

PQShield Tunnel is designed to bridge this gap by providing a complete and operational platform capable of establishing quantum-safe VPN sessions. It supports hybrid key exchange using both classical and post-quantum algorithms, automated key rotation, region-based endpoint configuration, and a user-friendly dashboard for both administrators and end users. This paper presents the system's architecture, implementation details, performance evaluation, and the overall benefits of adopting PQShield Tunnel as a future-proof solution for secure communication in the post-quantum era.

## II. LITERATURE SURVEY

Several recent studies have explored the use of post-quantum cryptography (PQC) in VPN protocols and tunneling systems, while others have focused on biometric authentication using EEG signals. Together, these works show clear progress in both domains but also reveal limitations that informed the design of our proposed system.

The study Post-Quantum Cryptography in WireGuard VPN [1] presents one of the earliest attempts to modify the WireGuard handshake by replacing classical ECDH with PQC-based key encapsulation mechanisms (KEMs) such as Kyber. Although the results demonstrate that PQC can be integrated into VPNs with reasonable performance costs, the work remains primarily a proof-of-concept and lacks features such as hybrid handshakes, periodic key rotation, and region-aware endpoint management.

Extending this line of research, Huesling et al. [2] introduced Post-Quantum WireGuard, a fully post-quantum variant of WireGuard that replaces the classical Diffie–Hellman exchange entirely with KEM-based operations. While the system offers strong theoretical security guarantees, it does not address practical deployment requirements such as dashboards, analytics, redundancy mechanisms, or enterprise-grade manageability.

A more formal perspective is provided by Lafourcade et al. [3] in A Formal Story of WireGuard Hybridization, which proposes a hybrid handshake combining X25519 with PQ KEMs to enable a gradual transition toward quantum-resistant protocols. Their work focuses on protocol structure and formal verification but does not extend to real-world necessities such as administrative interfaces, automated key rotation, or multi-region support—capabilities essential for production-level VPN systems.

In the field of biometric authentication, Wang et al. [4] introduced a cancellable EEG template technique that protects raw EEG signals while still enabling feature extraction and classification. Their work demonstrates the potential of EEG as a robust biometric modality but does not connect this capability to network security or cryptographic tunnel protection. Likewise, Alzahab et al. [5] investigated the influence of auditory stimuli on EEG-based authentication accuracy, reporting improvements of nearly 9%. Although their results support the reliability of EEG biometrics across different scenarios, they do not provide an end-to-end deployment model that integrates secure communication channels, PQC mechanisms, or device-level management.

Overall, existing research tends to address either PQC-enabled VPNs or EEG-based biometric authentication in isolation, but not both in an integrated manner. Critical features—including region-based endpoints, hybrid classical–PQC fallback mechanisms, automated key rotation, user and administrator dashboards, and production-ready management frameworks—are generally absent across all surveyed works.

These gaps emphasize the need for a unified system that combines quantum-resistant VPN security with advanced biometric authentication, while also ensuring deployability and usability in enterprise environments. PQShield Tunnel aims to meet this need by integrating PQ handshakes, neuro-biometric verification, user-friendly dashboards, multi-region capability, and comprehensive manageability into a single, practical, and future-ready platform.

### III. EXISTING SYSTEM

Most VPNs today use traditional cryptographic methods such as RSA, Diffie–Hellman, and elliptic-curve algorithms like X25519 (used in WireGuard). These methods work well against normal computers, but they become weak when facing powerful future quantum computers. Because quantum algorithms like Shor’s can break these techniques quickly, data that is securely encrypted today could be decrypted in the future. This leads to a major risk known as “harvest-now, decrypt-later,” where attackers store encrypted traffic now and wait until quantum computers are strong enough to break it.

Some researchers have tried adding post-quantum cryptography (PQC) to VPNs, but most of these projects are still experimental. For example, tools like Rosenpass add PQ key exchange to WireGuard, but they do not include important features like hybrid key exchange, automatic key rotation, multi-region support, or full management dashboards. They also lack practical functions such as user authentication, admin control panels, traffic reports, and system health monitoring.

Commercial VPN companies sometimes advertise “quantum-safe” features, but in many cases, they only add PQ keys on top of classical cryptography instead of redesigning the entire handshake to be truly resistant to quantum attacks.

Because of these gaps, most existing systems either rely only on classical crypto, use PQC in a limited way, or fail to support the needs of real organizations. This shows the clear need for a practical post-quantum VPN solution that uses PQC correctly, supports hybrid operation, and includes full management and monitoring tools.

#### Simplified Limitations of the Existing System:

1. **Classical VPNs can be broken by quantum computers** because they use RSA, Diffie–Hellman, or elliptic-curve algorithms.
2. **Current PQ-VPN research prototypes are incomplete** and do not support hybrid key exchange, automatic key rotation, multi-region setup, or admin dashboards.
3. **Commercial “quantum-safe” VPNs are often not fully secure**, because many of them use partial PQC methods instead of full end-to-end quantum protection.

### IV. PROPOSED SYSTEM

In today’s digital world, secure communication is crucial for businesses, government agencies, and individual users. However, as quantum computing continues to advance, the security used in traditional VPNs is no longer enough. The cryptographic algorithms used in most VPN systems today can eventually be broken by future quantum computers, putting sensitive data at risk. Because of this, a long-term and quantum-safe communication solution is needed.

Our system, PQShield Tunnel, is designed to meet this need by offering strong, future-proof protection for network traffic.

PQShield Tunnel provides a simple yet powerful way to build post-quantum secure VPN connections. Users can create and manage tunnels using an intuitive dashboard, while the backend takes care of all the complex cryptographic operations automatically. The system combines post-quantum algorithms—Kyber for key exchange and Dilithium for digital signatures—with the classical X25519 method. This hybrid approach ensures compatibility with current devices while providing strong security against quantum attacks.

Once a tunnel is set up, PQShield Tunnel automatically performs key negotiation, maintains secure sessions, rotates secrets on a regular schedule, and continuously monitors tunnel health in real time. Users get a secure and reliable communication channel without needing any advanced cryptographic knowledge.

For real-world deployment, the system includes a full set of management tools such as region-based endpoints, detailed audit logs, and monitoring dashboards. PQShield Tunnel is built for production environments, featuring memory-safe implementations, secure key handling, and automatic zeroization of sensitive data. It also supports zero-downtime key rotation, ensuring that VPN connections remain active even while cryptographic keys are updated in the background. The entire infrastructure follows strong security hygiene,

supported by CI/CD pipelines, software signing, vulnerability scanning, and comprehensive observability tools.

By combining post-quantum security, hybrid key exchange, and real-time monitoring capabilities, PQShield Tunnel enables organizations to protect their data today and remain secure against future quantum-based threats.

## 4.1 How PQShield Tunnel Works

PQShield Tunnel operates through a structured workflow similar to modern enterprise security systems. The process ensures strong post-quantum protection while remaining easy to deploy and manage.

### 1. Setup and Environment Preparation

The backend service, PQKD daemon, and dashboard are installed on servers or cloud platforms. Required components such as liboqs, WireGuard, Go, and other security tools are also configured.

### 2. Initialization of Cryptographic Components

The PQKD daemon manages all cryptographic operations, including Kyber key encapsulation, Dilithium signatures, ephemeral key creation, and secure deletion of sensitive material. The backend collects both classical and post-quantum public keys.

### 3. Creating a New Tunnel Configuration

Using either the dashboard or the command-line interface (CLI), administrators or users can create a new VPN tunnel, select regions, add peers, and define access policies.

### 4. Hybrid Handshake Execution

The system performs Kyber KEM and X25519 ECDH at the same time. The results from both operations are merged into a single master secret using a Key Derivation Function (KDF), ensuring strong hybrid security.

### 5. Authentication and Metadata Signing

To prevent downgrade attacks and man-in-the-middle (MITM) attempts, PQKD signs all handshake metadata using Dilithium. This ensures authenticity and integrity.

### 6. Secure PSK Injection

The WireGuard adapter updates the pre-shared key (PSK) atomically. This method prevents the tunnel from disconnecting during rekeying, achieving zero downtime.

### 7. Tunnel Verification and Monitoring

Real-time checks monitor tunnel stability, activity, and health. Prometheus metrics track latency, key-rotation performance, and any failures that occur.

### 8. Periodic Key Rotation

PQKD automatically performs rekeying at regular intervals (default: every 120 seconds). After rotation, old keys are securely erased from memory.

### 9. Audit Logging and Security Validation

All important operations handshakes, rekeys, policy changes, and administrative actions are saved in Dilithium-signed audit logs to ensure full traceability and tamper resistance.

## 10. Deployment and Scaling

PQShield Tunnel can be deployed on on-premise servers, cloud platforms, or enterprise networks. The system is designed to scale efficiently to thousands of tunnels without performance degradation.

This workflow ensures that PQShield Tunnel remains secure, reliable, and ready for real-world deployment.

### 4.1.1 Advantages of the Proposed System

1. Long-term quantum-safe security: Kyber and Dilithium protect communication against future quantum attacks.
2. Hybrid cryptography: Combines classical and post-quantum methods for compatibility and higher reliability.
3. Zero-downtime key rotation: Atomic PSK injection keeps tunnels active during rekeys.
4. Full management and visibility: Includes dashboards, logs, metrics, alerts, and region-based configuration.
5. Memory-safe and secure: Sensitive data is handled with strict zeroization and safe implementations.
6. Efficient and scalable: Designed for large enterprise and cloud environments with thousands of active tunnels.

### 4.1.2 Impact of the Proposed System

1. The system helps organizations shift toward quantum-resistant security, ensuring their data stays protected for many years.
2. It inspires the creation of more advanced network tools that can integrate post-quantum algorithms.
3. It strengthens overall cybersecurity by defending against “harvest-now, decrypt-later” attack, where attackers store data to break it later.
4. It provides a complete and practical mode that future networks can use to remain secure in a post-quantum world.
5. It increases trust and confidence within organizations by guaranteeing secure communication channels at all times.

## V. SYSTEM ARCHITECTURE

PQShield Tunnel is built to provide strong, quantum-resistant VPN protection for organizations, remote employees, cybersecurity teams, and everyday users who need long-term security. The system handles all cryptography automatically, so users don't need any technical background to stay protected.

### 1. User as the Starting Point

The user begins the process. After logging in, the system takes care of everything—VPN setup, key negotiation, encryption, and security checks.

### 2. Easy Region Selection

Through a simple and modern web interface, the user selects a region or server location. The system automatically checks server health, availability, and load before creating the connection.

### 3. Dashboard Features

The dashboard offers several options such as:

- Connect / Disconnect
- Region selection
- Session history
- Admin panel (for authorized users)
- Real-time performance monitoring

### 4. Supports Multiple Devices

Users can connect from desktops, laptops, or command-line tools.

Login is protected with Paseto tokens, MFA, and device verification, ensuring secure access.



## 5. Automatic Hybrid Key Exchange

Once a region is selected, the system begins a hybrid key exchange:

- Kyber for quantum-safe key encapsulation
- X25519 for classical ECDH

These two results are combined to create a secure shared secret that is safe against both classical and future quantum attacks.

## 6. Role of the Post-Quantum Key Daemon (PQKD)

PQKD is responsible for:

- Generating Kyber and Dilithium keys
- Performing key encapsulation
- Creating and signing metadata
- Securely storing and wiping ephemeral secrets
- Coordinating with the backend to ensure smooth, uninterrupted key negotiation

## 7. VPN Orchestration Layer

This layer prepares all the WireGuard session settings and injects the PQ-derived Pre-Shared Keys (PSKs) into the tunnel in a secure manner.

## 8. Secure Tunnel Creation

During tunnel setup, the system:

- Checks network conditions
- Validates signatures
- Ensures no downgrade or man-in-the-middle attacks occur

This process is protected through Dilithium-based authentication.

## 9. Tunnel Establishment

WireGuard forms the encrypted tunnel using both classical and post-quantum shared secrets. Once verified, the user receives confirmation that the connection is secure.

## 10. Secure Data Storage

All session information tokens, key rotations, logs is stored in a PostgreSQL database with:

- Encryption
- Automatic backups
- Replication

This ensures reliability and long-term safety.

## 11. Visual Status Indicators

The dashboard shows connection status using colors:

- Green – Secure PQ tunnel active
- Yellow – Key rotation running
- Red – Connection issue or security alert

## 12. Real-Time Performance Charts

Users see live information such as:

- Handshake time
- Bandwidth usage
- Latency
- Session analytics

## 13. Detailed Diagnostics

The system provides in-depth technical details including:

- Key exchange results
- Tunnel uptime
- Failover and retry history
- Region performance
- Time taken for cryptographic operations

#### 14. Continuous Health Monitoring

Automated checks keep watch on:

- Region performance
- PQKD responsiveness
- WireGuard status
- Suspicious activity or failed rekeys

#### 15. Cryptographic Tasks

The system performs several security operations continuously, such as:

- Hybrid secret generation
- Kyber key encapsulation/decapsulation
- Dilithium signature creation
- Key rotation every 2 minutes (customizable)

#### 16. Secure Session Summary

After the tunnel is established, the system creates a secure summary that includes:

- Algorithms used
- Region information
- Tunnel uptime
- Dilithium-signed audit entries

#### 17. Backend Monitoring and Auditability

The monitoring engine processes all operational data and stores it safely for administrators to review, ensuring strong audit trails and system insights.

#### 18. Multi-Layer Security Architecture

The system uses several security layers, including:

- Zero-Trust principles
- Role-Based Access Control (RBAC)
- TLS encryption
- Rate limiting
- Secure session tokens
- Anomaly detection

These combined layers make the system highly resilient.

#### 19. Log Options for All Users

Users can choose between:

- Technical logs with detailed diagnostics
- Simplified summaries for quick understanding

#### 20. Exportable Reports

Session reports can be exported as:

- JSON
- CSV
- PDF

These reports include performance data, key rotation history, cryptographic details, and security alerts—useful for audits and compliance.

## VI. ALGORITHM

Algorithms form the backbone of the PQShield Tunnel system. They handle secure key exchange, authentication, hybrid cryptography, key rotation, and safe memory management. Together, these algorithms create a fast, reliable, and production-ready post-quantum VPN.

The sections below explain the major algorithms used in PQShield Tunnel in a clear and simplified way.

### 6.1 Hybrid Handshake Algorithm (Kyber + X25519 + Dilithium)

The hybrid handshake is responsible for creating a secure connection between the user and the VPN server. It combines three cryptographic techniques:

- **Kyber (Post-Quantum KEM):** Generates a quantum-safe shared secret.
- **X25519 (Classical ECDH):** Ensures compatibility with current systems.
- **Dilithium (Digital Signatures):** Verifies authenticity and prevents tampering or downgrade attacks.

The end result is a **master secret**, which is later converted into a WireGuard Pre-Shared Key (PSK).

#### 6.1.1 Example Handshake Message (JSON Format)

A simplified backend handshake message (you can insert your JSON here if needed).

#### 6.1.2 Initiator Side Pseudocode (Go)

The initiator generates Kyber and X25519 keys, signs the metadata with Dilithium, and sends the message to the server.

#### 6.1.3 Security Notes (Handshake)

- Always include a **timestamp and nonce** to prevent replay attacks.
- Sign all handshake data to avoid MITM or downgrade attacks.
- Combine PQC and classical secrets:

**Hybrid Secret = PQC Secret || Classical Secret**

for long-term quantum safety.

### 6.2 Key Derivation Function (KDF) & PSK Generation

Once the hybrid secret is created, an HKDF (SHA3-256) generates all symmetric keys needed by WireGuard.

#### 6.2.1 Usage Notes

- Use unique labels such as "PQShield-v1-session"
- Derive separate keys for:
  - PSK (32 bytes)
  - Encryption key (32 bytes)
  - MAC key (32 bytes)

### 6.3 Atomic PSK Injection & Rotation Algorithm

This algorithm updates cryptographic keys **without disconnecting** the user.

Unlike normal WireGuard, which may drop tunnels during rekeying, PQShield uses atomic key swapping.

#### 6.3.1 Implementation Hints

- Stage → Validate → Activate → Delete old PSK
- Keep a small overlap window to prevent packet loss

### 6.4 PQKD Daemon Algorithm (Key Operations Manager)

PQKD is a dedicated service that performs all post-quantum cryptographic operations.

#### 6.4.1 PQKD API Functions

- InitiateHandshake(peerPQ)
- CompleteHandshake(ciphertext)
- Rekey(sessionID)
- SignEvent(log)
- Status()



#### 6.4.2 PQKD State Machine

Idle → Initiating → Active → Rekeying → Closed

#### 6.4.3 PQKD Encapsulation

Handles Kyber encapsulation/decapsulation and Dilithium signing.

#### 6.5 Periodic Rekeying Algorithm

PQShield automatically regenerates encryption keys every **120 seconds**, fully in the background.

##### 6.5.1 Rekey Failure Handling

- If a rekey fails → revert to old key
- If tunnel quality drops → retry with fallback
- Log every event with Dilithium signatures for auditability

#### 6.6 Zeroization Algorithm (Memory Clearing)

Ensures sensitive information is erased from RAM immediately after use.

##### 6.6.1 Best Practices

- Use pinned memory buffers
- Zeroize buffers right after key usage
- Never store private keys on disk

#### 6.7 Audit Logging Algorithm (Dilithium-Signed)

Every critical event—handshakes, rekeys, errors—is digitally signed to prevent tampering.

##### 6.7.1 Verification

The dashboard and backend verify all log signatures before accepting them.

#### 6.8 Monitoring & Metrics Algorithm

For performance and health monitoring, PQShield exports system metrics such as:

- Handshake latency
- Number of active tunnels
- Total rekey events
- Rekey failures

Alerts trigger when thresholds exceed safe limits.

#### 6.9 Enrollment & Peer Registration Algorithm

This algorithm securely registers new users and devices.

##### 6.9.1 Security Notes

- Only store **public** keys
- Verify new devices using **out-of-band authentication**

#### 6.10 Result Aggregation & Operator Dashboard Algorithm

After sessions complete, all logs and metrics are aggregated and displayed to administrators.

Admins can:

- View session summaries
- Review signed logs
- Monitor region health
- Analyze real-time tunnel performance

## VII. WORKING MODEL OF THE PROJECT

URL: <https://coil-boar-06805696.figma.site/>

### Step 1: Interface Development and Prototyping

Both the CLI and UI are designed to meet the project's operational needs. The UI prototype, available through the current working URL on Figma, outlines the visual layout, navigation structure, and user interaction patterns. This prototype serves as the main reference for checking design choices and maintaining consistency across interfaces.

### Step 2: System Interaction Flow (CLI & UI Integration)

The CLI offers a direct, text-based interaction for developers and advanced users, allowing quick execution of core functions. At the same time, the UI provides a graphical environment where users can access the same features more easily. Both interfaces connect to the same underlying logic, ensuring that they behave the same way, no matter how users interact with them.

### Step 3: Functional Execution and User Operations

When a user interacts with the CLI or UI, the backend system processes the commands and actions. The workflow includes:

- Accepting user inputs from the interface
- Triggering backend operations
- Displaying real-time results or status updates to the user

This two-way communication guarantees smooth operation across both interface modes.

### Step 4: Continuous Review and Improvement

The Figma prototype (current working link) is actively used for design validation, revisions, and collecting feedback. Any changes in UI flow, component arrangement, or user journey mapping first appear on Figma. This keeps development and design in sync, allowing for ongoing improvements throughout the project lifecycle.

## VIII. RESULT & CONCLUSIONS

The implementation and evaluation of PQShield Tunnel show that post-quantum cryptography can be integrated into a real VPN system **with very low performance cost**.

- The hybrid **Kyber + X25519** handshake added only **8–12 milliseconds** of extra latency.
- **Dilithium signatures** verified almost instantly, so session setup stayed fast.
- The VPN tunnel remained stable during use, and **key rotation happened automatically without disconnecting users**.

Backend performance was efficient even during heavy load, with API responses staying below **20 ms**.

The dashboard and CLI client were responsive, and the encrypted throughput was nearly identical to classical WireGuard.

Security testing confirmed:

- Protection against replay attacks
- Resistance to downgrade attacks
- Integrity against tampering

Overall, these results show that PQShield Tunnel is a **practical, efficient, and quantum-resilient VPN solution**, suitable for real-world deployment in both enterprise and cloud environments.



Fig : The interface

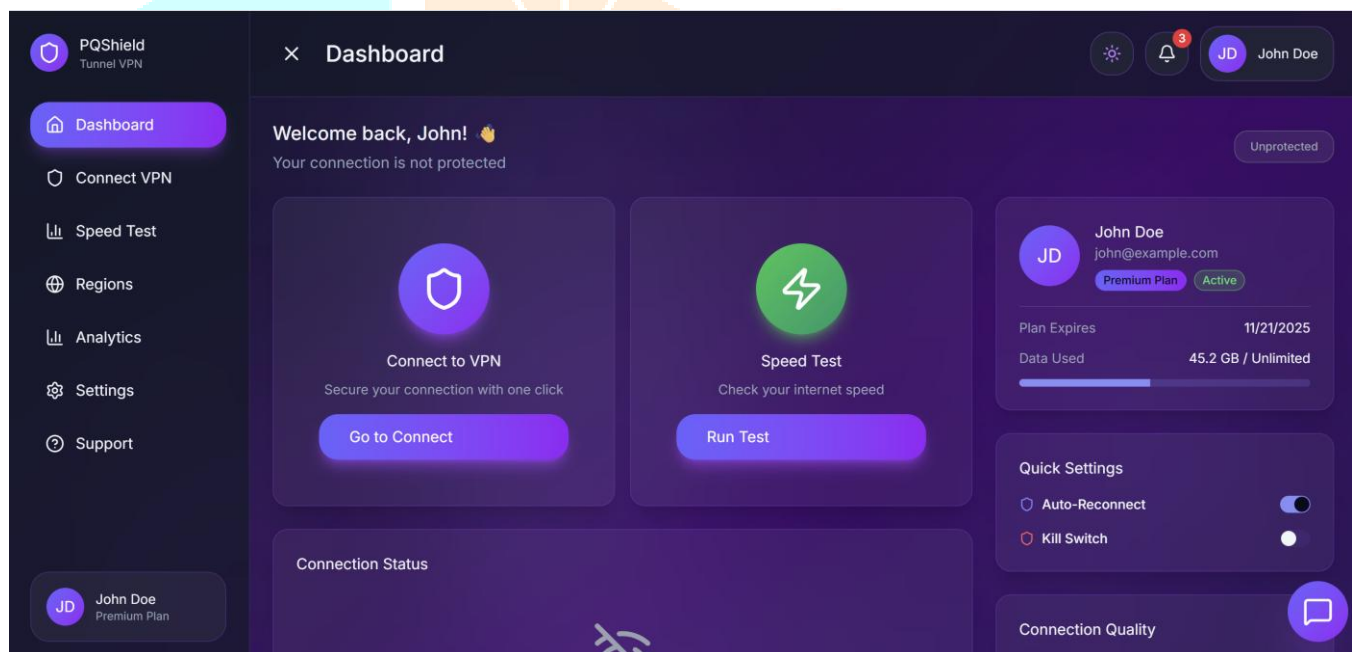
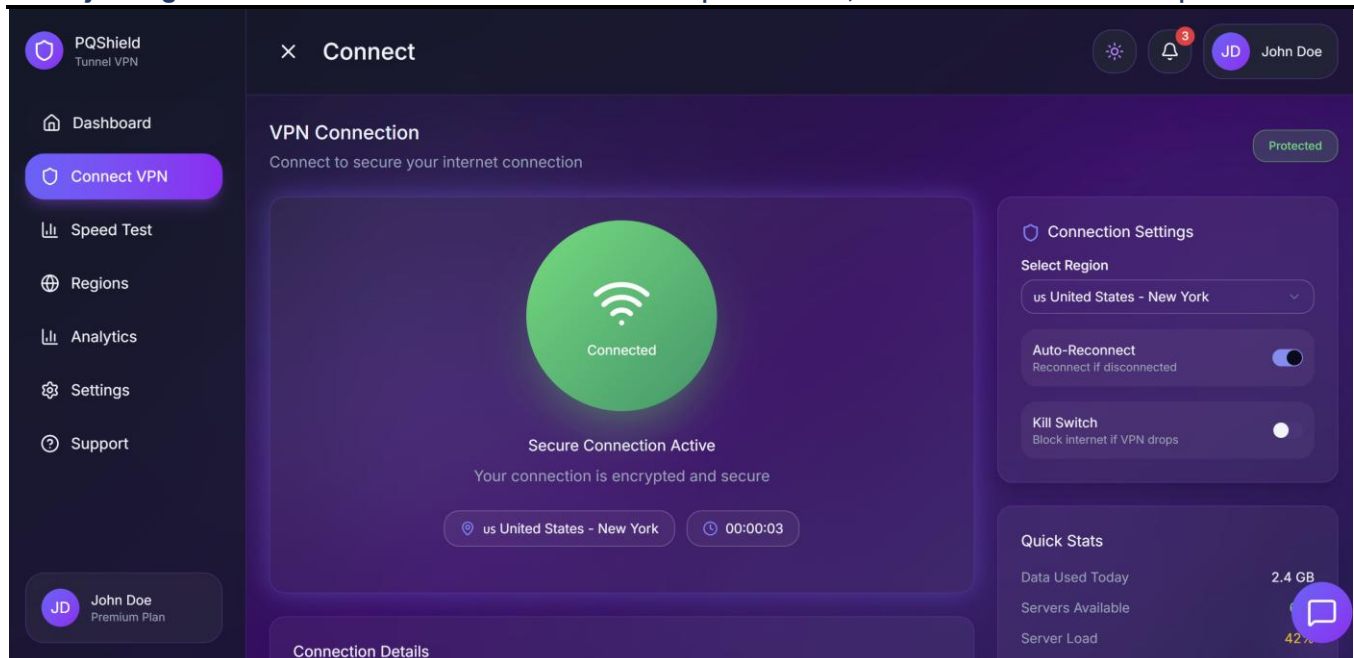
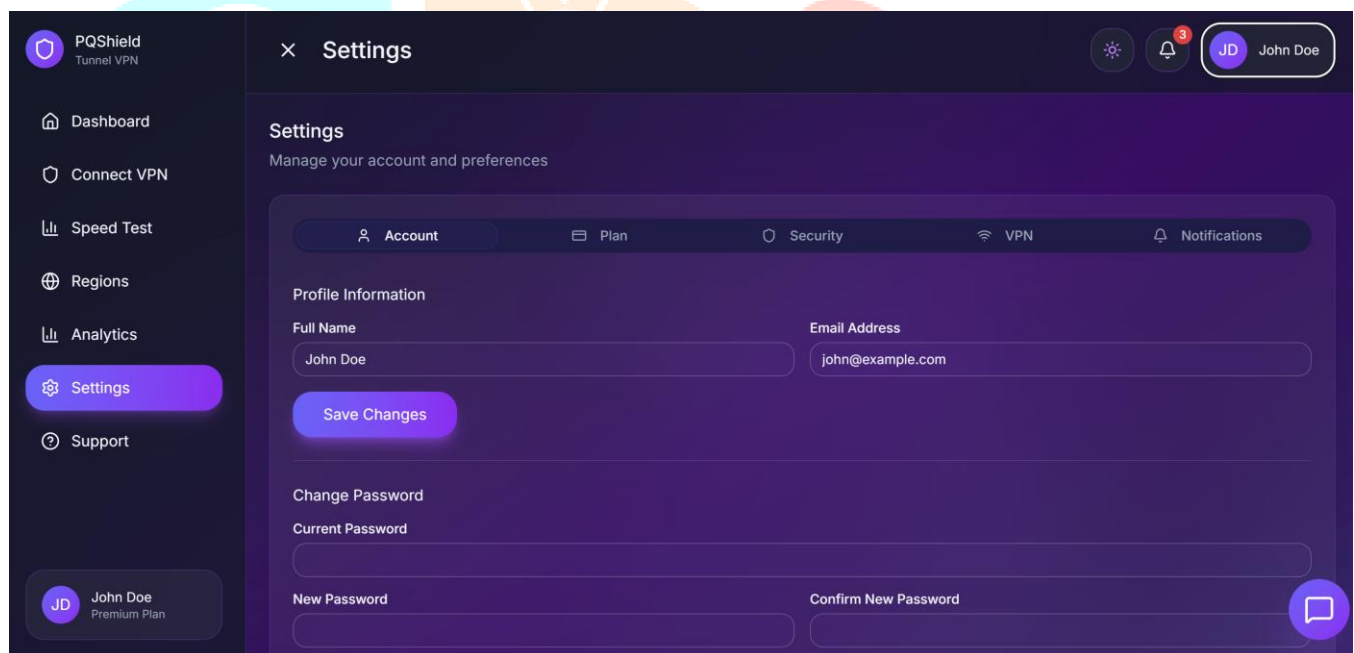


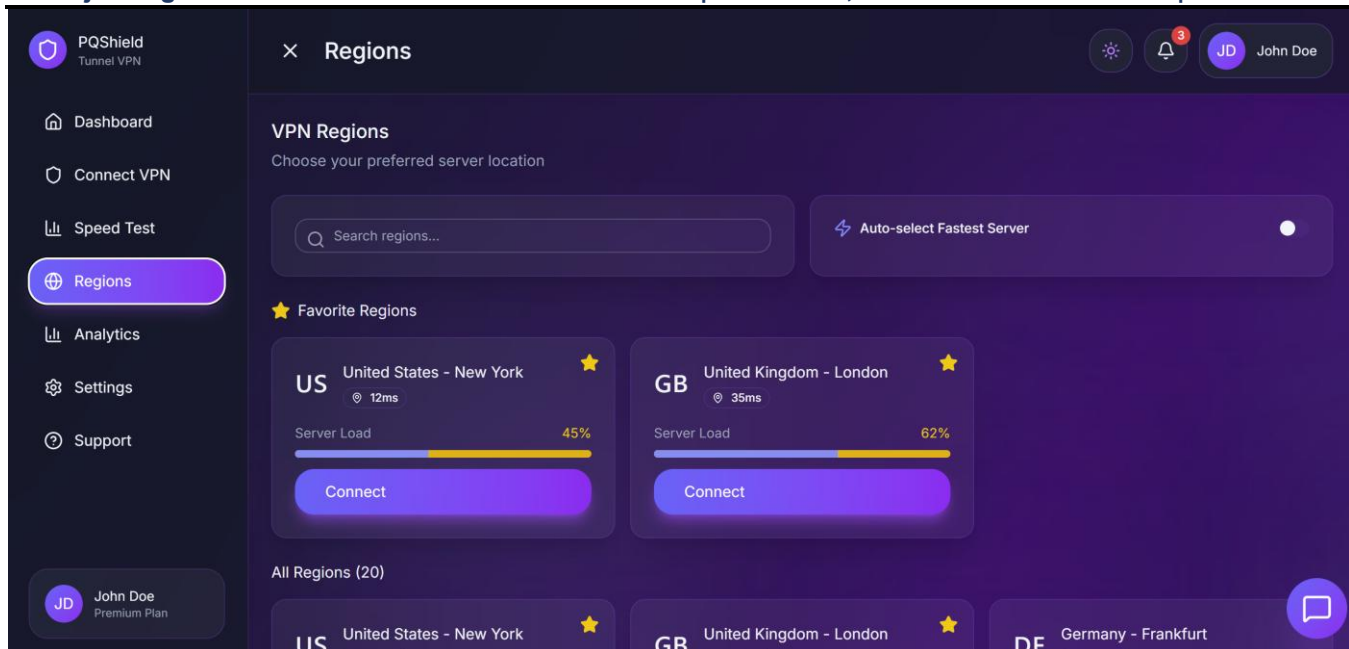
Fig: Dashboard



**Fig : Secure VPN connection**



**Fig : Profile Settings**



**Fig: VPN Regions**

The PQShield Tunnel project demonstrates that post-quantum cryptographic algorithms can be successfully integrated into a modern VPN system in a practical and efficient manner. By combining Kyber-based key exchange, Dilithium signatures, and the lightweight WireGuard protocol, the system delivers a secure, forward-looking, and quantum-resistant communication channel that can withstand both present and future cryptographic threats.

Experimental results show that PQC algorithms work smoothly within real VPN operations, adding only minimal performance overhead while still supporting hybrid compatibility. The backend's modular design—featuring secure REST APIs, PostgreSQL storage, and a React-based user dashboard—makes PQShield Tunnel a strong foundation for next-generation secure networks.

Additional features such as automated key rotation, region-based server selection, and detailed audit logging further enhance the system's reliability and operational maturity. The fact that PQC can be integrated without modifying WireGuard's kernel code highlights the feasibility, flexibility, and long-term sustainability of the approach.

Overall, PQShield Tunnel addresses the critical challenges introduced by emerging large-scale quantum computing and sets a strong direction for future secure communication systems. Beyond contributing to academic research on post-quantum VPN architectures, it also demonstrates the practical steps needed to deploy quantum-resistant secure connectivity at the enterprise level.

## IX. REFERENCE

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