



**INSTITUTE OF
STRATEGIC STUDIES**

web: www.issi.org.pk
phone: +92-920-4423, 24
fax: +92-920-4658

Issue Brief

Pakistan and India: A Soured Affair

Mahrukh Khan, Research Fellow, ISSI

June 18, 2015

Narendra Modi's invitation to his Pakistani counter-part Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on his swearing in ceremony was seen as a constructive gesture. However, the impact of this overture was short lived. Since then, India's inimical stance towards Pakistan is not accidental. Anti-Pakistan rhetoric is often used by political parties in India to gain support of the public. The ideological position of the BJP feeds on the concept of 'Hindutva.' Hence, India has been intensifying its efforts to thwart Pakistan's development whilst unjustly accusing Pakistan of creating nuisance, and promoting terrorism¹.

Soon after Narendra Modi's took office, India criticized Pakistan at every forum. Tweeting on a social networking site, Modi openly blamed Pakistan for its obsession with three AK's²; one being AK 47 – which 'Pakistan uses to spill innocent Indian blood³.'

Modi at the UN General Assembly also picked on Pakistan and advised the international community to 'shun such countries.' Pakistan's struggle to bring the Kashmir issue at the United Nations General Assembly was rebuked as a 'pointless struggle⁴' by the Indian Prime Minister, who, moreover, blamed Pakistan for 'not producing conducive environment⁵' for bilateral talks and also tweeted on social media reaffirming no different⁶.

A positive shift in Pakistan and Afghanistan relations as well as Pakistan's good economic outlook has really roiled India. India wants to impose its writ as 'Big Brother' in the region and feels that Pakistan stands in its way of its ambition.

Recent statements by the Indian Defense Minister, Manohar Parrikar, demonstrate India's intentions towards Pakistan. He made a culpable statement about India's policy to 'neutralise terrorists through terrorists only⁷.'

Pakistan's response was swift and categorical. A statement issued by the Foreign Office stated; 'It must be the first time that a minister of an elected government openly advocates the use of terrorism in another country, on the pretext of preventing terrorism from that country or its non-state actors⁸.' Pakistani Defense Minister Khawaja Asif in response said 'Parrikar's statement was a blatant admission of sponsoring terrorism in Pakistan⁹.'

India's animus towards Pakistan to use terrorism against terrorism comes at a critical time when Pakistan is succeeding in its war against terrorism and it is on the threshold of an major economic transformation. BJP has adopted an aggressive policy not just against Pakistan but also China. The China

Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is on a steady path of implementation. Pakistan has also made a considered determination that India would use its intelligence assets, terrorists and non-state actor to destabilize Pakistan politically and economically and sabotage..

India has illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir and oppressed its people. It is smothering their voice by foisting BJP on the State Assembly. Indian Defense Minister on another occasion also acknowledged the 'so-called targeted killing by the Indian Army in India-held Jammu and Kashmir'¹⁰It now threatens to start proxy wars in Pakistan and unleash terrorism. India's growing hostility towards Pakistan and its development as a prosperous nation imperils stability in the region. Some of the irresponsible statements given by Indian politicians warrant references to the UN Security Council, General Assembly, European Union and the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation..'

With democratically elected governments, both Pakistan and India had an opportunity to write a new chapter in their history . Both Pakistan and India can craft a shared vision in South Asia and develop the region. However, Delhi's outlook towards Pakistan is antagonistic on all fronts.

Mr. Modi – a Hindu nationalist who has previously criticized Congress's foreign policy as weak and vowed in his campaign speeches to protect his country's borders – will likely follow a more 'muscular' anti-Pakistan foreign policy¹¹. Pakistan cannot think of granting India the Most Favored Nation status (MFN), in the backdrop of hostility generated by Delhi. Pakistan realizes that the way forward for the region is engagement but it cannot do so if India does not reciprocate. A breakthrough is badly needed to break the cycle of escalation. In the backdrop of recent statements, the onus is on India to restore the dialogue process.

Notes and References:

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 - ² "Modi Launches Anti-Pakistan Assault on AAP," <http://www.dawn.com/news/1095710>, the tweet can be followed at <https://twitter.com/narendramodi/status/448751340865347584>
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 - ⁴ Chidanand Rajghatta, "At UN general assembly, PM Narendra Modi rebukes Pakistan for its Kashmir obsession," September 27th, 2014, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/At-UN-general-assembly-PM-Narendra-Modi-rebukes-Pakistan-for-its-Kashmir-obsession/articleshow/43652333.cms>

- ⁵ Chidanand Rajghatta, "At UN general assembly, PM Narendra Modi rebukes Pakistan for its Kashmir obsession," September 27th, 2014, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/At-UN-general-assembly-PM-Narendra-Modi-rebukes-Pakistan-for-its-Kashmir-obsession/articleshow/43652333.cms>
- ⁶ <https://twitter.com/PMOIndia/status/515877980342468609>
- ⁷ 'Have to Neutralise Terrorists Through Terrorists': Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar, NDTV, May 22, 2015, <http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/have-to-neutralise-terrorists-through-terrorists-defence-minister-manohar-parrikar-765218>
- ⁸ "Manohar Parrikar's statement proves India involved in terrorism in Pakistan: Aziz," The Express Tribune, May 23rd, 2015, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/891254/indian-defence-ministers-statement-proves-india-involved-in-terrorism-in-pakistan-aziz/>
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- ¹¹ Niharika Mandanah, "How Will Modi Change India's relation with Pakistan, " <http://blogs.wsj.com/indiarealtime/2014/05/19/how-will-modi-change-indias-relationship-with-pakistan/> also see http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2014-09-01/news/53441703_1_brand-india-australia-india-institute-foreign-policy