

Modi's Kashmir Policy: The Probable Consequence for the Security of South Asia

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Abstract

India's decision to pursue an aggressive foreign policy to subdue Pakistan and its tactic to implement such policy entails a perilous course of action. The dangerous brinksmanship between the states since the last two years along the Line of Control (LoC) and the Working Boundary could lead to disastrous consequences. The US's ever increasing cooperation with India and its lukewarm response to Islamabad's call, is yet another factor, which encourages New Delhi to adopt an offensive behaviour towards Pakistan. Modi's Kashmir policy has resulted in failure, causing despondency among the people of the Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK). Modi's rigid approach towards Pakistan and the people of IOK continues to irk the Indo-Pak relations. India's absurd policy towards Pakistan has rather compelled Islamabad to resist, which faded the flexibility and goodwill towards New Delhi shown by it during the past ten years. An unresolved Kashmir issue is a historical fact, which cannot be sidelined and ignored for too long. Even a minor miscalculation by India, in pursuit of its foreign policy objectives for undermining Islamabad's will to resist, could put the entire region in trouble. India and the international community should, therefore, realise that none of the strategies other than 'dialogue' involving all the stakeholders would succeed in resolving the long pending issues including the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K).

Keywords: Pak-India Relations, Kashmir Issue, Brinksmanship, Lukewarm Relations, Coercive Policy, Miscalculation.

Introduction

Despite having no direct or indirect role in the outcome of the incidents of 9/11, Pakistan was put under tremendous pressure. In this backdrop,

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Pakistan was compelled to adopt an overall defensive policy. Due to its domestic and external constraints, the Kashmir issue, as a foreign policy agenda, was relegated to the lower priority. The former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, Ambassador Inam ul Haque, considers Pakistan's Kashmir policy as a "prisoner of the circumstances."¹ It is perceived that India became the key beneficiary of the incident that slowed down the momentum of 'Azadi' (Independence) struggle being pursued by the Kashmiri people. It also succeeded in isolating the Kashmiris through a well-structured narrative of declaring their *Azadi* struggle as an act of terrorism.²

Pakistan continued to maintain its principle stance over the Kashmir issue in the post-9/11 scenario. However, Kashmiri's struggle for *Azadi* suffered setbacks due to the presence of around 700,000 Indian troops in the Valley.³ Waseem Shehzad consolidated this view with facts that "in Srinagar, capital of the IOK, there were 300,000 troops for one million residents: one soldier for every three civilians, making Srinagar the most militarised city in the world."⁴

Nonetheless, despite the presence of massive armed forces in the Valley with full back-up support of India's draconian laws,⁵ New Delhi has failed to consolidate its gains in the IOK. It is this very reason that India continues to maintain a large military presence in the Valley. India

¹ A formal interview conducted by the researcher with Mr Inam-ul-Haque, former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, on September 24, 2014, at Rawalpindi (1945-2145 hrs)

² P R Kumaraswamy, "India and Israel: Evolving Strategic Partnership," *Mideast Security and Policy Studies*, no. 40 (September 1998), www.biu.ac.il/SOC/besa/publications/40pub.html and Vijay Prashad, "The Convulsions of Kashmir: South Asia after 11 September," *Global Dialogue*, vol. 4 no. 2 (Spring 2002), worlddialogue.org/print.php?id=203

³ Fasahat Husain Syed and Sobia Haidar, eds., "Indo-Pak Relations," *Fact Files, Islamabad Policy Research Institute*, ipripak.org/factfiles/ff27.shtml and Dr Ghulam Nabi Fai, "Resolution of Kashmir is in the Interest of Global Community," *Kashmiri American Council*, www.kashmiri.com/index.php?option=com_acymailing...

⁴ Waseem Shehzad, "Indian Brutality, Killings in Kashmir Continue," *Crescent*, July 2010, www.crescent-online.net/.../indian-brutality-killings-in-kashmir-continue,

⁵ "Draconian Laws Must be Immediately Repealed in Kashmir," *Kashmir American Council*, www.kashmiri.com

could not take risk of reducing its forces despite its tall claims that normalcy in the IOK has been restored.

It is believed that being realist, the Indian leadership has never been sincere towards resolution of the Kashmir issue. The Indian attitude during the talks on the subject held between India and Pakistan for the last 50 years have brought hopelessness for the people of the IOK. Instead of moving a step forward, India's rigid approach created a climate of mistrust and suspicion, which continue to grow thicker. During the past five decades, India played its cards smartly to consolidate its position in Kashmir by creating legal lacunas' thereby weakening Pakistan's position both at the bilateral and international level.⁶

Contrary to the 'go slow policy' of the Indian National Congress (INC) led government, Modi decided to follow a different approach on the Kashmir issue. In his election manifesto, Modi promised to re-integrate Kashmir into the India Union by doing away Article 370 of the Indian Constitution. During the last election, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) applied all tactics to win a requisite number of seats in Kashmir legislative assembly.⁷ Although it failed to win the desired majority seats, yet it managed to fetch 25 seats, the ever-highest numbers the party could win in Kashmir. It gained enough power to manipulate Mehbooba Mufti's government in the IOK. Yet, since the BJP could not establish its stronger foothold in the Valley, its ambitious plan of doing

⁶ Rasheeduddin Khan and Sumit Ganguly, "Kashmir Challenges and Prospects," *Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies*, www.rgics.org/pdf1/wpo-34.pdf; Mayilvaganan, "A Survey of Elections in Kashmir," *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS)*, April 10, 2002, www.ipcs.org/.../jammu-kashmir/a-survey-of-elections-in-kashmir-717.h and "The Kashmir Accord 13 Nov 1974," *Important Historical Documents, Government of India Publication*, www.jammu-kashmir.com/documents/documents.html

⁷ K P Nayar, "Real Target: Kashmir Special Status 'Mission 44' Sinks Talks," *Telegraph*, August 20, 2014, <http://www.telegraphindia.com/1140820/jsp/frontpage/story>; Mariana Baabar, "India Calls-off Secretary Level Talks with Pakistan," *News International*, August 19, 2014 and Rodrigo Tavares, "Resolving the Kashmir Conflict: Pakistan, India, Kashmiris and Religious Militants," *Asian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 16, no. 3 (2008): 284, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02185370802504316>

away with Article 370 could not materialised.⁸ Above all, the historic decision given by the J&K High Court on the status of Kashmir has pushed Modi's desire into the backyard.⁹

It is believed that Modi's fast track policy on Kashmir has caused damage to India for two main reasons: First, Islamabad has been able to shed away the international pressure, which made the Kashmir issue re-emerged again as one of its priority foreign policy agenda after staying in the backyard for over one decade. India's hawkish attitude towards Pakistan, since the last two years, did not get encouragement from the international community. Greater cooperation between China and Pakistan has also emerged as a setback to India's foreign policy. Second, Modi is no more in the driving seat in the IOK. His policy has helped Kashmiri freedom fighters unite. Mufti, as the Chief Minister, might still like to stay in India's fold, but she seems losing grip over her people.

In the aftermath of the cold-blooded murder of Burhan Muzaffar Wani, a wave of carnage, no-one had expected, had been unleashed across the IOK.¹⁰ Besides killing the innocent youth, the Indian forces brutally used the pellet guns against the helpless protestors injuring and blinding hundreds of them.¹¹ As a result, despite the presence of overwhelming military forces, large scale rallies are being held regularly in the Valley against India. A full-

⁸ Asif Ezdi, "Game-changer in Kashmir," *News International*, December 29, 2014; Abid Siffi, "BJP fails to make Inroad in Kashmir Valley, could not Secure any Seat in Ladakh region," December 23, 2014, www.headlinealley.com and Khalid Iqbal, "Modi's Kashmir Policy: Penny Wise Pound Foolish," *IPRI Journal*, January 8, 2015, www.ipripak.org/modis-kashmir-policy-penny-wise-pound-foolish/

⁹ "Jammu and Kashmir High Court says, State Government should Review Obsolete Laws," *Economic Times*, October 17, 2015, economictimes.indiatimes.com/.../jammu-and-kash... and "Article 370 is Permanent, beyond Amendment, rules Jammu and Kashmir High Court," *India Today*, October 11, 2015, indiatoday.intoday.in > IndiaSrinagar

¹⁰ Shujaat Bukhari, "Why the Death of Militant Burhan Wani has Kashmiris Up in Arms," *BBC News*, July 11, 2016, www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-36762043 and Praveen Swami, "Decoding Burhan Wani's Death: Behind Hot Pursuit, Hunt for Informer who Turned Cold," *Indian Express*, July 25, 2016.

¹¹ Suhasini Raj, "Indian Forces Kill 10 During Kashmir Protests Over Separatist's Death," *New York Times*, July 9, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/.../indian-forces-kill-10-during-kashmir-protests-over-separatis...> and Mirza Waheed, "India is Blinding Young Kashmiri Protesters – and No One will Face Justice," *Guardian*, July 18, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com> > Opinion > Kashmir

blown protest by the university and college students has now erupted on the streets. Soutik Biswas writes that “in a rare sight, even school girls are throwing stones and hitting police vehicles.”¹² During these protests, Pakistani flag has been waved frequently, which clearly demonstrate Kashmiri's resolve to resist.¹³

The authors are of the view that Modi's regime is being misled by its establishment and media. His intelligentsia encouraged him to exploit Pakistan's internal issues and its economic problems. As a planned strategy, India continues to persuade the anti-state elements to destabilise Pakistan by providing them with arms and logistics support in close collaboration with Afghan intelligence agencies.¹⁴

It is viewed that India's bullying attitude, since 2014, has only strengthened Islamabad's resolve to harden its stance over the Kashmir issue. Pakistan has not only sustained but also discarded the pressure mounting from various circles. Its economy is also no more in limbo. Hence, it is highly unlikely that Pakistan would surrender to India's demand. Any possible crisis in South Asia due to New Delhi's gamble and stubborn attitude must not be seen in isolation, it will have a long-lasting global impact.

In this background, this paper is an effort to explain that coercive diplomacy is not an option for India to impose its will against its next-door nuclear neighbour, Pakistan. The paper unfolds in the following sequence: first, introduction; second, BJP's Kashmir policy; third, Modi's strategy to win public support; fourth, revival of Pakistan's Kashmir policy and its impact on Indo-Pak relations and finally a way forward.

¹² Soutik Biswas, “Is India losing Kashmir?,” *BBC News*, April 26, 2017 and Faisal Khan, “Female Kashmiri Students Lead Anti-India Protests,” *Aljazeera*, April 27, 2017.

¹³ “Protesters Raise Pakistani Flags in Indian Kashmir,” *Fox News*, July 20, 2016, www.foxnews.com/world/2016/.../protesters-raise-pakistani-flags-in-indian-kashmir.htm...

¹⁴ Sanaullah Khan, “Indian, Afghan Agencies Supporting Terror in Pakistan: IB Chief,” *Dawn*, October 18, 2016 and “Menacing Plot by India and Afghanistan to Break Pakistan,” *Balochistan Times*, March 10, 2014, <https://balochistantimes.wordpress.com/>

BJP's Kashmir Policy

Primarily, India's Kashmir policy remained consistent throughout the history. Irrespective of the party that remained in the power, India has never shown any flexibility to give the right to self-determination to the people of the IOK. However, the strategy used by the Congress to gain time had been different from that of the BJP. Yasir Masood writes, "the BJP is a right-leaning, Hindu nationalist party. It is the first major party to mobilise overtly on the basis of religious identity and to adopt a clearly anti-Muslim stance."¹⁵ Despite the BJP's anti-Muslim stance, Atal Bihari Vajpayee was a very clear-headed politician, who wanted to take the peace process forward so as to end the permanent confrontation with Pakistan, said Amarjit Singh Daulat, the former Chief of India's intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW).¹⁶ Rekha Chowdhary, a former professor at University of Jammu, viewed that under the leadership of Vajpayee, the BJP took extraordinary steps to resume talks both with Pakistan and with Kashmiri separatists and put in place a number of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) including a 'free and fair' election. Muzamil Jaleel, the Kashmir Chief of Bureau for the *Indian Express*, is of the view that "despite the ideological position of the BJP, Vajpayee is remembered as one of the most dynamic Indian Prime Ministers in Kashmir."¹⁷ Nevertheless, during the 2004 election campaign, the BJP took a hard stance against Pakistan and Kashmiri separatists and went back to its original position of opposing Article 370 though, they lost the election.¹⁸

Regardless of the difficulties in managing the coalition government, Vajpayee drafted a better strategy to maintain peace in the region. Though Manmohan Singh, as the new Indian Prime Minister, was keen to take his policies forward, he failed because unlike Vajpayee, he could not get

¹⁵ Yasir Masood Khan, "The BJP's Track to Triumph: A Critical Analysis," *Institute of Regional Studies, Islamabad*, vol. xxviii, no. 3 (2014): 13, www.irs.org.pk/focus3-14.pdf,

¹⁶ Muzamil Jaleel, "Kashmir is in Pre-'96 Era, Narendra Modi is in the Best Position to Handle it: RAW Chief A S Daulat," *Indian Express*, July 12, 2015, <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/kashmir-is-in-pre-96-era-narendra-modi-is-in-the-best-position-to-handle-it-2/#sthash.y6qHYJKE.dpuf>

¹⁷ Rekha Chowdhary, "Modi's Roadmap for India's Kashmir and Pakistan Policies," *East Asia Forum*, May 16, 2014, [www.eastasiaforum.org/.../modis-roadmap-for-indias-kashmir-and-pakist...=](http://www.eastasiaforum.org/.../modis-roadmap-for-indias-kashmir-and-pakist...)

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

requisite support from within his government. Yet, Lisa Curtis appreciated Singh for his good work in keeping South Asia away from serious tension. She says that although he failed to achieve a breakthrough with that of Pakistan over Kashmir dispute but still, he deserves credit for keeping the two countries out of military conflict.¹⁹

During an interview, Daulat draws a comparison of the three Indian leaders namely Vajpayee, Singh and Modi. He viewed that due to coalition governments, other two leaders had limitations because they were to look left and right to seek support but Modi does not have any. Today, "I feel a bit like we are in the pre-96 days ...*baatchet ho sakti hai, politics ho sakti hai*, which is what Kashmiris since 1990 have been looking for." But in reality, "either the clock has stopped somewhere or we've moved back a bit," said Daulat.²⁰

Ever since Modi took over as the Prime Minister of India, his slogans of regional economic development and integration were overshadowed by his policies to enhance India's defence capabilities. He has brought at front the military bureaucracy to play a greater role in foreign and security policy decision making process. As part of its grand strategy, New Delhi is involved in coercive diplomacy aimed at persuading Pakistan to give up its independent foreign policy including that of policy on Kashmir.²¹ It is believed that Modi has been able to draw maximum advantage from the US by maintaining close ties with the Obama administration. The new US administration has also committed to strengthening its relationship with India to protect their common strategic interests in the Indian Ocean and the Asia Pacific region.²²

Said Nazir Mohmand, a defence analyst, says that domestically, Modi has undertaken an ambitious reform agenda including political, economic as well as social programmes. On the foreign policy front,

¹⁹ Lisa Curtis, "India and Pakistan under Modi," *Spearhead Research*, April 2, 2014, spearheadresearch.org > Home > Security

²⁰ Jaleel, "Kashmir is in Pre-'96 Era."

²¹ One-day Conference on "Pakistan-India Relations: Post-Congress Era," arranged by *Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI)*, August 4, 2015.

²² "Remarks by President Trump and Prime Minister Modi of India in a Joint Press Statement," *The White House, Office of the Press Secretary*, June 26, 2017, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/.../remarks-president-trump-and-prime-minister-modi-in...>

Modi's agenda is even more ambitious. He wished to "secure a permanent seat for India at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC); membership of Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG); rebalancing in Asia Pacific; dominance in the Indian Ocean; hegemony in the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) region; competition with China and confrontation with Pakistan."²³ Because of the American backing, India's dream of becoming a member of the UNSC as well as the NSG is likely to materialise in an earlier time frame.

The former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, Aizaz Ahmed Chaudhry, claimed that RAW has been found involved in espionage activities inside Pakistan.²⁴ In this regard, an undercover RAW agent Kulbushan Jadhav, a serving naval officer from the Indian Navy, who has been arrested from Balochistan during March 2016, has already confessed India's involvement in destabilising Pakistan.²⁵ Curtis predicted even before the outcome of India's parliamentary election that with Modi's rise to power, "there would be an increased likelihood of a greater Indo-Pakistani tension and potential for military escalation, especially if a major terrorist attack occurs in India."²⁶ India's former External Minister, Salman Khurshid, said while talking to a panel discussion at Islamabad, "the ideological resistance of the BJP to the 'Idea of India' has put the entire justice project in cold storage, to await the return of secular politics."²⁷

Modi-led government has opened up multiple fronts against Pakistan. During the last two years, India has been violating ceasefire agreement along the LoC and the Working Boundary and killed and injured many innocent people.²⁸ The Indian troops did not hesitate even to fire on

²³ One-day Conference on "Pakistan-India Relations."

²⁴ Zahid Gishkori, "RAW behind Terrorist Activities in Pakistan: Foreign Secretary," *Express Tribune*, May 14, 2015.

²⁵ Kamran Yousaf, "Indian Spy Admits RAW Destabilising Pakistan," *Express Tribune*, March 30, 2016, <https://tribune.com.pk> › Pakistan and Syed Ali Shah, "RAW Officer' Arrested in Balochistan," *Dawn*, March 25, 2016, www.dawn.com/news/1247665

²⁶ Curtis, "India and Pakistan under Modi."

²⁷ Panel discussion arranged by *Jinnah Institute* on November 12, 2015, at Islamabad.

²⁸ Rupam Jain Nair and Mehreen Zahra-Malik, "Modi's Bravado ups the ante in India-Pakistan fighting," *Reuters*, October 12, 2014, <http://mobile.reuters.com/article/idUSKCN0I103H20141012?irpc=932> and "India Rejects UN Probe into Ceasefire Violations," *News International*, October 14, 2014.

public transport as well.²⁹ Repeated violation of the LoC besides, the Indian politicians and military leadership continue to give intimidating statements against Pakistan.³⁰ The former Advisor to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs, Sartaj Aziz, has concluded that “since he came to power, Modi wants to normalise (relations) on his terms and do not want to talk about Kashmir. But the rights of Kashmiris cannot be denied, the people of Pakistan want us to help them and we are providing them diplomatic, political and moral support.”³¹ Modi's strategy appears to be “waiting for Pakistan to blink on Kashmir,” says Ali Ahmed.³² Pramit Pal Chaudhuri, the Foreign Editor of the *Hindustan Times* says that at Ufa, Modi's message to Nawaz Sharif, the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, was very clear. He said, “...not that we won't talk, but that any conversation would be about tangibles regarding terror.”³³ India is ill-prepared to discuss anything other than terrorism.³⁴ The authors believe that the Ufa Joint Statement did cause a great deal of embarrassment to Sharif.

Nasim Zehra, a Pakistani journalist and TV anchor person, is of the view that Sharif put himself in trouble by opting for this controversial statement, especially in an environment when the Modi regime had already taken “unprecedented steps to shrink the space for dialogue and conflict resolution.”³⁵ Chaudhuri has gone a step ahead and said that “the Joint Statement at Ufa has replaced the Composite Dialogue with a new line-up of bilateral meetings.” It has put tremendous pressure on

²⁹ M A Mir and Kamran Yousaf, “8 killed as Indian Forces Target Passenger Bus near LoC,” *Express Tribune*, November 23, 2016, <https://tribune.com.pk> › Pakistan › Jammu & Kashmir; Tariq Naqash, “Four reported killed in Indian firing across Line of Control,” *Dawn*, November 19, 2016, www.dawn.com/news/1297329 and Ali Ahmed, “Demystifying India's Volte-Face on Pakistan,” *Diplomat*, September 2014, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/09/demystifying-indias-volte-face-on-pakistan/>

³⁰ One-day Conference on “Pakistan-India Relations.”

³¹ “Pak took ‘K’-refuge over Fears of being Exposed by India on Terror,” *Times of India*, August 23, 2015.

³² “Developing Dangers,” *Express Tribune*, August 20, 2014 and Ahmed, “Demystifying India's Volte-Face on Pakistan.”

³³ Pramit Pal Chaudhuri, “Talk about Terrorism or Nothing: Why PM Narendra Modi met Nawaz Sharif,” *Hindustan Times*, July 11, 2015, www.hindustantimes.com/.../modi...kashmir/article1-1368035.aspx,

³⁴ “Pak took ‘K’-refuge over Fears of being Exposed by India on Terror.”

³⁵ Nasim Zehra, “Ufa Statement has put Nawaz Sharif on the Mat in Pakistan,” *Hindustan Times*, July 16, 2015.

Pakistan's political leadership.³⁶ Yet, Islamabad has already absorbed too much pressure, therefore, it is unlikely to blink on the Kashmir issue as wished by India.

Since 2014, India's key leadership adopted an aggressive posture towards Pakistan. The manner in which the bilateral talks have been put off twice, demonstrates how India intends to bring about change through implicit means.³⁷ In an editorial published in the *Express Tribune*, it was expressed that "the BJP government holds the affairs of India in an iron grip for now following its sweeping electoral win and the consequences of this for Pakistan are just now beginning to be felt."³⁸ Modi has already decided to keep the Hurriyat Party leadership away from his Kashmir policy because it goes against his intended foreign policy scheme.³⁹

It has also been highlighted earlier that India continues to maintain pressure on Pakistan, which is already involved in combating terrorism since 9/11. During October-November 2015, India conducted large scale combat exercises in Rajasthan sector, involving almost the entire Southern Army Command including 21st Corps, one of the three 'Strike Corps' of the Indian army.⁴⁰ India believes that this might be the right time to bring Pakistan down, said Farrukh Khan Pitafi.⁴¹ India's decision to cause unrest in Pakistan seems part of the larger plan to see it imploding.

Modi's Strategy to Win Public Support

There are several important reasons which directed the way forward for the BJP's stunning victory in the 2014 elections including the political and ideological vacuum created by the rival INC. Besides, the poor

³⁶ Chaudhuri, "Talk about Terrorism or Nothing."

³⁷ Nasim Zehra, "An Asymmetrical Dialogue," *Express Tribune*, July 16, 2015, tribune.com.pk/story/921548/an-asymmetrical-dialogue/ and Ahmed, "Demystifying India's Volte-Face on Pakistan."

³⁸ "Developing Dangers."

³⁹ "Pak Took 'K'-Refuge over Fears of being Exposed by India on Terror."

⁴⁰ Rajat Pandit, "India Eyes Swift Attacks into Enemy Land in Upcoming Drill on Pak Front," *Times of India*, September 22, 2015, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/India-eyes-swift-attacks-into-enemy-land-in-upcoming-drill-on-pak-front/articleshow/49053262.cms>

⁴¹ Farrukh Khan Pitafi, "Dear India, Your Policy on Pakistan is Utterly Obsolete," *Dawn*, August 27, 2015.

performance of the INC-led government, the hardened anti-Pakistan stance adopted by the BJP in its election campaign also played a significant role in its victory. Masood Khan writes that the BJP and Modi, as its central character, are considered the offspring of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).⁴² By playing an anti-Muslim card successfully, Modi became a popular leader and got elected as the Chief Minister of Gujrat.⁴³ To maintain his popularity graph, he replicates the same strategy as the Prime Minister of India. As a result of his domestic policies, "Muslims are terrorised and other religious groups, too, as are secularists. The situation can only be called fascist," said Himani Bannerji.⁴⁴

It is believed that in line with Modi's thinking, his team has been following an aggressive approach towards Pakistan, a strategy which is easily acceptable within the Indian society. Chowdhary explains the ideological position of the BJP based on "Cultural Nationalism, with an emphasis on the concepts of '*Hindutva*', 'territorial integrity' and 'unity with uniformities' and... is oppose asymmetrical federalism with any kind of constitutional exception for the state of Jammu and Kashmir."⁴⁵ Khan says, "*Hindutva* stands as the ideology and political philosophy of a group of militant anti-minority Hindu organisations."⁴⁶ The BJP is considered "as the parliamentary wing of a Hindu Nationalist Movement that has already succeeded in radically changing the Indian political culture for the worse." Party discourse even intends getting rid of the separate civil code for Muslims which to talk for a separate homeland for Kashmiris.⁴⁷ The BJP is reinforcing "this new national enterprise of unbridled neo-liberalism laced with religious-cultural ideology," said Bannerji.⁴⁸

⁴² Khan, "The BJP's Track to Triumph," 54.

⁴³ An interview with Bengali-Canadian writer, scholar and activist, Himani Bannerji, conducted by Salmaan Khan on "India and the Rise of Religious Nationalism – The BJP, Masculinity, Islamophobia and Neoliberal Politics, Violence and the Decline of the Left," August 21, 2014, 7 and 8, <https://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article34420>

⁴⁴ An interview with Himani Bannerji, 8 and 10.

⁴⁵ Chowdhary, "Modi's Roadmap for India's Kashmir and Pakistan Policies."

⁴⁶ Khan, "The BJP's Track to Triumph," 4.

⁴⁷ Syed and Haidar, ed., "Indo-Pak Relations."

⁴⁸ An interview with Himani Bannerji, 11.

Aijaz Zaka Syed viewed that the Indian society has been communally polarised “with increasing threats and terrorising of religious minorities. Modi’s regime is adamant to turn India into the supremacist ‘*Hindi Rashtra*,’ where minorities are being reduced to the status of a second-class citizen in the same line as the Jew had been under the Fuhrer.”⁴⁹ A secular India seems in crisis due to religious fanaticism. Modi stands accused of encouraging this culture by turning a blind eye to the growing religious fanaticism in India.⁵⁰ It is believed that with the existing policy, Modi might be able to gain some short-term goals but in the long-term, India might suffer a domestic collapse.

While commenting in the context of the cold-blooded murder of Mohammad Akhlaq at Dadri village for suspicion of having eaten beef, Pratap Bhanu Mehta opines that “the blame for this has to fall entirely on Modi. Those who spread this poison enjoy his patronage.”⁵¹ The outcome of the election in the IOK, where the BJP clean swept the elections in Hindu majority areas of the Jammu region amply proved the emerging trends of fundamentalism, radicalisation and polarisation in the Indian society.⁵²

To survive domestically, Modi has to make continuous move externally especially with regards to India’s relation with Islamabad. Sushil Aaron said that there are deep rooted differences between India and Pakistan including terrorism, the Siachen and Kashmir. There are no hopes of melting ice on these issues soon. Thus, in order to make any rapprochement towards Pakistan, Modi would wish to secure the conviction of Mumbai attackers in Pakistan. Conversely, Modi regime has decided to go ‘out of its way’ to save sentenced Indian spy, Kulbhushan Jadhav, from death row in Pakistan. The Indian Foreign Minister, Sushma Swaraj, has even warned Islamabad

⁴⁹ Aijaz Zaka Syed, “Holy Cow and Other Bull,” *News International*, October 10, 2015.

⁵⁰ Editorial, “Secular India in Crisis,” *News International*, October 10, 2015.

⁵¹ Pratap Bhanu Mehta, “Dadri Reminds us How PM Narendra Modi Bears Responsibility for the Poison that is Being Spread,” *Indian Express*, October 3, 2015, indianexpress.com › opinion › columns, and Leila Nathoo, “India PM Narendra Modi Facing Calls to Condemn Hindu Mob that Killed Muslim Man for Slaughtering Sacred Cow,” *Independent*, October 8, 2015, www.independent.co.uk/.../india-pm-narendra-modi-fa...

⁵² Iqbal, “Modi’s Kashmir Policy.”

of the consequences of Jadhav's execution.⁵³ In order to draw the attention of the Indian public away from the domestic issues, a state of restlessness and chaos along the Indo-Pak border seems the most suited strategy that Modi has decided to follow.⁵⁴

Additionally, Modi is also under pressure from those conservative voices in the establishment that remain suspicious of Pakistan Army's outlook towards India. Since Modi and his party certainly relies on anti-Muslim rhetoric as their strength to exercise political and social control within the country, therefore, he is also compelled not to extend cooperation towards Pakistan, fearing that if he does so, it might fire back domestically.⁵⁵ Finally, it is believed that a strong nexus between Modi and the Indian Armed Forces has emerged. As a result, they have been given greater role in formulating and implementing India's foreign policy and domestic policies.

Revival of Pakistan's Kashmir Policy: Impact on Indo-Pak Relations

As highlighted in the introductory paragraphs, the 9/11 episode and ensuing developments in South Asia, over the next two years, forced Pakistan to review its diplomatic stance over the Kashmir issue. The attack on the Indian Parliament and the consequent massing up of the forces by India along Pakistani border with the sufficient international backing put Islamabad under tremendous pressure. During this period, political and security environment in and around South Asia made it difficult for Pakistan to extend an open-ended diplomatic/material support to the Kashmiris' *Azadi* struggle.⁵⁶

During the last decade, the political leadership of Pakistan tried to improve its relations with India while bypassing Kashmir issue, though a symbolic support for them continued. After winning the 2008 elections, Asif Ali Zardari, the then President of Pakistan, though "reaffirmed his

⁵³ "India Will Go out of its Way to Save Jadhav from Death Row: Swaraj," *Dawn*, April 11, 2017 and "Kulbhushan Jadhav: the Story so Far," *Hindu*, July 13, 2017, www.thehindu.com/news/national/kulbhushan-jadhav-the-story.../article18075599.ece

⁵⁴ One-day Conference on "Pakistan-India Relations."

⁵⁵ Sushil Aaron, "Modi's Kashmir Gamble," *Friday Times*, March 13, 2015.

⁵⁶ A Z Hilali, "Pakistan's Foreign Policy Objectives in the Post September 11, 2001 Era," *Strategic Studies*, vol xxxii & xxxiii, no. 4 and 1 (Winter 2012 & Spring 2013):161.

party's support for Kashmiris but also stressed that Pakistan's relations with India should no longer be tied solely to the resolution of the dispute."⁵⁷ Ashok K Behuria, a Fellow and Coordinator of the South Asia Centre, at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis (IDSA), is of the view that "Zardari went to the extent of saying that a solution to Kashmir could wait but there must be movement on other fronts like promoting trade, people-to-people contact and a friendly relationship with India."⁵⁸

In order to promote economic agenda of Pakistan, Sharif did try to maintain soft corner towards India. Because of his lenient approach, he succeeded in engaging India through 'Composite Dialogue' process, which was subsequently derailed after the Kargil episode.⁵⁹ By participating in Modi's oath-taking ceremony, Sharif made another attempt to re-establish peace with India by focusing on economic ties with it. Yet, his desire to open a new chapter in the bilateral relationship was not reciprocated by India.⁶⁰ This argument has been reinforced by Khurshid who very candidly opined that "Sharif is genuinely committed to peace with India and has more than once put himself in considerable discomfort to find an opening beyond pious incantations."⁶¹

Notwithstanding, at the international forums, Sharif as Prime Minister of Pakistan, has always been taking a solid stance on the Kashmir issue.⁶² The authors fully endorse the point of views of both Shaheen Sehbai and Tariq Butt who appreciated Sharif for his meaningful speech at the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in September 2014. Butt expressed that it was the first time ever that a Pakistani leader

⁵⁷"Pakistan's Relations with India: Beyond Kashmir?," *International Crisis Group*, Asia Report 224, May 3, 2012, www.crisisgroup.org/.../asia/...asia/.../224-pakistans-relations-with-india-...

⁵⁸Ashok K Behuria, "Pakistan's Approach to Kashmir Since the Lahore Agreement: is there Any Change?," *Strategic Analysis* vol. 33, no. 3 (May 2009): 443.

⁵⁹"Pakistan's Relations with India."

⁶⁰One-day Conference on "Pakistan-India Relations."

⁶¹ Panel discussion arranged by Jinnah Institute.

⁶²"Address by Mr Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, the former Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, during the General Debate of the Sixty-eighth Session of the UN General Assembly," *Prime Minister's Office, Islamic Republic of Pakistan*, pmo.gov.pk/pm_speeches.php and Mr Sharif's address during the General Debate of the 69th Session of the UN General Assembly on September 26, 2014 at 2230 hours Pakistani time. His speech was directly covered/telecasted by Pakistan Television (PTV).

has effectively covered all aspects of Pakistan's foreign policy forcefully including the issue of IOK, Palestine and the general status of marginalised Muslims across the globe.⁶³ Besides, it was the first time ever that Pakistan also handed over a dossier to the UNGA, alleging evidence of India's hand in terrorism inside Pakistan.

The Indian hawkish behaviour towards Pakistan clearly demonstrates that Sharif's decision to create good will with India could not yield the desired results. Over the last two years, Sharif has been occasionally frustrated by Modi. The authors believe that irrespective of what mistakes Pakistan may have committed in defending the cause of Kashmir at various forums and what India is trying to promote and sell to the international community, Pakistan's Kashmir policy has been revived. As explained before, Sharif took a clear position on the Kashmir issue at the 69th Session and, later on, during the 70th and 71st Sessions of the UNGA.⁶⁴

The peace initiatives proposed by Sharif during his speech at the UNGA Session were simple, rational and easy to implement. However, as expected, India out-rightly rejected Pakistan's 4-points initiative for the establishment of normal ties between the two countries. India's flawed thinking of focusing on issues of its own choice while ignoring those having relevance to Pakistan and Kashmiris would not work. India's aggressive behaviour towards Pakistan clearly demonstrates as to how the security situation in South Asia might emerge in near future.⁶⁵

⁶³ Tariq Butt, "Nawaz Told Everything Effectively, First Time Ever, at UNGA," *News International*, October 2, 2015 and Shaheen Sahbai, "Nawaz Made Forceful Presentation," *News International*, October 2, 2015.

⁶⁴ The speech of Sharif has been widely covered by national and international electronic and print media. *PTV News* and other Pakistani channels on September 30, 2015; Muhammad Saleh Zaafir, "Pakistan Proposes 4 Peace Initiatives to India," *News International*, October 1, 2015; "India Responds to Nawaz Sharif's U.N. Speech," *Hindu*, October 1, 2015; Zaafir, "India Rejects Pak 4-point Peace Initiative," *News International*, October 2, 2015; "PM Nawaz Sharif 'Mission Kashmir' at UN General Assembly 71st Session," *Times of Islamabad*, September 21, 2016 and Statement by Sharif, the former Prime Minister, at the General Debate of the 71st Session of the UN General Assembly on September 21, 2016, *Prime Minister's Office, Islamic Republic of Pakistan*, www.pmo.gov.pk/pm_speeches.php

⁶⁵ "At UN, Sushma Swaraj replies to Nawaz Sharif: Give up Terrorism and let's Talk," *Indian Express*, October 1, 2015; "India responds to Nawaz Sharif's U.N. Speech," and Zaafir, "India Rejects Pak 4-point Peace Initiative."

In general, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) continued to express solidarity with the people of Kashmir. The OIC extended its support to their right to self-determination.⁶⁶ Recently, Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, also offered his services to mediate on the Kashmir issue and suggested the two sides to resolve the dispute bilaterally through talks. But India out-rightly rejected the offer made by President Erdogan.⁶⁷ It is believed that Islamabad cannot afford giving up its claim over Kashmir. It is genuinely a jugular vein and lifeline for Pakistan. Besides its principal stance to stay with Kashmiri people, since all rivers flow from Kashmir, it cannot afford giving up its claim over Kashmir at any cost. Yet, to deal with the Kashmir issue in the backdrop of 9/11, Pakistan changed its strategy and not a policy which has now been revived. In reaction, India has become more hawkish towards Pakistan as well towards the people of IOK. It has resorted to unprovoked firing across the LoC and Working Boundary in violation of 2003-Cease Fire Agreement between India and Pakistan.

Thus, the state of security along the LoC and the Working Boundary, are volatile. Similarly, since Kashmiri youth has taken decision to lead the *Azadi* struggle, the security condition inside the IOK has gone from bad to worst. Daulat also acknowledged the new approach adopted by the Kashmiri youth to fight back. He said the Kashmiri youth is more determined and well trained.⁶⁸

The reaction shown by youth against Modi's regime in the backdrop of the cold-blooded murder of Wani amply demonstrates the future discourse of the people of Kashmir. "The absence of political engagement to resolve the Kashmir issue is setting a new political discourse and militancy is gaining legitimacy among people who believe Delhi is ignoring political realities," said Shujaat Bukhari.⁶⁹ Prem Shanker, an Indian writer, while talking to Hamid Mir on *Geo TV* on May 16, 2017 said "even if India brings in 70 lac army personnel, it will not be able to contain the Freedom Movement initiated by Kashmiris."

⁶⁶ Salient features of the meeting's proceedings were telecasted on *PTV News* Channel at 2100 hours on September 29, 2015 and "Implementation of UN Resolutions on Kashmir Demanded," *News International*, September 30, 2015.

⁶⁷ "India Dismisses Erdogan's offer of Multilateral Talks on Kashmir," *Dawn*, May 02, 2017 and Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, "India turns down Turkey's offer to Mediate with Pakistan on Kashmir," *Economic Times*, May 02, 2017.

⁶⁸ Jaleel, "Kashmir is in Pre-'96 Era."

⁶⁹ Bukhari, "Why the Death of Militant Burhan Wani has Kashmiris Up in Arms."

To reinforce the argument, the authors would like to quote, Shekhar Gupta, a leading columnist who says that while Kashmir is “territorially secure, we are fast losing it emotionally and psychologically.” The abysmal seven per cent turnout in the Srinagar polls proved that “while your grip on the land is firm, you are losing its people.” In his memoirs, Daulat wrote that “nothing is constant; least of all Kashmir.” However, right now, “the anomie and anger of the youth, and a worrying people’s revolt against the Indian rule appear to be the only constants.”⁷⁰

Having seen the resilience of the youth to resist the Indian forces, even Farooq Abdullah, a pro-Indian Kashmiri leader got compelled to speak in favour of the youth, fighting for *Azadi*. While addressing his party workers, in the backdrop of Modi’s last visit to the IOK and the careless statement that Modi made (Kashmiris have a choice between terrorism and tourism), Abdullah said, “*Kashmir tumhare baap ka hai kya*,” that means does Kashmir belong to your father. He said youth is pelting stones and sacrificing lives for “freedom of this nation.” While recognising Pakistan as an important stakeholder, Abdullah said that “wake up India, talk to Pakistan or lose Kashmir.” His statement evoked sharp reactions from both the political leadership of India as well its intelligentsia.⁷¹

As highlighted earlier, Pakistan would not submit to the Indian demands. It has already shown its will and resilience to respond in coin. In recent past, by resorting to extensive shelling across the LoC, India

⁷⁰ Mirza Waheed, “India’s Crackdown in Kashmir: is this the World’s First Mass Blinding?,” *Guardian*, November 8, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com › World › Kashmir>; Biswas, “Is India losing Kashmir?;” Khan, “Female Kashmiri Students Lead Anti-India Protests,” and “Jinnah’s Two-Nation Theory Triumphant in Kashmir.”

⁷¹ Prabhash K Dutta, “Farooq Abdullah’s ‘*Kashmir tumhare baap ka hai kya*’ rant evokes sharp reactions,” *India Today*, November 26, 2016, [17](http://indiatoday.intoday.in › India, “Youth Pelting Stones Sacrificing Lives for Kashmir, not Tourism: Farooq Abdullah,” Times of India, April 11, 2017; Fayaz Wani, “Kashmiri Youth Picking up Guns to Fight for Freedom: Farooq Abdullah,” New Indian Express, February 24, 2017; Ashiq Hussain, “Kashmiri Youth not Sacrificing to Become Ministers, but for Azadi, Says Farooq Abdullah,” Hindustan Times, February 25, 2017, www.hindustantimes.com/.../kashmiri...farooq-abdullah/story-PZ7zkTAfK8LeHylciF..., and Sameer Yasir, “Farooq Abdullah Takes on Modi, Says Stone Throwers Lay Life for Kashmir not Tourism,” First Post, April 05, 2017, www.firstpost.com › Politics News</p></div><div data-bbox=)

has tried to weigh Pakistani response. India's claim of conducting a surgical strike across the LoC failed to make an impact.⁷² The authors are of the view that the flawed propaganda of conducting a surgical strike across the LoC has rather embarrassed the Indian political and military leadership.

It is believed that India's wishful thinking of fighting and winning a limited conventional war against Pakistan is unlikely to succeed. Currently, Pakistani conventional forces are sufficiently strong enough to defend itself against India's limited war without involving its nuclear forces. In this regard, Ambassador Haq opined that India's chances of winning a conventional war against Pakistan "now are very remote at best."⁷³

Nevertheless, keeping in view India's ambitious plan of developing its defence sector, the ground realities may change soon in its favour. India's defence spending has gone up to 12 per cent as compared to last year, which makes it "one of the fastest-growing major defence markets in the world."⁷⁴ India's projected defence capability has already started to show its far-reaching impact on Pakistan. The emerging security situation has thus, obligated Islamabad to acquire full-spectrum deterrence capability.⁷⁵

Way Forward

Under the prevailing security and political situation in the region and beyond, no single-track approach by Pakistan would work against India. Pakistan will have to evolve a simultaneous response aggressively to include diplomatic manoeuvres and security counter measures. Some of the relevant policy options to bring peace and economic prosperity in the region, as well as to keep some kind of checks on India, may include following:

⁷² "India's Claim of Surgical Strikes 'Fabrication of Truth': Pakistan," *Indian Express*, September 29, 2016; Syed Sammer Abbas, "Army Rubbishes Indian 'Surgical Strikes' Claim as Two Pakistani Soldiers Killed at LoC," *Dawn*, September 29, 2016 and "ISPR rejects Indian Claim of Surgical Strike along LoC," *Nation*, nation.com.pk/international/29.../indian-army-claims-to-conduct-surgical-strike-at-loc

⁷³ Haq, "India's Israel Envy."

⁷⁴ Shane Mason, "India Defense Budget Up, Procurement Down," *Defense News*, February 2, 2017.

⁷⁵ Michael Krepon and Travis Wheeler, "The Second Coming of MIRVs," *Stimson Center South Asian Program*, January 26, 2017.

- i One-sided sincerity and restraint would not work for long. If the two sides wish to contain the risk of escalation, New Delhi must stop its military bureaucracy from initiating uncalled firing along the LoC and the Working Boundary. By resuming multi-dimensional talks on long-pending issues, the paranoia chances of war could be reduced and steadily eliminated.
- ii Unlike Ufa statement, the engagement in future should be symmetrical and sustainable. For that “simultaneous engagement on all disputes, including those of security, political and economic nature is a must.”⁷⁶
- iii Pakistan should not be very keen to talk with India. It should rather focus its energies on internal security and economic stability because, without economic stability, even Kashmiris might not be too eager to join Pakistan.
- iv The future dialogue strategy of Pakistan with India should be sure footed. Also, and Kashmiris are the main stakeholders, therefore, they must be made part of any future dialogue process.
- v Monitoring mechanism along the LoC and the international border need to be strengthened. In this regard, the US has already highlighted its importance. As suggested by Sharif, there should be an expansion and full-time deployment of the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) along both sides of the LoC.⁷⁷
- vi In the past, the US role has always been crucial in keeping the nuclear-armed neighbours away from military escalation. In this context, Washington should remain vigilant and continue to play its constructive role in balancing the temperature between the two rival states.⁷⁸
- vii The current tension in Asia Pacific between China and the US and its allies has direct relevance to the security situation in South Asia.

⁷⁶ Zehra, “An Asymmetrical Dialogue.”

⁷⁷ Muhammad Saleh Zaafir, “US for Monitoring Mechanism at LoC,” *News International*, September 29, 2015.

⁷⁸ Curtis, “India and Pakistan under Modi.”

Even if Pakistan wishes to stay away from the ongoing Great Game, it would still be pulled in, especially in the backdrop of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and its tense relations with India on Kashmir issue. The global actors should, therefore, be mindful of the strategic scenarios, which are building in South and Southeast Asia and their subsequent impact on the regional peace and the global economy.

- viii Pakistan must also continue to maintain pressure on India by highlighting human right violations by its armed forces in the IOK and its alleged role in promoting and/or sponsoring terrorism inside Pakistan. Concerns must be raised with New Delhi on occurrence while keeping the world community in the loop. The latest dossier of India's involvement in terrorism acts inside Pakistan must also be shared with all relevant quarters so as to keep some kind of check on India.
- ix After handing over a dossier to the UNGA of India's alleged involvement in Pakistan's internal matters, Pakistan's representatives must not sit back. All relevant quarters of the UN must be kept on board about India's mindset and behaviour towards its neighbours as well as the people of IOK.⁷⁹
- x Both India and Pakistan must realise that economic revival of the two countries is crucial to reduce the poverty graph. Population explosion on both sides has already put tremendous pressure on their respective social sector. Hence, in order to let their economies grow, both sides should maintain cordial relations while keeping the doors for dialogue open for resolution of all outstanding issues and disputes.
- xi In this globalised world, the theory of 'relative gains' is no more practicable. Hence, both India and Pakistan must realise that neither of the two sides would be able to acquire everything that they might wish to attain. In order to resolve their long pending issues like Kashmir, both sides will have to shed away some part of their core interests by adopting a pragmatic policy of compromise and accommodation.

⁷⁹ President Masood Khan was talking on *PTV News* channel during a programme, 'Nishandai,' October 4, 2015 at 8.30 pm.

- xii Finally, in the changing geo-political environment, the people of Kashmir have become more relevant because they are the ultimate decision makers on the future of Kashmir. Therefore, in order to give them confidence in the peace process, both India and Pakistan should involve their leadership in future debate on the Kashmir Issue.

Conclusion

Generally, in order to realise their national aims and objectives, the states in their own capacity continue to follow the 'realist approach,' but none of them could get all that it would wish to have. India has failed to appreciate Pakistan's resolve and ability to survive and fight back. It is believed that an undue pressure by New Delhi against Pakistan is not maintainable for too long. It only helps create uncertainty, which is against the larger interest of this region.

The world community must realise that in this globalised world if one region is disturbed, the entire world would be affected. In such case, if the so called option of limited war exercised by India, it could spiral out of control and could result in a nuclear response by either side, it would have a devastating effect on climate and the food production, which could result in killing billion of people because of global famine.

India's strategic partnership with the US and the lukewarm relations between Islamabad and Washington is a dangerous trend with perilous consequences. The authors, therefore, sincerely hope that New Delhi should desist from its senseless policy of military adventurism against Pakistan so that the horrible consequences of such initiatives are avoided to protect and promote humanity. Finally, the authors also suggest that the US must avoid creating a strategic imbalance in this region affecting both China and Pakistan.