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Forum for Strategic and Security Studies
1103, Vikram Tower, Rajendra Place
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Tel: +91 (0)11- 25720334 (Office)

Tele:- +91-9810014769 (Editor)

E-mail: agni.editor@gmail.com

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AGNI

STUDIES IN INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

OBJECTIVE

AGNI is the journal of the Forum for Strategic and Security Studies [FSSS]. The aim is to use this publication to explore the perceptions and developing logic on strategic issues, that have a bearing on global stability and harmony, from a wide range of analysts, policy makers and academics world wide, who influence strategic thought in their countries or region, so as to create greater awareness and a wider understanding of the elements giving drive to formulation of State policies and responses.

CONTRIBUTIONS

The FSSS shall publish, solicited or unsolicited, studies by experts or groups conducting them, on strategic issues that have a direct or indirect bearing with immediate or long term implications, on regional or global security.

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EDITOR'S PAGE

The year has been marked by momentous events, both within and without India. Pakistan-aided terrorist activities escalated in Kashmir with the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) launching the biggest terror strike since 1989 in February at Pulwama. The Government seized the opportunity to give a fitting response to this provocation with the IAF launching airstrikes at terror camps deep inside Pakistan, signalling a major shift from past policy. The consequences of the use of airpower in counter-terrorism operations are examined in this issue.

The General Elections to constitute the 17th Lok Sabha were held in April-May. After a hard-fought campaign, predictably, the BJP won a clear mandate to form the government. Modi 2.0 faces numerous security issues and the government must draw up a National Security Strategy to articulate major security challenges that give direction to its foreign policies. There have been several attempts at formulating such a document in the past. But the political dispensations have yet to formally approve one and put it in the public domain, probably fearing a “commitment trap”. Interestingly, Congress was the first political party that included a national security strategy document as part of its 2019 election manifesto. In this issue, we discuss the imperatives for such a document and insights for policymakers to keep in mind.

During the 2014 swearing-in ceremony, Modi had invited leaders of SAARC member states. The May 2019 swearing-in saw leaders of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) invited. This has indicated that Modi's second term will see a new pivot of focus. This organization, comprising of seven states-Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand and India-covers both South Asian and Southeast Asian regions. With the SAARC becoming dysfunctional after India and other members pulled out of the 19th Summit hosted in Islamabad in the wake of the Uri terrorist strike in 2016, it was imperative to look for an alternative regional grouping. Inviting the BIMSTEC leaders for the BRICS summit at Goa in 2016 sent a clear message on future government's leaning. This also harmonizes with India's “Act East” policy and should provide some economic engagement with countries under the influence of China's BRI's initiatives.

The defence budget for FY 2019-20 at less than 1.50% of India's projected GDP for the year was disappointing since it is the lowest since the 1962 war with China. During the 1980s, it had peaked to 3.50%. It is presently among the lowest in the world – China and Pakistan spend 2.5% and 3.5% respectively. The pension bill itself takes up approximately 35% of the budget (out of which 40% goes towards defence civilian pensions). The meagre and lopsided defence budget poses a serious hindrance for the modernization and procurement plans.

On a positive note, the Modi 2.0 government placed orders for Rs 8,500 crore worth of weapon systems and missiles in their first 50 days in office. Another major move to fulfill a long-pending requirement and towards self-reliance was the establishment of an Indo-Russian joint venture to manufacture AK-203 rifles at Amethi.

The recent revocation of Article 370 and Article 35-A of the Constitution that granted special status to J&K, and bifurcating the region into two Union Territories-J&K and Ladakh- was another milestone decision by the government. It hopes to cut the Gordian knot of violence in the state and integrate it with the rest of the country. The move has been welcomed by the security forces, which had been facing the brunt of anti-national activities. However, the fallout of this decision will only emerge after the situation stabilizes in the valley. We shall be covering this in our future issues.

In his Independence Day speech, Prime Minister Modi announced the establishment of the long-awaited post of Chief of Defence Staff. It has been a long-overdue part of military reform, first recommended by the Kargil Review Report. This major step on the 20th anniversary of the Kargil War would lead to better coordination between the three services, ensure optimal utilization of resources and make them more effective in action. However, the effectiveness of this step will depend on how it is implemented. We shall be analyzing this in subsequent issues.

IN THIS ISSUE:

In his article *Why China May Run Into Roadblocks In Paving Its New Silk Road in South Asia*, Ramtanu Maitra observes: China embarked on a new long-term strategy to strengthen its future post the economic stagnation of Mao Zedong's era. The objectives were to counter the massive presence of the US throughout Asia's Far East and the Middle East by securing its existing trade routes and to develop new ones; and to ensure the physical security of China as a geographical entity and that of their land and maritime-based trade routes. The idea was first announced during their President's visit to Kazakhstan in 2013. The Belt and Road Initiative was touted to help build basic infrastructure of South Asian countries, contributing to their development and to enhance trade ties with them. Primarily, it would enable China securing access to the Indian Ocean. The article examines in detail two corridors – the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor. The realization of running up a huge debt burden has alarmed many partner countries, while other local issues have marred the initiative elsewhere. Myanmar reworked the original deal to reduce its investment to more manageable levels, Sri Lanka has had to hand over assets to China to offset its debt burden, Bangladesh labourers have clashed with Chinese workers at a construction site on a few occasions. Further, despite its turnaround from the earlier policy of exporting communism to create regime change in South Asia and elsewhere, China's recent behaviour has not earned the trust that is critical to making the Belt and Road Initiative a success in South Asia.

Ashok Kapur in his article *Formulating a Coherent National Security Doctrine for India* observes that the country even after more than 70 years of independence does not have a coherent, publicly credible national security doctrine, despite being located in a region with multiple military, diplomatic and cultural conflicts and challenges. Till now its wars and crises have been marked with ad hoc decision-making based on reactive external pressures and involving a small circle around the Prime Minister. Despite the numerous committees existing for this purpose, decisions are highly personalized and their basis is not open for public scrutiny as they are covered under the cloak of the Official Secrets Act for indefinite periods. This is unlike the 30-year rule followed by most countries to declassify state secrets.

This perpetuates an opaque system of decision-making, sans responsibility and which is contrary to the need of an educated public debate in a democracy. No lessons have been learnt from the past, despite this closed system resulting in the ultimate occupation of Tibet by China in the

1950s, the debacle in the 1962 Indo-China War and other incidents, including the Kargil imbroglio in 1999, another intelligence failure. The Kargil Review Committee Report in 2000 identified major issues affecting our security and defence machinery. Many of the recommendations are yet to be implemented by the government, showing a lack of urgency of the part of the political leadership. The author has further gone on to examine the strategic challenges facing the country by dividing these region-wise. He also dwells on the necessity to develop an Indian consciousness on national security and to involve the state government machinery to mesh with the national effort. He stresses that in geopolitics, national and international interests can only be met by deliberate action; others never hand them out freely. In developing explicit guidance at the highest political levels, the doctrine should also guide public conversations on national security, as well as build a large cadre of country-specific experts in the academic community and think tanks. The author argues that Indian media and NGOs cannot be expected to heed such guidance owing to many having foreign ownership; till their ownership and agendas are subject to full disclosure. A sound doctrine is essential to avoid emotional and partisan political differences on national security issues, which is an urgent requirement in the backdrop of past reactions being divided along party lines on crucial security matters.

N. Manoharan and Vishal Sen Gupta in their article *Terrorism and Regional Cooperation: What is SAARC Up To?* examine the regional efforts to combat terrorism by the SAARC grouping and the outcome of these initiatives. They trace the history of SAARC in this direction since the passing of the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism in 1987. In the post-Cold War era, terrorism has figured at the top of the list of threats to security. The emergence of terrorism as a weapon of proxy war between hostile nations has further complicated the issues involved. The possibility of weapons of mass destruction reaching the terrorists is frightening. South Asia is the worst affected region in the world, with the Global Terrorism Index of this region having the highest average score for the past 16 years. Despite the long history of terrorism counter-measures being in place in South Asia, they have failed to have any meaningful effect. This is largely because the cooperation is mainly on paper to meet international obligations, rather than actually tackling the menace; and, whatever cooperation exists is at bilateral rather than multilateral levels.

J.K. Verma in his analysis on *Balakot Airstrike Signified a Major Shift in Policy: Its Implications for India* brings out the significance of the airstrike, which has bilateral, regional and international repercussions. The author traces the background of the Pulwama attack by JeM that triggered the strike by the IAF on their terrorist training camps inside Pakistan. This was a major shift in India's policy in dealing with cross-border terrorism. Even during the 1999 Kargil War, the IAF was under strict instructions not to cross the LOC. The few surgical strikes to counter terror strikes in the past were limited intrusions across the land borders. Balakot was a milestone decision to use the IAF deep inside Pakistan, signalling that terror strikes can now be countered militarily anywhere in the country. The strike also dispelled Pakistan's nuclear threat myth perpetrated over the years. This action was coupled with the aerial engagement between the two air forces the day after the strike, which led to the downing of one fighter aircraft on both sides and the capture of the Indian pilot by Pakistan. Hectic international activity followed to calm tensions on both sides and for the release of the captured pilot. Internationally, India received wide support for its action that was considered in its self-defence.

This is to inform our readers about the sad news of the passing away of Major General Afsir Karim on 12 February 2019, after a long and heroic fight against cancer. He was a renowned scholar

and thinker on strategic issues, had authored many books and was the founder-editor of this magazine. His passing away is a great loss to the Armed Forces and the strategic community. AGNI missed coming out within an issue as a result of the void left after his demise.



Brigadier Amreshwar Pratap Singh (Retd)
Editor

**WHY CHINA MAY RUN INTO ROADBLOCKS
IN PAVING ITS NEW SILK ROAD IN SOUTH ASIA**

BY

RAMTANU MAITRA

W*ith the four-decade-long rapid rise of China as a world power beginning in the 1980s and continuing through the first two decades of this millennium, after decades of virtual political and economic stagnation under Chairman Mao Zedong, it became essential for China to develop a new and wide-ranging strategy to sustain what it has achieved and make long-term plans that are neither time nor goal-defined to strengthen its future. In light of the massive military presence of the United States throughout Asia's Far East and the Middle East, Chinese strategy has had two objectives—first, to keep its trade routes undisturbed and develop new trade routes that will remain fully under China's control denying the potential of foreign interference; and, second, to ensure physical security to China as a geographic entity and to the new land-based and existing maritime trade routes it has developed.*

During a September 2013 visit to Kazakhstan, China's President Xi Jinping announced the idea of a Silk Road Economic Belt. A month later in Indonesia, he expanded the project, putting forth the idea of a 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road. In November 2014, the Chinese government announced the creation of a new Silk Road Fund (\$40 billion) at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting in Beijing. And in March 2015, China's National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce jointly and officially announced the "One Belt, One Road Initiative" (BRI). In the following months, the specifics of the initiative were revealed. (*China*

Reclaims World Power Status: Putting an End to the World America Made: Paolo Urrio: Routledge: 2018)

The stated objective of China's Belt and Road Initiative in South Asia—as elsewhere—is to help South Asian nations build basic infrastructure, weighted to favour road, power and rail, that would enable China to get closely linked with this population-dense part of Asia and to also contribute constructively to these nations' economic and commercial development. The link-up would provide China with accesses to the Indian Ocean—a major maritime trade artery for China and the rest of Asia. India has not endorsed the program, and therefore is not involved; but Pakistan, Myanmar, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka all have BRI projects ongoing at one stage or another.

BELT AND ROAD: QUESTIONS RAISED

Following Xi's unfolding of the One Belt, One Road plan in 2013, questions have been raised about what truly lies behind China's stated efforts to recreate the old Silk Road. The plan, according to Beijing, is simply to ensure that China develops some land-based and maritime routes to link up with countries with whom it needs to enhance trade and economic interactions. It is also a benevolent effort to help economically weaker nations build basic infrastructure that could lay the foundation for their well-being and help strengthen economic ties with China in the future.

But some have questioned whether the aim isn't to expand and overwhelm some of the nations, particularly the smaller ones, and establish China as the dominating foreign power to look up to, thus weakening the influence of other foreign powers, such as the United States, in those countries. Others argue that by developing a direct land link and/or a maritime link, by setting up an economic web and putting in place security-related agreements, China is lubricating the process of establishing military installations in those countries in the future. This is perhaps partly based on the Chinese observation that the weakening of the West's economic foundations is very much in progress and that a time will come when China will be recognized for its deserved position in the world.

At the same time, the immediate benefits for China from the Belt and Road must be acknowledged. Its success will immensely help in resolving a critical problem, namely the lack of development in China in regions distant from the country's main development centres. As Paolo Urio points out in his book, the BRI aims to reduce China's regional development gaps that had already started during the third stage of China's development (1999–2013). It is interesting to note that BRI involves all four of China's economic blocs, comprising 25 provincial-level administrative units out of a total of 31. For the Road Belt, areas included are: Heilongjiang, Liaoning, Jilin, Henan, Jiangsu, Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai, Ningxia, Sinkiang, Chongqing, Sichuan, Yunnan, Guangxi, Tibet and Inner Mongolia. For the Maritime Road: Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong, Shanghai, Hainan, Liaoning, Tianjin, Shandong and Guangxi. (*China Reclaims World Power Status: Putting an End to the World America Made: Paolo Urio: Routledge: 2018*).

From that perspective alone, China's objective in the BRI should be understandable to New Delhi. India's inherent inability during the more than 70 years since independence to develop the vast northeast, where seven Indian states together touch five foreign nations with each state having one or more international boundaries, led the former Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao to come up with his "Look East" policy in 1991. Rao planned to hook up these Indian states through infrastructure with Myanmar, Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries to achieve rapid economic development. Today Prime Minister Narendra Modi has advanced the cause by upgrading the "Look East" policy to the "Act East" policy in 2014. Though the initiative has not borne the fruit that China's developmental plans have achieved since President Xi's declaration to launch BRI, "Act East" is still very much in India's playbook.

BELT AND ROAD: A VAST NETWORK

China has defined five routes for the BRI: three for the Road Belt, and two for the Maritime Road. The first land route goes from northwest China and northeast China to Europe and the Baltic Sea via Central Asia and Russia; the second goes from northwest China to the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea, passing through Central Asia and

West Asia; and the third from southwest China through the Indochina Peninsula to the Indian Ocean. The first maritime route starts at the coastal ports of China, crosses the South China Sea, passes through the Malacca Strait and reaches the Indian Ocean, extending to Europe; and the second starts at the coastal ports of China, crosses the South China Sea and extends to the South Pacific.

Within the framework of the five routes, China has proposed six corridors, six means of communication, multiple countries, and multiple ports. The six corridors are: the New Eurasian Land Bridge Economic Corridor, the Russia Economic Corridor, the China-Central Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor, the China-Indochina Peninsula Economic Corridor, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor. The six means of communication concern rail, highways, seagoing transport, aviation, pipelines and an aerospace integrated information network, which comprise the main targets of infrastructure connectivity. (*China Reclaims World Power Status: Putting an End to the World America Made: Paolo Urio: Routledge: 2018*).

Of interest for this article, however, is a discussion on the prospects for success of the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor that connects the Road Belt (from Kashgar-Xinjiang Autonomous region) to the Maritime Road in Gwadar, a port city on the southwestern coast of Balochistan, Pakistan, and the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor. The latter includes the development of all BRI projects in Myanmar, such as the Kyaukphyu deep-water port, the Kyaukphyu-Kunming high-speed railway, special economic zones and natural gas pipelines.

Besides, the impact of events within the BRI, and beyond, on the South Asian population in creating a negative environment for China will be discussed. For instance, China's non-transparent policy toward the Uyghur community in Xinjiang has raised concerns among the Islamic countries. While at the governmental level, these countries may not like to antagonize China; their Muslim citizens may feel and act differently toward Chinese who come to help build that country's infrastructure.

A similar situation is developing vis-à-vis Myanmar, an important BRI country for China to secure access to the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean. Deep-rooted anti-Muslim prejudices among a significant section of Buddhist chauvinists have led to violence against the native Rohingya Muslims, tacitly backed by a section of the Myanmar military in the state of Rakhine, the very state through which China is developing its infrastructure and planning to build a port and a special economic zone to optimize access to the Bay of Bengal. The persecution of Rohingya Muslims who have been uprooted from their homes and were quartered along the Bangladesh-Myanmar borders has created a potential law and order bomb that could go off at any time, Bangladesh worries.

Whether Beijing will attend to Dhaka's request to persuade Naypyitaw to stop the persecution of the Rohingyas and give them the status of legal citizens in Myanmar is a moot point. What is almost a certainty, however, is that Myanmar authorities' persecution of the Rohingyas and their unwillingness to take the initiative to stop it may lead China to become identified by the international Islamist Jihadis as yet another powerful anti-Muslim nation that endorses persecution of Muslims. China will find that such branding will have altogether a much broader international impact than what accompanied the persecution of Tibetans carried out by China following its annexation of Tibet in 1959. This could also impede China's ability to earn the trust of the population of Muslim-majority Bangladesh, a country China is courting to get land access through to the Bay of Bengal by developing its main port in Chittagong, help in building a new port at Payra and strengthening Bangladesh's power infrastructure.

CHINA PAKISTAN ECONOMIC CORRIDOR

Inclusion of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which enters Pakistan from China's Xinjiang province through parts of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, in the BRI demonstrates China's lack of concern for India's views and interests in its drive to get what it wants. As Beijing well knows, New Delhi considers that the state of Jammu and Kashmir belongs to India and that Pakistan has unlawfully occupied about a third of it. Pakistan states the opposite. Whether China believes

that India's claims are justified or not, what was minimally necessary for China was to consult India and discuss the Corridor's proposed entry to Pakistan through Gilgit and Baltistan before launching the CPEC since India is a neighbour and by no means a pushover in the economic, political or military fronts.

Perhaps China's fear that, if consulted, New Delhi would reject the route and its urgency of securing a port in Pakistan's landmass close to the Strait of Hormuz resulted in this intentional lapse. Beijing went pell-mell in developing the CPEC. Though problems have begun to emerge, slowing down progress, China now has full access to Gwadar Port on the Makran coast and is building it up as a virtual Chinese enclave. What other objectives this port will serve China in the future besides being a major trans-shipment location, are anyone's guess.

In addition to developing the port, the China-Pak Investment Corporation has bought a 3.6-million square foot "International Port City" to house the Chinese workforce and will establish a financial district and build a gated community for the anticipated 5,00,000 Chinese professionals who will be located there by 2022, according to *The Economic Times*. The proposed city will house the Chinese workforce. (*As part of CPEC, 'Chinese only' colony coming up in Pakistan: Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, The Economic Times; Aug 21, 2018*). Though China has denied this report, it is evident that given its growing relations with the African nations, in general, and the Middle East, China is bound to make sure that the Indian Ocean, and the trade routes to these two areas of great importance, remains under its close watch.

By itself, the CPEC would be a fine project—if Pakistan had the economic means to build on the infrastructure that China is putting in place at a cost. The cost ensures Pakistan will inherit about \$60 billion in loans, which with interest, will turn out to be much higher. As it is, Pakistan has a serious debt-payment problem and seeks IMF bailout from time to time. This tidy sum of additional loans that China is putting on Pakistan may not break the proverbial camel's back, but will surely strain it further. More importantly, if Pakistan does not have the money, or can't produce any amount of cash magically to invest

generously to optimize the utilization of the roads and railroads that China is planning to build, the CPEC will fail to bring any meaningful benefit for the Pakistani people.

In addition to the financial problems that could delay benefits from the CPEC, there is one other challenge: the economic corridor, whose western route leads directly to Gwadar Port, runs through a vast landmass where insecurity prevails. Pakistani officials point out that large sections of the population, mostly based in the province of Balochistan, are openly against the construction of the CPEC and are involved in sabotaging efforts aimed at bringing foreign investments and integrating Balochistan with the rest of Pakistan. Balochistan has remained volatile since the inception of Pakistan in 1947, and some of its people are steadfast in seeking separation from the country. The decades-long instability in Afghanistan that borders Balochistan, and the consequential growth of terrorism in the area, has further made the area highly insecure. (*China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: The Challenges: Ramtanu Maitra: EIR; April 15, 2016*).

During the construction stage, insecurity poses a significant threat to the Chinese workers and technicians involved with the project. Islamabad is aware of these problems and has assured China it will provide protection, asking Beijing to ensure that security officials have prior knowledge of the movement of Chinese personnel in the construction area. Besides, Pakistan has established a Special Security Division comprising nine composite infantry battalions (9,000 personnel) and six civilian armed forces wings (6,000 personnel) to be headed by a serving Major General of the Pakistan Army. (*17,177 soldiers deployed for security of Chinese workers of CPEC: The News: Mehtab Haider; December 15, 2015*).

One would expect that such measures would ensure security, but they may not. Continuing violent incidents in Balochistan suggest that the security of the CPEC, and the Chinese personnel working there, is less than certain.

In addition to security concerns, Pakistan's small and medium-size industries also have expressed fears that those industries may come

under pressure because of cheaper and plentiful imports from China that are further facilitated by the fully-operational CPEC. Atif Iqbal, Executive Director of the Organization for Advancement and Safeguard of Industrial Sector, told Pakistan's news daily, *The Express Tribune*, that the Free Trade Agreement with China had not been favourable to Pakistan. "It is imperative for the government of Pakistan to keep in mind all these factors while negotiating the second phase of the FTA with China," he said. Iqbal is of the view that in talks with China some leverage should be provided for Pakistan's products to enable the local industry to compete in the race. (*CPEC project: Nascent industries afraid of big Chinese firms: Peer Muhammad: The Express Tribune; Nov 20, 2016*).

MYANMAR: TOO MUCH CHINESE MUSCLING

In Myanmar, China's BRI faces a different set of problems. The Myanmar government is under pressure from the international community for its poor handling of the Rohingya crisis. What particularly hurts Naypyitaw is repeated attacks from the United Nations on the issue. Yanghee Lee, the U.N. independent expert on human rights in Myanmar, said in late June that the Myanmar army may be committing gross human rights violations under cover of a mobile phone blackout in Rakhine and Chin states: "The conflict with the Arakan Army (a violent outfit set up by the Rohingyas with help from Saudi Arabian money and Pakistani training) in northern Rakhine State and parts of southern Chin State has continued over the past few months, and the impact on the civilians is devastating. Many acts of the Tatmadaw (army) and the Arakan Army violate international humanitarian law and may amount to war crimes, as well as violating human rights." (*U.N. investigator reports possible fresh war crimes in Myanmar: The Daily Star of Bangladesh; July 03, 2019*).

Perhaps because of this virtual isolation and China's decision not to join the voices pushing Myanmar to attend to the Rohingya crisis, Naypyitaw has become more dependent on Beijing for its economic well-being. But, that too has run into problems. In 2015, Myanmar chose a Chinese consortium led by the state-run CITIC Group to develop a

\$10 billion port, Kyaukphyu, on the Bay of Bengal and an industrial park that could turn out to be the country's largest foreign investment. With Beijing pledging to create 100,000 jobs and transform a poor region, the Kyaukphyu port plan potentially represented a huge win for Myanmar, it was argued.

At the time, it was estimated that the deep-sea port component itself would run up a bill of \$7.3 billion. CITIC settled for a 70 per cent stake in the port, leaving a \$2.2 billion contribution from Myanmar for its 30 per cent share. Assuming that Myanmar and China are pursuing a 50/50 joint venture in the \$2.7 billion industrial park at the site, the total amount of investment Myanmar needs for its stakes in the port and the park would be around \$3.5 billion, or 5 per cent of Myanmar's GDP. (*China's latest megaproject courts controversy in Myanmar: Yun Sen: Nikkei Asian Review; Nov 16, 2017*).

However, critics challenged the deal within Myanmar, citing the debt burden that China would impose on the population and voicing reluctance to be over-dependent on China. As a result, the deal was reworked, and the initial \$7.3 billion was revised in July 2018. The revised cost would be "around \$1.3 billion, something that's much more plausible for Myanmar's use," said Sean Turnell, economic adviser to Myanmar's civilian leader, Aung San Suu Kyi. The original plan was to develop about 10 berths at the 25-meter, deep-sea port to accommodate bigger oil tankers, but the size will now be revised to only two berths, Myanmar's Deputy Finance Minister Set Aung said in an interview. (*Myanmar scales back Chinese-backed port project over debt fears: Reuters; Aug 2, 2018*).

It is likely that even the revised deal had to be muscled in by Beijing. It succeeded because Myanmar is facing criticism from the United Nations, Western nations and many Muslim-majority nations for its treatment of the Rohingyas and has remained heavily dependent on China for shoring up its diplomatic efforts to withstand the pressure.

It should be noted, however, that even the strong muscle of China was not successful in the case of the Myitsone Dam near the Myanmar-

China border. Construction of Myitsone Dam, the first dam to cross the Irrawaddy River, began in 2009, and the finished crossing was scheduled to open in 2017. Facing huge protests from the local population, it was abandoned in 2011 after the Chinese had spent about \$1 billion. The dam was to be built by the Upstream Ayeyawady Confluence Basin Hydropower Company, a joint venture between the China Power Investment Corporation, the Myanmar Government's Ministry of Electric Power and Asia World Company. The dam was planned to have a generating capacity of 6,000 megawatts and to produce electricity primarily for export to Yunnan, China. Though it has not been completed, the last word on Myitsone has not yet been said. China is still pressuring Myanmar to revisit the contract.

ELSEWHERE IN SOUTH ASIA

China has met serious resistance in Myanmar, but because of the strong cards it holds in light of Naypyitaw's inability, or unwillingness, to counter the hardline anti-Muslim Buddhists, has given Beijing a leg up in pushing through the BRI, even the curbed version. In other South Asian countries such as Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Maldives and Nepal, China does not hold as many cards.

For instance, in the Maldives, Beijing made large investments in infrastructure projects during former President Abdulla Yameen's tenure in office. Projects included an \$830 million upgrade of the Maldives airport and a 2-km bridge to link the airport island with Male, according to the Centre for Global Development. China is also building a 25-storey apartment complex and hospital in the Maldives. While these developments do not indicate BRI activity, the arrival of three Chinese naval ships in Male in August 2017 cast a different light on the purpose of those investments.

Subsequently, following Yameen's defeat in the presidential election and the emergence of opposition leader Ibrahim Mohamed Solih as the new President, rumblings were heard from this nation of less than a half-million people about accruing an estimated \$1.3 billion in debt to China, more than a quarter of its GDP, mostly for large-scale

infrastructure projects, according to Reuters. In the run-up to the elections, an opposition Maldivian Democratic Party spokesperson called the Beijing-funded projects “debt traps” and signs of corruption under Yameen. Notwithstanding this turnabout by Maldivian authorities, no anti-China activity in the Maldives has been noted yet.

A similar situation exists in Sri Lanka as well. In the mid-2000s, Colombo signed with Beijing to build a new port from scratch in the town of Hambantota, in the south of the island. “Chinese funds and engineers are mobilized to build infrastructure outside China, as part of a partnership that was meant to be win-win: this is the very definition of the rationale of the Silk Road,” said Jean-François Dufour, economist and director of DCA China-Analysis. The Chinese President integrated the Sri Lankan project into the BRI in 2013. *(In Sri Lanka, the new Chinese Silk Road is a disappointment: France 24; March 24, 2019).*

However, the project turned out to be a dud. In 2015, when it was realized that the future of Hambantota Port is bleak and Sri Lanka was staggering under debt, and was unable to repay the more than \$8 billion in loans it had taken from China for several infrastructure projects in the country, it agreed to turn over the port to Beijing for 99 years in exchange for cancellation of its debt.

The first phase of another project, the construction of Colombo Port City, a \$1 billion megaproject funded by China, was completed earlier this year with the reclamation of 269 hectares of land from the ocean. Two-thirds of the new 269-hectare reclamation project, which is envisaged as the site of a new financial district and has worried environmentalists, also goes to China on the 99-year lease.

In Bangladesh and Nepal, where Chinese investments are growing steadily, BRI is the focus. China has emerged over the years as Bangladesh’s largest trading partner. In fiscal 2017-2018, bilateral trade between the two was \$12.401 billion. During the fiscal year, Bangladesh imported \$11,706 million while exporting about \$694.97 million of goods to China. Chinese investments totalled \$1.03 billion in 2018, the bulk of it—\$834 million—coming in the power sector.

Both countries have identified electrical and electronics, agriculture, tourism, flower, medicine, connectivity and maritime as some of the potential sectors for joint ventures.

However, the presence of the Chinese has not been as well-received in Bangladesh as it was in Sri Lanka. Recently, hundreds of Chinese and Bangladeshi labourers clashed at the site of Payra power plant being built south of Dhaka, leaving one Chinese worker dead and more than a dozen others injured. Following the incident, Bangladeshi officials pointed out to the media that similar clashes occurred a year ago.

In May 2017 in Kathmandu, according to the Chinese state-run agency Xinhua, Nepal and China signed a memorandum of understanding on bilateral cooperation under the framework of China's BRI. Nepal received foreign direct investment pledges from China to the tune of \$57 million in 2015-2016, \$76 million in fiscal 2016-2017, and \$427 million in fiscal 2017-2018.

Further, in May 2019 these two countries also signed a protocol to allow Nepal access to seaports at Tianjin, Shenzhen, Lianyungang and Zhanjiang and road and rail facilities at Lanzhou, Lhasa and Shigatse for third-country import, according to Nepal's *Kathmandu Post*. Long Xingchun, director of the Centre of India Studies at China West Normal University, said the protocol was "largely symbolic since most of Nepal's external trade will still rely on passing through India, but it does help Nepal's bargaining power when dealing with India."

Nepal, a nation of nearly 30 million people, is the focus of rivalry between the two Asian powers, with a surge of Chinese investment and infrastructure development reshaping a region long considered to be India's backyard. India is Nepal's biggest trading partner, accounting for about two-thirds of Nepal's exports and most of its consumer goods imports.

“China knows that it cannot replace India’s role in Nepal,” Long said. “China also does not demand Nepal side with it, which is different from India’s attitude which actually pushes Nepal even further away. For China, it’s fine as long as Nepal remains neutral.” (*China and Nepal sign off on ports deal to ease Kathmandu’s dependence on India for trade: Catherine Wong: SCMP; May 2, 2019*).

CONCLUSION

The resentment against Chinese workers who have been employed by Chinese construction companies and other enterprises engaged in BRI work stems from several factors. In South Asia, incidents exhibiting resentment have occurred in both Pakistan and Bangladesh.

With easy access to a large market and relatively cheap labour, more Chinese companies are heading to wherever BRI has created an opening for them to function. Suddenly Chinese workers, many of whom are skilled and are experienced with the technology they are handling, have appeared. It is not surprising that the locals do not like the presence of these foreign workers, whom they consider not only intruding on their land but also taking away jobs that they might be expected to perform.

What causes further anguish among the locals is that China is a huge country compared to theirs, and an economic powerhouse. That provides China with an unequal advantage and allows it to disregard their concerns. Even normal interaction between the two could get testy because of this perception.

Besides, particularly in Pakistan, as Pakistan’s debt to China increases, anger has developed among some, particularly the small and medium-sized business community, because of the preferential treatment Chinese companies have been enjoying, thanks to the Pakistani authorities. They fear that things will go further downhill, endangering their means of

livelihood. Such perceptions, bordering on suspicion, often drive people to challenge other positive aspects of the project.

As a June 2018 report from the International Crisis Group on the CPEC in Pakistan put it: “The project risks inflaming longstanding tensions between the centre and smaller federal units and within provinces over inequitable economic development and resource distribution. Less-developed federal units such as Balochistan and Sindh contend that the corridor’s route, infrastructure and industrial projects will mostly benefit Punjab, already the country’s wealthiest and politically powerful province. Yet, even in Punjab, locals could forcibly resist the state’s acquisition of land for CPEC’s agricultural projects.”

In Pakistan, China needs to watch over its shoulder carefully to make the CPEC a smooth operation. Disgruntlement among the locals about what they may construe as “Chinese intrusion” in the country since the large power projects or transport projects do not directly help the poorer Pakistanis as they help those with means, could result in a public expression of anger. In a country where the Islamist Jihadis are looking for opportunities to assert themselves, such disgruntlement could lead to serious disruptions.

Even though in Bangladesh or Nepal the Islamist Jihadi factor does not exist as a threat to the Chinese projects, many of the resentments expressed by the Pakistanis can be expected to show up. One of the added problems in South Asian countries, barring Pakistan, is the fact that pre-Deng Xiaoping, China during the halcyon days of Mao had actively funded, armed and supported Maoist communist groups trying to find their feet. Although the main beneficiaries of Chinese bounty in those days were the anti-India secessionist groups in India’s northeast, Chinese support did show up in Nepal, Bangladesh and other South Asian countries as well.

Despite its turnaround from the earlier policy of exporting communism to create regime change in South Asia and elsewhere, China's recent behaviour has not earned the trust that is critical to making the Belt and Road Initiative a success in South Asia. China's money power may achieve some success, but without trust that may not be enough.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ramtanu Maitra contributes to *Executive Intelligence Review (EIR)*, a weekly magazine published from Washington, DC, and *21st Century Science and Technology*, a Washington DC-based news quarterly, regularly. He contributes to *Asia Times Online* and *Nueu Solidaritat*, a German weekly published from Wiesbaden.

FORMULATING A COHERENT NATIONAL SECURITY DOCTRINE FOR INDIA**BY****ASHOK KAPUR**

India is located in a region with multiple military, diplomatic and cultural conflicts and challenges and yet, after more than 70 years of its independence, it does not have a coherent, publicly credible national security doctrine. Thus far India has landed on its feet in various military wars and crises with Pakistan and China but the decision-making has been reactive to external pressures, it has been ad hoc and the result of decisions by a small circle of officials around the Prime Minister. Although the Indian government's organisation charts show an extensive network of committees, the decisions are highly personalised, often not institutionalised and the basis of these decisions made, the options considered and the options declined, are not open to public scrutiny because they are protected by the Official Secrets Act. Most countries protect state secrets for 30 years and then open their archives to scrutiny by researchers to determine the basis of decisions made and their policy implications and lessons for the future. Indian government documents are kept secret indefinitely for fear of disturbing 'friendly relations with states' – which consists of the whole world. The real reason may be that government officials fear that exposure to public scrutiny may be embarrassing to them and the Official Secrets Act is used to provide them cover for their errors. A democracy requires an educated public opinion to weigh in on official policies; this is imperative to ensure that the best possible decisions are being made in defining the national security aims and to develop the means to achieve them.

INTRODUCTION

In the Himalayan region, India faces pressures from China because of its expansionist and revisionist policies as they relate to Indian territorial and diplomatic interests. A key aim of national security is to ensure the country's territorial integrity but this requires a thorough assessment of the character of the threat facing India. Nehru's government failed to comprehend the nature of China's revisionist position vis-à-vis India even though Mao himself laid out his policy to liberate Tibet, Bhutan, Sikkim, Nepal, and parts of India in a declaration he made in 1950. Mao's military writings explained in detail his view of the importance of propaganda, surprise attacks, the use of strategic flanks to encircle the enemy and to use feints. Did Nehru and his minions study Mao's view on strategy and Zhou en-Lai's views on the role of diplomacy in China? It seems that Nehru and his Ministry of External Affairs did not do so and wrongly believed that even if China could attack India – as became possible with its military build-up in the Tibetan region it would not do so because China valued Indian friendship. India's China policy was based on this false premise in the period 1950-62. This is an example of the existence of a decision-making apparatus based on the instincts of a Prime Minister and a small, closed circle of yes-men. However, we still do not have access to official archives to assess the basis of Nehru's decision-making relating to Kashmir, Tibet and China policy-making during the 1950s.

Fortunately, Indians woke up from the Nehru induced stupor about national security and also began to sense that the development of a modernization agenda was meant to promote the welfare of the people and to develop Indian power as in the case of USA, Japan, Israel and other such countries. It took years for the Indian government and the Indian public following Nehru's death to realise the dual meaning of modernization: it was not simply an economic activity; its purpose was to build the economy and India's military strength. In this context, it was appropriate for the Government to terminate the Planning Commission that had become a parking lot for Nehruvian economists. This group came to power to promote socialism in India rather than

national defence. Their agenda was ideological and it was Nehru and Congress Party-specific.

My paper tries to specify the geo-strategic threats that India faces and to propose the qualities of a national security policy with a doctrinal component to guide Indian deliberations of issues and options. It is not my place to tell the Government what to do but it is within my mandate as an outside observer to define the nature of the strategic challenges facing India, to highlight the Indian Government's cultural and political environment in which decisions have been made in the past and thirdly, to identify the character of internal security challenges India faces in the 21st century. Thus far India has been lucky in landing on her feet in various crisis but these outcomes were the result of several elements: 1. The threats were imminent and in the post-Nehru environment, the political and military machinery was geared to deal with them, albeit in a haphazard way up to 1965; 2. With each military crisis between 1965 and 2018, Indians developed a learning curve to improve on the previous campaign. But there are major structural defects in the national security planning machinery that should be fixed. The Kargil Review Committee Report (2000) identified major issues concerning the proliferation of intelligence agencies and their lack of coordination and the provision of actionable intelligence on a timely basis. This criticism was on top of the faulty intelligence inputs by the Intelligence Bureau on the China question and the border crisis. Have these issues been fixed? The paper presumes that barring the policy elites in Delhi, Indians across the country do not have a consciousness of the importance of national security and its requirements. My approach is to divide the questions in terms of sub-regional hubs of strategic challenges that face India in the future. The first order sub-regional hubs relate to India's northern frontiers, the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean littoral islands that command the sea-lanes. The second-order circle of states refers to the countries in SE Asia, Australasia, Japan, Taiwan, and the South China Sea arena. A distinction is made between issues, which are in Indian control or may be controlled by India, and on the other hand, there are issues that are not controllable by India alone but require the cooperation of like-minded foreign countries. And then there is consideration of

the need to develop an Indian consciousness about the importance of national security and to strengthen the state governments' machinery to function as a part of an effective national team. This is a daunting task because some state governments are led by politicians who are more interested in winning elections and less so in national security management even though their states are in the crosshairs of national security issues such as illegal migration, terrorist activity and growing insurgency. This paper addresses these questions.

OVERVIEW OF ARGUMENT

In formulating a single comprehensive national security doctrine, which provides theoretical guidance to leaders and officials in different Indian government ministries and state administrations, and as well provides the basis for an ongoing national debate in terms that the Indian people understand and appreciate, it is necessary to base this exercise on a few fundamental postulates. It is widely agreed by the specialists and officials that the two fundamental aims of a national security policy are to defend territorial security and sovereignty of a country and to satisfy the country's international interests. Some argue that satisfaction of India's rightful place in the world system is a necessary part of a security doctrine. This idea comes from a study commissioned by the Indian Congress Party titled 'Indian National Security Strategy' (March 19, 2019) authored by Lt. General D. S. Hooda (retd), who raised the issue of promoting India's rise to its rightful place in the world. This is problematic as the definition of what is rightful is subjective. In international affairs a seat at the high table of the Security Council is not a right; it has to be taken by successful action such as winning a war or securing a diplomatic concession from other Powers. Another way is to use compensation (aid, bribes to leaders or economic or territorial tradeoffs) to secure support for a seat at the table. Absence of such actions to induce or force change, claims of a seat in the Security Council as a right based on a country's rightful place is a mere assertion, it is not a realistic argument that other Powers will willingly act upon. Twice India was offered a permanent seat on the UN Security Council during the 1950s because it was seen then as an alternative in Asia to communist

China but Nehru, a moraliser, declined it in favour of China and now India is clamouring for a permanent seat in the Security Council as its rightful place in world affairs! And China, India's main strategic rival, objects. To recap: in world history and politics, the power to satisfy one's national and international interests is taken, and not freely given by others, especially by rivals. I cannot imagine a single country in the world today which has developed itself as a model of peaceful development, as a status quo oriented Power which has gained a place at the high table without a fight and without a willingness to take major risks and make commitments on behalf of other members of the world community.

A national security doctrine has, as the first cut of policy-making, to establish its choice between three alternative models of international governance. The first is to seek hegemony, the second is to seek a balance of power through the use of tools of geopolitics, and the third is to rely on appeasement of a stronger power or to do nothing. Nehru and his cohorts tried the third route and failed by 1962. President Xi Jinping's writings make clear China's desire for hegemony in the Indo-Pacific sphere, and in making this claim he is challenging the vital interests of many of his neighbours. The second approach requires a build-up of the country's economic and military strength and an effective demonstration of the will to resist and defeat encroachments on territorial sovereignty by coercive means if diplomacy fails to deter the enemy. By aligning with the US-Japan-Vietnam-Australia and other like-minded countries in Asia, Europe and the Gulf region, the Modi government has openly opted for the geopolitical/balance of power approach. My point is that it is through geopolitics and the adoption of the balance of power approach that hegemony of China will be resisted, and by taking this approach India gains its strategic autonomy and manoeuvrability in the IPR sphere. The Nehruvian approach of seeking international influence via nonalignment and the sloganeering by the Ministry of External Affairs about 'strategic autonomy' was merely rhetoric and not an effective argument, which convinced her rivals about India's inability to commit itself to a forceful line of action and to take risks related to ground realities. In sum, for advocates of Modi 2.0, a clear exposition of the value of geopolitics

and balance of power approach is the bedrock of a national security doctrine for India in the 21st century. This is based on the premise that India, like many other Powers including the US, cannot pursue its interests unaided. It needs allies with similar strategic interests even if values concerning democracy and human rights may not be commonly shared. Such explicit guidance from the highest level of Indian political authority is required to guide India's diplomatic, intelligence and military services, to guide public conversations about national security, and to build a large cadre of issue and country-specific experts in the academic community and the think tanks. India's media and the NGO community cannot be expected to gain much from such guidance because many such outlets have foreign ownership and their work is guided by foreign agendas. This comment is not meant to reject the potential usefulness of the media and the NGOs to develop the civil society aspect of Indian society and politics, provided their ownership and agendas are subject to full disclosure.

The second cut in the development of a national security doctrine is to define the tools available in the Government's playbook to defend territorial sovereignty and her international interests. If it is adopted, a balance of power policy must establish a combination in the use of the following: the possession and further development of coercive means for self-defence and deterrence; the use of coercion should be proportional to the damage done. The presence of a highly trained and a larger diplomatic service and a specialised intelligence service is necessary to understand the challenges in the external environment and provide opportunities to exploit the rivals' policy-making structure and its internal pressure points. These services can identify foes, friends and neutrals to see if the foe's rivalry can be muted or diverted or defeated if neutrals can be converted into allies and if friends can be mobilised for the defence of Indian interests. Finally, to maintain international and national legitimacy, the development and application of a structure of laws, both domestic and international, is necessary to ensure lawful conduct and legitimacy.

The third cut requires a clear definition of the threats that the nation faces and these should be framed in the context of the permanently

operating factors, which condition India's national security policy and doctrine. These factors relate to the history, geography, and political values/cultural base which a national strategy is required to defend and promote. A security doctrine that has long-term value is founded on the acknowledgement that weapons of war are a basis of statecraft in a hostile external environment. Possessing weapons of war does not imply necessarily that the country is militaristic or expansionist. India's political system and society is neither and barring the takeover of Goa and Sikkim (the former by force, the latter by consent of the Sikkimese population) and the dispute over J&K, the Government of India does not have a history of territorial aggrandizement. India did not stay in Bangladesh as an occupying force, nor did it occupy Pakistan's territory following the wars and local clashes.

**THE PERMANENTLY OPERATING FACTORS:
HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY, STRATEGY AND DIPLOMACY**

These factors are permanent but their role concerning India has elements that are constant and/or variable.

1. India's geographical environment has both features. Its northern frontier favours Chinese military movement and reinforcement in the Tibetan plateau compared to Indian movement from the plains to the mountainous areas. Without a well-developed road infrastructure near the China-India border and between the plains and the frontier areas near Tibet, Myanmar and China, the porous borders make it hard to police and prevent illegal migration and infiltration of enemy agents into the frontier areas of India. China has changed the region's strategic infrastructure in the Xinjiang-Kashmir-Gilgit area with the completion of the Karakoram highway in the mid-1980s. This gives China a strategic pathway to Karachi and the Arabian Sea through Pakistan. Other examples show how China's rivalry with India and its dream to be South Asia's hegemon replacing India's political and moral authority, is being developed in Nepal and in the Indian Ocean littoral states. Chinese road and rail building into Nepal and its political activity there has effectively converted Nepal into a buffer state between China and India. China has been on the hunt to develop a strategic gateway

between Yunnan and Myanmar to promote Yunnan's development and to establish a strategic pathway to the Bay of Bengal. In 2019, China obtained permission to establish a seaport off the Myanmar coast. This will be in proximity of India's naval facilities in the Andaman and Nicobar islands and place China and India in contention for the future of the Bay of Bengal and its surrounding areas. These ventures indicate that China is determined to alter to its advantage the strategic architecture between its southern frontiers and South Asia from the north to the south and thus it will be in a position to challenge India either directly across the Sino-Indian Line of Actual Control or through two strategic flanks – Pakistan and Myanmar.

Here China is using its geographical proximity to these areas to alter the strategic/physical architecture to India's disadvantage and thus it is raising the costs of Indian defence build-up to compete with Chinese actions.

2. Is history a variable in our case study? Here India's diplomatic history since 1947 enters our narrative.

There is no official history of the Ministry of External Affairs as there are histories of various wars with Pakistan and China that have been prepared under the auspices of the Ministry of Defence. No doubt the MEA publishes regularly its annual reports of activities. These indicate the actions it takes and its priorities may be inferred from the commentaries in its annual reviews. However, these reports do not provide a coherent appraisal of the framework and priorities of foreign policy aims and options, the relationship between Indian diplomacy and Indian strategic policies, and the role of diplomacy in that framework.

India's diplomatic record on war and peace questions was spotty during the Nehru era. The recognition of the intimate connection between Indian diplomacy and Indian military strategy is a post-Nehru development and it has occurred incrementally. The game changers were post-Nehru and they reflected the thinking and political will of Prime Ministers and the military establishment, more so than MEA initiatives. Still one must appreciate that the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officials are

well trained as technicians who can craft official communiqués, attend international meetings, execute the wishes of the Prime Minister and land on their feet in regional crises; but their strength lies in an ability to function well when Indian relationships with the outside world are in a sub-critical state. We should be mindful that the IFS official is more likely than not to parrot the official line laid down by the PMO, rather than question their underlying assumptions and evidence. The training is to follow orders, respect seniority and not get too far ahead of the IFS herd because the next posting and the education of children often compete with the desire for policy innovation.

A striking illustration of these points is evident in Indian diplomacy during the Nehru years. Nehru ignored Deputy Prime Minister V. P. Patel's long note written in the early 1950s warning about Chinese machinations against India. Nehru also ignored the advice of Sir Girja Shankar Bajpai about the need to consider a balance of power strategy. This was also in the early 1950s. This is history, and as social scientists point out politics and strategy without history has no roots, and history without strategy bears no fruit. Nehru ignored the Patel/Bajpai interventions at great costs to Indian border security, India's China policy and India's international prestige. Sadly MEA (and the Army HQ and the MOD) were sideshows in policy-making because Nehru was PM, Foreign Minister and India's negotiator with Zhou en-Lai, who played Nehru. Nehru had surrendered his leverage on the Tibet question by his policy of 'talks' but no 'negotiations' about the border question. Without a military option to fight back and without a diplomatic option to make a compromise with China, Nehru had no cards to play; his belief that China would not attack India because it valued Indian friendship had no basis in the history of Chinese imperialist habits and in Mao's public statements about his intention to liberate the Himalayan region and parts of India. Perhaps the MEA's Historical Division and the research department, if one exists, could enlighten the Indian public about their assessments of Chinese intentions and capabilities during the 1950s and the lessons learnt from that experience.

Fortunately for India, Nehru's successors learnt to connect the dots

between national security decision-making and diplomacy and not treat them as two separate silos or eco-chambers. The first game-changer, albeit a mini one, concerns the strategy of the little-understood L. B. Shastri in 1965. Nehru and Mountbatten - a combination of Nehru's naiveté in strategic affairs and Mountbatten's speciality as a British strategist who saw service in SE Asia during the Second World War - framed India's Pakistan and Kashmir policy as follows: no general war with Pakistan, ceasefire now, and refer the issue to the UN Security Council. This approach put an end to India's military option and internationalised the issue by taking it into the field of international power politics at the UN where the big Powers played with the vital issue of Indian security. Confronted by Pakistan's military intervention in Kashmir, Shastri ordered the Indian Army to cross the international border into Pakistan to relieve the pressure on Kashmir. The effects were long term and short term. Long term it broke the Nehru-Mountbatten injunction against war with Pakistan. Short term, the approach of the Indian Army towards Lahore and Sialkot, Pakistan's heartland, terrified the population and shook the confidence of Pakistani ministries. (I visited Pakistan and know this from conversations with my Pakistani interlocutors). The war ended in a military stalemate because of Soviet and American 'spare parts diplomacy' - it meant that both sides did not have supplies of spare parts to sustain their military campaign. The result was a Moscow-arranged ceasefire. This had two long-term outcomes for India. One, a determination to ensure an adequate supply of spares in future; and two, to complete the military operation before the UN and the Great Powers were able to secure a ceasefire and an Indo-Pakistani diplomatic stalemate. These lessons were applied to the 1971-72 Bangladesh campaign.

The 1971-72 war was a game-changer. It showed that all Pakistani Muslims were not anti-Indian. It also showed that if different branches of the Indian government were mobilised – intelligence, all elements of the armed forces, and the diplomatic machinery - and Indian public opinion was mobilised then India could achieve military and diplomatic success, it could rearrange the subcontinent's geopolitics, it could cut Pakistan to size, it could defeat a hostile international coalition of Pakistan, China and USA with the help of an ally in Moscow. This

operation was a high-risk operation because the Bangladeshi guerrillas could not alone defeat the Pakistan Army, and a prolonged insurgency on India's eastern front posed the danger of a rise of a Vietnam-type situation which China could exploit and which could threaten the security of India's northeast. The heroes of this campaign were the faceless intelligence officers, the Indian Army personnel under Sam Manekshaw's direction with a well thought out military campaign, and the political decision-making by the PM and her close advisers, the diplomatic and public relations activity of the MEA and Ambassador L. K. Jha's masterly manoeuvres to erode Henry Kissinger's moral authority and political strategy in Washington and the UN. And of course, it helped that Yahya Khan was inept at his job as a President and military commander. China's conduct revealed that it was shy of opening a military front against India. It was leery of undertaking a high-risk operation in part because the Cultural Revolution was in full swing, China is usually concerned about losing face in case of failure, and it prefers to intervene if the strategic stakes are high (as in the Korean war) or if intervention is a low-risk option.

But in one respect India failed. It is a principle of statecraft that the victor gets to dictate the peace terms. India secured a humiliating surrender of the Pakistani military in a ceremony in Dhaka but India failed to link the return of the Pakistani POWs to the conversion of the LOC into an international border. The Shimla Agreement was signed but as the history of conflict between India and Pakistan after 1972 shows, the Indian victory did not settle the Kashmir controversy. On the other hand, it fostered among the Pakistani government a desire to avenge the 1972 defeat and to continue warfare by other means.

The Shimla agreement codified bilateralism as the basis of Indo-Pakistani negotiations to settle the Kashmir issue in the future. But what did this provision mean in practice? Pakistan had a strong incentive to avenge its defeat not by direct war but under Generals Zia-ul-Haq and Aslam Beg by a policy of a thousand cuts through terrorist activity in Kashmir and other parts of India. These activities were not simply confined to the 'disputed' territory but were also extended to Mumbai, Delhi and elsewhere. And China had Pakistan's back after 1972 by its

provision of military and economic aid and later by aiding its nuclear and missile program to balance India's nuclearisation. The 1971-72 military victory by India did not end China's policy and right as a great power to increase the costs of Indian defence by the nuclear asymmetry between China and India. China remained committed to its traditional policy to maintain an Indo-Pakistani military and diplomatic balance. And China had the diplomatic option to act on Pakistan's behalf in the Security Council on anti-terrorism issues and to keep India from taking a permanent seat in the Council. In short, Pakistan's and China's defeat in the 1972 campaign reinforced the Pakistan-China alliance at the diplomatic and military level, along with the establishment of a line of military communication between China and Pakistan through the Karakoram highway.

On the other hand, the advice to Nehru by Patel and Girja Shankar Bajpai was validated by the events and by a major shift in India's strategic orientation. Patel's warning was moot after the 1962 war. The Bajpai advice to adopt a balance of power approach and implicitly shed non-alignment came to pass in the decisions taken by Nehru's successors. Narasimha Rao opened the window to Israel and a Look East orientation. Indira Gandhi showed the utility of coercive diplomacy to stabilise India's eastern front and inflict a psychological blow to Pakistan's belief that they were destined to rule the subcontinent again, like the Mughal emperors, and that one Muslim was equal to ten Hindus - a Bhutto boast. In 1998, P. M. Vajpayee converted the nuclear option into an open declaration that India was a nuclear weapon power, and with the progress made in its space and missile programs under V. Sarabhai, Professor Yashpal, Dr Abdul Kalam and the Atomic Energy Commission scientists, the asymmetry between Indian and Chinese nuclear and missile capabilities was reduced and China could not raise the costs of Indian defence or threaten India by nuclear means without considering the Indian reaction. India was now in a position to conduct its nuclear diplomacy with China and Pakistan because it left something to chance in a nuclear confrontation as in the Cuban Missile Crisis. And Modi 1.0 (2014) gave balance of power diplomacy a good name by aligning India was the non-Chinese major Powers in Asia – US, Japan, Australia and the SE Asian powers

who shared a common interest viz. to keep the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean sea routes open for international commerce, and to promote peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific world between the Pacific and Indian Ocean region extending to Africa. Judging by the sequence of Indian actions post-Nehru, India's new strategic orientation appeared to rely on a pattern of armed co-existence in the Himalayan and the IPR; and to achieve this goal India had moved from its position in the 1950s and 1960s as a status quo country to a status quo power which was working in opposition to two revisionist countries – Pakistan and China.

What are the permanently operating factors in this setting? And are there new challenges on the horizon that should cause Indian strategic planners to review the interface between internal and external security? And how are the different modes of international discourse – the language of military war, that of diplomacy and negotiations and peaceful cooperative engagement through commerce and cultural links, the language of intervention (short of war), economic aid and economic warfare (the language of sanctions), the language of the Jihadi, the language of psychological or civilizational warfare - to be studied in the formation of a realistic national security doctrine in the 21st century?

**FRAMING THE NATIONAL DEBATE
TO ESTABLISH A STRATEGIC DOCTRINE**

One must begin with the view that India functions in a dangerous strategic neighbourhood, its size is expanding and the issues are becoming complicated and these require a well-trained and motivated intelligence, military, diplomatic and commercial establishment to engage the strategic neighbourhood. In framing and executing the national security doctrine such a core group should not get distracted by non-essential issues and platitudes such as the importance of world peace and prosperity, social justice, climate change, and elimination of poverty. These are important issues in a political party's platform but they are not essential to the core mission of developing an integrated national security doctrine. My view is that a Doctrine must focus on the question of war and other means of coercive activity to protect the

territorial sovereignty on the country, to maintain and to sharpen the distribution of power in the IPR (and indeed the world) and to shape a pattern of relationships with other Powers that are advantageous to Indian interests. Currently India is one of five major Powers – along with the US, China, Russia and Japan, and presumably, its Government and its people would expect to retain a top tier position. I will outline the challenges that India faces in the 21st century in the following section. Modi 2.0 government has proclaimed a ‘Neighbourhood First’ policy but this aim while it is valid needs to be fine-tuned into two parts. The first one is to suggest an ‘India first’ policy that takes into account the challenges India faces as a result of the growing interface between domestic and external threats that undermine the Indian Union. On this foundation i.e. with a strong Indian Union it is possible to build a ‘neighbourhood first’ policy that references the Indian Ocean littoral areas and the Himalayan kingdoms that are threatened by China’s and Pakistan’s activities in the subcontinent.

Before specifying the issues and challenges in India’s strategic neighbourhood, one must debate and finalise one preliminary question. What does India want as its preferred model of international relations in Asia? Does it seek China’s hegemony as a benign patron, ‘do as I say and I will be generous to you in terms of aid and protection’ where China-Pakistan relations is the model of ‘Asian cooperation’ and strategic conduct between a Big Power and subordinate one? India’s communists probably do not have a problem with this model but are the Indian political class and public opinion willing to accept this? The second approach is to stabilise the balance of power in Asia – currently under US leadership - to maintain the distribution of power within IPR and the world. This implies that the non-Chinese world does not accept China’s predatory and unilateralist actions in the Himalayas, the South China Sea, its use of intellectual property theft and cyber theft to gain industrial and commercial advantage – with Huawei as the case in point - with the declared aim to overtake the US economy in the coming decade and to rise as a global hegemon. If India opts for a clear enunciation of its role in a balance of power approach in the IPR, this approach requires a continuous Indian alignment in strategic relations with the USA, Japan, Australia, Vietnam and the

Southeast Asian nations. However, it does not imply an endorsement of Trump's America-First policy. It simply means that India will work with all like-minded countries that oppose hegemonism. Presently (2019) the balance of power in Asia is unstable, as Mao would say there is turmoil under heaven and it is unclear if equilibrium will follow turmoil or whether disequilibrium is the normal condition of international relations, again according to Mao? If so, India's elites will need to pay constant attention to external developments. 'Paying attention' means establishing and nourishing connectivity with like-minded nations and with foes as well, in the context of a belief in a stable balance of power in Asia. The third model is labelled 'strategic autonomy' which took shape as a follow-up to the belief in non-alignment. This approach rests on the belief that India could be a swing factor in tilting towards either the US, or China or Russia as the situation demanded. So if Trump becomes overbearing, say with India on a bilateral trade issue, or sanctions India for buying oil from Iran or buying military equipment from Russia, India could tilt towards China as in Wuhan. And if Trump becomes difficult on arms supply questions, India could tilt towards Russia and buy their S-400 system. This approach works if Indians believe that they have a China card and a Russia card to use against the US, and a US card to use against China. This approach requires considerable diplomatic and political nimbleness. Nehru's nonalignment policy was justified in dealing with international issues 'on their merit' – as defined by Nehru. It worked in the crises in Korea and Suez in the early 1950s when the Superpowers needed an intermediary. But once the Great Powers developed some trust in each other and talked directly, Nehru's India lost its usefulness. What are the circumstances and the limits in which India can function as a swing factor in international relations?

These alternative models of shaping India's strategic and diplomatic, as well as economic and cultural/soft power orientation will need to be evaluated in the following but still evolving setting.

In a thoughtful article Lt. Gen. (retd) Philip Campose, titled 'India's

National Security: Imperatives of Integrated Defence Policy', CLAWS Journal, Winter 2016 makes two compelling points. First, India requires a security framework for rapid decision-making in an unfolding crisis. This requires 24/7-oriented defence planning and preparation for action by the political leadership. Second, 'contingency driven ad hocism' as in the case of most previous crises 'derived from the individual inclinations of the leadership and the bureaucracy of the day' is not a sound basis to conduct national security policy by a major power like India.

The appearance of ad hocism and reactivity gives the malign actor(s) the benefit of military initiative and surprise and it misses an important element of policy viz., to be ready for war should it be unavoidable to protect legitimate interests. A 'peace only or at any cost' policy ought not to find a spot in a national security doctrine. For Pakistanis and Chinese planners, a peace policy declaration by India is a sign of a feeble Hindu mind. Remember Z. A. Bhutto's boast that one Muslim was equal to ten Hindus! After their defeat in 1972, Pakistan's Foreign Secretary was reminding Henry Kissinger about Pakistan's glorious Muslim rule over the Hindus. And in conversations with Mao and Zhou, Kissinger shared derogatory views about Gandhian and Nehruvian pacifism. A national security doctrine should be aimed at the enemy's mind to ensure that there is no misunderstanding as to the likely reaction if the enemy crosses a red line. In other words, at issue is the ability to deter and fight effectively but also to establish a strategy for psychological warfare aimed at the enemy's psychology. Implicit in the above is that one cannot depend on the world community to defend Indian interests.

The challenges India faces with Pakistan and China are well known and they will persist in the foreseeable future. Pakistani aims: keep Kashmir issue alive, encourage discontent among Kashmiris against Indian rule, and foster jihad. As the US pulls out of Afghanistan the unemployed jihadis will find work in the Kashmir area. ISIS recently inspired the attack on Sri Lanka's churches, and the growing spread of Wahabbism and ISIS-al Qaeda influence in the subcontinent seems inevitable. The national security issue for India in the 21st century is

the prospect of the spread of externally inspired jihadi orientation in the Indian north and the south and growing links between Middle Eastern, Indian and Sri Lankan Muslims. Further, the relations between Buddhists and Muslims in Sri Lanka are leading to violence and this trend is likely to continue. Myanmar has recently experienced growing militancy between the Myanmar Army and the Arakan Army and it is not inevitable that the Myanmar Army will be able to contain the Arakan militants. A Muslim-Buddhist rift in Myanmar is also brewing and this has implications for Indian socio-economic-military security in the Northeast, should the unrest spread and unsettle the Rohingyas. In short, jihadi influence is spreading in India, and this is compounded by the prospect of racial-religious violence in Sri Lanka and Myanmar and its fallout in India itself. This places a heavy burden on India's intelligence services to monitor the growth of such movements that affect the social stability of the affected areas.

Apart from supporting Pakistan by different means to maintain pressure on India and to keep the border issues alive, China's main aim is to deny India a leadership position in Asia and maintain China's primacy. The road and rail projects are meant to promote Chinese economic as well as her geopolitical interests by developing a series of donor-client, hegemon-subordinate relationships. China speaks about inclusiveness and multilateralism in international conferences but in Asia, it is working hard to keep India out of regional trade pacts and to undermine India's cultural influence. If China has its way India would not be treated as an Asian country and the Indian Ocean would be renamed the Pakistan-Bangladesh-China Ocean!

India's strategic neighbourhood has a mix of old threats and new emerging ones, and its geopolitical sphere is expanding. The following hubs merit attention in a national security doctrine.

- The Tibet-Xinjiang-Kashmir-Karakoram-economic/military corridor axis leading to Gwadar is a well-defined geopolitical line of political-military communication between China and Pakistan.

- The Tibet-Arunachal Pradesh-India's northeast is a line of communication China seeks to establish but it is not a done deal, which nevertheless requires Indian attention.
- Myanmar is rising as an economic hub with Chinese port development off the Myanmar coast in the Bay of Bengal. Japan and Thailand are also showing an interest in Myanmar as a platform for their interests. India has a naval base in the Andamans and it is promoting BIMSTEC, which requires cooperation with Thailand and Myanmar - a worthy regional enterprise that shows the growing importance of naval and economic activity in the Bay of Bengal. This is an emerging geopolitical regional hub.
- Sri Lanka and the Maldives have seen intense political and strategic competition between China and India and as India has revived its influence, the 'Neighbourhood First' policy has grown in importance.
- China has broken through Nepal by undercutting India's position and the growth of Chinese road and railway construction in Nepal and under the Himalayas creates a potential line of military, political and commercial activity in the Himalayan kingdom, which is Hindu by religion but pro-Chinese in its political orientation.
- Finally, India has strategic interests in the Gulf region. Saudi Arabia is a source of oil supply, intelligence cooperation and it recently interacted with Pakistan and India following the terrorist attack in Kashmir and the Balakot response by India. Iran has been an oil supplier and even if this link is under US sanctions, India has a major interest to develop a land route to Central Asia for trade and geopolitical reasons, and to build this sphere as a strategic backyard with Indian support to monitor the Afghan-Pakistan arena. It is prudent for India to develop its intelligence, military, trade and diplomatic footprint in Pakistan's backyard,

as well as to develop bilateral relations with the Muslim world that is not consumed by jihadi animosity and determination to liberate Kashmir and spread the jihadi way of life.

A national security doctrine that highlights these immediate and looming challenges in the strategic neighbourhood would be a good way to start a national conversation across party lines and centre-state lines. A crucial part of the endeavour will be to emphasise the importance of public education and understanding on an on-going basis. The Indian reactions to Balakot (February-March 2019) showed a poor level of discourse among Indians other than in emotional and partisan terms. Further, the Indian global diplomatic outreach had limited effectiveness. A sound national security doctrine that explains the basis of security policymaking is essential to avoid emotional and partisan political differences in India on matters of national security. The Modi election victory in 2019 was based in part on the Government's and the public's acknowledgement of the importance of national security as a major electoral issue. Thus this sentiment justifies the development of public diplomacy to legitimatise India's investments in the national security spheres.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ashok Kapur is Distinguished Professor Emeritus in Political Science, University of Waterloo, Canada.

TERRORISM AND REGIONAL COOPERATION: WHAT IS SAARC UP TO?

BY

N. MANOHARAN

South Asia has the distinction of being one of the most affected regions of terrorism and political violence; it is also one of the least integrated regions in the world. Terrorist threats have been diverse - characterised by religious fundamentalism, separatism, left-wing extremism and cross-border support. Interestingly, the countries of the region, under the umbrella of SAARC passed the 'SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism' to address the scourge of terrorism cooperatively way back in 1987. An 'Additional Protocol' to the Convention was agreed on in January 2004 to meet the obligations of the UN Security Council Resolution 1373. Other related SAARC conventions include 'Convention on Narcotic Drugs', 'Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters', 'Convention on Combatting and Prevention of Trafficking in Women and Children'. In 1995, SAARC also established a Terrorist Offences Monitoring Desk (STOMD) for collecting, analysing and disseminating information on terrorism. Despite the existence of these regional arrangements, the problem of terrorism continues unabated in the region. Ironically, some of the states of the region support terror groups directly or indirectly as a 'war by other means' to destabilise other states. As a result, the region has reached a point where even the SAARC summits are not being held regularly.

Countering terrorism requires a holistic and coordinated approach at national, regional and global levels. For a strategically significant

region like South Asia, regional-level cooperation against the terrorist menace is all the more vital. What could be done to make countries realise this underlying truth? What steps could be taken to counter terrorism through cooperation at the regional level? How could SAARC, as a regional cooperative mechanism, address the issue of terrorism other than having just conventions and protocols? What challenges does it face in this regard? The paper aims to address these and related questions.

TERRORISM AND REGIONAL COOPERATION

Terrorism is defined as “an act of violence which targeted civilians for political subversion of the state to intimidate a population, or to compel a government or an international organisation to do or abstain from doing any act”.¹ A principal characteristic of terrorism, distinguishing it from many other forms of violence, is its ability to strike directly at perceptions of personal security. Terrorism is a complex phenomenon imbued with political, social, economic and psychological factors. It is the arbitrary use of violence. The emergence of terrorism as a weapon of a proxy war between hostile nations has further added to this complexity. Terrorism, thus, is not only a threat to state security but has become a primary source of ‘human insecurity’. Terrorism threatens norms, rules and institutions largely because it dents the rule of law, human rights, democratic procedures for settling political disputes and the laws of war. In this sense, “terrorism is a threat to the global normative structure without which security would be impossible to realise.”²

In the post-Cold War era, terrorism figured at the top in the list of new threats to security. This is not only because of increased ruthlessness of attacks but mainly due to their lethality and unpredictability. Increased possibilities of weapons of mass destruction reaching terrorist groups like al Qaeda and ISIS have further heightened the threat level.³ Several terrorist groups adopting suicide tactics has further amplified the threat perception to alarming proportions. The ‘globalised terrorism’ thus effectively assimilates diverse forms of political violence intending to unify and amplify the threat. The seriousness of the threat to security by this ‘New Terrorism’ is identified by apparent trends listed below:

- terrorism has become lethal and bloodier;
- terrorists have developed alternative financial resources so that they are less dependent on state sponsors;
- they have evolved new models of organisation with a wider network, blurring the distinction between domestic and international terrorism;
- they are more diverse in terms of motivation and can wage global campaigns;
- they have effectively exploited new communications technologies including the use of cyberspace.⁴

Terrorism is taken seriously not just because of what it represents, but also because of what it brings about. Terrorism poses a serious threat to security. Directly, terrorism is a threat to core human rights like right to life, right to personal liberty and security, the right to humane treatment, the right to due process and to a fair trial, the right to freedom of expression, and the judicial protection and its correspondent obligation to respect and ensure all human rights without discrimination.⁵ With terrorist attacks becoming more lethal of late, a growing percentage of terrorist attacks are designed to kill as many people as possible. The trend towards higher casualties reflects the changing motivation of today's terrorists.

The terrorist threat is also changing in ways that make it more dangerous and difficult to counter. New terrorist threats can suddenly emerge from isolated conspiracies or obscure cults with no previous history of violence. Guns and conventional explosives have so far remained the weapons of choice for most terrorists. Such weapons can cause large scale casualties and are relatively easy to acquire and use. But some terrorist groups now show interest in acquiring the capability to use chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear (CBRN) materials.⁶ It is difficult to predict the likelihood of a CBRN attack, but most experts agree that today's terrorists are seeking the ability to use such agents in order to cause mass casualties. Ignatieff summarises the scope of the threat that is more indirect in nature:

A succession of large-scale attacks would pull at the already

fragile tissue of trust that binds us to our leadership and destroys the trust we have in one another. Once the zones of devastation were cordoned off and the bodies buried, we might find ourselves, in short order, living in a national-security state on continuous alert, with sealed borders, constant identity checks and permanent detention camps for dissidents and aliens. Our constitutional rights might disappear from our courts, while torture might reappear in our interrogation cells. The worst of it is that the government would not have to impose tyranny over the cowed populace. We would demand it for our protection.... That is what defeat in a war on terror looks like. We would survive, but we would no longer recognize ourselves.⁷

Given the complexity and gravity of the issue, there is a “growing realization throughout the world that trans-border terrorism and organized crime cannot be controlled without bilateral or regional cooperation.”⁸ In this regard, the UN Security Council has affirmed the importance of international, regional, and sub-regional counter-terrorism cooperation in several resolutions and decisions. Cooperation at all the above-identified levels is required to prevent the spread of terrorism and underlying radicalisation, to stem support systems from both state and non-state actors that act as oxygen to terror groups and abstain from the use of terrorism as an instrument of state policy. Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), called upon all the States to: “Cooperate, particularly through bilateral and multilateral arrangements and agreements, to prevent and suppress terrorist attacks and take action against perpetrators of such acts.”⁹ Moving on further, through resolution 2178 (2014), the UNSC emphasized on the need for States to strengthen their international, regional, and sub-regional cooperation to combat foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs).

Foreign terrorist fighters touch on three categories of states to perpetuate their acts: States of origin, the States they transit and the States to which they travel (destination). The Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), acting on behalf of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), partners with international, regional, and sub-regional

organizations on the implementation of resolutions 1373 (2001), 1624 (2005), 1963 (2010), 2129 (2013), and 2178 (2014), in “promoting international best practices, standards, and codes, assessing States’ performance, identifying regional and thematic challenges, assisting in States’ capacity-building, and facilitating technical assistance delivery.”¹⁰

Regional cooperation perhaps is an effective measure to counterterrorism because countries at the regional level are supposed to understand each other’s problems and appreciate the strength of cooperation better. Realising the importance of multilateral cooperation especially at the regional level, several regional organisations have adopted counterterrorism as an area of cooperation: SCO, EU, ASEAN, AU, OAS, SAARC to name a few.

REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND COUNTERTERRORISM COOPERATION

Region	Organisation	Agreement	Mechanism
South Asia	SAARC	Regional Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, 1987	Terrorist Offences Monitoring Desk (STOMD), 2005
Central Asia	SCO	Shanghai Convention against Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism, 2001, Convention on Counter-Terrorism of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, 2009	Anti-terrorism Centre, 2004
South-East Asia	ASEAN	ASEAN Declaration on Joint Action to Counter-Terrorism, 2001, ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism, 2007	Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2003
Africa	AU	OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, 1999 Protocol to the 1999 Convention was adopted in 2004	African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT)
Americas	OAS	Inter-American Convention against Terrorism, 2001	Inter-American Committee against Terrorism
Europe	EU	European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, 1977 Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism, 2005 Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism, 2015	Committee of Experts on Terrorism (CODEXTER)

SAARC AND COUNTERTERRORISM COOPERATION IN SOUTH ASIA

THE STATE OF TERRORISM IN SOUTH ASIA

South Asia has the distinction of being one of the most affected regions of terrorism and political violence. According to the Global Terrorism Index (2018), South Asia “has had the highest average score on the GTI of any region for the past 16 years.”¹¹ Two types of violence that are related to terrorism are evident in the countries of the South Asian region - secessionist and ideological.

1. SECESSIONIST

Secessionist movements that use or have used terrorism include LTTE in Sri Lanka, militant groups in India’s Northeast, Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir, and groups in Balochistan of Pakistan.

Sri Lanka witnessed a separatist movement since the late 1970s. Of the several militant groups, the LTTE was the most dominant. The main aim of the LTTE was to establish a separate Tamil nation (*Eelam*) by armed struggle. The ‘cult of martyrdom’ and the ideology of vengeance in the LTTE were based on appeals to a heroic Tamil past. It had both political and military wings. At the macro level, the Tigers’ strategy had four key components:

1. Use of peace to prepare for war, in line with the Maoist doctrine of retreat and recuperate;
2. Attain total control over the Tamil struggle to gain legitimacy as the ‘sole representative’ of the Sri Lankan Tamils;
3. Subordination of the political struggle to the military goal; and
4. Use of conventional and guerrilla modes of resistance.¹²

Besides, the LTTE made use of suicide bombers; it was one of the few militant organisations to adopt suicide attack as an article of faith. A separate unit called ‘Black Tigers’ existed for this purpose. The Tigers’ international network extended from Canada and the United States in the West to Australia in the East. Its links were forged by the Tamil refugees who fled from the ethnic conflict.¹³ Due to sympathies to the Eelam struggle in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, LTTE enjoyed

support in Tamil Nadu too. Due to this Tamil Nadu factor, New Delhi extended indirect support to the militant group until it sent the IPKF to Sri Lanka in 1987 to implement the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord. The LTTE's continued use of terror tactics resulted in the crackdown from the international community, including India, especially post-9/11. Its support base also dwindled as a result. After 'Eelam War IV' in 2009, the LTTE has been neutralised and its cadres and leaders have either been killed, surrendered or have scattered.

Militancy in Punjab emerged as an ethno-nationalist movement in the early 1980s but turned separatist in due course. The Sikhs, in the late 1970s, started agitating for a separate sovereign state called 'Khalistan' due to perceived religious, political and economic grievances. The Sikh fundamentalists, headed by Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale dubbed "religious depravity of Sikhs and ever-increasing Hindu domination" as the main cause for their "relative deprivation".¹⁴ He called on young Sikhs to sacrifice their lives for the sake of Sikhism. The All India Sikh Student Federation, Dashmesh Regiment and Dal Khalsa emerged as leading organisations to execute Bindranwale's orders. These groups indulged in both targeted and indiscriminate killings costing more than 30,000 lives. Some of the high-profile victims of the Sikh insurgency were the then serving Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi, former Chief of the Army Staff, Gen. A. S. Vaidya and the then Chief Minister of Punjab, Beant Singh. The militants carried their violence even overseas when they bombed Air India's Flight 182 near the coast of Ireland in 1985 killing all 329 onboard.

The militancy received moral and material support from Pakistan that was ever ready to recognise Khalistan as and when it was formed. The support of Sikh diaspora was another major factor in sustaining Sikh militancy.¹⁵ Sikh diaspora organisations were intensely involved in mobilisation of support and resources among Sikhs abroad, lobbying with local governments, and international propaganda through the media. The Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan has been using Pakistan-based terror outfits like Lashkar-e-Toiba to partner with Sikh militant groups. Some of the important leaders of the Pro-Khalistan militant outfits enjoy sanctuary in Pakistan. The pro-Khalistani elements

based elsewhere are also reported to be in touch with the Pro-Khalistan militants in Pakistan for the revival of militancy in Punjab.¹⁶

Militancy in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) started gradually in 1988 due to various frustrations, rooted in socio-economic and political grievances. This was ably aided by the influence of Islamic militancy across the border in Pakistan. Initially, Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front led the revolt by selective assassinations of “Indian spies” and “political collaborators”. With weapons and training support from Pakistan, JKLF aimed to achieve complete independence of Kashmir. Indian military response further aggravated the alienation of ordinary Kashmiris and offered a fertile breeding ground for more militant groups to crop-up and prosper.¹⁷ Utilising this, Pakistan promoted a more radical Islamist group called Hizb-ul Mujahideen to fight for Kashmir’s integration with Pakistan.

The ‘Fidayeen’ phase of violence erupted in July 1999, immediately after the end of the Kargil War. Two principal terrorist groups involved were Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Toiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed. By describing J&K as the “gateway for jihad against India”, these groups started targeting other important urban centres in India viz. Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Ahmadabad, Jaipur, Varanasi, and Kolkatta.¹⁸ They successfully exploited the resentment of Indian Muslims, especially the youth, in the aftermath of the Gujarat communal riots of 2002. A cycle of normalcy returned to the state in 2004, basically due to a multi-pronged strategy combining military, political and developmental initiatives. This once again proved short-lived. Since June 2010, the Kashmir Valley has been witnessing an intifada-type of violence ably perpetrated by elements from across the border. In the present context, there are reports of ISIS penetration in the valley with the announcement of “Wilayah of Hind” (India Province).¹⁹

The problems of the northeast of India are more complicated and have a unique distinction of facing militancy for the longest time period. Militancy continues even today in one form or the other. Several militant groups are fighting for various causes in the region, ranging from separatist to autonomist. What has added to the complexity

are cross-border linkages of these militant groups with forces in the neighbouring states of Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, Bhutan and China at various periods of time. The borders of these states are not only porous but also sensitive.²⁰

Of all the eight states, only Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim have not confronted any kind of indigenous militancy. Roots of multiple insurgencies and autonomist movements lie deep in the history and geography of the region.²¹ The underlying issue is the inadequate physical, cultural and emotional integration of the locals with the “mainland”. The terrain of the region, which is dominated by hills and dense forests, is also more conducive for insurgency, but at the same time difficult for policing and administration. The British policies during the colonial period, especially by segregating the hill people from those from the plains, to protect their economic interests led to the locals never developing an “identity” with the rest of India. The work of missionaries also played a role in abetting militancy in the region. Further, the scant presence of the state administration has alienated the people, making them sympathisers of the insurgents. Support from neighbouring countries in the form of sanctuaries, arms and logistics have also been sustaining militancy in the region. Some of the neighbouring countries tried to use the northeast militant groups to keep India in a destabilised mode. China stopped aiding northeast militant groups in the 1980s, but Pakistan filled the void through the ISI with more rigour.

Balochistan is the largest province of Pakistan, rich in mineral resources, strategically vital, sparsely populated, but ethnically diverse. Yet, it is considered one of the backward regions. Balochistan is a classic case that “degenerated from a progressive movement for national emancipation within Pakistan to a retrogressive and reactionary nationalist cusp.”²² Baloch nationalism in the form of separatism erupted on the perception of discrimination - economic, socio-cultural and political. But the insurgency was largely due to the question of identity - Pakistan’s insistence on a single Islamic identity and counter-productiveness from the Balochis. There were five major spurts of insurgency in the province so far - 1948, 1958, 1962, 1973-77 and 2002 till date. In 2006,

the movement got intensified after the killing of Nawab Akbar Bugti, a prominent Baloch leader. The separatism is spearheaded by many groups: Balochistan Liberation Army, Balochistan Republican Army, Balochistan Liberation Front, Lashkar-e-Balochistan, Baloch Republican Guard, Baloch Liberation United Front and the United Baloch Army. But the prominent ones are BLA and BLF. They indulge in attacks on security forces, infrastructure projects and foreigners who would collaborate with the state in economic activity in the province.²³

The problem of insurgency in Balochistan is compounded by porous borders with Iran and Afghanistan and the emergence of the province as a sanctuary for many militant groups of Afghanistan and Pakistan. The situation turned murky when the Pakistan military used Islamist groups like Lashkar-e-Jangvi and Taliban to counter Baloch nationalists, both militant and moderate.²⁴ Pakistan blames its neighbours – India, Iran and Afghanistan – for the separatism in the province. Pakistan alleges that India's external intelligence agency has been "funding and training" Baloch militants through its missions in southwest Afghanistan. But India has consistently denied its hand in any form in the separatist movement. The fact of the matter is that India has refused to be drawn in the separatist movement despite overtures from Baloch nationalists.²⁵

2. IDEOLOGICAL

Ideological terrorism has both left and right-wing strands. Left-wing groups include Maoists of India and Nepal and Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna in Sri Lanka. Right-wing groups include both Islamic and Hindu groups.

The issue of Indian Maoism started as an agrarian rebellion in 1967 in West Bengal directed by the leftist Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist). The party followed the Maoist line to achieve "revolution".²⁶ The ripples of rebellion in West Bengal were felt as far as in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Punjab and Kerala. From the late 1970s and 1980s, the Naxal movement got revived, especially in Bihar and Andhra Pradesh. Called otherwise as Left-Wing Extremism, Naxalism has been like a shifting pain that moved from

West Bengal to Bihar and then to Andhra Pradesh and then to central India. When there was pressure in Andhra Pradesh, the Naxals found a suitable sanctuary in the central Indian areas comprising parts of Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Maharashtra and Karnataka. This constitutes the so-called “Red Corridor”, which they found conducive for insurgency and an ideal base to start “Revolutionary Zones”. The movement of Maoists to tribal-dominated central India is, in fact, a perfect match for the aggrieved and the “Robin Hoods”. The Maoists, in this regard, have learnt the knack of operating through front organisations in each state focusing on local grievances and have successfully drafted some intellectuals and human rights activists on their side.

What is more worrying is their external linkage with both state and non-state actors within and outside India. Major drivers for these linkages are arms, training, finance, ideology, drug trade, and a plan to forge a broad front against the “common enemy” – India. The actors with which Naxals have linkages include militant groups operating in the northeast of India, anti-India terror groups based in Pakistan, and organisations like Coordinating Committee of Maoist Parties and Organisations of South Asia, Friends of Indian Revolution, International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organisations and International Communist Movement. These linkages are increasing in depth and quality, and also turning deadly.²⁷

In the case of Nepal, the situation of political instability and economic uncertainty in the 1990s gave rise to a new force called the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists) or simply “Maoists”.²⁸ Using their military wing – the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) – they launched the “people’s war” in 1996 with the aim of establishing a communist republic and “new democracy” (*naulojanabad*). They aimed to move towards socialism after destroying feudalism and imperialism and then marching to communism “by way of cultural revolutions based on the theory of continuous revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat....”²⁹ The Government’s heavy-handed response further fuelled the insurgency. The Maoists expanded rapidly, especially in rural areas, gaining immense support from poor and marginalised

sections in Nepal. Their external linkages were minimal. The first attempt at peace talks between the government and the Maoists in June-November 2001 did not succeed.³⁰ The Nepal Army, which had thus far remained out of counter-insurgency operations, was forced to get involved when an Army barrack was attacked by the Maoists. The security situation deteriorated further. With the assassination of the popular King Birendra, Gyanendra assumed the throne. He dissolved parliament in 2002 and gradually took control of all powers of the state himself. A second attempt at holding peace talks with Maoists in 2003 also failed. This led to an unusual alliance between the Maoists and the Seven Party Alliance (SPA), a group of important political parties of Nepal, with the sole aim of wresting executive powers from the King.³¹ The joint movement received unprecedented mass support and, in April 2006, the King was forced to relinquish his powers. In November 2006, the Maoists and the government signed an UN-brokered Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that not only brought the 10-year insurgency to an end but also paved the way for the inclusion of the rebels in mainstream politics and elections to an assembly that was to write a new constitution.³²

Left-leaning militancy was also present in Sri Lanka represented by Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP). Formed in 1965, the JVP came into being as a result of the then-existing socio-economic crisis. JVP's Leftist claim was symbolised by red colour, populist welfare measures and anti-globalisation. The first insurrection by this group in April 1971, in fact, drew its inspiration from the successful Cuban revolution led by Fidel Castro. JVP, at the same time, appealed to Sinhala nationalism and its outlook towards minorities. Its cadre base was predominantly Sinhalese. Most of the active members of the group were rural Sinhala educated unemployed, predominantly from the poor and middle classes.³³ JVP viewed that it "should arm itself to confront the potential threat of a neo-colonial dictatorial regime that could have been established by the pro-U.S. elements. Unlike the Tamil militant groups, JVP did not have any support base in foreign countries. It was perhaps because of "nothing foreign" mindset of the JVP since its inception that made the group not to have "strategic alliances with other socialist countries". JVP viewed those socialist countries at that point of time "not based

on proletarian internationalism”.³⁴ North Korea allegedly supported JVP during the 1971 insurrection, but not significantly. Diaspora support was virtually absent.

JIHADIST TERRORISM

In recent years, terrorists have been drawing inspiration from Islamic scriptures – the *Quran* verses, Hadith and Sharia – to justify attacks on “infidels”. The largest number of Muslims have fought and died in the name of *Jihad* from South Asia. The region has one-third of the world’s Muslim population and has over 200 Islamic extremist groups and *Jihadi* organisations of various brands and sizes. Most of the Islamic terrorists who struck in different parts of the world have had some link or the other with the region.³⁵ History, geography and international power politics have conspired to make this region the single largest contributor to the growth of Islamic terrorism, as also its major victim.

Despite India being home to a large number of Muslims next only to Indonesia, Indian Muslims have by-and-large remained out of international jihadist terrorist groups. Jihadist terrorism initially commenced in the state of Jammu and Kashmir and later within a decade spread to other parts of India. Closely witnessing the strength of the jihadists, the ISI made them part and parcel of its larger plan to “bleed India”, “liberate” Jammu and Kashmir and the Indian Muslims. The ISI initially used Pakistan-based militant groups like Lashkar-e-Toiba, Jaish-e-Muhammad, Hizbul Mujahideen, Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami, but gradually encouraged local Muslim groups like Students Islamic Movement of India, Indian Mujahideen and Al Ummah to “wage jihad against India”. It is fully externally sponsored - weapons, financing, ideological motivation, plans and manpower to a great extent. Demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992 and the subsequent communal riots and bombings acted as the defining moment for the rise and intensification of jihadist terrorism in India. Jihadist terrorists’ nexus with criminal gangs like Dawood Ibrahim also came to the fore after this period.

The West never understood the gravity of this phenomenon until the

September 11 attacks. After 9/11, Pakistan struck deals with both the US and Taliban-al Qaeda combine and also adopted a policy of “different strokes for different folks” to deal with three categories of terror groups operating from its soil - anti-West, anti-India and anti-Pakistan.³⁶ Dealing with these groups with such categorisation did not work due to their deep linkages and common ideological motivation. Islamabad, however, has been trying hard to at least delineate anti-Indian jihadists groups through its “Karachi Project” which took shape roughly in 2003, immediately after ISI’s Forward 23 post that supervised training and induction of anti-Indian militants in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK). The primary objective of the Project is to brainwash, train and use disgruntled Indian Muslims to carry out terror attacks on “fair targets” of India. This is part of Pakistan’s sub-conventional warfare strategy to bleed India, both militarily and economically, without leaving any evidence of its involvement – a ‘plausible deniability’ operation.³⁷

Bangladesh also has been facing jihadist terrorism for a considerable time period. The notable group involved is Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB). The JMB, meaning ‘Assembly of Holy Warriors’, is a Bangladesh-based terror outfit formed in 1998. The principal objective of JMB is to establish an Islamic state in Bangladesh based on Sharia. Given its strong belief in Salafist ideology, JMB considers the modern principles of governance like democracy, liberalism, socialism and secularism as “anti-Islamic”. In the initial stages, funding for JMB came from various sources such as extortion, smuggling of drugs, donations from international Wahhabi based in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and the United Kingdom, patronage by Pakistan’s ISI, contribution from its members and taxation on local business. Thereafter JMB turned towards more lucrative foreign sources of funding and also smuggling in counterfeit currencies. The then Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)-led government’s soft-peddling also helped in JMB’s phenomenal growth and influence. The government did not realise the gravity of JMB’s agenda until the terror group triggered a country-wide serial bombing in August 2005, when about 500 bombs went off in 63 of the 64 districts of Bangladesh within half-an-hour. More alarming is the linkage of JMB with ISIS.³⁸

Penetration of ISIS in South Asia in the recent past has spread further south in the region, especially in the light of Easter attacks in Sri Lanka in April 2019. Linking these attacks, the ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi asserted that South Asia would eventually become incorporated into the greater “caliphate”.³⁹

SAARC AND COUNTERTERRORISM IN SOUTH ASIA

South Asia is one of the least integrated regions in the world despite the existence of SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation). Established in 1985, SAARC comprises of eight countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. As per the SAARC Charter, the objectives of the Association are: to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improve their quality of life; to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region and to provide all individuals the opportunity to live in dignity and to realize their full potential; to promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among the countries of South Asia; to contribute to mutual trust, understanding and appreciation of one another’s problems; to promote active collaboration and mutual assistance in the economic, social, cultural, technical and scientific fields; to strengthen cooperation with other developing countries; to strengthen cooperation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interests; and to cooperate with international and regional organizations with similar aims and purposes. Decisions “at all levels are to be taken based on unanimity; and bilateral and contentious issues are excluded from the deliberations of the Association.”⁴⁰

Within a year of its establishment, SAARC took note of the importance of regional cooperation in eliminating terrorism from South Asia. In the second SAARC summit, the leaders

unequivocally condemned all acts, methods and practices of terrorism as criminal and deplored their impact on life and property, socio-economic development, political stability, regional and international peace and co-operation. They recognized the importance of the principles laid down in the UN Resolution 2625 which

among others required that each State should refrain from organizing, instigating, assisting or participating in acts of civil strife or terrorist acts in another State or acquiescing in organized activities within its territory directed towards the commission of such acts.⁴¹

In the subsequent year, the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism was adopted that came into effect on 02 August 1988. The Convention tried to fix the scope of terrorism offences that were identified by the then-existing international conventions on Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft (1970), Suppression of Unlawful Acts on Safety of Civil Aviation (1971), Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons (1973). But, interestingly, it kept “political offence” out of the ambit of terrorism. This is a serious lacuna in the Convention because terrorism is indeed a political offence with political motives. As a result, the Convention is a dead letter from the very beginning.

In the light of the 9/11 attacks and the subsequent UN Security Council Resolution 1373 and the International Convention for Suppression of Financing of Terrorism, an Additional Protocol to the SAARC Regional Convention was adopted in January 2004 at the Twelfth Summit. It came into force on 01 December 2006. The Additional Protocol criminalized the provision, collection or acquisition of funds to commit terrorist acts and take further measures to prevent and suppress the financing of such acts. Notably, the Protocol provided for a State to deny refugee status in respect of any person for whom “there are serious reasons for considering that he or she has committed an offence outlined in Article 4 of this Additional Protocol”, which encompasses terrorism-related offences.⁴²

In 1995, SAARC also established a Terrorist Offences Monitoring Desk (STOMD) to support the implementation of the Convention and the Additional Protocol by collecting, assessing, and disseminating information on terrorist offences, tactics, strategies, and methods. A SAARC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance was approved at the 15th SAARC summit in August 2008 to overcome the need for separate bilateral agreements by harmonizing the domestic legal systems of member countries.⁴³

The SAARC Interior/Home Ministers met periodically to review the progress in the implementation of the 1987 Convention and the Additional Protocol. During these reviews what came out were disappointments on the non-implementation of provisions of both the Convention and its Additional Protocol. The issue of “one country’s terrorist is another country’s freedom fighter” continues to haunt the SAARC countries. Reflecting on this India’s Home Minister Rajnath Singh remarked:

One country’s terrorist cannot be a martyr or freedom fighter for anyone. I also speak for the entire humanity – not just for India or other SAARC members – in urging that in no circumstances should terrorists be eulogised as martyrs. Those who provide support, encouragement, sanctuary, safe haven or any assistance to terrorism or terrorists must be isolated. Strongest possible steps need to be taken not only against terrorists and terrorist organisations but also those individuals, institutions, organisations or nations that support them. Only this will ensure that the forces engaged in promoting the heinous crime of terrorism against humanity are effectively countered.⁴⁴

Most countries agree with India’s stance of ‘zero tolerance’ to any kind of terrorism as it is misleading to distinguish between “good” and “bad” terrorists.

Despite the failures of the existing arrangements, the SAARC members in April 2007 agreed to work out modalities to implement the provisions of the SAARC conventions to combat terrorism, narcotics and psychotropic substances, trafficking in women and children, and other trans-national crimes. In the subsequent year, the Expert Group meeting of SAARC countries decided to share intelligence for curbing terrorism and other transnational crimes under the banner of South Asian Regional Intelligence and Coordination Centre (SARICC).⁴⁵ Unfortunately, Pakistan chose not to attend the meeting. This highlights the complexity of intelligence sharing among the countries of the region mainly due to links between state intelligence services and terrorist organizations in some countries. Yet, the fact that most countries agreed to move forward on the initiative, is encouraging.

It is important to note that there is a tendency on the part of the South Asian countries to depend on external support for countering terrorism rather than cooperating amongst themselves. US has emerged as a significant external component in counter-terrorism in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and India. Countries like China, Russia, Japan, and UK have also extended help by various means including weapons, logistics, information and funds in countering terrorism in states like Sri Lanka. However, the involvement of the West in its counter-terrorism cooperation with South Asian countries is by-and-large motivated by the threat posed by Al Qaeda, ISIS and other Islamic terror groups. In other words, the US and its allies would not be extending counter-terror cooperation with the countries of SAARC if the groups of the region are not part of global terrorism. This is evident by the fact that the West is not much bothered about those groups that pose threats only to South Asian countries. Consequently, the support extended by the US and its European allies to the South Asian countries in fighting terrorism is carefully calibrated. Accordingly, 'global terrorist' outfits like Al Qaeda, ISIS and Taliban are treated differently from what they consider to be 'local terrorist' groups like the Maoists of India and Nepal, Indian Mujahedeen, SIMI, Northeast insurgents, LTTE, or local Kashmiri militants.⁴⁶

On the positive side, the South Asian states are conscious of the value of cooperation in countering terrorism. But the success of such cooperation has been mostly at the bilateral level rather than at the multilateral level. This is the crux of the failure of SAARC's various counter-terrorism initiatives in the form of conventions and mechanisms.

CONCLUSION

South Asia undoubtedly is one of the worst affected regions by terrorism with separatist and ideological goals. Except for Bhutan, almost all countries of South Asia are affected by one or the other form of violence. The groups indulging in terrorism are well networked, both at regional and global levels in terms of finance, logistics, propaganda,

arms and training. The most alarming aspect is their state support, mainly emanating from Pakistan.

It is interesting to note that the South Asian countries took note of the threat posed by terrorism and the need to cooperate way back in 1987 under the umbrella of SAARC. They put in place the Convention and the Additional Protocol on Terrorism to meet UN obligations that facilitated cooperation on extradition, mutual legal assistance, agency consultation, exchange of information and expertise, and stifling funding sources. Yet, two issues continue to haunt regional cooperation. One, regional cooperation is mostly externally driven, especially to meet the international obligations rather than an inherent and sincere commitment to tackle the menace of terrorism. Two, the counter-terrorism cooperation among the countries of the region exists more at bilateral rather than at multilateral levels. As a result, whatever regional mechanisms put in place under the SAARC framework have remained ineffective.

To effectively counter the phenomenon of terrorism, what is required is a holistic and coordinated approach at the regional and global levels. No single country can bear the difficult task of countering terrorism on its own. Coordination among all countries of South Asia is vital. At the outset, terrorism needs to be recognised as a common enemy rather than getting into the trap of “one man’s enemy is another man’s freedom fighter”. Terrorism should not be used as an instrument of state policy. Experience shows that whenever terrorist groups stop enjoying state-sponsorship, they tend to wither away. There have to be punitive provisions for state sponsorship.

Establishing a regional counter-terrorism centre on the lines of the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (CTC) would help. Apart from sharing expertise through a regional CTC, countries should cooperate in capacity-building of counter-terrorism forces like police, military, intelligence

and para-military. A regional database on various actors involved in terrorism and its sponsors could be set up. Existing conventions could be revisited taking note of the current dynamics of existing threats and their networks. Building cooperative regional grids of civil society and private sector actors can also help to build trust and lay the groundwork for greater cooperation among the people of the region.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. N. MANOHARAN is Associate Professor at the Department of International Studies and History, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru; Mr Vishal Sengupta is pursuing Masters from the same Department.

**BALAKOT AIRSTRIKE SIGNIFIED A MAJOR
SHIFT IN POLICY: ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIA**

BY

J.K. VERMA

Indian Airforce planes entered Pakistan airspace on 26 February 2019 and destroyed the terrorist camp at Balakot, which is situated in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Before Operation Bandar, the Indian Army had entered inside Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) and obliterated seven terrorist launch pads on 28-29 September 2016. However, at that time Indian Army had entered POK which Pakistan accepts as disputed territory while Balakot is in province of Pakistan. ISI created JeM carried out a lethal attack on a CRPF convoy on 14 February 2019 at Pulwama, Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) in which 40 CRPF Jawans were martyred. India took retaliatory action through Operation Bandar. About 200 to 350 JeM terrorists, trainers and commanders were killed in the airstrike. India also withdrew MFN status from Pakistan which was accorded in 1996. The airstrike has dispelled the myth of Pakistan's threat of using nuclear warheads in case of a attack from India. Pakistan's standing in the world has been considerably downgraded with this incident, while India got support from several world powers. The Balakot airstrike has bilateral, regional and international repercussions. If Pakistan continues with its low-intensity war against India, Delhi should also extend diplomatic and moral assistance to disgruntled ethnic groups in Pakistan including Balochis, Sindhis, Pashtuns, Muhajirs, Saraikis, Hindkowanis, Chitralis and Shia Muslims of Gilgit and Baltistan.

Pakistan has launched a low-intensity war against India since a few decades and the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) has created several terrorist outfits which have been carrying out terrorist activities in various parts of India, especially in Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan sponsored terrorist activities include a daring attack on the Indian Parliament in 2001, serial bomb blasts in the capital city of Delhi in 2005, bomb blasts at the temple city of Varanasi in 2006 and terror attacks in Mumbai in 2008 and 2011. As a consequence, hundreds of innocent Indian citizens have been killed and many security forces' personnel martyred. The Indian government has been issuing stern warnings to Pakistan, but no worthwhile action was taken against Islamabad and this had further emboldened the military-controlled ISI.

Pakistan trained terrorists attacked Pathankot Air Force Station on 2 January 2016 and on 18 September 2016 four terrorists of Pakistan based Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) attacked an Indian Army camp at Uri in J&K. The terrorists were equipped with AK 47 rifles, grenade launchers and hand grenades. They were Pakistani citizens and had been trained in terrorist camps in Pakistan. In the terrorist attack at Uri, 19 soldiers of the Indian Army were martyred, while all four terrorists were exterminated.

The killing of 19 soldiers at Uri shook the nation and there was strong demand for some punitive action against our western neighbour. The government at the highest level took the decision and within 15 days of Uri attack, 200 soldiers of the Indian Army entered Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) and smashed seven launch pads on 28-29 September 2016. The Indian Army killed more than 40 Pakistanis including guides, terrorists, their trainers which included Pakistan Army personnel both serving and retired. Guides play an important role in the infiltration of terrorists. These guides are residents of border villages and have detailed knowledge of the topography of the area including hiding places, infiltration routes etc. Guides are important assets of intelligence organisations as without them infiltration is not feasible.¹

The Government of India made it clear that the surgical strike was not against the Pakistan Army but was a defensive action to counter

the terrorists. India had confirmed intelligence that terrorists were waiting at the launch pads to enter India. The surgical strike enhanced the morale of the country as well as of security forces which saw it as retaliation for the martyrdom of their brethren. The differences between the Nawaz Sharif government and the Pakistan Army also came to surface as the civilian government accepted the occurrence of the surgical strike while the Pakistan Army outrightly rejected the infiltration by the Indian Army. Pakistan Army which considers itself as the saviour of the country, knew very well that it cannot take revenge of the attack by the Indian Army as India does not have terrorist camps. Attack on any army or civil installation will be an act of war and the Indian Army is much stronger than the Pakistan Army.²

DEADLIEST ATTACK ON CRPF CONVOY AT PULWAMA

The surgical strike carried out by Indian Army on 29 September 2016 could not deter the rogue intelligence agency ISI created Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM). It carried out a lethal attack on the convoy of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) on 14 February 2019. The suicide bomber Adil Ahmad Dar, nicknamed as Waqas Commando of Gundibagh collided his car loaded with approximately 80 KGs of explosives with a bus which was a part of the CRPF convoy. The RDX explosive, which is a military-grade explosive and is available only with defence forces, was used in the attack. In this ghastly act, 40 CRPF personnel were martyred. The ill-fated bus was part of CRPF convoy going from Jammu to Srinagar. As the Jammu-Srinagar Highway had been opened after a gap of a few days, the convoy had about 75 vehicles and approximately 2500 personnel. The movement of local traffic was not prohibited at that time hence the suicide bomber could easily ram his explosive-laden car with the CRPF bus at about 1500 hours on 14 February 2019 at Lethipora in Pulwama district. Although the suicide bomber was alone in the vehicle, he was supported by several others. Shortly after the incident, the security forces in a daring encounter eliminated his accomplice who provided the car and also killed the organiser of this horrifying act. Security forces also arrested few other support agents and they were thoroughly interrogated.³

The mastermind of the Afghan-style Pulwama attack was Mufti Abdul Rauf Asghar, younger brother of Masood Azhar, Chief of JeM. Masood Azhar is seriously ill and at present, he is admitted in Military Hospital, Rawalpindi where a bomb exploded in the third week of June 2019. Rauf is the operational head of JeM and was also involved in the hijacking of the Indian Airlines plane in December 1999. It appears that Rauf briefed the JeM terrorists to carry out this terrorist attack on the pattern of Afghanistan on behest of ISI. The negotiations between US Representative and Afghan Taliban are going on and the possibility that US-led forces leave Afghanistan and the Taliban come to power cannot be ruled out. In that case, ISI will infiltrate more Afghan terrorists to carry out terrorist activities in India. India stepped up diplomatic efforts of isolating Pakistan after the Pulwama attack, and Indian Foreign Secretary met envoys of United Nations, P-5 and 25 other countries and explained about the involvement of Pakistan.⁴

The attack on the CRPF convoy at Pulwama was not the handiwork of one person, it was carried out after detailed planning and preparation. Adil Ahmad, who was the suicide bomber, was imparted psychological training and he was completely radicalised. His handlers were directing him from Pakistan, and he was vigorously trained by them.⁵

The security forces thereafter enhanced the hunt of terrorists of JeM. Lt. General K J S Dhillon, General Officer Commanding of the Srinagar based Chinara Corps told in a press conference that the security forces have successfully eliminated 18 terrorists out of which 14 belonged to JeM. He claimed that JeM second-in-command, Mudasir Khan, who planned the Pulwama attack had also been killed. Out of these 18 terrorists, ten were Kashmiris while eight were Pakistanis.⁶

AIRSTRIKE ON TERRORIST CAMP AT BALAKOT

However, these actions were not sufficient and the common man wanted some retaliatory action against Pakistan. The present government had already abandoned the policy of 'strategic restraint' and adopted a 'muscular' policy. The general elections were also just around the corner, hence the government was bound to take some visible action.

Thus the Indian Air Force (IAF) launched Operation 'Bandar' under which for the first time after the 1971 Indo-Pakistan War, IAF planes entered Pakistani air space in the early hours of 26 February to demolish the terrorist training camp. The IAF planes targeted terrorist training camps, not in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) which Pakistan admits is a disputed territory, but destroyed the main JeM terrorist training camp at Balakot in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which is a province in Pakistan. India claimed it was an intelligence-based non-military pre-emptive air-strike against JeM terrorist camp as the IAF planes targeted a terrorist camp and not any Pakistani military installation. India also made it clear that there were confirmed intelligence inputs that a large number of JeM terrorists were gathered at Balakot and they were contemplating more terrorist attacks in India.⁷

IAF deployed twelve Mirage-2000 fighter jets which have a speed of Mach 2.2 and were equipped with high calibre radar and precision-guided missiles. Sukhoi Su-30 MKI jets, early warning Israeli Phalcon and indigenously built Netra aircraft were kept ready for action. Airpower will play a vital role in future India-Pakistan conflicts especially while handling Pakistan sponsored terrorism in India.⁸

IAF Mirage 2000 aircraft used Popeye precision-guided air-to-surface missiles and Israeli Spice 2000 bombs which work with pinpoint accuracy. An IAI Heron UAV and two Ilyushin II-78 aerial refuelling aircraft were also used. Besides Spice-2000, the fighter jets were also equipped with Crystal Maze. Spice 2000 bombs are designed to penetrate the building and then explode while Crystal Maze are equipped to photograph and send video pictures of the target hit by the bombs. However, the Crystal Maze was ineffective because of cloudy weather.

Four SU-30 MKIs were launched from an airbase in Punjab and flown towards Jodhpur and on to Barmer before turning towards JeM Headquarters located in Bahawalpur. These four planes worked as decoys and were successful in drawing attention of PAF fighters. The Indian planes returned unharmed and Pakistan's F-16 jets could not engage the Indian jets.

IAF successfully gave strategic surprise to Pakistan Air Force (PAF) even though it was expecting retaliation from India. Pakistan could not take any action against the Indian planes due to pinpointed intelligence, expertise, skill and clever strategy of the Indian pilots. The surprise element was so much that PAF planes though scrambled from eight locations, but they became active ten minutes after the IAF planes had returned to Indian air space. The IAF pilots could not utilise all the bombs and missiles carried by them due to inclement weather, but they successfully hit five out of the six designated targets. Although about 6000 defence personnel were involved in the planning and preparation of the strike, complete secrecy was maintained and the top IAF officers continued with their daily routine, so no suspicion arose about the impending Operation Bandar.

The Pakistan Army had refuted Indian Army's claim of the first surgical strike, but this time accepted that IAF planes entered Pakistan air space and dropped bombs in forests and returned hurriedly without causing any causality or damage. Major General Asif Ghafoor, Pakistan's Director General Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) told in a press conference that on 26 February three teams of IAF planes were seen approaching Pakistani borders. When PAF planes challenged the IAF planes, two teams did not enter Pakistani airspace while the third team crossed the border from Kiran Valley but turned back within three minutes. The Pakistani spokesperson further claimed that Indian planes returned after releasing their payloads and fuel dump in the desert area without causing any damage.

Arun Jaitley, the then Finance Minister gave two reasons for Pakistan's denial about any loss or damage by the Indian aerial attack. Firstly, Pakistan Army had created a big aura about its chivalry, hence it cannot accept IAF planes entered its airspace, bombed them and went back. Secondly, if it accepts the damage then it had to show to the world the damage and the impartial international media would ask numerous questions which will confirm the presence of a terrorist camp.

The bombs destroyed the JeM Madrassa Taleem ul-Quran in Balakot managed by Masood Azhar's brother-in-law, Muhammad Yusuf Azhar. A

2004 United States Department of Defence report confirms that Balakot had a training camp for terrorists where basic and advance training was imparted on use of explosives. Indian intelligence sources claim that a terrorist training camp was situated at a hilltop forest which is about 20 KMs from Balakot. In the camp, there were a large number of JeM terrorists, their trainers and senior JeM Commanders at the time of the aerial attack. About 200 to 350 JeM terrorists, trainers and commanders were killed. Although Pakistan claimed that there were no casualties and no damage to the infrastructure, according to National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO), there were approximately 300 active mobile phones in Balakot just before its destruction. The NTRO which was established in 2004, is a technical intelligence agency which works directly under the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). National Institute of Cryptology Research and Development is also part of NTRO. The villagers confirmed that bombs exploded in the area. Pakistan military twice postponed the visits of journalists at Balakot and ISPR ultimately took select journalists on 29 March to the site of the attack. At the time of the visit of the journalists, about 375 students were studying in the Madrassa. The journalists were allowed to meet, talk and photograph these students. However, the whole exercise which was carried out after a month was planned and managed in such a way that the journalists could not get the impartial idea of the damage caused by Indian bombings. The analysts question that if there was no damage, why the visit of journalists was postponed twice, and they were then taken after a month. Reuters journalists were stopped thrice within nine days of the attack from approaching near the site. The Pakistan Army had cordoned off the area and dead bodies were buried clandestinely.⁹

The Indian officials analysed the images of Balakot terrorist camp before and after the aerial attack through synthetic aperture radar (SAR). The images clearly showed that four buildings were destroyed in the attack. The images also showed that destroyed buildings were repaired and corrugated galvanized iron (CGI) sheets which were damaged were either repaired or changed. The Indian authorities showed these images to journalists who confirmed about the holes in the roof which were caused by the SPICE bombs.¹⁰

Abdul Rauf Rasheed Alvi, brother of Masood Azhar stated in a rally of JeM at Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa on 28 February that Indian planes attacked the JeM headquarters at Balakot and they will take revenge for it.

In the camp, hundreds of JeM terrorists were trained as suicide bombers to target India particularly J&K. In JeM run Madrassas including at Balakot, the Jihadists are indoctrinated with a distorted form of Islam and they were taught that Jihad is important for Muslims and if they are killed, they will directly go to Jannat (Heaven) and will get everything that is scarce in the country.

Pakistan threatened that the air attack will be avenged very soon and the very next day PAF planes intruded into Indian airspace. IAF planes were scrambled and they chased the PAF planes and in one dogfight, an Indian MIG 21 was shot and crashed in Pakistani territory. Its pilot, Wg Cdr Abhinandan Varthaman was captured by Pakistani nationals. Indian planes also chased and downed a PAF F-16 but Pakistan denied this as the country had bought F-16s from the USA for use only for counterterrorism and defensive purposes. Hence use of F-16 for attacking Indian aircraft was a breach of end-use agreements. Pakistan has also purchased 13 F-16s from Jordan and they might have used one of these in the engagement. The debris of downed F-16 had fallen in Pakistan hence the details are not available to India. However, India was sure about the use of F-16s as the PAF planes used AMRAAM missiles which are used by F-16s and whose remnants were found on the Indian side. Pakistan had to return Wg Cdr Abhinandan Varthaman within 60 hours due to intense pressure from foreign powers including the United States, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The United States, which wants to withdraw from Afghanistan because of internal pressure is utilising the services of Islamabad for negotiating with the Taliban. ISI has a good hold over the Afghan Taliban as they have bases in Pakistan and get full support from ISI. Hence, US cajoled Saudi Arabia and UAE to press Pakistan to release the Indian pilot. Pakistan receives massive financial assistance from both these countries. Adel al Jubeir, State Minister of Saudi Arabia shuttled in the area at the behest of the Saudi Crown Prince, while UAE Crown

Prince had telephonic discussions with Indian and Pakistani Prime Ministers. It was a big victory of Indian diplomacy. Unfortunately, the Pakistani pilot of their F-16, who had crashed in Pakistani territory was caught and killed by their countrymen as they thought him to be an Indian pilot.¹¹

All Indian planes returned safely, and Pakistani planes could not attack any defence installation, fuel storage site or ammunition depot despite their aborted attempt. The Russians must be pleased to know that a MiG 21 of 1970-1980 vintage had successfully shot down an F-16 fitted with latest AMRAAM missiles. However, this encounter has its own story to tell of the unfortunate state of the modernisation of IAF fighter planes which has been delayed for the last two decades.

WITHDRAWAL OF MFN STATUS

There were strong reactions to the Pulwama attack and both Prime Minister and Home Minister pledged to retaliate against this cowardly act. India withdrew the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status to Pakistan, given in 1996. The customs duty was raised to 200 percent on all goods imported from Pakistan. Pakistan had never reciprocated and refrained from according MFN status to India. The MFN status was accorded to protect non-discriminatory trade practices and both countries were importing and exporting goods of all kinds except banned items. Pakistan exports to India are only \$454 million, while India's exports are \$ 1.8 billion. Hence the total legal trade between both the countries accounts for only \$2 billion which is minuscule considering the economies of both the countries. Further, legal trade between India and Pakistan is stagnant at \$2 billion since the last two decades while trade of India with Bangladesh and Sri Lanka is increasing steadily. On account of strained relations between both the countries, the informal trade between India and Pakistan takes place through Dubai, Singapore, Iran etc. Besides the informal trade, there is also illegal trade between both the countries. According to analysts, the

legal, informal and illegal annual trade between both these countries may be between \$10 to \$12 billion.¹²

BALAKOT AIRSTRIKE IS A MAJOR CHANGE IN INDIA'S POLICY

Balakot airstrike is a major change in India's policy in dealing with cross-border terrorism. During the Kargil War in 1999, the IAF was under strict instructions not to cross the Line of Control (LoC). Similarly, there were limited intrusions across land borders. In 2016 Indian forces entered inside POK and that was considered a major decision, but air attack on Balakot was a milestone decision as it made it clear that Indian forces can attack anywhere in Pakistan if cross-border terrorism continues. India has now changed its policy, previously terrorists were hitting us, and we were bearing the pain but now India has decided that it will hit back militarily. Hence our posture has changed from defensive to offensive, in case Pakistan sponsored terrorists attack us.¹³

BALAKOT AIR STRIKE NULLIFIED PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR THREAT

The airstrike at Balakot was a landmark action against cross-border terrorism as Indian planes penetrated inside Pakistan and destroyed a terrorist camp which was located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The airstrike has obliterated Pakistan's threat of use of nuclear warheads in case of a attack from India. Balakot airstrike has also raised the expectations of the Indian masses, that in case of a major terrorist attack by Pakistan sponsored terrorists, Indian security forces would attack and destroy their training centres. On the other hand, it also gave a blunt and candid message that if ISI sponsored terrorist outfits will continue to carry out terrorist activities in India, our forces will enter inside Pakistani territory and punish the perpetrators.¹⁴

PAKISTAN INCURRING LOSSES BECAUSE OF AIRSPACE CLOSURE

Pakistan, which is passing through a severe economic crisis is suffering heavy losses because of the closure of airspace. An estimated 400 flights a day are affected by the airspace closure and Islamabad is losing about \$100 million. The flights include both Pakistani as well

as foreign carriers. Closure of airspace has increased operational and maintenance costs, fuel expenditure and enhanced duty hours for the aircrew. The total losses of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) have already crossed \$100 million. Few foreign airlines have suspended their operations because of the closure.¹⁵

PAKISTAN'S SULLIED INTERNATIONAL IMAGE

Pakistan's international image is that diverse Jihadi outfits operate in the country and training is imparted to terrorists and several such outfits are supported and financed by ISI. The country is financially bankrupt and survives on financial assistance rendered by friendly countries as well as financial institutions. Recently Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, China and Qatar gave financial assistance to Pakistan. International Monetary Fund (IMF) also promised \$ 6 billion to Pakistan albeit on more stringent terms. Islamabad also takes financial assistance from World Bank and Asian Development Bank. The international community is aware that although there is a façade of democracy, the real power lies in the hands of the Pakistan Army. The Army controlled ISI disseminates religious fanaticism in neighbouring countries. The reprobate intelligence outfit sheltered Al Qaeda Chief Osama bin Laden for several years.¹⁶

Pakistan's standing in the world has considerably dwindled while India got support from several world powers. Saudi Arabia and UAE both condemned the attack on security forces at Pulwama and they denounced terrorism. Indian External Affairs Minister was invited to speak at the Foreign Ministers meeting of Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) and the objection raised by Pakistan over this invite was overruled. China, which had not condemned the Mumbai attack of 2008, condemned the Pulwama attack. The Russia-India-China (RIC) Foreign Minister's meeting communique was quite stringent on terrorism. The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has put Islamabad on the 'grey list' and it is inching towards 'blacklist'. India has emerged as a big economic power with huge market potential, hence many countries want to have close relations with it. However, China considers India

as its potential adversary and supports Pakistan as it creates trouble in India. As India is strengthening its relations and purchasing defence equipment from the United States, Russia is also supplying arms & ammunition to Islamabad. On 2 July 2019 Russian Ground Forces Commander in Chief, Army General Oleg Salyukov met Pakistan Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Bajwa at the Pakistan Army Headquarters. Both the generals agreed to enhance joint military ties between the defence forces of Pakistan and Russia. The generals also discussed cooperation in training and security matters. The Russian general also appreciated Pakistan Army's successes against terrorism. Pakistan is the only nuclear-equipped Muslim country in the world hence Muslim countries also like to have cordial relations with Islamabad.¹⁷

BALAKOT AIRSTRIKE: REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Balakot airstrike has bilateral, regional and international repercussions. Bilaterally, Pakistan which never expected that Indian planes will enter Khyber Pakhtunkhwa stated that though Indian planes entered up to Balakot but could not damage anything and there were no casualties. Prime Minister Imran Khan held an emergency cabinet meeting and three cabinet ministers talked to media to counter Indian claims and to convince Pakistani masses that Indian planes could not do any damage. They claimed that although there was no damage, Pakistan has to avenge Indian airstrike as it violated Pakistan airspace.¹⁸

The neighbouring countries which are suffering from terrorism originating from Pakistan must be pleased with the Indian airstrike at Balakot terrorist camp. Afghanistan is the worst sufferer of Pakistan sponsored terrorism and it must have welcomed the audacious Indian retaliation of Pulwama terror attack. The ISI is openly assisting Gulbuddin Hekmatyar group to destabilise the present lawful government of Afghanistan. Kabul has always pressed New Delhi to take aggressive steps against Pakistan.¹⁹

China, which is an all-weather friend of Pakistan, is also suffering from terrorism emanating from Pakistan. Few Muslim extremist

organisations operating in Pakistan are assisting Uyghur Muslims residing in the restive Xinjiang region of China. Multiple secessionist groups of Uyghur Muslims are getting financial assistance, training and shelter in Pakistan. Few Muslim terrorist groups operating in Afghanistan also support Uyghur secessionists through Pakistan. The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) also “condemned” India’s airstrike on Balakot.²⁰

Iran being a Shia country also suffers from terrorist attacks from Pakistani territory. Sunni terrorist outfits at the behest of Saudi Arabia carry out terrorist activities in Iran. On 13 February 2019, Jaysh al Adl (Army of Justice) took responsibility for the terrorist attack on a bus carrying Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) personnel in Iran’s Sistan-Balochistan province. In the attack, 27 personnel were killed and 18 were injured. It was the third attack in a month. Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei blamed Sunni terrorist outfits for these terrorist activities. The Jaysh al Adl outfit was established in 2012 to protect the rights of Sunnis in Iran. The outfit is getting full support from diverse Sunni extremist organisations operating in Pakistan. The Sunni terrorists take refuge in Pakistan before and after terrorist attacks in Iran. Iran’s Foreign Ministry summoned Pakistan Ambassador in Iran and not only conveyed Iran’s displeasure but also stated that Pakistan must control the terrorist outfits operating from its territory. The powerful IRGC Commander stated on 19 February 2019 that the suicide attacker was a Pakistani and his accomplices who were arrested were also Pakistan nationals. Hence Iran must have welcomed the Indian airstrike at Balakot.²¹

INDIA BRIEFED DIPLOMATS ABOUT BALAKOT AIR STRIKE

Vijay Keshav Gokhale, the Indian Foreign Secretary briefed diplomats of United States, Russia, China, United Kingdom, Indonesia, Australia, Turkey and the six ASEAN countries about the Balakot airstrike. Indian diplomatic missions also briefed the Foreign Offices of the countries of their assignment.

The international reaction was in India’s favour. Australia condemned

the Pulwama attack and asked Islamabad to take stringent action against terrorist outfits operating from Pakistan. France asked both countries to exercise restraint but mentioned that it supports the Indian action against terrorism. It also asked Pakistan to adopt measures so that terrorists stop using its territory. Mike Pompeo, United States Secretary of State called India's airstrike as "counter-terrorism action" and reiterated about US-India ties. Most of the countries including China stated that both the countries should exercise restraint and take action so that the situation in the region remains peaceful and mutual relations are improved.²²

WAY FORWARD

India gave a straight-forward message through Balakot airstrike that if Pakistan will continue abetting terrorist activities in the country, Delhi will not shy away from destroying terrorist camps well within Pakistan. However, the chances that Islamabad will stop training, assisting and infiltrating terrorists in India because of Balakot surgical strike is remote. India must be ready for another strike well within Pakistan and its retaliation by Islamabad. However, the analysts claim that the airstrike strike at Balakot had an impact on Pakistan and infiltration reduced thereafter.

Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai stated in Lok Sabha on 9 July 2019 that consequent to the airstrike at Balakot, the infiltration from Pakistan is reduced by 43 percent and the security situation has also improved. The Minister also mentioned that the government is perusing a policy of zero tolerance.²³

Pakistan's investment in the low-intensity conflict (LIC) is nominal in comparison to India, hence it will not stop it. India should adopt measures so that the cost of pursuing such a conflict to Islamabad enhances. There are several ethnic groups in Pakistan including Punjabis, Balochis, Sindhis, Pashtuns, Muhajirs, Saraikis, Hindkowan, Chitralis and Shia Muslims of Gilgit and Baltistan. All these nationalities are disgruntled because of excessive domination and exploitation by Punjabis. In 1971 Bengali-dominated East Pakistan revolted against

Punjabi control and exploitation and separated. Unfortunately, Islamabad blames India for the disintegration of the country. Hence, instead of reforming its system, the Army pledges to split India and the sinister ISI, which works directly under the control of Army has either created or assists diverse terrorist outfits which are carrying out activities in India. The Punjabi controlled Army which usurps a large proportion of the budget should change its attitude and instead of carrying ill-will against India should work for the progress of the country. India is a peaceful country and does not want to interfere in the internal matters of any country. But if Islamabad continues helping terrorist outfits, Delhi should also think of rendering moral and diplomatic assistance to secessionist elements in Pakistan.

Proportionately, the size of the defence forces of Pakistan is much higher in comparison to the size of the country. The government must also reduce the number of defence force personnel and the money saved can be utilised in the development of the country.

One or two surgical strikes will not deter Pakistan and it will not discontinue infiltrating terrorists, hence India must enhance vigil on the borders. Besides strengthening the security forces, more electronic gadgets should be used so that infiltration can be curbed.

India should endeavour to convince the global community that Pakistan is a terrorist state and it is training terrorists of several countries. Hence the world at large should put some restrictions and economic sanctions on the country so that the rulers change their mindset.

On account of world pressure, Pakistan wants to start the process of peaceful negotiations with India. Prime Minister Imran Khan sent letters to the Indian Prime Minister for a meeting and start of negotiations, but in all his letters he mentioned for the peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue. The Kashmir issue is not only very complicated but both countries have contrary stands on it and hence this issue cannot be resolved easily. First of all, both countries must work on confidence-building measures and the Kashmir issue should

be taken up later. But since Pakistan wants to use the proposal for negotiations only for international propaganda, Imran Khan is writing letters for the sake of public posturing only. Hence India should not dilute its stand that talks and terror cannot go together. Pakistan must first arrest terrorist leaders like Hafiz Saeed, Masood Azhar, Syed Mohammed Yusuf Shah, commonly known as Syed *Salahudeen*, and their accomplices. Islamabad should also hand over Dawood Ibrahim, Chhota Shakeel and other members of 'D' company before the start of any meaningful negotiations.

India also needs to develop a separate secret force which is capable of operating on foreign/enemy soil. Most world powers possess special forces for this purpose, for example, United States has SEALs, United Kingdom has Special Air Service (SAS) which is an elite military unit, Russia has Spetsnaz while Germany has GSG-9. If India wants to destroy terrorist camps run by LeT or JeM, then a secret elite force is essential. India can then eliminate hardcore terrorists as well as fugitives like Dawood Ibrahim and his accomplices.²⁴

Israelis have developed special capabilities and were able to punish several culprits of the "Holocaust" of the Second World War. Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir also authorised Israeli intelligence organisation Mossad to exterminate the members of the Palestinian terrorist outfit Black September after they assassinated 11 members of the Israeli Olympic team in 1972. Mossad launched a covert Operation "Wrath of God" also known as Operation "Bayonet" and eliminated all the assassins.

Iran also has this capability as they successfully killed eight Pakistani soldiers and injured several others as a revenge of the terrorist attack from Pakistan in which 29 Iranian Revolutionary Guards were killed. India must enhance its capabilities for counterstrikes in case of terrorist attacks in India. These counter-attacks will give a strong message that the terrorist attacks will be retaliated, and the perpetrators of the crime will be punished.

There are also reports that Mirage aircraft under Operation ‘Bandar’ could not discharge all the weapons at Balakot as the weapons could not be fully integrated with the old Mirage aircraft. The Ministry of Defence should send these aircraft to France for upgrading and integration of weapons. The integration must be done more professionally as non-integration may be dangerous at any crucial juncture. However, this may not be possible as France will gather knowledge about the details of weaponry. In that case, we may try the integration of weapons from the country from where the weapons are purchased.²⁵

Internationally, Western powers supported the Indian action and it was considered an action in self-defence. India also played its cards well and successfully generated goodwill. However, one has to be careful if Pakistan assisted terrorist outfits again carry out terrorist strikes of Pulwama magnitude; then India’s action will be important as the masses in India will press for stringent action and it will not be easy to violate Pakistan’s territory every time. Hence security forces and intelligence agencies should be more vigilant to ensure that terrorists are prevented from carrying out any strike in the country.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

J. K. Verma is a former Director in the Cabinet Secretariat. He is a Pakistan watcher and has written extensively on the nefarious designs of the ISI, smuggling of fake Indian currency notes, etc. He is also writing on other SAARC countries. He has written articles on Islamic terrorism and left-wing extremism. He is a strategic analyst and delivers lectures at training academies of paramilitary and intelligence organisations.

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- Initiate, co-ordinate and promote studies related to national security and strategy and formulation of national security strategies.
- Organise and facilitate the holding of seminars, symposia, lectures on national security policies and strategic issues concerning the region in general and India in particular.
- Assist in the development of post graduate research and teaching on Asia Pacific strategic affairs and national security strategy related issues.
- Promote awareness and informed public debate on strategic and national security issues.
- Publish research papers put together by members and associates of the Forum and independent intellectuals. Publications would be in the form of a tri-annual journal, research papers and books.
- Provide constructive inputs for policy development to parliamentarians, ministries, public and private sector enterprises and academic institutions on strategic and national security related issues.
- Provide consultancy services to the defence industrial establishment in India and assist them in their marketing drive by organising periodic defence exhibitions.
- Establish and award stipendiary and non-stipendiary fellowships.

