

CISS SPECIAL ISSUE

ISBN 978-969-23235-5-0

PULWAMA-BALAKOT CRISIS & OPERATION SWIFT RETORT

27 February 2020

Edited by

Saima Aman Sial

Senior Research Officer

INDIAN AIR FORCE MIG-21 Bison

This aircraft was shot down by PAF F-16AM flown by Wg Cdr Noman Ali Khan, OC No 29 Aggressor Squadron using an AIM-120 AMRAAM BVR missile. The MIG-21 Bison was flown by Wg Cdr Abhinandan Varthman, OC No 51 Squadron of Indian Air Force. He dared intruding into Pakistani Air Space and was promptly shot down, taken as a POW by the Pakistan Army.

Photo Credits: Operation Swift Retort Exhibit, PAF Museum Karachi



CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC STUDIES

Suite 506, 5th Floor, Evacuee Trust Complex, Agha Khan Road,
Sector F-5/1, Islamabad. Pakistan

Ph: +92-51- 8315410-423, 2722343, Fax: +92-51-2826865

www.ciss.org.pk

CISS SPECIAL ISSUE



CISS CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL
STRATEGIC STUDIES
ISLAMABAD-PAKISTAN

CISS SPECIAL ISSUE

**PULWAMA-BALAKOT CRISIS
&
OPERATION SWIFT RETORT**

27 February 2020

Edited by
Saima Aman Sial
Senior Research Officer



**CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC STUDIES
ISLAMABAD-PAKISTAN**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Prologue	01
Changing Dynamics of Air Warfare in South Asia and Future Challenges for PAF	05
<i>- Air Cdre Kaiser Tufail (Retd)</i>	
The Balakot Crisis and Conventional Deterrence	11
<i>- Ali Zia Jaffery</i>	
India's Land Warfare Doctrine – Post Pulwama: An Appraisal.....	16
<i>- Afeera Firdous</i>	
Pulwama Attack and the Indian Dilemma	22
<i>- Zawar H. Abidi</i>	
Nuclear Signaling during the Pulwama – Balakot Crisis 2019	26
<i>- Dr. Naeem Salik</i>	
Balakot to Swift Retort: Putting 'New Normals' to Test.....	33
<i>- Dr. Mansoor Ahmed & Maimuna Ashraf</i>	
Balakot Strikes and Operation Swift Retort: Lessons for Crisis Management	40
<i>- Saima Aman Sial</i>	
US and China's Crisis Management in South Asia	47
<i>- Riaz Khokhar</i>	
Indian Media's Sensationalism during the Pulwama – Balakot Crisis..	53
<i>- Samran Ali</i>	

APPENDICES

Indian Officials' Statements	i
Pakistani Officials' Statements.....	ix
Statements by International Community	xiv
Keynote Address by Lt. Gen. (R) Khalid Kidwai at IISS London	xxiv
Keynote Address by Lt. Gen. (R) Khalid Kidwai at ISSI Islamabad.....	xl

PROLOGUE

The India- Pakistan rivalry goes as far back as the creation of both the states in 1947. Its history has been well documented and equally researched by scholars of international history, international relations and strategic studies. The acrimonious relationship has led both states to fight three wars and face several crises. The nuclearization of both states led to a transformation in the conflict by helping curb the potential for a full-blown war, at the same time increasing the recurrence of crises under the nuclear overhang. The Pulwama-Balakot and Rajouri-Nowshera skirmish in early 2019 was a continuing manifestation of the same phenomenon, where the Indian politico-military elite tested Pakistan's resolve by hitting targets in mainland Pakistan, under the flawed assessment of a likely weak Pakistani response and overconfidence that they would be able to control escalation.

What began as a suicide attack, by a young Kashmiri boy on Indian CRPF forces on 14 February 2019, suddenly morphed into a bilateral confrontation between India and Pakistan owing to the decades' old Indian practice of blaming Pakistan of complicity in terrorist incidents in India. The impending elections in India fueled the narrative of 'punishing Pakistan', subduing all chances of an informed internal discourse on the origin of the Pulwama suicide attack. The hyper-nationalist sentiments were invoked to suppress the legitimate grievances of the Muslims of the Kashmir valley who continue to struggle against Indian forces' oppression in Indian Occupied Kashmir.

Soon after the attacks, Indian Premier, Narendra Modi and his government started playing to the gallery, upped the war ante against Pakistan to divert attention from the domestic policy failures. Revenge against Pakistan was used as an election-winning strategy.

The media was used as a tool to fuel the fire which in turn became the government's justification to carry out an attack within Pakistan. On the morning of 26 February 2019, Indian fighter aircraft with a strike package of over twelve planes fired Israeli supplied Spice bombs on three targets in Balakot. The bombs failed to hit the targets. The Indian claims to establish a 'new normal' were nipped in the bud, when the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) took India by surprise the next day in what came to be known as the Operation Swift Retort. PAF, in a show of resolve but constrained by the political direction of exercising restraint, chose to drop the bombs close to the military targets and later downed an Indian Mig-21 entering Pakistan's airspace, capturing its pilot. The crisis defused soon after, as Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan, as a gesture for peace, returned the captured Pilot to India.

Although the Pulwama-Balakot crisis demonstrated that Pakistan's conventional forces were prepared to tackle the Indian threat, however, with normalization of relations not on the horizon any time soon; Pakistan needs to seriously take into account Indian arms acquisitions as well as destabilizing doctrinal trends as manifested in new thinking on preemption and counterforce posture. After nearly two decades of rehearsing its Cold Start Doctrine, the Indian army's failure to implement it in the current crisis reflects badly on their preparedness and confidence; however in future, the Indian Army's inclination - as manifested in its Land Warfare Doctrine - to escalate the crisis across the air, land and sea-domain should be kept in mind by Pakistan's policymakers.

Pakistan's measured response during the 2019 crisis, reasserted the efficacy of its conventional deterrence, but the growing qualitative and quantitative asymmetry in South Asia is likely to keep deterrence stability under constant stress for the foreseeable future. Pakistan,

therefore needs to be vigilant and cognizant of the evolving nature of the threat spectrum and continue to maintain the credibility of its full-spectrum response.

It has been a year since the crisis occurred and relations between India and Pakistan are far from normal. The Line of Control remains hot and the rhetoric on the Indian side of fighting and winning a war against Pakistan has but only increased. Much has been written in the intervening period on various aspects of the crisis and this special issue is being published with an intent to compile the material and analyze the Pulwama-Balakot crisis and Operation Swift Retort and make it readily available as reference for further research. It features articles written by CISS team and other informed analysis by a noted Pakistani practitioner and a young scholar. The appendices in the issue offer policy statements made by Indian and Pakistani political elites during and after the crisis period as well as putting on record the international responses as reflected in policy statements from major capitals of the world.

This issue features articles dealing with the dynamics of escalation/de-escalation, aspects of nuclear signaling, an appraisal of the conventional deterrence aspects, future of aerial warfare, role of crisis managers, lessons for crisis management and role of media in spreading sensationalism.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the cooperative team at CISS led by our Executive Director Ambassador (R) Ali Sarwar Naqvi, for their support in bringing out this issue at such short notice, especially Colonel (Retd.) Iftikharuddin Hasan for his continued guidance and mentorship.

Islamabad
February 2020

Saima Aman Sial

Changing Dynamics of Air Warfare in South Asia and Future Challenges for PAF

Air Cdre Kaiser Tufail (Retired)

The Balakot strike by IAF on 26 February 2019, and PAF's 'Swift Retort' a day later, can be considered watershed events in modern aerial warfare in South Asia. Though the IAF strike was beset with technical snags, including failure of stand-off bombs to guide themselves to the target due to faulty terrain elevation data, it was able to deliver the ordnance – albeit, in the pine forests – from as far as 40 km away. Interception of ingressing IAF fighters threw up a new conundrum: flying in their own territory, the hostile intentions of the fighters could not be read in advance and they could not be fired at, lest Pakistan be accused of unprovoked aggression. After weapons release, the IAF aircraft rapidly turned back, and could not be chased for fear of violating international rules of engagement, as the release of bombs – and the breach of peace – was discovered only after some time.

PAF retaliated within 30 hours of the IAF strike, and hit Indian military targets with stand-off bombs, staying well within own territory. The sizeable strike package including its escorts, as well as the accompanying fighter sweep aircraft swamped the Indian air defence radar scopes, and the patrolling Su-30 aircraft were promptly vectored towards the PAF swarm. Sooner the PAF strike fighters had delivered the bombs and turned around, the F-16s and JF-17s swept the skies, with very useful support from data-linked AEW&C and ground radars, as well as from own formation members. The pilots were glued to their multi-function displays streaming vital information and firing cues. It was as if a whole squadron was playing

a mass video game in the skies. With excellent situational awareness, and the adversary in disarray, an F-16 fired a BVR AMRAAM (AIM-120C) at an approaching Su-30. Whether the aircraft survived with nil or minor damage, or was hit critically remains moot, but the missile coming from nowhere and exploding in the vicinity resulted in complete panic amongst the IAF aircraft. The patrolling IAF Mirage 2000s too seemed shell-shocked, and did not enter the fray; MiG-21 Bisons on ground alert had, therefore, to be scrambled. All this time PAF's airborne and ground jammers were at work, and the IAF pilots and air defence controllers were thrown into total confusion. As one of the scrambled MiGs appeared on the radar scope of an F-16, another AMRAAM was fired, which shot the MiG out of the sky, the pilot surviving by a whisker and parachuting into Pakistani territory.

The mission flown by the PAF was unique in many ways. The ground targets had been identified and prepared well in advance for exactly such an eventuality. The pilots had routinely practiced flying in large packages, with ECM support and comprehensive situational awareness provided by AEWG aircraft. BVR missiles were used in the Indo-Pak scenario for the first time; interestingly, close combat situations did not crop up for the classic dogfighters like PAF's F-16 and IAF's Mirage 2000, for instance. It was manifest that BVR combat had taken precedence over close combat, if not rendering it completely obsolete. A fighter in any future conflict must, therefore have both long and short range missile firing capabilities, along with the associated sensors like radars, threat warning systems, and data links. PAF could do well by urgently replacing its legacy fighters with 'home-grown' JF-17s (especially the upcoming Block III version), which have all the desirable attributes at an affordable cost.

For surface attack, stand-off capabilities were demonstrated by both air forces, and the safety of attacking aircraft was clearly highlighted.

Accuracy of the attacks was, however, not achieved for different reasons: the IAF suffering from faulty terrain data being fed into the bombs' guidance system, and PAF being constrained by political considerations to prevent escalation by avoiding direct hits on military targets. In any case, the efficacy of stand-off weapon delivery was unmistakably validated, and it is certain that this is likely to be the mode of choice in any future conflict. An aircraft not having such a weapon delivery capability should be considered redundant for surface attack missions.

With IAF having the initiative, and PAF finding itself in a reactive mode, the latter's full operational preparedness clearly saved the day. The whole operation was over within 48 hours, and deployment of strike elements of ground forces did not take place. It became amply clear that air forces offer the best and swiftest means of retribution under a nuclear overhang, as the relatively slow positioning of ground troops to their operational areas is fraught with the possibility of being stymied, due to international pressure. PAF's *tour de force* will, thus, serve as a model for dealing with any future Indian military action that is punitive in nature. PAF's preparedness must continue to be refined, as IAF is expected to iron out the hitches that dogged its operations during the failed Balakot strike.

It is to be noted that after a disastrous showing by IAF on the 26th and 27th February, the Indian government unwisely decided to even the score by deploying – conceivably, for employing – Surface-to-Surface Missiles (SSMs) against targets in Pakistan. Apparently, this measure was aimed at preventing further fighter losses at the hands of the PAF that was perceived by the IAF as being technically superior. Exercise of the rash and senseless decision to deploy SSMs could well have been misconstrued by Pakistan, and a catastrophic exchange could have followed between nuclear-armed neighbors. The Government of

Pakistan, as well as its armed forces, should treat it as a textbook lesson in regional conflict escalation dynamics, and must remain cognizant of such developments in any future conflict.

With the Rubicon having been crossed after the Balakot raid, use of IAF fighters to compliment the usual artillery shelling across the Line of Control, is likely to be the new norm for intimidating Pakistan. While PAF's response is likely to be as swift as it was on 27 February, decision-making by the politico-military leadership may be complicated by a host of prevailing factors, both internal and external. It is therefore imperative that meetings of the National Security Council and Joint Staff Headquarters are conducted regularly, and key decision-makers are kept posted about the developments so that there are no surprises. The government must be fully aware that for the PAF to react as swiftly as it did in the recent skirmish, there will be a premium on prompt and smart decision-making. It is also important to note that what starts as a single service response (by the PAF), could rapidly morph into a wider war; as such, over-dependence on the PAF could be fraught with risks, and a joint services response must continue to remain the ultimate objective of the Pakistani government to any aggression.

Future Challenges for Pakistan Air Force

After nuclearization of South Asia, strategic parity of sorts has emerged in the region, and numerical disparity faced by Pakistani armed forces, has been largely negated by this new capability. As an agreeable consequence, the threat of an all-out conventional war has diminished considerably, and there is a need for a slowdown in the arms race that Pakistan has had to keep up with in the past. PAF would do well to remain undaunted by the larger IAF, and continue to

maintain a fine balance between quality and quantity of its weapons systems. That such a policy can pay dividends was clearly demonstrated during the post-Balakot aerial skirmish of 27 February 2019. The geo-political changes in the region also call for a parsimonious evaluation of PAF's development goals that are in sync with new strategic realities. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, for instance, entails new security concerns for which the PAF will have to be at the forefront in chalking out cogent responses. Similarly, the impending exit of US forces from Afghanistan, gradual as it might be, is likely to add to the responsibilities of Pakistan Army and PAF in maintaining stability in the region.

The previous two decades have seen the emergence of non-state actors as the new threat to much of the world, with its epicenter not too far from Pakistan. The country has faced the wrath of these terrorist groups, and the PAF, alongside the Pakistan Army, has been at the forefront of counter-insurgency operations (COIN) for many years. While the threat has been tackled to a large extent and most terrorist groups have been neutralized, splinter groups have raised their ugly heads whenever there has been a let up in operations.

For the PAF, fighting a perennial insurgency, while maintaining a credible deterrent posture against its eastern neighbor, remains the biggest challenge. In essence, Pakistan is confronted with a two-front threat, one from within, and the other from outside. Under these circumstances, committal of PAF's valuable fighter assets in COIN operations over a long term needs to be reviewed. Utilization of armed UAV is considered a more viable and economical solution, as has been unmistakably demonstrated in Afghanistan by the USAF. While PAF's high-end F-16s and JF-17s are very effective, they are expensive to maintain and sustain in a seemingly endless insurgency. Their use in low-intensity operations also detracts from the PAF's

ability to maintain full-spectrum operational readiness. As existing fighter fleets continue to age and new platforms place additional burdens on the maintenance and supply systems, it is imperative that the PAF finds ways of lowering its operating costs while maintaining its readiness standards.

A tri-services review of roles and responsibilities is long overdue, so that Pakistan's military machine continues to operate with complete operational efficiency and economy of effort. Areas long considered to be the PAF's turf need to be clearly demarcated again, to ensure that there is no duplication of effort; this would also be a safeguard against any misunderstanding about who is the overall in-charge of some shared operational activities in war. Air defence is a domain that is seen to be most prone to impingement by other services. Command and control of airspace, and ownership of all early warning sensors by the PAF has occasionally been the cause of some dissonance amongst the services; similarly, the jurisdiction of each service for air defence of vulnerable points/areas, and choice of different categories of terminal weapons needs clearer delineation. Training establishments of the three services that impart the same courses – of which there are many – need to be unified. The Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee is considered the most appropriate forum for resolution of such issues, if only the PAF and PN had cyclic representation on the top chair. For the PAF, this goal will remain one of the significant challenges if it is to retain its operational influence, and its first-rate organizational functionality which is seen as a model of efficiency in the country.

Air Cdre Kaiser Tufail (Retired) is a former fighter pilot and a writer on military affairs.

The Balakot Crisis and Conventional Deterrence

Lessons for Pakistan

Syed Ali Zia Jaffery

In one of his acclaimed books entitled, *On Escalation*, Herman Kahn argued, 'You really don't want to escalate further because it is too dangerous; in fact, it is even dangerous to stay where we are; therefore you'd better back down.' The quote is as relevant and true as it was when this book came out during the height of the Cold War. As a matter of fact it has become all the more meaningful today when deterrence stability between nuclear dyads is under constant stress. This is particularly true in the case of the South Asian nuclear rivalry between arch-foes India and Pakistan. Even after more than two decades of their being tied in a nuclear dyadic relationship, India and Pakistan continue to keep watchers on the edge of their seats. The ever-exacerbating *casus belli*, along with the proclivity to use force as an instrument of policy, has made South Asia a crisis-prone region.

New Delhi and Islamabad have learnt their nuclear lessons differently. While Pakistan has internalized the essence of deterrence theory, India is treading on a path that seeks to exert compellence under a nuclear umbrella. Last year's Pulwama-Balakot crisis, brought the difference in their nuclear learning trajectories to the fore. While understanding the anomalies and aberrations in crisis behavior of the warring parties during the Balakot crisis is beyond the purview of this piece, it is important to revisit some actions in a bid to elicit lessons for the future. For Pakistan, India's Balakot gambit was and is instructive. Learning the right lessons is thus all the more important for policymakers in Islamabad.

Though the crisis has attracted a great deal of scholarship from across the globe, yet many of its aspects need to be delved into. In order to

improve crisis learning from the Balakot episode, disquisitions have revolved around escalation patterns and nuclear deterrence dynamics. However, despite the fact that both countries locked horns in a conventional air duel after a hiatus of almost five decades, the conventional war, and by extension, conventional deterrence sides have largely been missing in the discourse. What then becomes most important is the need to analyze India's use of force in the Balakot conflagration. This will help in contextualizing the significance of conventional deterrence in a nuclearized South Asian theatre.

The Politics of Escalation and the Levels of War

One of the greatest strategists to have ever lived, Carl Von Clausewitz said: "War is an extension of politics by other means." Clausewitz's treatise continues to influence military decision-making even today. Understanding modern-day escalation patterns through the prism of the war-politics nexus is essential. The Balakot crisis cannot be understood fully without assessing the incendiary forces behind India's brazen aggression against Pakistan. Even a cursory look at India's Balakot strikes- brandished as a manifestation of India's might- can help make sense of what drove Indian decisions to precipitously ramp-up the ante against Pakistan after the unfounded allegation regarding its involvement in the attack on a paramilitary convoy in Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK). Despite the failure of the strikes in Balakot, Indian media resorted to chest thumping; while the BJP-led government made 'Modi's courage, to teach the perpetrators of terrorism' a lesson, as the rallying point in its election campaign. The approach paid-off as PM Modi was re-elected with a thumping majority. However, the question that arises is this: why is it important to understand the politics surrounding the Balakot strikes? The answer lies in looking at how Modi 2.0 has dealt with Pakistan. If stripping Kashmir of its autonomy by abrogation of Articles 370 and

35-A was not enough to vitiate relations, reckless statements from the Indian leadership about capturing Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) certainly were. Buoyed by popular support and facing domestic troubles in the shape of an economic slowdown and protests, Indian PM Modi might 'stage manage' a crisis-trigger and jump on the escalation ladder. There are two reasons as to why such a scenario could be deadlier. One, India's tall claims of killing terrorists and downing a Pakistani F-16 have not been proven. This has put serious question marks on India's war-fighting prowess, something that is damaging to India's standing as a potential counterweight to China as part of US' Indo-Pacific Strategy. India would want to make amends when the next crisis is precipitated. Two, India contends that, by conducting the Balakot strikes, it has established a 'new normal' viz Pakistan. Thus, no matter how any future crisis starts, India's climb-down from the ramp will have political costs for the BJP government. Writing elsewhere, I argued that, 'Anything short of deep incursions in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, or mainland Pakistan for that matter, could be brushed aside by Pakistan as a normal cross-LOC skirmish. Pakistan would ignore such alleged incursions the way it dismissed the highly-publicized surgical strikes post the attack in Uri in 2016.'

All this does not portend well for strategic and crisis stability in South Asia due to a number of factors. Firstly, India's resort to conventional air strikes has been established as an acceptable response to sub-conventional incidents. A false-flag sub-conventional attack attributed to Pakistan will be responded to conventionally. The transition from the sub-conventional level to the conventional level will be rapid. In such a milieu, what happens at the conventional level will determine the role of nuclear deterrence as a means of escalation control. The equation will be simple - the more ineffective the conventional deterrence, the greater the reliance on nuclear weapons.

What Should Pakistan Do?

With the limited conventional response becoming a norm in the event of any sub-conventional level incident, Pakistan would need to beef up its conventional deterrence in order to strengthen its overall deterrence mix. Conventional deterrence is also needed for the purpose of retaining the absolute and high-end deterrence value of nuclear weapons.

For Pakistan, nuclear deterrence has stood the test of time in several and crises. What McGeorge Bundy called existential deterrence, has continued to influence decision-makers in India since 1998. The absolute weapon has certainly changed things. Compared to the large-scale forays in the pre-nuclear era, India's initial incursions, like the one in Balakot post-1998 have been far less punitive. However, as analysts have argued that nuclear weapons do not deter adversaries from launching air raids, it is worth stressing that nuclear weapons are not the be-all and the end-all of deterrence.

For Pakistan, it is imperative that its deterrence against non-nuclear threats through conventional means, is enhanced. In his influential book, *Conventional Deterrence*, John Mearsheimer defines conventional deterrence as the ability to deny the aggressors their battlefield objectives through conventional forces. His theory is not merely a function of numbers or the military balance but also of military strategy. The idea is to have the ability to deny an aggressor a quick victory. With India constantly on the lookout for quick and spectacular results, Pakistan's conventional rung-additions are likely to upset India's calculus. Acquiring the capability to prolong the battle is a deterrent against an adversary that wants to quickly attain battlefields objectives. All this fits right into the Indo-Pak equation. India has long been exasperated at not being able to do enough in a short period of time. Pakistan holding its own for a considerable

length of time would be bad news for India because that would upset India's politico-military aims of escalation.

Pakistan's conventional score-leveling in the Balakot crisis demonstrated the efficacy of same-domain deterrence. With India all at sea in regard to achieving synergy for joint operations regardless of nomenclatures, it is reasonable to assert that India will prefer to use air power in future as well. Based on this assessment, improvements both, qualitative and quantitative, in air combat capabilities, should lie at the heart of Pakistan's efforts to buttress its conventional deterrence. Though the steps that Pakistan should take to augment its conventional deterrence are beyond the ambit of this piece, it is important to assert that Pakistan must focus on cost-effective deterrence-enhancers. This is important because crises like Balakot will see intense hostilities in the conventional domain, something that will make conventional deterrence a lynchpin of deterrence stability in South Asia.

In sum, the Balakot crisis amplified that crisis onset and even escalation till a certain level has got little to do with the N-factor. Faced with a neighbor infused with zealotry and war-hysteria, Pakistan has to plug gaps in its deterrence spectrum that nuclear weapons inherently cannot do solely.

Syed Ali Zia Jaffery is a Research Associate at the Center for Security, Strategy and Policy Research, University of Lahore.

India's Land Warfare Doctrine – Post Pulwama: An Appraisal

Afeera Firdous

The publication of Joint Doctrine of Indian Armed Forces 2017 (JDIAF) was followed by the publication of Indian Land Warfare Doctrine (LWD) by the Indian Army in December 2018. Historically, Indian Armed Forces had been following flexible doctrinal guidelines in the form of General-Staff Pamphlets, for shared understanding of threat perception and response, but this was for restricted circulation within the military. The trend changed when Indian Air Force (IAF) published its first doctrine in 1995.

Quite a few doctrinal changes and shifts have come to light in the Indian Armed Forces' threat definition and response in the last two decades. Indian Army presented its First doctrine in 1998, which was named, 'Indian Army: Fundamentals, Doctrines, Concepts'. The doctrine was updated subsequently in 2004 and came to be known as the Cold Start Doctrine (CSD). Indian Army had been regularly practicing its CSD and may have modified its limited war fighting concepts during the subsequent years. The 2017 and the 2018 doctrines could be an outcome of lessons learnt from various military exercises that India continues to hold every year.

This article will assess the Indian land warfare doctrine and also the JDIAF, since the two have some linkages and could provide better appreciation of India's war fighting concepts, which may be useful in the context of the ongoing military crisis between India and Pakistan.

As compared to the 2004 doctrine of Cold Start, the LWD of 2018 seems to have shifted the focus from non-contact operations, besides

the battlefield engagements. The doctrine focuses on defining and preventing conflict through a process of credible deterrence, coercive diplomacy and punitive destruction. Indian LWD repeatedly lays emphasis on 'No War No Peace Scenario' in the region, which according to some could have four objectives; to address domestic pressure to punish Pakistan, to compel Pakistan to act against so-called terrorists operating from its territory, to initiate controlled conflict with Pakistan which would not be easily amenable to escalation and coming out of the conflict successful.

LWD clearly states that the emphasis of Indian Army in the future will be to develop cross-domain capabilities, facilitate enhanced collaboration and integration amongst three services of Indian Armed Forces. It also lays emphasis on a possible two front war (collusive conflicts) that Indian Army may have to fight against Pakistan and China.

As the Indian Army is considering/perceiving a collective threat from Pakistan and China, which can have impact on India's deterrence posture in a nuclear environment, it is therefore increasing the number of weapons (tactical or strategic) and might shift its doctrine from credible minimum deterrence to credible deterrence. Joint Doctrine of Indian Armed Forces 2017 (JDIAF) states in this regard that, 'future conflicts will be prevented through credible deterrence... in a nuclear environment across the spectrum of the conflict.' Though, India's political leadership has not yet officially approved the shift in India's deterrence posture from credible minimum deterrence to credible deterrence, yet the Indian military planners continue to work on increasing their capabilities along the same lines.

LWD 2018 confirms India's hegemonic designs in the region as it says that India's role as 'regional security provider' requires it to have

force projection capabilities to achieve its national security objectives. For this purpose, Indian Army is working on its profile and is planning to become an agile, mobile and technology-driven force, with resilient coordination with other services.

Indian Army is also aiming to integrate two important components of war-fighting i.e. soldier and technology. Some technologies that the Indian Army aims to develop or acquire in coming years are mentioned in the LWD. These are electronic and psychological warfare, drones, development of case-to-case maneuverable and intelligent outer space satellites for military purposes, Quantum Computing, Nano-Technology, High Energy Lasers, Directed Energy Weapons, Hypersonic Weapons including Pulsed Microwave Weapon Systems and Injection of False Information etc.

These technologies could have implications for Pakistan. For example, advanced quantum computing technology expertise if achieved by India, can break any kind of encryption (codes) in secure Pakistani communication within the country and abroad and put its entire security at risk. Another important point this doctrine raises is '*enhancement of ISR capabilities for precise and decisive employment of long range vectors and strategic assets*' in the presence of intelligent outer space military-purpose satellites. This future enhancement of India's ISR capabilities will increase its capability as well as proclivity for counter-force targeting.

With reference to the Line of Control (LOC), LWD states that Indian Army will increase and strengthen its operational capabilities by punitive responses in greater depth, sophistication and precision. By claiming this as a futuristic goal, Indian Army and the government can further propagate its claims of so-called surgical strikes across the LoC. It may however be mentioned that such claims, which have

remained unsubstantiated by independent observers or analysts suit the Indian civilian and military leadership for domestic political reasons.

JDIAF, of 2017, has also acknowledged the use of surgical strikes as a formal part of India's retaliatory policy in the future. Indian Army LWD specifies that Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs) will play an important role in making Indian Army a battle-ready force in the future, even after the nuclear threshold has been crossed. Indian Army Chief Gen. Bipin Rawat has acknowledged this, explaining the structure of IBGs while stating that the IBGs will not be based on the concept of one-size fits all, but will be on case-to-case basis or suited well to the battlefield terrain.

The LWD has also included hybrid threats i.e. threats from cyber, space and information domain in its threat spectrum. In 2017, JDIAF also recognized the need for creation of integrated cyber, space and special operations agencies with defensive and offensive capabilities. Some analysts however argue that JDIAF is ambiguous doctrine. However, after coordination between three chiefs of Indian Armed Forces, the then Indian Army Chief General Bipin Rawat has been named India's first Chief of Defence Staff to command Headquarters Integrated Defense Staff (HQ IDS) on December 30, 2019. According to General Bipin Rawat, Indian Army has also received the approval for a joint cyber, space and special operations agency of tri-services command. In 2020, the structures of the three tri-services agencies; cyber, space and special operations, came up with the announcement of number of personnel for these agencies. However, according to the reports that came later, training of tri-services staff, working under HQ IDS, will start afterwards.

In summary, LWD can be described as an ambitious document but it has more challenges than opportunities for the Indian Army. Budgetary and resource constraint have remained the most important matters for Indian Armed Forces for many years. Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence also stated, in its report in March 2018, that all three services of Indian Armed Forces face deficiencies in terms of resource allocation which hinders military modernization plans such as 'Make in India'. Indian Army Vice Chief, Lt. Gen. Sarath Chand, also highlighted the issue that it is almost impossible for the army to modernize and develop capabilities with current budget outlay in which Indian Army is allocated only 60% of its demanded budget (Indian army has been allocated Rs. 268.2 billion in 2018 against the Rs. 445.7 billion it had projected).

Civilian and bureaucratic control of military issues in India is another challenge. Analysts have highlighted that the lack of integration between the armed forces and the civilian defense administration affects defense planning, procurement and human resource development. High-tech equipment and technologies as mentioned in the Indian Army Land Warfare Doctrine need extensive budgetary resources and political commitment to procure or develop such capabilities. In the immediate and short term, India may not be able to achieve these capabilities. However, as part of its long term force modernization plan, it will seek to add these capabilities.

As Indian Army has updated its doctrine after JDIAF, it is anticipated that updated version of Indian air and maritime doctrines will also come up soon. Both doctrines, LWD 2018 and JDIAF 2017, could have long-term implications for Pakistan's threat perception and therefore may require a serious review by Pakistan's security planners. After rigorously exercising the Cold Start Doctrine for several years, India did not use the option of CSD after Pulwama incident rather it

resorted to the escalatory option of aerial strikes. Nevertheless, it is not clear whether India would embark upon another review after the Pulwama-Balakot crisis, or would consider the existing doctrine sufficient in the face of changed ground realities.

A version of this article appeared in the *Strategic Foresight for Asia*.

Ms. Afeera Firdous is a Research Assistant at the Center for International Strategic Studies (CISS) Islamabad.

Pulwama Attack and the Indian Dilemma

Zawar H. Abidi

On 14 Feb 2019, the already tense bilateral relations between India and Pakistan received a serious blow due to a suicide attack in Pulwama, which led to the death of over forty Indian soldiers. India instantly attributed this to Pakistan without any investigations. Indian media went all-out to create war hysteria and the Indian leadership made tall claims of taking meaningful revenge. After twelve days of delay, the Indian Air Force carried out a 'non-military' surgical strike and claimed that it had destroyed a terrorist training camp killing hundreds of terrorists near Balakot in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

A lot has already been said on electronic and print media on both sides of the border, as well as internationally, but it would be useful to analyze the Indian capability, to assess the credibility of India's perpetual threat to Pakistan, and to establish its claim of a regional, if not the global power.

India's Indigenous Capability

India, emboldened by its achievement in 1971 Indo-Pak war, initiated the program to build indigenous 'Arjun' main battle tank program. It took twenty-four years for the Indian government to approve its mass production, but so far, the Indian Army has been able to build only 124 'Arjun' tanks that make 4.13% of India's total 2998 MBTs strength.

India decided to build a nuclear submarine by launching a feasibility study under Project 932 in the early 1970s. Initially, the project did not sail smoothly for quite some time, and in the 1980s India decided to get a nuclear-powered submarine from the former Soviet Union

(SU). In 1988, India also acquired a Charlie class submarine, from former SU, on a three years lease. The possession of a Russian nuclear-powered submarine provided it a unique opportunity to learn about various aspects of nuclear submarine designing and operations. Moreover, many of the Russian scientists and engineers reportedly stayed back to help India push her own Advance Technology Vessel (ATV) project. India's ATV went for sea trials in December 2014 and was finally commissioned in August 2016. It also leased another nuclear-powered submarine from Russia in 2012 for ten years, and more recently has concluded another agreement for a third submarine to be leased from Russia. Despite having worked on ATV for forty years, India remains reliant on the Russian nuclear submarines for its Navy.

The fate of the Indian Air Force is no different. Notwithstanding the tall claims of building indigenous capability to manufacture fighter aircraft, India continues to remain reliant on external platforms. The most recent statement by PM Modi that if India had Rafaele aircraft, the outcome of the current crisis (Pulwama-Balakot) would have been different is a testimony to the limitations of the Indian Air Force and its defense industrial complex.

Doctrinal Developments

In April 2017, India made public its second edition of 'The Joint Indian Armed Forces Doctrine.' This followed the publication of 'Land Warfare Doctrine (LWD)' in 2018 by the Indian Army. The LWD of 2018 is being touted as a visionary document laying the foundation for future strategies for Northern and Western Fronts. The doctrine, however, does not make a reference to Krishna Rao Report 'Army Plan 2000', which was the only doctrinal and structural development plan proactively undertaken with a vision for the next 'Twenty-five' years.

All other follow up doctrinal or structural modifications were reactionary, including the 2018 LWD.

The concept of Independent Battle Group (IBG) whether it be in 'Cold Start Doctrine (CSD)' or in the 2018 LWD, is also flawed and an attempt to put old wine in the new bottles. The IBG concept was first incorporated in the 'Army Plan 2000' and was tried in 'Operation Brasstacks,' in the form of 'Strike RAPID' by the Indian Army. The concept failed to achieve the desired objective, despite reportedly concentrating 6-8 Lacs of Indian Army with first line ammunition in Rajasthan, due to military and diplomatic countermoves by Pakistan.

The reason for the concept being a nonstarter is that for any offensive action - limited or full scale - against an adversary, the most essential principle of war is the concentration of force, which can be mathematically translated into 3:1 ratio in favor of the attacker. The concept of IBGs of a division minus, and engaging the adversary on multiple fronts, is thus a non-starter. Glancing through the conventional military balance, between India and Pakistan, reveals that India never had an overall 3:1 in the strength of its armed forces nor in the number of various weapon systems since the two states became independent. In fact, it has been sliding down as per 2019 'Military Balance' published by IISS.

The ratio in the overall strength of armed forces between India and Pakistan is around 2:1. In terms of the number of main battle tanks (MBT), it is 1.42:1, artillery guns (SP, Towed & MRL) is 1.5:1, and in terms of a number of combat aircrafts the ratio is 1.9:1. However, the slight advantage that the Indian forces have, for ground and air operation, is offset by the geographic limitations along the Line of Control (LoC), and Pakistan's advantage of having its cantonments close to the international border with less mobilization time.

Ineffectiveness of the CSD was further proven by India's failure to operationalize CSD after Mumbai incident (Nov 2008) and Pathankot (Jan 2016). Frustrated by the futility of the CSD, India resorted to so-called surgical strike after Uri (Sep 2016), and also in the current crisis of Pulwama.

The Pulwama incident provided the Indian media an opportunity to create war hysteria and demand revenge from the government against the perpetrators. The Indian government led by Mr. Modi failed to correctly assess the political resolve and military preparedness on the Pakistani side and resorted to the use of its Air Force for its face-saving and domestic political benefits. It is due to this incorrect reading and assessment that the outcome of the so-called Indian Air Force surgical strike turned out to be the exact opposite of the Indian expectations.

Attempts were made by the Indian leadership to explore other possibilities of responding PAF's Operation Swift Retort, but they were unsuccessful. The crisis appears to have subsided for now, but it is not over. Mr. Modi, as the head of the government, has a lot on stake during his second term. Hence there are possibilities of a re-escalation of tension between India and Pakistan. Pakistan needs to and should remain vigilant in the coming months. Pakistan has demonstrated that it is not only a nuclear weapon state, but also has strong conventional military capability to effectively respond in case of a misadventure. Meaningful dialogue is the only path for solution of the issues between the two neighbors.

A version of this article appeared in *Strategic Foresight for Asia*.

Mr. Zawar Haider Abidi is a Senior Research Fellow at the Center for International Strategic Studies Islamabad.

Nuclear Signaling during the Pulwama-Balakot Crisis 2019

Dr. Naeem Salik

Preamble

Nuclear deterrence consists of three main components i.e., capability, credibility and communication. For the purpose of nuclear signaling, however, communication is most relevant aspect of nuclear deterrence. Nuclear deterrence threat can be communicated through one or more of the following means:-

- a. Public Statements (by responsible political and military leaders or key diplomats).
- b. Demonstrative Actions (by conducting nuclear or missile tests, and displaying missiles and other nuclear delivery means at military parade etc.).
- c. Diplomatic Channels (through own diplomats in adversary's capital or the adversary's diplomats in own capitals).
- d. Third Party Messaging (this would entail sending messages through visiting envoys of friendly countries who could also bring similar messages from the other side. However, in this kind of communication one is not sure whether the messages are being accurately conveyed or are being willingly or unwillingly distorted).

Additionally, another possible means of communication is the existing hotlines. In the South Asian context, DGMOs hotline has been an important means of communication between India and Pakistan. For the purpose of exchange of information related to any nuclear incident, a dedicated hotline has been established between the

respective Foreign Secretaries since 2005. This could also be used for communicating deterrence messages.

Nuclear Signaling in South Asia

Despite the fact that communication of deterrent threats is a key ingredient of deterrence and different techniques can be employed for nuclear signaling, in South Asia the art of nuclear signaling has not been developed and refined. As a result, the signaling is often crude and the signals are not received by the recipient the way they are intended by the initiator. Interestingly, both Indians and Pakistanis tend to believe, that they know each other well, due to shared history, centuries of co-habitation and understanding of each other's socio-cultural sensibilities, but in reality their understanding of each other is tainted by their perceptual biases and acute trust deficiency which hinders clear reception of signals emanating from the other side.

The confusing and boisterous environment in the midst of a crisis makes it even more difficult to de-clutter nuclear signals from the background noises. To add to this difficulty is the fact that the two countries have been unable to develop a common nuclear jargon, which leads to misunderstandings and misperceptions. The following paragraphs will provide a brief overview of various instances of nuclear signaling during the "Pulwama Crisis" of February-April 2019.

On 14th February 2019, a convoy of vehicles carrying personnel of India's paramilitary Central Police Reserve Force (CRPF) was attacked near Pulwama by a teenaged local Kashmiri suicide bomber, causing over 40 fatalities. Indian authorities blamed Pakistan based proscribed extremist group Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) for planning and executing the attack on the basis of a video message by the suicide

attacker in which he had purportedly avowed allegiance to JeM and the JeM's claim of responsibility for the attack. The incident happened in the backdrop of India's ongoing election campaign and was therefore, exploited for domestic political gains. The Indian media was also up in arms and drummed up war hysteria. Pakistani Prime Minister offered to cooperate in the investigation of the incident with India and asked for sharing of actionable intelligence. Given the threatening statements emanating from India he also made it clear that in case India takes any military action Pakistan would definitely respond in kind. He also cautioned about the dangers of a conflict between two nuclear-armed states.

In the midst of this tension filled atmosphere the Indian Air force carried out an attack on an alleged terrorist training camp near the town of Balakot in the Khyber Pukhtoonkhwa province of Pakistan at 3 o'clock in the morning of 26 February 2019 and made incredible claims about the success of this operation including the claim to have killed over 300 so called terrorists. Pakistan's military spokesman announced that Pakistan would respond to the Indian attack at a time and place of its own choosing. On 27th of February 2019, Pakistan Air Force launched a daytime attack at several targets in Indian occupied Kashmir. The Indian interceptors followed Pakistani aircraft into Pakistan airspace and during the ensuing aerial engagement an Indian Mig - 21 was shot down. The debris of the aircraft along with its pilot, who had bailed out, fell on the Pakistani side of the LOC. The PAF claimed to have shot down a second Indian aircraft, which supposedly fell on the Indian side. After these engagements there was no further escalation and the tensions gradually tapered off because of the realization of the serious risks involved in further escalation as well as behind the scenes prodding by friendly countries.

The nuclear signaling during the crisis done mainly by the Indian leadership was more of posturing rather than any practical change in nuclear postures or readiness levels, given the prevailing election fever in India. Indian Prime Minister Modi stated while addressing an election rally on 18 April 2019 that, we have called “Pakistan’s nuclear bluff” because India has the “Mother of Nuclear Bombs.” He was certainly flaunting India’s ‘thermonuclear bombs.’ Then addressing another public rally on April 21, 2019 he pronounced that, we are not scared of Islamabad’s threats adding that India’s nuclear capabilities were not meant for use on ‘Diwali.’ He was referring to Hindu festival of lights and fireworks. This kind of nuclear sabre rattling by none other than the Indian Prime Minister himself was unprecedented to say the least. Earlier on 17 March 2019, the Indian Navy in a press release announced that, ‘The Major combat units of the Navy, including the Carrier Battle Group with INS Vikramaditya, nuclear submarines and scores of other ships, submarines and aircraft swiftly transited from exercise to operational deployment mode as tensions between India and Pakistan escalated.’ Though the precautionary operational movement and deployment of naval units during a serious crisis should not come as a surprise but the special mention of the ‘nuclear submarines’ in the press release was undoubtedly in the realm of nuclear signaling.

On Pakistan’s part, there was apparently no attempt at nuclear signaling except references by Pakistani Prime Minister in his three short speeches during the crisis to the dangers of a military confrontation between two nuclear-armed states. After the tit-for-tat air actions a meeting of the National Command Authority (NCA) was convened and in a departure from its two decades old tradition of issuing press statements on the conclusion of such meetings no press release was issued to avoid any misunderstanding or

misinterpretation of the NCA's statement. However, Pakistan's military spokesperson in his exuberance while announcing the convening of the NCA meeting added, 'I hope you know what NCA means and what it does.' These uncalled for remarks could be interpreted as an oblique nuclear signal, which were against the spirit of the decision to refrain from making a press statement at the conclusion of the NCA meeting held on 27 February 2019.

Conclusion

Neither India nor Pakistan have declared their nuclear alert levels and therefore heightened alert levels during crises even if publicly pronounced would not clearly signal the actual enhancement in alert status of strategic forces. There is also little possibility of the two countries elaborating their respective alert levels and what all actions each of these levels will constitute. This would leave public statements by senior government officials and the employment of bilateral or third party diplomatic channels as the available options for signaling. Public statements are also beset with problems of their own and can cause misunderstandings or misperceptions, especially in view of the absence of mutually agreed and commonly recognized strategic jargon. Moreover, in South Asia it has often been experienced that totally unconcerned officials who are neither privy to nor have even the very basic understanding of strategic issues make statements out of exuberance thereby causing unnecessary confusion. The statement by Pakistani Minister of Religious Affairs during the Kargil crisis is a case in point. The communication of deterrence messages would best be done at the political level. For this purpose, bilateral diplomatic channels and existing hotlines between key officials on either side could be used as means of communicating nuclear signals with the greatest clarity. In this regard, hotlines between the respective foreign

secretaries and the DGMOs would be a dependable means of signaling resolve and understanding each other's vital interests. The two sides could also notify their respective points of contact, who could exchange necessary information with their counterparts on behalf of their political leaderships. Though, due to disparity in the two nuclear command and control systems it would not be easy to find corresponding counterparts. For instance, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCSC) and Director General Strategic Plans Division – the two key officials on the Pakistani side don't have equivalent counterparts on the Indian side.

Pakistan's current nuclear posture bears some similarities with the Russian concept wherein it has introduced battlefield nuclear weapons for manipulation of threat and option enhancement in order to deter a conventional conflict of even a limited scale in a situation of unfavorable conventional balance. However, Pakistan has, unlike the Russians, dubbed its doctrine as 'Full Spectrum Deterrence' rather than calling it 'de-escalation strategy.' India, though, appears non-receptive or dismissive of these signals and is continuously challenging this strategy by raising the stakes through aggressive actions across the LOC as well as the Working Boundary. India is continuing to seek a space for a conventional conflict under the nuclear overhang despite lowering of the nuclear threshold by Pakistan. It appears that the nuclear signaling in South Asia is not finding receptive ears and most signals are not being perceived by the receivers in the way they are intended by the sender leading to a very tenuous situation which should not be allowed to persist due to its inherent dangers. There is, therefore, an urgent need for both countries to fine tune their nuclear signaling, develop a common strategic language and remove the filters of bias and mistrust while receiving signals by the other side.

This is a shortened version of a research article published earlier as Islamabad papers by Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad.

Dr. Naeem Salik is a Senior Research Fellow at the Center for International Strategic Studies (CISS) Islamabad.

Balakot to Swift Retort: Putting ‘New Normals’ to Test

Dr. Mansoor Ahmed & Maimuna Ashraf

The latest India-Pakistan crisis has contested longstanding narratives on South Asia’s crisis stability, conflict management and escalation control. The conventional wisdom on Pakistan’s force posture asserts that given Pakistan’s relative conventional weakness and its first-use doctrine, it is “nuclear trigger happy.” In contrast, the events unfolding after the Pulwama attack has reinforced the perception that the threat of mutually assured destruction has deterred India and Pakistan from pursuing aggressive strategic options. It also shows that, at least initially, two nuclear-armed states can risk the pursuit of limited objectives under the nuclear threshold.

Correspondingly, this crisis has put a lid on various misrepresentations regarding Pakistan’s posture of Full Spectrum Deterrence (FSD) that was being only viewed through the lens of Pakistan’s nuclear-capable Hatf-IX (NASR) short-range battlefield ballistic missile. Pakistan’s FSD has thus been misconstrued to solely represent a nuclear war-fighting strategy, centered on the employment of NASR against Indian military operations. During the past decade, this characterization was wholly embraced by Pakistani, Indian and Western scholars and officials alike. But this led to misperceptions about Pakistan’s nuclear threshold and its consolidating conventional capabilities.

The India-Pakistan border skirmishes along the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir are considered a routine phenomenon. However, in the wake of the February 14, 2019, Pulwama attack, India upped the ante and chose to vertically escalate by employing air power across the LoC and into Pakistan’s Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province bordering

Azad Kashmir (Jabba Top). It was the first practical manifestation of India's doctrinal evolution towards counterforce response through the Indian Air Force (IAF).

Ostensibly a counter-terror strike, the IAF operation was dubbed as a "non-military pre-emptive action" by India. But in effect, New Delhi's airstrikes were primarily aimed at establishing a "new normal" which, once successful, could be replicated at other places against Pakistan at will. Also, the strikes in Pakistan was a symbolic act with the aim of feeding domestic political constituencies ahead of India's elections. In doing so, however, New Dehli seriously underestimated Islamabad's conventional capability and resolve to give a matching response.

India had been preparing IAF for counter-force roles during the past decade through regular exercises such as the "Gaganshakti 2018"—designed to validate operational concepts for a short, intense two-front war against Pakistan and China. The training simulation also involved preparation for possible nuclear war, in addition to conventional and counterforce strikes in conjunction with the Indian Army and Navy. Moreover, the Gaganshakti 2018 exercise came on the heels of a Joint Doctrine unveiled in 2017 with the addition of the Land Warfare Doctrine in 2018. These reflect India's commitment to building warfighting capability for escalation dominance against Pakistan and China through the application of "Full Spectrum Conflict" that seeks to continue military operations even after the adversary's nuclear threshold is crossed. Thus, the February 26 attack on Pakistani territory was a tentative foray into testing India's doctrinal evolution.

What is certain is that the ensuing aerial engagement between the Indian and Pakistani air-forces was a seminal event between two rival air-forces operating in a net-centric environment, backed by Airborne

Early Warning and Control Systems (AWACs), ground sensors and electronic warfare. The Pakistan Air Force (PAF) was able to carry out its retaliatory strikes at six places across the LoC in Indian Occupied Kashmir on the morning of February 27 by employing stand-off weapons, effectively neutralizing India's formidable multi-layered Air Defence Ground Environment System and Integrated Air Defence System.

The intercepting IAF formation, comprised eight aircraft (SU-30 MKI, Mirage 2000 and Mig-21 Bison aircraft) was backed by Phalcon AWACS, against the PAF's twenty-four aircraft strike formation (comprising JF-17s and ROSE Mirage-III/V aircraft) which were perceived to be inferior to the IAF front-line aircraft. The PAF force was also supported by Erieye and ZDK-03 AWACS and F-16s armed with AMRAAM (Beyond Visual Range missiles).

The IAF was unable to destroy any Pakistani aircraft even though the PAF took on a much larger, better-equipped IAF backed by a seemingly formidable multi-layered air defense network. In the ensuing air-battle, a PAF F-16 shot down a Mig-21 Bison whose debris and pilot fell inside Pakistani territory. That pilot was taken into custody while an SU-30 MKI was also shot down. The Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was later forced to lament the absence of the French Rafale which he hoped might have produced better results for the IAF, and the IAF Western Command's Air Officer was consequently removed. This implies that while the IAF continues to operate and add new types of aircraft in its existing inventory, it appears to be struggling to maintain an efficient pilot ratio, severability of aircraft and interoperability of an assortment of French, Israeli, Russian and British assets. As a result, the outcome is impacted along with IAF sortie generation capability during a prolonged conflict.

Shortly after India's Jabba strike, there was a chorus of euphoria that India had established a "New Normal" and had "called Pakistan's nuclear bluff." However, analysts also believe that this scenario did not play out as widely projected because the IAF was unable to demonstrate its will and capability to retaliate against the PAF counter-strike and escalate further, despite losing two aircraft and a Mi-17 helicopter.

While Pakistan's nuclear thresholds (their military, territory, domestic stability and economy) were no-where seen to have been breached, Islamabad was able to re-establish deterrence solely through conventional means. Pakistan did so in the air on February 26 and 27, and at sea on March 4 when the Pakistan Navy forced the most advanced Indian conventional attack submarine, the Scorpene-AIP SSK, to surface.

Conversely, India brought nuclear connotations in crisis after Pakistan's air-strike, by swiftly operating its naval combat units that included its nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN), INS Arihant, along with other destroyers, submarines and frigates. Reportedly, India was also prepared to vertically escalate following the PAF's matching response, not through the IAF as New Delhi was not willing to risk any further losses. Instead, India considered using ballistic and/or Brahmos cruise missile strikes against key Pakistani military targets. India was only deterred once Pakistan signaled it would swiftly engage in a three-fold disproportionate retaliation against Indian targets.

This brings up a previous example during the 2016 Doklam episode. During that crisis, India quickly resorted to nuclear signaling—specifically with readying the INS Arihant—which was found crippled when the Cabinet Committee on Security inquired of its operational

status for immediate deployment. These crises reflect India's sustained shift towards a pre-emptive counterforce posture as an extension to its massive retaliation doctrine, which suggests a proclivity for nuclear first use. This could be if and when a crucial threat is anticipated in the future, notwithstanding its official doctrine of No First Use.

The Pulwama crisis also witnessed a re-established pattern of third-party mediation but one that marked a radical departure from past crises. The United States initially supported India's right to self-defense by approving their air-strikes as a counter-terrorism raid. But after the PAF counter-strike, Washington implored both sides to exercise restraint and step back from further escalation. U.S. mediation was also reportedly involved in the quick release of the downed Mig-21 bison pilot. Later Washington was also engaged in diffusing India's missile threat, but only after Pakistan showed its intention to swiftly retaliate with greater force.

In addition, this crisis showed that the United States was not the primary third-party mediator—this time the active roles were played by Russia, China, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. America's reduced influence as a crisis manager in South Asia has been the result of its growing strategic partnership with India as central to its Indo-Pacific strategy against a rising China, and a concurrent loss of influence with Pakistan in relation to Islamabad's thawing relations with Moscow and regional re-balancing towards Beijing.

Moreover, the manner in which Pakistan was able to deter India from escalating the conflict, twice—after the PAF counterstrike and the threat of missile attacks—came as a surprise for many across the world. Particularly, it was worrisome for the United States, which views its strategic partnership with India as the most important

alliance of the twenty-first century, to see that India hasn't been able to operationalize its Cold Start Doctrine, or even achieve limited politico-military objectives against Pakistan which was routinely dismissed as nothing more than an irritant rather than a serious military contender.

The events of February 2019 show that there is a yawning credibility gap between what India has been projecting in terms of capability and resolve to take on China and Pakistan simultaneously. This is also implicit in its Land Warfare Doctrine 2018, which calls for maintaining the status quo and ensuring "minimum escalation" along the Line of Actual Control with China while seeking "operational ascendancy" along the Line of Control with Pakistan. Therefore, India might not be able to share the burden as "a net security provider" and "anchor of stability" for Washington. However, New Delhi will continue to project itself as the only viable strategic choice for Washington in its Indo-Pacific strategy against Beijing, and thereby secure access to advanced and emerging American military technologies.

Nevertheless, in view of India's growing appetite to achieve escalation dominance and establish itself as a regional and global power, space for limited military action exists if any one side exhibits irrational behavior during a crisis. India will still seek to exploit another opportunity in order to avenge its losses at the hands of the PAF. For now, Pakistan has been successful in nipping the "new normal of pre-emptive non-military strikes" in the bud.

Furthermore, Islamabad's mature, rational and patient handling of the crisis prevented further escalation and is arguably Pakistan's "Finest Hour" since both India and Pakistan's 1998 nuclear tests. Pakistan could have escalated, first on the night of the February 2019 IAF

strike, by targeting the IAF's Mirage 2000 strike force, and subsequently by hitting the Northern Command (15 Corps headquarters). Alternatively, the PAF could have attacked a major IAF airbase or engaged in disproportionate retaliation of heavy artillery fire along the Line of Control. Despite calls for escalation from within India and Pakistan—mainly to dominate the escalation ladder and re-establish the power equilibrium—both sides were self-deterred due to the unacceptable costs of a full-fledged conflict.

While the crisis has abated for now, it will have long-term effects on deterrence stability in South Asia. Western arms suppliers will compete with Russia and Israel to secure additional contracts for advanced conventional weapons. New Delhi and Islamabad will speed up their ongoing force modernization efforts coupled with the restructuring of their armed forces. India will focus on achieving escalation dominance and capabilities for “Full Spectrum Conflict.” New Delhi will, therefore, remain a top arms importer—the only country that has managed to simultaneously acquire state-of-the-art military technologies from all major Western arms suppliers and Russia. This will force Pakistan to take remedial measures to maintain the credibility of its deterrence posture. Arms race instability will be the new normal and crisis stability will remain elusive.

A version of this article appeared in the national Interest.

Dr. Mansoor Ahmed is Senior Research Fellow and Maimuna Ashraf is Research Officer at the Center for International Strategic Studies (CISS) Islamabad.

Balakot Strikes and Operation Swift Retort: Lessons for Crisis Management

Saima Aman Sial

Recurring crises are a constant feature of South Asia, owing to over 70 years old underlying territorial dispute of Kashmir between the two nuclear armed adversaries. The latest in the series of several crises, happened in February last year and is regarded as the most serious military engagement involving aerial battle after their overt nuclearization in 1998. It has been a year since the Pulwama-Balakot skirmish between India and Pakistan took place, however the tensions do not seem to have fully subsided. The LoC remains hot for over a year now and the war-mongering by Indian politico-military elite has intensified.

The crisis initiated with the usual template of a terrorist incident, when a young boy Adil Dar, from Indian occupied Kashmir, carried out a suicide bombing of a vehicle carrying 40 CRPF officials. Later, the CRPF's inquiry report revealed that the incident was a serious security lapse and an intelligence failure. The CRPF convoy, comprising 78 vehicles carrying over 2500 personnel, was too large to be traveling by road, with the civilian traffic movement being allowed as an exception. The incident was nonetheless blamed on Pakistan, based on a video released by the JeM - a militant group banned in Pakistan.

In a statement after the attack, Indian Prime Minister Modi said that he had given a 'free hand' to his military to strike at the time and place of its choosing. Under the directions of the Indian government, driven by its election fervor and playing to the gallery, Indian Airforce (IAF) carried out strikes across international border with stand-off

weapons, near Balakot within Pakistani territory, claiming to have killed a large number of militants.

What ensued was a flurry of claims by India about the success of the strikes, till Pakistan's Inter-Services Public Relations Directorate (ISPR) took local and international media and foreign diplomats to the site to validate its claim that the strike had failed to hit any purported targets; a claim later confirmed through satellite imagery provided by Reuters.

The strike, however, offered a credibility dilemma for Pakistan, if it chose not to respond. After the Pulwama attack, all-through, Pakistan's highest political leadership had been cautioning India not to undertake any military adventure against Pakistan, as the latter would be forced to retaliate. Hence, soon after the strike on 26 February, Pakistan's Air Force (PAF) retaliated in kind on the morning of 27 February, by dropping payloads across the LoC in Rajauri sector, intentionally avoiding targeting the Indian military sites, while establishing its capability and intention to strike back if any further escalation was envisioned by India. In the ensuing dog fight, PAF was able to shoot down an Indian Mig-21 Bison and capture the pilot, who was later returned under instructions from Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan, as a grand face saving to India, to climb down the escalation ladder.

There has been a lot of analysis done on the lessons learnt from the Pulwama-Balakot crisis. Although one question that comes to mind is, with continuing shelling and casualties along the LoC and competing narratives of past crises, have both states learnt the same crisis management lessons? A follow-up question would be, does learning different lessons from the same crisis; poses challenges or solutions, from a crisis management perspective? This article attempts to

understand the emerging crisis dynamics during the Pulwama-Balakot episode and glean crisis management lessons for the future.

From Uri to Pulwama: India's Efforts at Establishing a 'New Normal'?

After the Balakot strikes, the Indian Foreign Secretary Vijay Ghokale, claimed that the strikes were 'non-military preemptive action' that specifically targeted the JeM camp, a claim that evidence proved to be false. India had earlier been contemplating military responses to side-step Pakistan's nuclear capability and commit aggression below the latter's perceived nuclear threshold. In 2016, after the Uri terrorist incident, India claimed to have carried out a so-called surgical strikes 'along the LoC', that Pakistan dubbed as a farce. The claim however provided Indian political leadership the opportunity to flaunt it as a political success in the then-coming elections.

It has been claimed by many that the Pakistan's denial and in consequence lack of response of the surgical strike, emboldened India to think that a 'new normal' had been established and that Pakistan wouldn't respond after the Balakot strikes too. It was in this context that it was necessary that Pakistan rectified such misplaced strategic thinking and hence soon after the 26 February strikes, Pakistan's National Security Committee stated that it would respond to this uncalled for aggression, 'at a time and place of its choosing'.

However, the Indian claims of calling Balakot strike as preemptive action is reflective of an emboldened strategic thinking in Indian political leadership to engage in a military conflict short of war; under the nuclear overhang; which is a recipe for escalation.

The 'Nuclear Bluff' Mantra & 'Quid-Pro Quo Plus'!

Indian strategic community started spinning the narrative soon after the Balakot strikes, claiming the strikes had called Pakistan's nuclear bluff and that nuclear deterrence had failed. This was a misplaced strategic assessment, as the Pakistani response demonstrated that its conventional means were sufficient to deter Indian aggression. The misplaced thinking was also a result of over analysis of the introduction of Nasr; a low-yield short range missile developed by Pakistan, to counter India's ambition of carrying out Proactive military operations across the International border; as part of the former's full-spectrum deterrence (FSD). The doctrine intended to cater to the full spectrum of threat, i.e. strategic, operational and tactical but was misconstrued to the virtual lowering of the nuclear threshold. The PAF Operation Swift Retort established the validity of Pakistan's conventional response and deterred India from escalating the crisis further, as evident from the statement made by India's External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj. Soon after the Rajauri strikes, she claimed that India 'does not wish to see further escalation of the situation'.

The crisis also reaffirmed Pakistan's FSD to reinforce deterrence by putting cold water on Cold Start; as after almost two decade of war-gaming the doctrine; India did not feel confident to implement CSD across the international border.

Managing crises with an intemperate leadership in India that uses cavalier language flaunting us of nuclear weapons as 'fire-crackers' and threatens Pakistan with a 'night of massacre', the burden of maintaining strategic stability would rest on Pakistan's actions, i.e. through establishing restraint as well as robust conventional and nuclear deterrence. This policy has lately been called by Lt General

Khalid Ahmed Kidwai, Advisor NCA as a policy of 'Quid-pro-Quo plus'¹.

Deliberating Counterfactuals

Deliberating on the counterfactuals can be an instructive approach in arriving at a scenario that the future crises may portend. In this regard, one may ask; what if Pakistan had not returned the pilot providing a face saving to India—wouldn't India have been compelled to escalate further? If Pakistan's leadership had not acted prudently and under restraint, and had targeted the Indian Brigade HQs what form would escalation have taken? Had the Balakot strikes succeeded in causing casualties, would Pakistan's response have been similar? These are important questions and point to the inherent risk of escalation in a nuclearized environment. The Indian risk-acceptant political leadership further increases the risk of escalation, with its war-mongering statements claiming to end a war within 7-10 days, taking over Azad Jammu and Kashmir etc.

Misplaced Doctrinal Assumptions

As I have argued elsewhere, the crisis reflects negatively on India's claims of massive retaliation doctrine. The deployment of nuclear platforms across the air and naval domains, as well as the use of dual-use platforms Mirage-2000 (can carry nuclear payload) for military missions, Surface-to-Air Missiles (SAM); portends negatively for the readiness postures during future crises in South Asia. It implies preemptive counterforce use and belies the understanding of doctrine of massive retaliation. The induction of technologies that favor first

¹ See Appendix, p.xxiv.

use (like BMDs, PGMs, hypersonic cruise missiles, enhanced ISR capabilities etc.) alongside integration for rapid decisive action, and speed would enhance nuclear readiness levels, leading to an early occurrence of an escalatory spiral in a future crisis, that may take a dynamic of its own.

Where to From Here?

The future template for the crisis management in South Asia is one in which Pakistan would have to employ its own conventional and nuclear deterrent means to counter Indian ambitions for war rather than overly rely on third party mediation. Even during this crisis, Pakistan employed, what Moeed Yusuf calls as the ‘resolve-prudence trade-off’ in his book dealing with third party brokering; i.e. the resolve not to let the attack go unanswered, and prudence in deescalating the crisis by returning the captured pilot to India.

During the Pulwama-Balakot episode, role of US as an honest broker became suspect², with the western powers either encouraging India or remaining silent on Indian military action in Pakistan’s sovereign territory. Whatever mediation efforts were initiated they came in pretty late. From a crisis management perspective, the US and western powers overconfidence in their ability to manage further

² See Appendix, p.xiv. Trump’s National Security Advisor, John Bolton, stated that India had the “right to self-defence” while a White House official maintained that “we (US) do empathize with the Indians’ perception that they need to respond militarily”. The Indian strike in Pakistani territory was described by the US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo as a “counter-terrorism” operation while urging Pakistan “to avoid military action” in response to the Indian provocation. It was only after Pakistan took retaliatory measures by attacking Indian targets and shooting down intruding Indian jets that Washington made calls for restraint and de-escalation by both sides.

escalation even if they took cognizance late after the initiation of the conflict is a risky proposition.

The abrogation of article 370 and revoking the special status of the Indian-held Kashmir, would lead to a new wave of resistance from the valley. Moreover, the current Indian actions against Muslims and controlling peaceful protests by violent means are sowing the seeds of resentment that may manifest in recurring terrorist incidents in India. The Indian government is likely to blame such incidents on Pakistan to divert international attention. One cannot rule out a future crisis onset based on a stage managed event to divert attention from internal instability in Modi's India.

Finally, the most potent tool to managing crises is through establishment of reliable and multiple layers of communication between the politico-military establishments on both sides along with Pakistan's efforts to strengthen its defence. Crisis management would only prevent issues from boiling over but they would continue to simmer with the potential to escalate to the nuclear level; while not addressing the underlying disputes that would lead the crises to recur in South Asia. Any lasting peace can only be established through resolving the outstanding disputes through dialogue.

Ms. Saima Aman Sial is a Senior Research Officer at the Center for International Strategic Studies (CISS) Islamabad.

US and China's Crisis Management in South Asia

Riaz Khokhar

The United States and China have essentially different and indispensable partnerships with India and Pakistan, and this understanding shapes their view of the India-Pakistan conflict.

There are two explanations of U.S. thinking about Pakistan. One, the United States acknowledges Pakistan's all-important assistance in resolving the Afghan conflict and appreciates its efforts for convincing the Taliban, including by releasing important top Afghan leaders as a bargaining chip, in the ongoing U.S.-Taliban conciliation process.

Two, there is a completely opposite view about Pakistan when the United States pursues its containment/balancing strategy against China, in which India is rated as playing a linchpin role for Washington. In this larger context, terrorism has the potential to destabilize India, which Washington sees as a strategic partner and counterweight to China's rise—one of the primary strategic threats to the United States. In this sense, the United States regards the persistence of terrorism against India as hamstringing U.S. policies in Asia.

Since anti-India militants are mostly alleged to be in Pakistan or in its administered part of Kashmir, the United States and its international partners, including Britain and France, have criticized Islamabad for its patronization. These countries have also proposed resolutions in the United Nations and other multilateral forums to increase the legal, diplomatic and economic pressure on Islamabad to stop supporting anti-India organizations and individuals

allegedly functioning on its territory. Pakistan's placement on the Financial Action Task Force's watch-list represented one of Washington's various tools of diplomatic compellence to achieve this objective.

By this token, even if the United States succeeds in securing Afghan reconciliation with help from Pakistan, the pressure to contain radical elements from attacking India would continue. The militancy factor may also continue to dent their bilateral security and economic ties. Thus, when Pakistan's foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi talks of hunky-dory U.S.-Pakistan relations after the progress in the U.S.-Taliban talks, he may still have to wait. Because the resolution of the Afghan conflict is only the part of the U.S.-South Asia strategy; the significance of Pakistan in the broader U.S. Indo-Pacific rebalancing strategy appears to be unknown to both American and Pakistani strategists.

After the 2019 Pulwama terrorist attack, New Delhi's South Block found it easier to garner international support for conducting an airstrike in Pakistan's main territory, since there is a perception in the international community that the attack's masterminds were in Pakistan. John Bolton, the National Security Advisor to the U.S. president, openly supported India's right to self-defense. And, Mike Pompeo, the U.S. Secretary of State, later dubbed the Indian incursion in Pakistani airspace as a "counter-terrorism strike." It was an inauspicious moment for Pakistan, as its officials saw the international community connecting Kashmiri terrorism to the presence of anti-India religious outfits in Pakistan while disregarding Indian state oppression in Kashmir.

On the Kashmir issue, the official U.S. stance is one of respecting the "the pace, scope and character" of the dialogue over Kashmir as

worked out by Pakistan and India. Perhaps due to the adverse reaction from the South Block in India, former U.S. president Barack Obama withdrew from mediating the resolution of Kashmir issue, and termed it as “a tar pit diplomatically”.

Having been disappointed by the international community's response, the Pakistani Air Force (PAF) retaliated with an air raid on Indian-controlled territory and shot down Indian warplane(s). The PAF's airstrikes revealed two things for the U.S. interest. One, it proved staggering for the United States, which has apparently pinned its hopes on the Indian military to counter the rising military power of China.

Two, it exposed the antiquated nature of Indian defense equipment, in particular, the air force arsenal. The shootdown of the Indian warplane(s), a MiG-21 Bison (and another aircraft according to unconfirmed reports), has panned out to be a blessing in disguise for the U.S. aircraft businesses, Lockheed Martin and Boeing. *Foreign Policy's* Pentagon correspondent has already quoted some experts and think tanks (with funding from the aircraft-makers) describe the shootdown of Indian jets as “an embarrassment” for the Indian Air Force.

Thus, if the United States expects India to compete with or contain China, the current South Asian security crisis may encourage Washington to invest heavily in India's military modernization and replace its outworn military equipment with the technologically advanced American defense systems. This is going to be tough, as 58 percent of Indian defense systems are saturated with Russian military equipment, according to the 2019 report of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). Out of India's total

defense imports of \$11.3 billion in 2017, imports from the United States were worth only \$758 million.

China's Perspective on the India-Pakistan Conflict

There are two lenses with which China looks at these subcontinental rivals: India's role in the U.S. Indo-Pacific rebalancing, and Indo-Pak dynamics.

First, there are three important strategic partners of the United States in the Asia-Pacific region that are pillars of the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy aimed at balancing the military and economic power of China.

In 2004, the United States, India, Japan and Australia founded the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue to carry out disaster relief operations and provide humanitarian assistance to tsunami victims, but it always carried an implicit anti-China role. After being shut down in 2007, it was revived a decade later, continuing the same original objective it was founded for. The new interest in the Quad arrangement is due to concerns pertaining to China's military rise and increasing economic engagement with the U.S partners in the Indo-Pacific region, which Beijing hopes will neutralize the containment threat it sees growing in Asia.

Chinese strategy with India also follows from the same premise. Beijing seeks to woo India away from the United States and discourage it from following any of Washington's anti-China strategies. The 2018-Wuhan Spirit signified Sino-Indian cooperation in Asian development projects and thus in leading the Asian Century. It will remain as the most important determinant of the future trajectory of Sino-Indian relations. Had China flayed India for

its recent attack on Pakistani soil or had not issued a statement against terrorism, India would have felt disillusioned by China's bonhomie. Thus, Beijing's strategic objectives with India against the United States would have been undermined.

Second, the Indo-Pakistan dyadic dynamics. With Pakistan, China has had long-lasting strategic ties since the 1960s. In the security relationship, two factors have surfaced on top, in both the long-running and the short-term aspects. First, the long-running security interests. Since the Sino-Indian war of 1962, India has become the dominant stimulus for Sino-Pak friendship, which has therefore taken the "all-weather" moniker. It is so because India and Pakistan are perennial enemies, and arguably India and China have also remained strategic competitive powers and will continue to remain so for a long time to come.

In the latest press briefing by the Chinese foreign minister, three key phrases undergirded the Chinese view of the India-Pakistan relations: peace and stability in the region, a long-term vision and improvement of relations through dialogue and compromise, and respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty. This implies that the third point will continue to be an irritant in the trilateral relations among Pakistan, India and China. The second point will serve as the process to determine the materialization of the first point, that is, peace and stability in the region.

The second factor of the Chinese view of the Indo-Pak relationship is terrorism. In the post-India-Pakistan de-escalation scenario, Beijing has appreciated Islamabad's counterterrorism actions and asked the world to acknowledge it. However, it remained silent when India carried out an airstrike in violation of Pakistani airspace, and has not expressed condemnation of India's

human-rights violations in Kashmir. The Chinese position on the issue of terrorism and Kashmir is similar to that of the United States, it looks forward to both countries resolving the bilateral outstanding issues politically and bilaterally.

Nonetheless, the Chinese foreign minister noted the stance as “unbiased.” Understandably, this is due to China’s strategy as mentioned above.

In the long-term perspective, while China will discourage India from becoming part of the U.S. containment strategy and increase Sino-Indian economic interdependence, Beijing will also invest in Pakistan’s military and economic development to make it parallel India’s rising power, thereby helping Islamabad to contain New Delhi within the South Asian region.

A version of this article appeared in *The National Interest*

Mr. Riaz Khokhar is a Research Assistant at the Center for International Strategic Studies (CISS) Islamabad.

Indian Media's Sensationalism During the Pulwama-Balakot Crisis

Samran Ali

A wave of jingoism and war hysteria followed the February 14, 2019 suicide attack on the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in Pulwama district of Indian administered Kashmir by a young Kashmiri, Adil Ahmad Dar. A video of Adil Dar surfaced on the internet in which he claimed support from Pakistan based Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM).

Questions were raised on how Adil Dar was able to take a large quantity of explosive material in a heavily militarized region. Whatever may be the explanation, it brought to the fore the inhumane treatment of Kashmiris for the last several decades by the Indian security forces and policies of the union governments in India that had alienated the Kashmiris, particularly the young generation. The frustration and anger among them had been building for years. It was periodically manifested in large scale protests by the people. Ignoring these realities, the news headlines all across the Indian news channels and print media echoed with one voice. "Teach Pakistan a lesson."

The hyper-nationalism was voiced brazenly and with such emotional appeal that the saner voices in India were drowned in the noise. There seemed to be a unanimous call for punishing Pakistan. Bollywood celebrities, cricket stars, and other influential media persons joined the chorus. It seemed that there was an urgent need to express one's loyalty to the Indian state by all and sundry in the entire nation. Nationalistic sentiments expressed vociferously created enormous pressure on the political leadership to act. National emotions and political pressure complement each other. Sometimes the political

leadership deliberately arouses these sentiments if it wants to achieve specific political objectives.

The attack on CRPF convoy and the subsequent events, India's Balakot strikes and Pakistan retaliation and capturing of an Indian pilot, set in motion a dangerous dynamic. Indian media drummed war hysteria 24/7, as if the people had to go to the war front to fight. It built up a momentum where the Indian public couldn't question the actions and reports of its government. According to the journalists who visited the site of Indian bombing in Balakot, only pine trees had been the victims of the Indian airstrike, however, the reporting on Indian media; claiming several hundred casualties could only be attributed to the imagination of the overzealous media. Objectivity was killed in the name of nationalism.

In all this situation, the Indian government deliberately relied on subservient media to leak out incorrect information. A report in the Huffington Post said that the Indian government left it to friendly media to provide Balakot strike details. Doing so the government freed itself from taking any responsibility for the claims media was making from the official sources. Another article in the Foreign Policy magazine called Indian media "war-crazy." The media, therefore, churned out only stories which it was fed by the Indian government. At no point, did the Indian media questioned the government's narrative or talked about the likely consequences of India's military action against Pakistan, or asked for evidence of the Pakistani hand behind Pulwama. Instead, post-Pulwama attacks, Indian media came up with a fake picture of the mastermind of the Pulwama attack, and unarmed Kashmiris were targeted all over in India for being Kashmiris.

Having a difference of opinion also became an offence in India. A guest in a talk show was shown the door for having an opinion different than the news anchor moderating the program. The other guest was called naïve by the anchor for praising the peace gesture of PM Imran Khan. What was more ludicrous was the Indian media's frenzy in airing farcical shows on effects of nuclear war. In one instance, the educational program on how to survive a nuclear war instructed people to apply cow dung on their skin to protect from harmful effects of radiation.

Media plays a big role in shaping national narratives and when it chooses to side with a nationalist government and advance its controlled narrative then it becomes a dangerous tool. Masses are turned into a mob and the government commits itself in a commitment trap as happened in the Indian case. After the Pulwama attacks, Indian officials rushed to blame Pakistan for backing the suicide attacks and continued the mantra. The media added fuel to the fire. It framed the content in such a way that it suggested that the past governments were unable to stop Pakistan's sponsored terrorism and this government would punish it as it did in a surgical strike after the Uri attacks in 2016. Post Balakot strike, "India's revenge" was the dominant theme on the Indian news channels without questioning the wisdom behind the destabilizing strike.

India's decision to order its Air Force to violate Pakistan's air space and drop bombs and subsequent war frenzy created by its media, particularly its electronic media, had put the existing deterrence between the two neighbors under stress, but Pakistan's timely decision to retaliate helped reinforce the conventional as well nuclear deterrence. This message of responsible conduct was further reinforced later by the return of the Indian pilot captured by the PAF.

Moving forward, the media in both nuclear powers, India and Pakistan, needs to play a more responsible role in a crisis situation. Pakistani media during the current crisis was observed to be more restrained and acted with greater responsibility than the Indian media. In a future conflict, if Indian media repeats what it did in the post-Pulwama situation, it would only add fuel to the fire that could have disastrous consequences for the South Asian region and beyond.

A version of this article appeared in *Strategic Foresight for Asia*.

Mr. Samran Ali is a Research Assistant at the Center for International Strategic Studies (CISS) Islamabad.

APPENDICES

INDIAN OFFICIALS' STATEMENTS

Posted on Twitter - February 14, 2019

Prime Minister Narendra Modi

“Attack on CRPF personnel in Pulwama is despicable. I strongly condemn this dastardly attack. The sacrifices of our brave security personnel shall not go in vain. The entire nation stands shoulder to shoulder with the families of the brave martyrs. May the injured recover quickly.”

Posted on February 15, 2019

by Press Information Bureau, New Delhi

English Rendering of PM's Speech at the Flagging off Function of Vande Bharat Express

“First of all I pay my homage to the Martyred soldiers of Pulwama terror attack. They have laid down their lives while serving the nation. In this moment of grief, my and every Indian's deepest sympathies are with their families.

I am able to clearly fathom the anguish and anger of the people due to this attack. The expectation of the people at this time and the feeling of taking some action is quite natural. Our security forces have been given complete freedom. We have complete faith in the valour of our soldiers. I am confident that the patriots of our country will provide correct information to our agencies so that our fight against terror is sharpened.

I want to tell the terrorist organizations and their leaders that they have committed a grave mistake and they will have to pay a heavy

price. I assure the nation that whichever force was behind the attack, the perpetrators would be punished! I also respect the feelings of those criticizing us. I can completely understand their feelings and they have the right to criticize.

It is an extremely sensitive and emotional moment. I request my friends from both the sides to be away from political jibes. The nation is giving a befitting reply in a united way, the nation is united, the nation has one voice and this should reach the world because we are fighting this war to win.

If our neighbouring country, which has been isolated by the world, believes that committing such acts and conspiring like this would destabilize India, then they are absolutely wrong. They can never be successful and such a thing will never happen.

Our neighboring country, which is currently facing a major economic crisis, also believes that by this destruction it can bring a catastrophe upon India. Their intentions will never be fulfilled. Time has proved that the path on which they are walking has led them to destruction and the path that we have embraced is leading us towards progress and success. The 130 crore Indians will give a befitting reply to every such conspiracy and every such attack. Several powerful countries have condemned this terror attack in strong words and have extended their support for India. I am grateful to all those nations and I appeal to one and all that all the humanitarian forces unite and fight against terrorism. All the humanitarian forces must unite and defeat terrorism.

When all the countries unanimously with a single voice start moving in a single direction to fight against terrorism, then the menace of terrorism cannot survive for long.”

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan

"Pakistan is trying to destabilise the country. The nation respects their sacrifice, country will always be indebted to the security forces. Their sacrifice won't go in vain. The country will give them befitting reply."

After the Balakot Event

Posted on - February 26, 2019

Full Statement by the Indian Government on the Air Strike in Pakistan

On 14 February 2019, a suicide terror attack was conducted by a Pak based terrorist organization Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), leading to the martyrdom of 40 brave jawans of the CRPF. JeM has been active in Pakistan for the last two decades, and is led by Masood Azhar with its headquarters in Bahawalpur.

This organisation, which is proscribed by the UN, has been responsible of a series of terrorist attacks including on the Indian Parliament in December 2001 and the Pathankot airbase in January 2016.

Information regarding the location of training camps in Pakistan and PoJK has been provided to Pakistan from time to time. Pakistan, however, denies their existence. The existence of such massive training facilities capable of training hundreds of jihadis could not have functioned without the knowledge of Pakistan authorities.

India has been repeatedly urging Pakistan to take action against the JeM to prevent jihadis from being trained and armed inside Pakistan. Pakistan has taken no concrete actions to dismantle the infrastructure of terrorism on its soil.

Credible intelligence was received that JeM was attempting another suicide terror attack in various parts of the country, and the fidayeen jihadis were being trained for this purpose. In the face of imminent danger, a pre-emptive strike became absolutely necessary.

In an intelligence led operation in the early hours of today, India struck the biggest training camp of JeM in Balakot. In this operation, a very large number of JeM terrorists, trainers, senior commanders and groups of jihadis who were being trained for fidayeen action were eliminated. This facility at Balakot was headed by Maulana Yousuf Azhar (alias Ustad Ghouri), the brother-in-law of Masood Azhar, chief of JeM.

The Government of India is firmly and resolutely committed to taking all necessary measures to fight the menace of terrorism. Hence this non-military preemptive action was specifically targeted at the JeM camp. The selection of the target was also conditioned by our desire to avoid civilian casualties. The facility is located in thick forest on a hilltop far away from any civilian presence. As the strike has taken place only a short while ago, we are awaiting further details.

The Government of Pakistan had made a solemn commitment in January 2004 not to allow its soil or territory under its control to be used for terrorism against India. We expect that Pakistan lives up to its public commitment and takes follow up actions to dismantle all JeM and other camps and hold the terrorists accountable for the actions.

Posted on Press Trust of India – February 27, 2019

Defence Sources say no Reports of any IAF Jet Suffering Damage in Action by Adversaries

“There are no reports of any IAF jet suffering damage in action by India's adversaries, defence sources quoted by the Press Trust of India said on Wednesday. Pakistan has claimed it shot down two Indian military aircraft and arrested two pilots.”

Posted on – February 27, 2019

The MEA's Full Statement

"India had informed about counter-terrorism (CT) action it took yesterday against a training camp of Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) in Pakistan based on credible evidence that JeM intended to launch more attacks. Against this counter-terrorism action, Pakistan has responded this morning by using its Air Force to target military installations on the Indian side. Due to our high state of readiness and alertness, Pakistan's attempts were foiled successfully. The Pakistan Air Force was detected, and the Indian Air Force responded instantly. In that aerial engagement, one Pakistan Air Force fighter aircraft was shot down by a MiG 21 Bison of the Indian Air Force. The Pakistani aircraft was seen by ground forces falling from the sky on the Pakistan side. In this engagement, we have unfortunately lost one MiG 21. The pilot is missing in action. Pakistan has claimed that he is in their custody. We are ascertaining the facts." Feb 27, 2019

Posted on – February 27, 2019

India will not Buckle Under Pressure

Prime Minister Narendra Modi held day-long back-to-back meetings with National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Intelligence officials and chiefs of the three Services.

The key takeaways from the meetings were: "India will not buckle under pressure. Navy, Air and Army have been given a free hand to take a future course of action. A befitting reply would be given at a proper time."

Posted on – March 01, 2019

PM's Address after Launch of Development Projects in Kanyakumari

"Friends. India has been facing the menace of terrorism for years. But, there is a big difference now- India will no longer be helpless in the wake of terror. From 2004 to 2014 there were several terror attacks. There were blasts in Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Bengaluru, Delhi, Mumbai, Pune and other places. The nation expected those responsible for these acts of terror to be punished but nothing happened.

26/11 happened, India expected action against terrorists but nothing happened. But, when Uri happened you saw what our brave soldiers did. Pulwama happened and you saw what our brave air warriors did. I salute all those who are serving the nation. Their vigilance keeps our nation secure. There was a time when the news reports would read- Air Force wanted to do surgical strike after 26/11 but UPA blocked it.

And today, we are in an era where the news reads- Armed forces have full freedom to do what they want. Influence of terrorists and terrorism has been curtailed and it is going to be curtailed even more.

This is a New India. This is an India that will return the damage done by terrorists with interest.

Friends. The events of the past few days have demonstrated yet again the strength of our armed forces. It has also brought our nation closer. The way the nation has supported our armed forces is extra-ordinary and I bow to every Indian for that.

Sadly, a few political parties, guided by Modi hatred have started hating India. No wonder, while the entire nation supports our armed forces, they suspect the armed forces. The world is supporting India's fight against terror but a few parties suspect our fight against terror. These are the same people whose statements are helping Pakistan and harming India.

They are the same people whose statements are being happily quoted in the Parliament of Pakistan and in the radio of Pakistan. I want to ask them- do you support our armed forces or suspect them? They should clarify- Do they believe our armed forces or they believe those forces who support terrorism on our soil? I want to tell these parties- Modi will come and go, India will remain. Please stop weakening India to strengthen your own politics. In matters of defence and national security, we are Indians first and Indians only. Your politics can wait, it is the safety of our nation that is at stake."

Posted on – April 18, 2019

India Threatens Pakistan with 'Mother of Nuclear Bombs'

"Earlier, terrorists from Pakistan would come here and go back after conducting an attack. Pakistan would threaten us, saying it has the nuclear bomb and will press the button... In the past our people would

weep, go around the world saying Pakistan did this, did that. It is now Pakistan's turn to weep." "We have the mother of nuclear bombs. I decided to tell [Pakistan], do whatever you want to do but we will retaliate."

Posted on – April 21, 2019

'Qatal Ki Raat': PM Modi Speaks About US Claims on Wing Commander Abhinandan's Return

"When Abhinandan was captured by Pakistan, I said [to Pakistan] that if anything happens to our pilot, we will not leave you." He added, "A senior American official said on the second day that Modi has kept ready 12 missiles and might attack and the situation will deteriorate. Pakistan announced they would return the pilot on the second day, else it was going to be a 'qatal ki raat (a night of slaughter)'.

PAKISTANI OFFICIALS' STATEMENTS

Posted on – February 14, 2019

Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA)

“The attack in Pulwama in the Indian Occupied Jammu & Kashmir is a matter of grave concern. We have always condemned heightened acts of violence in the Valley. We strongly reject any insinuation by elements in the Indian government and media circles that seek to link the attack to the State of Pakistan without investigations.” MoFA Statement,

Posted on – February 19, 2019

Prime Minister Imran Khan's address on Pulwama Incident

I had taken notice of the Indian allegations against Pakistan in the Pulwama Attacks. However, I decided to hold off my response, as I did not wish to divert attention from the visit of the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia and the Investment Conference we had been planning for a long time. I am responding to the Indian allegations, now that the visit has ended.

Firstly you accused Pakistan without any evidence, or even considering what advantage Pakistan would derive from this. Let me assure you, Pakistan derives no benefit from such acts – Even a foolish person would not sabotage such an important visit and conference by such an act.

What benefit would Pakistan have from such acts at a stage when we are progressing towards prosperity? We have suffered the consequences of the fight against terrorism for 15 years and lost

70,000 lives. What benefit would we gain from such an act, at this point when terrorism is subsiding and Pakistan is becoming prosperous?

I would like to ask the Indian government if they wish to stay trapped in the past and blame Pakistan for any incident in Indian occupied Jammu & Kashmir, making Pakistan a regular whipping boy, instead of trying to resolve the Jammu & Kashmir dispute and resuming dialogue to move forward?

I am clearly telling you, this is the new Pakistan, a new mindset, a new thinking. It is in our interest that no one goes from our soil to carry out acts of terrorism anywhere outside Pakistan and similarly no one is allowed to come into Pakistan from outside for terrorism against us. We want stability.

I therefore wish to convey to the Government of India, our willingness for any investigation, if any Pakistani is involved. If you have any actionable evidence about the involvement of any Pakistani, I guarantee we will take action. We will take action, not because we are under pressure from anyone but because such acts are hostile to Pakistan's national interest. If anyone is using Pakistani soil for such acts it is against our interest. Secondly, whenever we speak about dialogue with India, their precondition is to discuss terrorism first. I am telling you we will speak about terrorism too. Terrorism is a regional issue and we are totally willing to discuss it because we want this scourge to end. Pakistan is the country which has suffered the most from terrorism; 70,000 Pakistanis have lost their lives and we have incurred losses of more than 100 billion US\$ due to this menace. We are ready to speak to you.

I want to say 2 final things to you. India needs to develop a new mindset, to introspect about the reason why Kashmiri youth have

reached the point where they have lost all fear of death. Do you think one-dimensional oppression, cruelty and resorting to use of force to solve a problem is the right way? If that has not worked earlier, do you think it will work now?

In Afghanistan, after 17 years, the whole world has accepted that there is no military solution and the only way to solve issues is through dialogue. Should not there be discussion on this in India too?

Secondly, we are hearing voices in India, including from the media and politicians about seeking revenge and carrying strikes against Pakistan—firstly, which law in the world allows any person or country to become judge, jury and executioner, all in one by any standard of justice? We understand it is your election year and slogans of teaching Pakistan a lesson will yield results. However, if you think you can attack Pakistan in any manner, Pakistan will not think of retaliating, Pakistan will retaliate. We will have no option, but to respond.

I cannot predict where it will go from there. We all know it is easy to start a war – that is in human hands. Ending war is beyond man; only god knows where it ends. I hope that better sense will prevail. We will exercise restraint and maturity. As in Afghanistan, this matter can only be solved through dialogue.”

Posted on – February 26, 2019

A Special Meeting of the National Security Committee Chaired by the Prime Minister was held at PM's Office

A special meeting of the National Security Committee chaired by the Prime Minister was held at Prime Minister's office today. The meeting was attended by Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Finance, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, Chief of Army Staff, Chief of Naval Staff, Chief of Air Staff and other civil & military officials.

Forum strongly rejected Indian claim of targeting an alleged terrorist camp near Balakot and the claim of heavy casualties. Once again Indian government has resorted to a self serving, reckless and fictitious claim. This action has been done for domestic consumption being in election environment, putting regional peace and stability at grave risk. The claimed area of strike is open for the world to see the facts on ground. For this domestic and international media is being taken to the impact site.

Forum concluded that India has committed uncalled for aggression to which Pakistan shall respond at the time and place of its choosing.

To take the nation on board, the government has decided to requisition joint session of the Parliament. The Prime Minister has summoned a special meeting of National Command Authority on 27th February 2019.

The Prime Minister has directed that elements of national power including the Armed Forces and the people of Pakistan to remain prepared for all eventualities. He decided to engage with global leadership to expose irresponsible Indian policy in the region. The Prime Minister appreciated timely and effective response of PAF to repulse Indian attempt without any loss of life or property.

Posted on February 27, 2019

Unofficial Transcript of Prime Minister Imran Khan's Address to The Nation

"I wanted to take the nation into confidence over the developments since yesterday morning. We offered peace to India after what happened in Pulwama. I understood the pain of the families. I have visited hospitals and seen the pain of people affected by violence. We

have lost 70,000 of our own and I know what those who are left behind and those who are injured feel.

We offered India that we would cooperate. It is not in Pakistan's interest to let our land be used for terrorism. There is no dispute there. Yet, I had still feared that India would ignore the offer and still take action, and I had therefore warned India against aggression and said we will be compelled to respond because no sovereign country can allow that violation of its sovereignty.

When India struck yesterday morning, the army chief and I spoke. We did not respond in haste – we did not have a complete assessment of the damage cause and it would have been irresponsible on our part as it may have resulted in casualties on their side. Once we assessed the damage caused, we were ready to take action. The sole purpose of our action today was to convey that we have the capability to respond. If you can come into our territory, we can do the same. That was the only purpose of what we did. Two of their MiGs were shot down by Pakistani forces after they crossed over into our territory.

It is important where we go from here. From here, it is imperative that we use our heads and act with wisdom. All wars are miscalculated, and no one knows where they lead to. World War I was supposed to end in weeks, it took six years. Similarly, the US never expected the war on terrorism to last 17 years.

I ask India: with the weapons you have and the weapons we have, can we really afford such a miscalculation? If this escalates, things will no longer be in my control or in Modi's. I once again invite you: we are ready. We understand the grief India has suffered in Pulwama and are ready for any sort of dialogue on terrorism. I reiterate that better sense should prevail. Let's sit together and settle this with talks".

STATEMENTS BY INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Posted on - February 14, 2019

US State Department Condemns Attack

In an official statement released by deputy spokesperson Robert Palladino, the U.S. Department of State condemned the “heinous act,” saying, “The United States is resolutely committed to working with the Indian government to combat terrorism in all its forms. The UN-designated, Pakistan-based terrorist group Jaish-e-Muhammad has claimed responsibility for this heinous act. We call on all countries to uphold their responsibilities pursuant to UN Security Council resolutions to deny safe haven and support for terrorists.”

Posted on - February 14, 2019

Statement from the Press Secretary on the Terrorist Attack in India

The United States condemns in the strongest terms the heinous terrorist attack by a Pakistan-based terrorist group that killed over 40 Indian paramilitary forces and wounded at least 44 others. We express our deep condolences to the victims’ families, the Indian government, and the Indian people for the loss of life in this brutal attack. The United States calls on Pakistan to end immediately the support and safe haven provided to all terrorist groups operating on its soil, whose only goal is to sow chaos, violence, and terror in the region. This attack only strengthens our resolve to bolster counterterrorism cooperation and coordination between the United States and India.

Posted on - February 14, 2019

“UN Secretary General condemns attack”

United Nations Secretary General António Guterres condemned the attack, his spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric said, "We strongly condemn today's attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district and express our deepest condolences to the families of those who lost their lives and to the Government and people of India. We of course wish a speedy recovery to those injured and call for those behind the attack to be brought to justice."

- Members of European Parliament ask India to stop atrocities in Kashmir. An overwhelming majority of members of the European Parliament (MEPs) attending a landmark event on the rights situation in occupied Kashmir put their weight behind the recommendations of a United Nations report on the state of human rights in the valley, and called on India to immediately halt its atrocities in Kashmir, the Foreign Office said in a press release. *(Dawn, February 20, 2019)*

UN chief calls for 'meaningful' engagement between India and Pakistan. This is the second statement issued by the UN secretary general on the rising tensions between India and Pakistan in the aftermath of a suicide bombing attack in Pulwama district of Indian-occupied Kashmir. *(Dawn, February 21, 2019)*

Posted on - February 15, 2019

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's Statement

The US condemns yesterday's horrific terror attack on Indian Security forces. My thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their families. We stand with India as it confronts terrorism. Pakistan must

not provide safe haven for terrorists to threaten international security. (Twitter)

Mike Pompeo urges India, Pakistan to 'avoid escalation at any cost' US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo has urged India and Pakistan to avoid further escalation "at any cost" and to "prioritise direct communication".

In a statement issued by his office in Washington following India's Line of Control (LoC) violation, Secretary Pompeo said that he spoke with Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi and his Indian counterpart Sushma Swaraj hours after Indian fighter jets intruded from the Muzaffarabad sector and scrambled back after dropping bombs. *(Dawn, February 27, 2019)*

Posted on - February 16, 2019

US National Security Advisor John Bolton

'We support India's right to self-defense': US NSA John Bolton to Ajit Doval on Pulwama attack. US National Security Adviser John Bolton told his Indian counterpart Ajit Doval on Friday that America supports India's right to self-defense.

The US cautioned Pakistan and asked it to immediately end support to all terrorists and withdraw safe haven provided to them on its soil. US National Security Adviser John Bolton spoke to Ajit Doval, on 15th night, promising to help bring those behind the attack to justice. They resolved to hold Pakistan to account for its obligations under UN resolutions. The US asked Pakistan to "freeze without delay" the funds and other financial assets of the UNSC-designated terrorist networks and their leaders. It also said it fully supports "actions to prevent" the outlawed Jaish-e-Mohammed "from conducting future attacks".

Posted on Dawn News - February 20, 2019

US President Donald Trump

'It would be wonderful if Pakistan, India get along': Trump on Pulwama attack United States President Donald Trump has said that his government will comment on last week's suicide bombing in Pulwama — that killed more than 40 Indian troops — at "an appropriate time". (*Dawn, February 20, 2019*)

Posted on - February 23, 2019

US President Donald Trump

- Trump described the current situation between India and Pakistan as very dangerous
"It's a terrible thing going on right now between Pakistan and India... it is a very, very bad situation and it's a very dangerous situation between the two countries. We would like to see it stopped. A lot of people were just killed and we want to see it stopped," he said.
- US President **Donald Trump** has described as "horrible" the deadly terror attack by Pakistan-based **Jaish-e-Mohammed** in Pulwama, as his administration offered full support to India to combat terrorism and asked Islamabad to punish anyone responsible for the "heinous act".

RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S RESPONSE

Posted on NDTV website– February 15, 2019

President Vladimir Putin

In a message to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Mr Putin said, "Please accept the most sincere condolences in connection with the loss of Indian law enforcement officers in the terrorist act in the state of

Jammu and Kashmir. We strongly condemn this brutal crime. The perpetrators and sponsors of this attack, undoubtedly, should be duly punished." Mr Putin reiterated Russia's "readiness for further strengthening counter-terrorist cooperation with Indian partners".

"In Russia, we share the grief of friendly people of India and hope for speedy recovery of the injured," he said. Mr Putin's message on Friday came separately after the Russian Embassy issued a statement on Thursday saying it "condemns in the strongest terms the horrific terrorist attack".

"We denounce terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and reiterate the need to combat these inhuman acts with decisive and collective response without any double standards," the Embassy statement said.

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN'S RESPONSE

Posted on Tehran Times – February 17, 2019

"After Kashmir attack, war drums beating again"

Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Bahram Qassemi said, "Iran also condemned the attack and termed any kind of violence as "unacceptable". "As a country that has been a victim of terrorism and has taken major and effective steps to root out terrorist groups in the West Asia region and has paid heavy costs and is resolved to keep up this path with strong determination, we believe using such bloody and inhumane methods by any group and with any motive and under any name is unacceptable".

Posted on The Print India – February 17, 2019

After Pulwama-like Attack

Iran Warns Pakistan that it ‘will Pay a Heavy Price’

A day before the heinous attack in Pulwama in which at least 40 CRPF personnel were killed, 27 Iranian Revolutionary Guards were killed in a southern Iranian province which borders Pakistan. This prompted Iranian elite security chief Major General Mohammed Ali Jafari to warn Pakistan Saturday that it would “pay a heavy price” for harbouring terrorists on its soil.

REPUBLIC OF CHINA’S RESPONSE

Posted on South China Morning Post – February 16, 2019

China Offers Support for Pakistan Counterterrorism

Efforts after Pulwama attack

The Chinese foreign spokesperson Geng Shuang, finally, on Friday said that it “condemned all forms of terrorism” and that “it hoped relevant regional countries will cooperate to cope with the threat of terrorism and jointly uphold regional peace and stability.”

Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi expressed support for Pakistan’s counterterrorism efforts in a phone call on Monday in the wake of the deadly Pulwama terrorist attack in Indian-controlled Kashmir. Pakistan foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi briefed Wang on Pakistan’s position regarding the suicide attack that killed more than 40 Indian paramilitary personnel on February 14, and said Pakistan would work with India in “sincerity and determination, to find out the truth of the incident”, according to a statement about the call from China’s foreign ministry. In the phone call with Qureshi, Wang said China supported Pakistan and India to quickly resolve the issue, and

to avoid escalating tensions. Qureshi said Pakistan would maintain regional peace, and was willing to strengthen its cooperation with other countries.

FRANCE'S RESPONSE

Posted on India Today - February 26, 2019

France Supports India's Need to Ensure Security Asks Pakistan to End Terror Activities

After the European Union, China and other nations, France, too came out to call for restraint amid escalating tension between India and Pakistan, but also supported India's need to ensure security.

A statement issued by France's Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs said, "France recognises India's legitimacy to ensure its security against cross-border terrorism and asks Pakistan to put an end to the operations of terrorist groups established on its territory."

Like Australia, France has clearly urged Pakistan to stop terrorist organisations from using its soil to continue with terror activities.

The French spokesperson further added, "France, which stands by India in the fight against terrorism in all its forms, is fully engaged in mobilising the international community to sanction terrorists responsible for this attack (Pulwama) and freezing their financing networks."

The European nation further called for restraint and said, "France calls on India and Pakistan to exercise restraint to avert any risk of military escalation and preserve strategic stability in region. Resumption of dialogue between Islamabad and New is Delhi necessary to initiate peaceful settlement of differences."

Posted on Radio Pakistan – February 25, 2019

Germany, EU Assure Full Cooperation to Pakistan to Overcome Tense Situation with India

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi made a telephone call to his German Counterpart Heiko Maas and European Union Representative for Foreign Relations and Security Policy Federica Mogherini, and apprised them about regional peace in the aftermath of Pulwama incident.

The Foreign Minister said despite, unfounded allegations and provocative statements from India, Pakistan has demonstrated utmost restraint and asked New Delhi to provide evidence, if any, to investigate the Pulwama attack.

Shah Mahmood Qureshi and his German counterpart expressed satisfaction over bilateral relations between Pakistan and Germany.

Acknowledging Pakistan's efforts for regional peace, Federica Mogherini assured the Foreign Minister to provide full cooperation to overcome this tense situation between Pakistan and India. The two leaders agreed to continue consultation to further promote bilateral relations.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATE'S RESPONSE

Posted on - February 15, 2019

“India’s close ally in the Gulf UAE has condemned the terrorist attack on security forces in Kashmir.”

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation said in a statement that the UAE "condemns this terrorist act," reiterating the

country's principled and unequivocal position rejecting all forms of violence and terrorism.

"The UAE stands in solidarity with the government and people of India in their fight against violence and extremism," the Ministry said in a stamen today.

SAUDI ARABIAS' RESPONSE

Posted on Outlook India - February 18, 2019

Post Pulwama Attack

Saudi Arabia Vows To De-Escalate India-Pak Tensions

Saudi Arabia on Monday vowed to de-escalate tensions between India and Pakistan following the February 14 Pulwama terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir that killed 49 CRPF personnel.

The remarks came as the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who was in Pakistan on a two-day visit, prepared to leave Islamabad for New Delhi to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir, who is travelling with the royal, told the media here that his country would try to de-escalate tensions between the two neighbours and see how differences between them could be resolved peacefully, Efe news reported.

"Our objective is to try to de-escalate tensions between the two countries, neighbouring countries, and to see if there is a path forward to resolving those differences peacefully," he said.

The Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) took responsibility for the February 14 attack. Islamabad has dismissed New Delhi's allegations of its involvement in the attack.

Earlier on Monday, Pakistan summoned its High Commissioner in India, Sohail Mahmood, for "consultations" amid the tensions.

Keynote Address by Lieutenant General (Retd) Khalid Kidwai, Advisor, National Command Authority at CISS-IISS Workshop on ‘South Asian Strategic Stability: Deterrence, Nuclear Weapons and Arms Control’

IISS, London - February 6, 2020

Ladies and gentlemen. Good morning to all of you. I am indeed very grateful to the IISS, London and CISS, Islamabad for honouring me once again to deliver the keynote address at the annual joint workshop of the two prestigious think tanks. The focus in these workshops remains on the by now elusive ‘Strategic Stability in South Asia’. Unfortunately, despite the best efforts of some of the best brains in the business, South Asia has remained on a slippery slope over the years lurching dangerously towards strategic instability rather than strategic stability. When I use word ‘strategic’ in my address, I do not imply nuclear stability alone, but refer to the much larger and wholesome concept of strategic stability encompassing in its fold, the many elements of national power and strategy.

At the outset, I would like to begin by stating what today is an South Asian reality; the reality is that it is Pakistan that must shoulder the responsibility of maintaining the vital strategic balance in the conventional and nuclear equation with India as the critical determinant of the state of strategic stability in South Asia. If Pakistan were to allow imbalances to be introduced in the strategic equation, South Asia would list towards serious strategic instability. This in turn would lead to catastrophic consequences in view of India’s historically persistent and insatiable drive for regional

domination especially given India's current irrational, unstable and belligerent internal and external policies. By default, over the decades therefore, it has been a Pakistani responsibility not to allow the South Asian strategic stability to be disturbed to its disadvantage despite India's repeated efforts to make it unstable. And, here I would like to show with evidence that Pakistan has fulfilled its responsibility with appropriate strategic responses at every swing of the instability-stability pendulum in South Asia.

Amongst many others, I will briefly recount India's seven major destabilising strategic steps in the last fifty years, which on the average amount to one major destabilising step every seven years, and the corresponding Pakistani response in each case to redress the instability:

Case 1: In the seventies, immediately after the 1971 War, India conducted its first nuclear test in May 1974 altering the tenuous strategic balance in South Asia to its advantage. While India played the farce of calling it a peaceful nuclear explosion, Pakistan responded by embarking on a nuclear weapons programme of its own, as the only strategic way of redressing the induced strategic instability. Pakistan succeeded in its efforts and the rest is history.

Case 2: In the eighties, in 1986-87, without provocation, India massed its army and air force complete with weapons and ammunition on Pakistan's borders under the garb of Exercise Brasstacks, in an operational posture threatening mainland Pakistan's north-to-south lines of communications in the desert sectors. In response, Pakistan not only counter-mobilised its conventional forces strongly on the international borders, but further, dropped hints of a nuclear capability coming into play, for the first time introducing the rudimentary concept of nuclear deterrence in South Asia. As a

balancing factor in a relatively asymmetrical operational environment. India blinked and strategic stability was restored.

Case 3: In the nineties India upped the ante and introduced in its strategic inventory ballistic missiles *Prithvi* and *Agni* as short and medium range nuclear delivery systems covering the length and breadth of Pakistan. The resultant instability compelled Pakistan to respond through the development of the *Ghaznavi*, *Shaheen* and the *Ghauri* ballistic missiles ensuring that the vast geographical dimensions of the Indian peninsula came within the Pakistani strategic range. The Indian attempt to introduce strategic instability was adequately checked.

Case 4: More importantly, also in the nineties, India came out in to the open and transited from a so-called peaceful nuclear state to an overt nuclear weapon state by conducting five nuclear tests in May 1998. These were followed immediately by immature political threats at responsible levels to drive home the point of the strategic balance having swung in India's favour. Pakistan's response is now part of the history of the South Asian strategic paradigm. Pakistan confidently responded by conducting six nuclear tests within two weeks of the Indian tests and restored the strategic balance.

Case 5: In the first decade of this century, the Indian military, having lost the advantage of relative asymmetry in conventional forces because of Pakistan's nuclear equaliser, and also having failed to coerce Pakistan in 2001-02 despite the ten months full scale military deployment of Operation Parakaram, conceived and operationalised the provocative Cold Start Doctrine, between 2005 and 2010, as a possible solution to regain the strategic advantage in a limited war scenario. It formally admitted in 2014 to the existence of the Cold Start Doctrine after a ten years state of denial. This in an environment

of a nuclear overhang in South Asia in an attempt to find space for limited conventional war against an established nuclear power. In the face of this destabilising development, Pakistan took corresponding operational, doctrinal and force developmental measures both in the conventional as well as nuclear fields, including the establishment of a Full Spectrum Deterrence regime, in order to ensure that strategic stability in South Asia remained on an even keel. As a consequence, the Cold Start Doctrine stayed neutralised, nuclear deterrence holds, and informed strategists consider large-scale wars on the international borders as a thing of the past.

Case 6: In February last year [2019], as if to maintain the dubious track record of its consistent attempts to induce strategic instability, this time linked to seeking political and electoral advantage for the BJP, India embarrassed itself by undertaking an unsuccessful air strike at Balakot, in mainland Pakistan, crossing the red line of the international boundary. In the process, there was much chest thumping in the Indian strategic circles about having called Pakistan's nuclear bluff, which in my judgment was a very poor conclusion. I will have more to say on that later. However, Pakistan Air Force (PAF) responded the next day through a carefully calibrated response in two ways. First, it struck with precision the unmanned flanks of three ground targets in the Rajouri Sector, so as not to cause casualties and spared the senior hierarchy of the Indian military present at one of the targets. Second, the PAF humiliated the Indian Air Force (IAF), by shooting down two IAF fighters and capturing one pilot, not to mention the IAF's fratricide in shooting down one of its own helicopters resulting in seven deaths. The two actions drove home the point strongly that Pakistan would forever continue to disallow strategic instability to become a norm. Strategic stability was restored and no new normal was allowed to prevail.

Case 7: A point that runs as a scarlet thread through the last five decades as a constant, is the fact of large scale budgetary allocations aimed at massive induction of equipment and technology and expansion in India's three conventional armed services, its nuclear forces on land, air and sea, as also a dangerous reach in space. It would be accurate to conclude that these allocations and inductions keep South Asia in a perpetual state of strategic instability. However, because Pakistan consciously will not indulge in a conventional arms race except to seek qualitative upgrades, it is compelled to seek security and strategic stability, by investing in appropriate nuclear weapons through quality, quantity, doctrines and the concept of Full Spectrum Deterrence. Pakistan's response of strengthening its Full Spectrum Deterrence in an operational environment of relative conventional asymmetry is therefore apt and ensures that South Asia will remain strategically stable.

A very important ingredient in the need for retention of strategic stability in South Asia, is that Pakistan has ensured seamless integration between nuclear strategy and conventional military strategy, in order to achieve the desired outcomes in the realms of peacetime deterrence, pre-war deterrence, as also in intra-war deterrence, if the adversary, having drawn the wrong conclusions, challenges the very foundations of the deterrence theory. This is especially relevant today post-Pulwama and Balakot, because there are people in important places in India's strategic circles who have drawn dangerously wrong conclusions about what they are referring to as Pakistan's nuclear bluff.

I would like to caution that it would be a serious professional folly on their part to consider that a single air strike, that too conducted most unprofessionally, would render Pakistan's robust nuclear deterrence a bluff. Pakistan's nuclear capability operationalised under the well-

articulated policy of Full Spectrum Deterrence comprises of a large variety of strategic, operational and tactical nuclear weapons, on land, air and sea, which are designed to comprehensively deter large-scale aggression against mainland Pakistan.

As amply demonstrated during the February stand-off, Pakistan's nuclear weapons continue to serve the purpose for which they were developed, on a daily and hourly basis, by compelling India's political and military leaders to craft a politico-military strategy, taking into consideration Pakistan's real time nuclear capability. While developing operational plans the Indian planners make deliberate effort to skirt around the Pakistani nuclear capability and nuclear thresholds. Official India, I hope, does not take Pakistan's nuclear capability as a bluff. It is precisely the presence of these nuclear weapons that deters, and in this specific case, deterred India from expanding operations beyond a single unsuccessful air strike. It is the Full Spectrum Deterrence capability of Pakistan that brings the international community rushing into South Asia to prevent a wider conflagration. That India chose not to proceed further in February is a testimony to not only the humiliation it suffered at the hands of the Pakistan Air Force, but also the cold calculation that nuclear weapons could come into play sooner rather than later. That, ladies and gentlemen, is nuclear deterrence at work and not nuclear bluff.

If India's strategic planners consider Pakistan's Full Spectrum Deterrence as a bluff, whether as a professional assessment or succumb to the irrational pressures of their political masters, and proceed to undertake further military misadventures, as is being threatened at regular intervals by the highest levels of political and military leadership, South Asia, I am afraid is heading into a catastrophic uncharted territory. While hoping that the Indian strategic planners will retain their professional equilibrium and will

not be swayed by irresponsible and unprofessional rhetoric of politics, I would like to state in very clear terms, that nuclear Pakistan's resolve to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity, including Azad Jammu and Kashmir, must never be tested. That might be the minimum lesson to take home from the Balakot-Rajouri skirmish.

Here, I would like to elaborate on a few more aspects of the February 2019 skirmish on the Kashmir Line of Control, as these are pertinent to the larger strategic stability paradigm that we are discussing today. It has been established by independent international analysts that nuclear India's conduct of an air strike against mainland nuclear Pakistan at Balakot, driven perhaps by delusions of Israeli-style air power tactics against Syria, Lebanon and Gaza, but disconnected from the realities of the dominant air operational environment in which Israel operates, was poorly planned and executed by the Indian Air Force. It was playing with fire at the lower end of the nuclear spectrum and Armageddon at the upper end.

It is clear that the strategic and military consequences of an irresponsible political decision for achieving domestic political and electoral advantages supported by poor professional military advice were not thought through or war gamed to their logical conclusion. If they had been, which they ought to have been, not only in the 12 days between Pulwama and Balakot, but indeed as a peacetime contingency planning for years earlier, nuclear India should have concluded that in an active military conflict situation, especially a limited one with nuclear armed Pakistan, while it may be easy to climb the first rung on the escalatory ladder, the second rung would always belong to Pakistan, and that India's choice to move to the third rung would invariably be dangerously problematic in anticipation of the fourth rung response by Pakistan.

Also, that the escalatory rung climbing could not be so neatly choreographed but could quickly get out of hand and morph into a major war which perhaps nobody wanted but whose outcomes would be disastrous for the region and the globe. This was muddled strategic thinking at its worst. In the process, it challenged the very foundation of strategic stability in South Asia, which is premised on the time-tested concept of restraint and responsibility. The strength of this foundation was put to test by India, but it had to beat a hasty retreat in the face of a determined Pakistani response; status quo ante was restored and no new normal was established.

As opposed to India's strategic recklessness, it was Pakistan's measured response at the politico-military level deliberately avoiding blood and dead bodies and following up with mature statesmanship that saved the day for South Asia and by extension for the world. It is not difficult to imagine the political and military pressures on Pakistan, if India, as it intended to, had actually killed 300-400 Pakistanis during its ill-conceived air strike at Balakot, or thereafter, as reports suggested, continued on a war widening trajectory on the third night and carried out missile strikes which the Indian Prime Minister termed colloquially as '*Qatal Ki Raat*', meaning literally the night of the murder.

There are few parallels of a country possessing nuclear weapons conducting itself with greater irresponsibility than India did against another nuclear-armed country. In an oblique way, one would like to thank the Indian *Spice* Missile targeting programmers and the IAF pilots for their timely incompetence, that ensured that none of the intended targets at Balakot got hit as indeed the loss of nerve by the Indian leadership to carry on further.

Keeping in view Pakistan's declared policy of '*Quid pro Quo Plus*'

against a limited Indian attack, it was surprising that India itself ended up with surprise on the quality of Pakistan's measured and successful response. As professional planners, the Indians also should have understood that from there on, the rush to a nuclear crisis was but a few steps away and that there would be no choice for India, but to step back and look for face saving options involving international players, highlighting yet again the centrality of the core issue of Kashmir in South Asia, precisely what India has sought to avoid for decades. Paradoxically, the entire episode has succeeded in bringing the Kashmir dispute as a nuclear flashpoint front and centre on the international stage ever since. This focus has been compounded further by India's inhumane lockdown in Occupied Kashmir since August 2019 and the political revocation of Articles 370 and 35-A.

Continuing further I would like to focus specifically on a few aspects of India's nuclear conduct during the crisis, which not only has direct bearing on the strategic stability-instability paradigm, but also provides a guide to India's strategic conduct in a future crisis.

First, Mr Modi said that he would not preserve India's nuclear weapons for the fireworks night of the Hindu festival of Diwali, implying in the most casual of manners their first use against Pakistan. This statement alone turned India's much trumpeted policy of No First Use (NFU) on its head; not that Pakistan has ever viewed with any degree of credibility India's NFU policy. Mr Modi's pronouncement was not off-the-cuff. He knew exactly what he was saying in a single-minded focus to stir up an anti-Pakistan, anti-Muslim, nationalistic narrative to win elections. As a consequence, however, India's formal nuclear strategy was upended single handedly within no time. The NFU policy was further put under strain by the later day pronouncements of India's Defence Minister Mr Rajnath Singh.

Second, added to the misadventure was the operational reality that India not only deployed in the Arabian Sea, its conventional Naval flotilla including an aircraft carrier, conventional submarine that got detected but spared by the Pakistan Navy, but more importantly, the nuclear submarine *Arihant* presumably to deter Pakistan from contemplating the use of nuclear weapons.

Arihant, which had earlier claimed running deterrence patrols in a fanfare ceremony presided over by the Prime Minister, was certainly carrying cannisterised ready-to-go nuclear missiles. Since there were no credible reports of India's first-strike weapons based on land and air being readied, one wonders whether India contemplated the use of nuclear weapons from a second-strike platform even before its first-strike options.

Third, with reference to the concept of institutionalised command and control of nuclear weapons, which institutional forum authorised the deployment of a second-strike platform carrying nuclear weapons? Was there a debate in a secret meeting of India's National Command Authority, because none was announced formally, as it was in Pakistan? Or was this too decided in a cavalier fashion between the Prime Minister and his Naval Chief? Or worse still, was the Indian Navy also given a free hand, as Prime Minister Modi claimed to have given to his other military commanders. With what sense of political responsibility would a Prime Minister of a nuclear state, single-handedly delegate authority to deploy nuclear platforms and nuclear weapons to military commanders?

Fourth, one wonders further whatever happened to the Cold Start Doctrine, which seemed to have taken a back seat just when the operational situation suggested mobilisation. Looking at the Indian Army's deployment pattern throughout the crisis, it appears India

itself did not place much faith in the Cold Start Doctrine, as a credible response option. It seems obvious that India's strategic thinking stood considerably confused in a moment of crisis at the altar of a political party's electoral strategy; it conceded professional space to the whims of a heavyweight Prime Minister. And that ought to be a cause of serious concern for Pakistan, when faced with a nuclear adversary, whose strategic thinking and actions get muddled up in a crisis. This was not only irresponsible conduct but also institutional failure in India, raising serious questions about the future state of strategic stability in South Asia.

It is not difficult to conclude from the foregoing Indian strategic conduct in a real time crisis, as a case study as it were, that the Indian political leadership, under the extremists of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), led in an unfortunate gung-ho style by the Chairman of India's National Command Authority, falls in the category of reckless nuclear custodians. And, that the Indian military is either too meek, or equally reckless, to offer sound professional advice. Mr Modi's infamous claim to have ordered the IAF to take advantage of the cloud cover to beat Pakistani radars, shows the IAF as a professional force in poor light. The scenario is a chilling reflection on the functionality, or more appropriately, the dysfunctionality of the Indian Command and Control system and the efficacy of its National Command Authority.

For years, the international community worried about the wrongly premised narrative of Pakistan's nuclear weapons falling into the hands of religious and extremist fanatics, despite the fact that the militants remained confined to the fringes, and despite the fact that throughout the years of the militancy, the state of Pakistan continued to be ruled successively by moderate governments, at the Centre and in the Provinces. These were supported by a professionally designed

command and control structure, managed by professionals who ensured the highest levels of nuclear security and responsible nuclear conduct.

One finds it intriguing on the contrary that today in India, and for the last six years, while extremists and religious fanatics of the RSS and BJP are the real time state and the government, at the Centre, and in a large number of provinces, and in firm control of India's nuclear weapons, with a track record of strategic recklessness and irresponsibility, in words and in deed, and one does not hear a word of concern from the same international community, which had sleepless nights about an imagined extremist takeover in Pakistan.

Finally, before I end, I would like to express my thoughts on the current state of strategic stability in South Asia, and also how I see things unfolding in the future in the region.

Elections were held in Pakistan in 2008 and a duly elected civilian government came into being. The Government completed its 5 years term, Pakistan held the next election in 2013, and there was much celebration about the transfer of power from one civilian government to another civilian government through a democratic process. The nascent roots of democracy and democratic tradition it seemed were finally taking shape. This important milestone was reinforced in Pakistan in 2018 when yet another transition took place through the ballot box, and it is clear that democracy and transition of political power through elections is becoming an established norm, and one looks forward to 2023 for a similar democratic exercise.

It is important to recall that throughout this critical period of a decade and a half, Pakistan simultaneously fought a raging militancy, terrorism and extremism through the sheer determination and sacrifices of the armed forces and the people of Pakistan and won.

On both accounts, that is, establishing a democratic tradition and fighting and defeating militancy, terrorism and extremism, Pakistan has come out with resounding success and has a good story to tell. Having put these demons behind it, Pakistan is now looking forward to getting its economic act together while consolidating the two successes. Making allowance for the inevitable rough and tumble of democracy and politics, Pakistan today is stable internally, and seeks its rightful place in the comity of nations as a responsible international player.

Unfortunately for South Asia, when we contrast the history of India during the same period, we find that it is a story of complete reversal, of the trajectory from which Pakistan has just emerged. In tourist terminology while Pakistan can say, “been there, done that,” India has placed itself most enthusiastically in a position where it can only say, “going there and doing that.” While Pakistan has moved away from the extremism and religious bigotry where fringe elements were trying to take it, and the state fought and defeated it, the Indian state has embraced extremism and religious bigotry head-on as state policy. And, when the state turns rogue, one can only hope that elements of the civil society and other saner institutions will resist, contain and reverse the obviously suicidal course.

The cautious optimism generated in India in the elections of 2014 which brought Mr Modi’s BJP and RSS into power, revolved around economic growth as a take-off from Mr Modi’s performance in Gujarat. While for some years it appeared that India might achieve the perceived economic miracle, however after the elections of 2019, the economic expectations have taken a nosedive. And, what has emerged centre stage in its place is the state policy of Hindutva encompassing in its many parts religious extremism, bigotry, ultra-nationalism, anti-Pakistan, anti-Kashmiri, anti-Muslim, anti-minorities, and what have

you. In short, the complete anti-thesis of a modern progressive secular state that the Indian Constitution had envisaged.

I can identify four major drivers of Hindustan's domestic Hindutva policies and by extension its policy towards Pakistan.

One, Hindutva philosophy has morphed into a movement to erase the negative psychological complexes and sense of humiliation of the Hindu nation, of a thousand years of Muslim rule. The Hindutva movement led by the BJP therefore seeks to marginalise and delegitimise the Muslims of India.

Two, by doing so, Hindutva seeks the restoration of the perceived glory of Hindu India going back to the Vedas, Chandragupta Maurya and Ashoka of 300 BC, and hence, the claims that one hears of Hindustan in the past having invented or discovered any numbers of cutting edge technologies much before the modern era.

Three, the relentless pursuit of becoming a regional and global power, oblivious of its many vulnerabilities and weaknesses, drives Hindustan's quest for regional domination, particularly its relationship with Pakistan.

Four, a self-delusional one-way competition with China under the guise of standing up as a western bulwark with strategic over-reach, now up to the Pacific.

In a nutshell, the gloves are off, the mask is off, and the veneer of secularism is dead. India in 2020 is now well and truly Hindustan, of the Hindus, by the Hindus and for the Hindus. This has been validated by the landslide victory of the BJP and RSS, and of the Hindutva philosophy twice in 5 years. The transformation from India to Hindustan, over a period of 72 years, now carries the duly stamped ownership of the vast multitudes of the Hindu population, which

voted for the BJP/RSS heavily. Most national institutions in Hindustan also seem to be in the process of succumbing to the national trend and have fallen in line.

As a conclusion, I would like to determine what these developments portend for strategic stability in South Asia. Much of what is happening inside India might be considered by many, in strict international terms, as India's internal affair and something that is for the people of India to decide as to the national direction they wish to take. However, India's conduct in Occupied Kashmir cannot be considered its internal affair from any perspective whatsoever: Pakistani, Kashmiri, or from the perspective of international law including the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions. None of these entities recognise India's right to bulldoze unilateral constitutional changes, in internationally recognised disputed territory.

It is clear that India's suppressive military and political actions in Kashmir have a direct bearing on strategic stability. The consequences invariably have the potential to spill over into Azad Jammu and Kashmir, through direct and indirect actions by India. It is only a matter of time before Occupied Kashmir boils over. When that happens, India is likely to apply even more suppressive military measures inside Occupied Kashmir, and for desperate diversionary strategies on the Line of Control and perhaps against mainland Pakistan itself.

The highest levels of India's political and military leadership have now transited in their rhetoric, from dropping hints to outright threats of invading Azad Jammu and Kashmir and defeating the Pakistani armed forces in 7-10 days. Yes, the Prime Minister of India and his services chiefs have actually said that, forgetting in their desperation that they are talking about a robust nuclear-armed Pakistan, with strong and

balanced conventional forces that only a year ago humiliated the Indian military.

As military professionals, we lookout for threat capabilities and intentions. In South Asia today, India's capabilities and intentions both are visible in the clearest of terms. Pakistan therefore plans its responses on what India is capable of as well as what its intentions are. There is no ambiguity here. From here on, we are in dangerously uncharted territory and strategic stability is giving way to strategic instability, and that in the presence of strong conventional and nuclear forces on both sides does not portend well for South Asia and the world.

In my opinion, however much Pakistan may wish and call for sanity to prevail, it will invariably get sucked into a conflict not of its making, a conflict that would have been thrust upon it. And, as I showed in the beginning with examples from South Asia's history, Pakistan will never hesitate in ensuring that strategic stability is not disturbed to its disadvantage.

With the emerging scenario quite visible on the horizon, one would expect the international community in all its wisdom to foresee the unfolding of a catastrophic sequence of events and prevent it from happening through stronger and timely intervention and diplomacy than we have seen so far.

At the very least, one would expect that today's proceedings at this very important forum of the IISS-CISS enclave, would send out a strong message to the world community, about the dangers lurking in South Asia and the threats to strategic stability, to not only the region, but to the world at large, with all of its dreadful and unthinkable consequences. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

Keynote Address by Lt. General Khalid Ahmed Kidwai
Seminar on “Strategic Stability in South Asia:
Is India a Responsible Nuclear State?”

ISSI Islamabad, June 13, 2019

1. Ambassador Khalid Mahmood Chairman ISSI, Ambassador Aizaz Chaudhry, Director General ISSI, members of the Islamabad Strategic Studies Institute, ladies and gentlemen. I would like to thank you for inviting me to talk on this currently pertinent topic which carries serious implications for not only strategic stability in South Asia but also has much wider ramifications for peace and security in the larger Asian region and indeed the world. I shall express my views broadly taking into account two time frames on the Seminar question: Is India a Responsible Nuclear State? First, the immediate time frame of India's irresponsible conduct as a nuclear state during and after the Pulwama stand-off, and second, reflecting back in time over the past decades to trace India's conduct history sheet as it sought to become a nuclear power over the years.
2. Recklessness, immature and irresponsible conduct of foreign policy by a nuclear power anywhere in the world is a threat to world peace. When combined with aggressive operational deployment of military power, followed by the physical employment of the military instrument against a fully armed nuclear power like Pakistan which has strong and well balanced conventional forces as well, in order to achieve domestic electoral objectives, the conduct goes way beyond the domain of irresponsibility; I think it falls in the category of insanity. When that happens there are consequences.

3. Nuclear India's conduct of an air strike in February earlier this year against mainland nuclear Pakistan, driven by delusions of Israeli style air power tactics against Syria, Lebanon, Gaza, but disconnected from the realities of a dominant air supremacy operational and threat environment in which Israel operates, was poorly planned and executed by the Indian Air Force, almost Quixotic. It was playing with fire at the lower end of the nuclear spectrum and Armageddon at the upper end.
4. It was critical and timely that Pakistan Air Force's carefully calibrated professional response resulting in the humiliation of the numerically larger IAF brought the Indian politico-military leadership, its turbo-charged media and, more importantly, India's international patrons down to the realities of the earth very quickly. Barring additional chest thumping and seeking refuge in lies and self-deception, quite in line with Chanakya teachings, nuclear India was left with no choice but to climb down and now has to live with the humiliation for an indefinite time; the consequences as I said. Interestingly, one hasn't heard much since then from the usually vocal Indian Army Chief.
5. It is clear that the strategic and military consequences of an irresponsible political decision for achieving domestic political and electoral advantages supported by poor professional military advice were not thought through or war gamed to their logical conclusion. If they had been, which they ought to have been, not only in the 12 days between Pulwama and Balakot but indeed as a peacetime contingency planning for years earlier, nuclear India, and international actors who gave a blank pass to India, should have concluded that in an active military conflict situation, especially a limited one with nuclear armed Pakistan, while it may be relatively easy to climb the first rung on an escalatory ladder, the second rung would always belong to Pakistan, and that India's choice to further up the ante by moving to the third

rung would invariably be dangerously problematic in anticipation of the fourth rung response by Pakistan.

6. Also that the escalatory rung climbing could not be so neatly sequenced and choreographed but could very quickly get out of hand and morph into a major war which perhaps nobody wanted but whose outcomes could be disastrous for the region and the globe. This was muddled strategic thinking at its worst. In the process, it challenged the very foundation of strategic stability in South Asia which is premised on the time tested concept of restraint and responsibility ever since the two countries opted to pursue the development of nuclear weapons. The strength of this foundation was put to test by India on 26th February but it had to beat a hasty retreat in the face of a determined Pakistani response on 27th February; status quo ante was restored and no new normal was established.
7. One would like to hope that India would learn appropriate lessons and desist from shaking these foundations again. However, it will be wise for Pakistan not to live by hope given India's irrational, erratic and delusional decision making. Hope is not policy; we need to factor in the reality of an erratic adversary in our national and military plans.
8. As opposed to India's recklessness and irresponsible behaviour, it was Pakistan's restrained and measured response at the politico-military level deliberately avoiding blood and dead bodies and following up with mature statesmanship that saved the day for South Asia and by extension for the world. It is not difficult to imagine the political and military pressures on Pakistan if India, as it intended to, had actually killed 300-400 Pakistanis during its ill-conceived air strike at Balakot, or thereafter, as intelligence reports suggested, continued on a war seeking trajectory and carried out operations which the Indian Prime

Minister has most gallantly termed as a possible 'Qatal Ki Raat' on the following night.

9. I don't think a country possessing nuclear weapons can conduct itself with greater irresponsibility than India did. In an oblique way, one would also like to thank the Indian Spice Missile targeting programmers and the IAF pilots for their timely incompetence that ensured that none of the intended targets at Balakot got hit as indeed the loss of nerves by the Indian leadership and its patrons' to carry on further.
10. Keeping in view Pakistan's repeatedly declared policy of 'Quid pro Quo Plus' in case of a limited Indian attack, it was surprising that India and its international supporters themselves ended up with surprise on the quality of Pakistan's measured and successful response. As professional planners, the Indians also should have understood that from there on, the rush to a nuclear crisis is but a few steps away and that there would be no choice for India but to step back and look for face saving options involving international players, highlighting yet again the centrality of the core issue of Kashmir, precisely the things that India has sought to avoid for decades.
11. In my opinion, India, and its backers in this recklessness, grossly misjudged. Retaliating to Pulwama in the manner that it was done was obviously not only an irresponsible and reckless decision in a strategic environment of prevailing strong nuclear capabilities but also poor political and foreign policy, which succeeded in bringing the Kashmir issue as a nuclear flashpoint front and center on the international stage.
12. However, since the sole objective of the exercise was to use, or perhaps misuse, the armed forces of India to bring about an election victory for the BJP to the exclusion of all other dangerous

consequences, then of course it is for India's political system and its other political parties to examine. In that case, serious questions arise as to the real possibility of Pulwama being a false flag operation undertaken by the Indian intelligence agencies at a predictably perfect electoral time and in the process misused the Indian armed forces. This in itself raises questions on the quality, character and professionalism of the Indian military leadership which allowed itself to be misused on the domestic political chessboard and have ended up being heavily politicized and demoralized. If one notes the body language since then of the IAF Chief together with the missing in action act of the Army Chief, it says it all.

13. Moving further from the immediate operations of February, Prime Minister Modi, while extracting full mileage from the episode during his election campaign, continued to put on public display in his election rallies further irresponsible conduct as the leader of a nuclear power by repeatedly threatening Pakistan with the actual use of nuclear weapons. His use of comical and street terminology like employing the 'mother of all nuclear bombs', 'qatal ki raat', fireworks at Diwali, would have been just that – comical – if only his rhetoric didn't confirm that nuclear weapons in India have now indeed landed in the hands of Hindutva extremists, represented in the newly elected Parliament with 40% of the Parliamentarians reportedly having criminal or terrorist cases against them.
14. The world, and most certainly Pakistan, needs to wake up to the transformed reality that India's nuclear weapons are today controlled by religious fanatics. India's nuclear weapons are no longer safe and have become a real threat to regional and world peace. They have been deployed and used to threaten Pakistan and indirectly world peace in pursuit of winning an election. The conduct unbecoming and crass language coming from the leader of the world's largest

democracy was not only in poor taste, it threw out of the window many elements of India's carefully crafted nuclear strategy.

15. First, it turned India's pronounced policy of No First Use on its head not that Pakistan has ever viewed with any degree of credibility India's No First Use policy; Mr Modi's pronouncements were certainly not off the cuff. He knew exactly what he was doing and talking in a single-minded focus to stir up an anti-Pakistan, anti-Muslim nationalistic narrative to win elections, which he has duly won. As a consequence, however, India's much trumpeted and choreographed formal Nuclear Strategy lies in tatters upended single handedly within a very short time.
16. Second, added to the misadventure further is the operational reality that during the crisis, India not only deployed in the Arabian Sea its conventional Naval flotilla including an aircraft carrier, conventional submarine that got detected by the Pakistan Navy, but more importantly, the nuclear submarine Arihant presumably to deter Pakistan from contemplating the use of nuclear weapons.
17. Arihant, which had earlier claimed running deterrence patrols in a fanfare ceremony presided over by no less than the Prime Minister himself, was certainly carrying ready to go nuclear missiles. Since there were no credible reports of India's First Strike weapons based on land and air being readied, was India considering the use of nuclear weapons from a Second Strike platform even before the First Strike options?
18. Third, with reference to command and control of nuclear weapons, which institutional forum authorized the deployment of a Second Strike platform carrying nuclear weapons? Was there a secret meeting of India's National Command Authority because none was announced formally as in Pakistan? Or was this too decided in a cavalier fashion

between the Prime Minister and his Naval Chief? Or worse still, was the Indian Navy also given the proverbial free hand to do as it pleases, as Prime Minister Modi claimed to have given to his other military commanders. With what sense of political responsibility can a Prime Minister of a nuclear state delegate authority to deploy nuclear platforms and nuclear weapons to military commanders?

19. Fourth, one wonders further whatever happened to the Cold Start Doctrine which seemed to have taken a back seat somewhere in a cold storage. Looking at the Indian Army's deployment pattern throughout the crisis, it appears India itself did not place much faith in its much flaunted Cold Start Doctrine as a credible response option.
20. Obviously, India's strategic thinking cultivated over the years stood considerably confused in a moment of crisis at the altar and primacy of a political party's electoral strategy; it conceded professional space to the whims of a heavy weight Prime Minister. And that ought to be a cause of concern for Pakistan when you are faced with a nuclear adversary whose strategic thinking and actions get muddled up even before the first shot has been fired. This was not only irresponsible conduct but also institutional failure in India.
21. It is not difficult to conclude from the foregoing Indian strategic and operational conduct, as a case study as it were, that the Indian political leadership under the extremists of the BJP and RSS led in a gung-ho style by the Prime Minister himself falls in the category of very irresponsible and reckless nuclear custodians. And that the Indian military is either too meek, or equally reckless, or equally incompetent, or perhaps a bit of all three, to offer sane professional advice. Mr Modi's infamous claim to order the IAF to take advantage of the clouds to beat Pakistani radars shows the IAF as a professional force in poor light. The scenario is a chilling reflection on the

functionality, or more appropriately, dysfunctionality of the Indian Command and Control system and the efficacy of its National Command Authority. It'll be important for Pakistan to take note of the trans-frontier state of affairs in its future politico-military assessments.

22. Yet another chatter among India's military and strategic community that needs to be addressed is regarding their gravely mistaken conclusion of having called Pakistan's nuclear bluff by undertaking a single air strike on Balakot and that too embarrassingly unsuccessful. The reality is far from this.
23. Like one swallow does not make a summer, one air strike, conducted most unprofessionally, does not render a robust nuclear deterrence a bluff. Pakistan's nuclear capability operationalized under the well-articulated policy of Full Spectrum Deterrence comprises of a large variety of strategic, operational and tactical nuclear weapons, on land, air and sea, which are designed to comprehensively deter large scale aggression against mainland Pakistan.
24. As things stand and as amply demonstrated during the February stand-off, Pakistan's nuclear weapons continue to serve the purpose for which they have been developed, on a daily and hourly basis, by putting the fear of God in India's political and military leaders. India's foreign policy and politico-military strategy take into consideration Pakistan's real time nuclear capability when developing contingency plans by making deliberate effort to skirt around the Pakistani nuclear capability and nuclear thresholds. Official India obviously does not take Pakistan's nuclear capability as a bluff. It is precisely the presence of these nuclear weapons that deters, and in this specific case, deterred India from expanding operations beyond a single unsuccessful air strike.

25. It is the Full Spectrum Deterrence capability of Pakistan that brings the international community rushing into South Asia to prevent a wider holocaust. That India chose not to proceed further to the third rung is a testimony to not only the bloody nose it got at the hands of the PAF, but also the cold calculations that nuclear weapons could come into play sooner rather than later. That, ladies and gentlemen, is nuclear deterrence at work and not nuclear bluff.
26. Given the foregoing overview of India's conduct as a nuclear weapons state during the Pulwama stand-off, one cannot but conclude that India's conduct as a nuclear state led most recklessly by the Chairman National Command Authority the Prime Minister clearly bordered between irresponsible and insane.
27. Next, I shall attempt to place Responsible Behaviour by a nuclear power in an academic and historical perspective with respect to India by reflecting back in time.
28. Strategic stability in a crisis prone region as a concept between two Nuclear Weapons State (NWS) encompasses the prevailing political conditions, security circumstances, respective doctrines and force postures. In view of our latest experience with India, I think I would now like to add Responsible Behavior on the part of a NWS as a primary requisite for strategic stability.
29. But then we must also try and define in more tangible terms as to what is "Responsible" Nuclear Behavior? In my opinion, the criteria for defining a responsible NWS should include some of the following policy approaches:
- a. A responsible NWS does not develop nuclear technology for the purposes of gaining international prestige and recognition, or for a place in the global order. Pakistan does not, India does and its leaders like Nehru and I K Gujral are on record on that. The birth of the Indian

nuclear program itself is a product of the country's desire to match the grandeur of superpowers of the world. Homi Bhabha's announcement in 1965 that India could produce a nuclear weapon within 12 months was an attempt to show off India as a technologically advanced State. This prestige seeking obsession continues to drive India's motives even today.

b. Far from seeking international prestige, a responsible NWS while outlining its Force Development Strategy remains focused on what it considers as a realistic and conservative threat assessment with respect to its legitimate security calculus. Hence the logic of Credible Minimum Deterrence, the emphasis being on Minimum and of course Credible. This professionally logical approach as followed by Pakistan is in contrast to an open ended pursuit of a frenetic and mindless arms build-up by India through the pursuit of every destabilizing technology in sight like Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD), Conventional Prompt Global Strike (CPGS), hypersonic glide vehicles, Anti Satellite capabilities, offensive cyber capabilities, etcetera.

c. In this respect, Pakistan has been careful and conservative. In Pakistan, strategists have firmly guided the force development needs as per its nuclear strategy and the scientists have followed successfully delivering on the identified goals. On the contrary, in India, the cart has been placed before the horse. The scientists of DRDO and the Indian Atomic Energy Commission have led the force development process without recourse to a professionally developed national nuclear strategy. It is the strategists who have adjusted their weapons needs to the scientists' technical strategy and perhaps whims. This is lop sided, betrays lack of responsibility, professional understanding and undercuts the Indian military from the decision making loop.

30. India, over the years, has continually justified its open and blatant disregard for responsible behaviour whether it is the case of diverting fissile materials for its so-called peaceful nuclear explosion of 1974, or proliferating foreign technology for developing nuclear submarines, ballistic and cruise missiles, or the space programme, or sneaking up the Pakistani border with aggressive intent under the garb of Exercise Brasstacks in 1986-87, or the genocide and gross human rights violations it has unleashed on the hapless Kashmiris on a daily basis. This dismissive behavior towards established norms of a responsible state especially a nuclear state has already led to serious ramifications for regional peace and security.
31. It will not be out of place to mention that some countries have been complicit in India's disregard for responsible behavior and have encouraged its recklessness by condoning and rewarding a variety of violations of international conventions and norms. The NSG exemption, membership of arms control cartels, brutal repression in Kashmir and the latest green light to attack Pakistan at Balakot are some examples of rewarding irresponsible state conduct.
32. Responsible nuclear behavior requires a NWS to manage and resolve its political differences vis-à-vis an adversary with maturity and restraint. While this behavior may not seek to arrest one's political ambitions, it surely puts a check on the ways employed in their pursuit. In this context, continuously trying to test Pakistan's nuclear threshold, planning to find space for limited war against a nuclear Pakistan, and now attempting clumsily planned and executed surgical strikes accompanied by aggressive deployment of naval assets is a testament of aggression and irresponsible behavior by India.
33. And what is one to make of India's stated position of retaliating through massive retaliation in case Pakistan were to hypothetically

employ a Tactical Nuclear Weapon on the battlefield even on its own territory, not taking into account the disastrous consequences on India itself of Pakistan's capacity of a counter massive retaliation. Irresponsible, ill considered, immature, perhaps a bit of all three.

34. For Pakistan, its politico-military leadership and indeed the people of Pakistan, I think it is important to understand and grasp the psychology and frame of mind of the Hindustan of today in order to understand what's going on. Since the advent of the religious extremist BJP/RSS Government in 2014, amongst many others, I can identify four major drivers of Hindustan's domestic Hindutva policies and by extension its policy towards Pakistan.
35. One, Hindutva philosophy is an effort to overcome and erase the negative psychological complexes and sense of defeat and humiliation of the Hindu nation of a thousand years of Muslim rule.
36. Two, in order to do that, Hindutva seeks the restoration of an imagined past glory of Hindu India going back to the Vedas, Chandragupta Maurya and Ashoka of 300 BC, and hence the pathetic claims that one hears every now and then from no less a person than Mr Modi himself of Hindustan in the past having invented or discovered any numbers of cutting edge technologies much before the modern era.
37. Three, the ambitious and relentless pursuit of becoming a regional and global power, oblivious of its many vulnerabilities and weaknesses, which drives Hindustan's relationship with international powers particularly Pakistan.
38. Four, a self-delusional one-way competition with China under the guise of standing up as western bulwark with strategic over-reach now up to the Pacific.

39. In many ways, while Hindustan's new found back to the roots discovery is quite in line with the current universal trend of the surge of strong nationalistic politics in countries like the US, UK, France, Italy, Israel, even the Middle East, the nationalistic politics especially those like in Modi's India based on a vicious anti-Muslim, anti-Pakistan sentiment together with recourse to misplaced muscular policies carry far reaching consequences for regional peace and security including irresponsible conduct as nuclear state.
40. The Indian leadership now proudly acknowledges that they were active lieutenants in the Indian enterprise to foment discord in East Pakistan leading to Pakistan's breakup, not that it was a state secret earlier. Espousal of such an all pervasive strategic culture and mindset generates national irrationality, and that in a nuclear armed country is dangerous.
41. Indian strategists would be well advised to get real and take into account the huge gap and imbalance that exists between their national ambition and national capacity failing which they will continue to falter and live dangerously putting the stability of the region in repeated jeopardy. With national ambition and psyche out of step with national capacity India will continue to suffer the indignities of Doklam, Balakot and Rajauri.
42. A stable environment requires a NWS to take steps at all tiers, including political and military, to avoid confrontation. However, Indian strategic behavior persistently seeks predominance in the region by relying heavily on hard-power and hybrid tactics, particularly at the sub-conventional level. Please recall that the Prime Minister of India took pride in announcing from the ramparts of the Red Fort in Delhi that India would pursue a Baluchistan policy in the sub-conventional sense.

43. Pakistani conduct as a responsible nuclear power stands out in contrast. As a responsible nuclear power, Pakistan does not believe in brandishing its nuclear arsenal or coercing its neighbors. Also, Pakistan continues to abide by all the tenets of the definition of a responsible NWS. Pakistan's policy is not driven by any delusions of international glory but is defined by restraint and responsibility in order to ensure national security.
44. Nuclear parity and arms race has never been Pakistan's agenda – we seek qualitative balancing.
45. The fragile strategic stability in South Asia demands that India and Pakistan, two eyeball to eyeball nuclear powers, move beyond the notions of crisis management and pursue conflict resolution, including the issue of Jammu & Kashmir, with sincerity of purpose. Responsibility on Pakistan's part is reflected in its continued calls to engage India in conflict resolution mechanisms and numerous proposals that seek to attain durable peace through dialogue.
46. The Indian narrative citing limited strikes against Pakistan as the “new normal” holds no ground. As demonstrated Pakistan is prepared to counter any such aggression in the future as well as it continues to reserve the right of self-defense like any other responsible and sovereign State.
47. The recent crisis signaled that India's attempts to exploit conventional advantages in a nuclear environment undermine deterrence stability. Yet, India remains unfazed and continues to explore space for limited war or non-contact warfare with Pakistan. While it failed to achieve any military objectives, recent Indian aggression only put regional peace and stability in jeopardy as also lowered the professional reputation of its military internationally – and simultaneously risked a nuclear catastrophe.

48. Ladies and gentlemen, in conclusion I would like to come back to the question posed in today's Seminar: Is India a responsible nuclear state? Having examined the political and strategic behavior of a nuclear India put on display during and after the Pulwama crisis, together with the long history of decades of devious and arrogant conduct as a state, India has risked strategic stability in South Asia and put in serious jeopardy global peace through its irresponsible and ill-considered conduct repeatedly.
49. While there may be many more conclusions to be drawn, I would like to focus on four of these.
50. One, that India conclusively, is not a responsible nuclear state, not today and has not been at any time in its history. There is no doubt that some in the international community bear responsibility for giving encouragement and solace at every stage to India in the pursuit of its irrational ambitions and irresponsible conduct as a nuclear state. Far from exercising caution, the world has brought India into the international mainstream of nuclear states by providing one exception after another to India in violation of their own designed conventions some of them prompted, ironically, by India's irresponsible behaviour.
51. As is the norm in the real world of statecraft, here too realpolitik is at play in that the international players are willing to look the other way and ignore India's transgressions because of their obsession with trying to build up India as a counter weight to China and India's attraction as an investment hub for weapons sales and for international funds. That obviously trumps everything else and that is the reality that Pakistan has to live with, and therefore take measures so as to look out for itself.

52. Two, far more dangerous than that, Hindustan's nuclear weapons have now well and truly fallen into the hands of religious extremists and Hindu fanatics, whose shallow knowledge base makes them seriously believe that they possess the mother of all nuclear bombs, whatever that means, that these do not need to be saved for Diwali fireworks, that Pakistani radars can be blinded in cloudy weather, that India can attack a nuclear power like Pakistan under the assumption that its nuclear capability is a bluff, that there is space for conventional limited war despite the presence of nuclear weapons in South Asia, that therefore a new normal can be imposed on Pakistan, that India can block Pakistan's rivers and render the country dry, that India is now so powerful that it can isolate Pakistan diplomatically, etc, etc. This, ladies and gentlemen, is the delusional mindset of Hindustan's extremist and religiously fanatic nuclear custodians.
53. Three, Pakistan, at the national, diplomatic and military levels, now needs to recognize the stark reality that with the advent of a resurgent Hindutva India, now more Hindustan than India, the nature, mindset and approaches of our adversary have changed entirely. With the elections of 2019, India has undergone a seismic change internally and that change will exert a more assertive, aggressive and arrogant policy towards Pakistan. We therefore must come up with rapid adjustments in our national, diplomatic and military calculus to the new challenges.
54. As the old military saying goes, do not prepare to fight the last war. Ladies and gentlemen, the last war is gone, long gone. It was buried under the combined weight of Pakistan's conventional and strong nuclear deterrence. The Indian elections of 2014 were only the harbinger of things to come; the elections of 2019 will now define a fundamentally new aggressive India which will not be shy of

deploying its economic, diplomatic and military muscle including nuclear weapons, howsoever irresponsible one may label that.

55. A new war, including what is now belatedly being recognized as Hybrid and fifth generation is already upon us and we need to stare it in the face boldly and be ready to counter it. Pakistani strategists and planners need to rapidly come out of their comfort zones. The new war focuses on Destabilization, Exhaustion and Slow Corrosion, I'll repeat, the new war focuses on Destabilization, Exhaustion and Slow Corrosion. It is already upon us. If one cares to notice, one can discern it playing out in our national and provincial psycho-social fabric, in our politics, in our vulnerable western border areas, in our streets and cities, in our institutions of higher learning, in our print and electronic media, in fact it is in the minds and on the palms of each one of us as we play around with our mobile phones in search of Whatsapp, Facebook, Twitter and fake news. Pakistan and Pakistanis need to wake up to the phenomenon of hybrid warfare, recognize the games being played by our adversaries, and be prepared to not only confront it but defeat it comprehensively.

56. While Pakistan cannot change geography and the neighbourhood, it must continue to adopt and display rational, responsible and mature state conduct when dealing with a belligerent and irresponsible Hindustan. Pakistan must remain steadfast in its firm and restrained responses as displayed with maturity during the Pulwama crisis, confident in its capabilities and capacity to deter and if need be to thwart any Indian machinations while pursuing the diplomatic path of managing and resolving disputes peacefully.

57. And finally, ladies and gentlemen, the fourth conclusion is that the gloves are off, the mask is off, and the veneer of secularism is dead. India in 2019 is now well and truly Hindustan, of the Hindus, by the

Hindus and for the Hindus. This has been validated by the landslide victory of the BJP/RSS and of the Hindutva philosophy. The transformation from India to Hindustan, over a period of 72 years, now carries the duly stamped ownership of the vast multitudes of the Hindu population which has voted for the BJP/RSS heavily – twice in five years.

58. Let us then recall and rejoice in the great wisdom, foresight and vision of Pakistan's founding fathers led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah who nearly eighty years ago formally declared in March 1940 that there were two nations in Hindustan: Mussalmans and the Hindus. He therefore demanded the creation of the separate homeland of Pakistan for the Mussalmans of India and won it in 1947. Ladies and gentlemen, the Indian Elections of 2019 are a landslide for Jinnah's Two-Nation Theory all over again.