TWO-AND-A-HALF SECURITY
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FOREWORD BY LT GEN VINOD BHATIA

In Memory of Late General Bipin Rawat

PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, YSM, SM, VSM, ADC

(Photo by Arvind Yadav/Hindustan Times via Getty Images)

First Chief of Defense Staff

16 March 1958 - 8 December 2021

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About Us

Indic Researchers Forum is an independent Think Tank established on 14th August, 2021 that promotes quality research on geopolitics and security studies through a civilisational perspective. The organisation strives to bring scholars, experts and practitioners together to deliberate and strategise India's geopolitical and security interests.

Late General Bipin Rawat's idea of Two-and a Half Front War is perspicuous and an accurate representation of the complexity India faces in terms of its external and internal security. The concept of Two and a Half Front War explains the complex multi-front and coordinated internal security concerns for India.

Similarly, due to the restructuring of the existing world order we are witnessing global conflicts, economic slowdown, increase in non-state attacks, radical transformation of technology and socio-cultural clashes. These transnational security challenges have paved the way for new geopolitical equations. Therefore, with a realist approach, IRF seeks to promote partnership and cooperation with like-minded countries to protect India's strategic interests.

Through quality research and deliberations, the organisation seeks to protect the cultural identity of Indian civilisation, devise strategies to counter adversaries and enhance civilisational security and adopt a statesmanship approach to nation building.
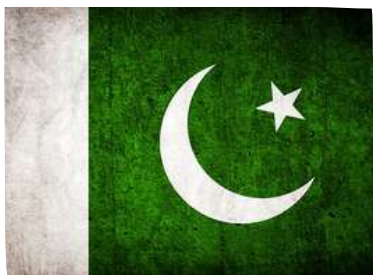
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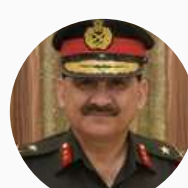
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Foreword

Indic Researchers Forum in the inaugural issue aptly dedicated to India's first CDS General Bipin Rawat, has come up with high-quality content, and well-researched articles on security and geopolitical challenges and opportunities impacting India's peace, progress, and stability. The journal covers the 'Two and a Half Front' - the primary security threat facing India. The first chapter is on India's China challenge, detailing the multi-domain threats to include maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region including the perspective of various stakeholders as well as the convergence of interests. The interview with Commodore SL Deshmukh a known China and maritime expert captures the Indo - Pacific maritime dimension. The complex and vexed India-China 'Boundary Question' touches the historical background in brief and goes on to discuss the contentious areas and CBMs, in an easy to comprehend manner. China's Challenge in the information and cyber domains is well covered, as are the measures initiated by India to meet and mitigate the Cyber threat and Information warfare being waged by China.

The second chapter of the journal is on 'Internal Security'. The interview with General Shaukin Chauhan on the strife in Manipur and the road map for peace gives a pragmatic and factual insight on a sensitive subject. Then there is an article each on Energy Security, Countering Extremism and radicalisation and Countering Terrorism. The Internal security challenges are one too many, however, the Journal keeps the focus on key issues, critical to national security, rather than attempting to cover all Internal security threats.

The third and final chapter is on Pakistan - our Western adversary. The interview with Mr. Fazal Ur Rehman Afridi of Pakistan details the Pakistan armies terror factory and counter-terrorist strategy of employing F 16 Fighter aircraft and heavy Artillery against Pashtuns killing nearly 80,000 people, and the growth of the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM). The researched article on Laskar - E - Taiba (LeT) analyses major terror attacks carried out by LeT, discussing the terrorist organisation's strategic alliance and global reach. A major emerging threat of narcotics emanating from Pakistan and its implications for India specially Kashmir and Punjab is well analysed.

The final article in the journal comprehensively covers the Indus Water Treaty and Pakistan's water security challenges.

Indic Researchers Forum has provided an excellent platform through this well-conceptualised journal for young scholars to analyse and argue critical security challenges impacting India. The quality of research is exceptional and easy to read and comprehend, contributing to policy formulation.

December 2023

Lt Gen Vinod Bhatia, PVSM, AVSM, SM (Retd.)
Senior Advisor, Indic Researchers Forum
Former Director General, Military Operations
Former Director, CENJOWS

Abbreviations

1. AES - Advanced Encryption Systems
2. AI - Artificial Intelligence
3. AIIMS - All India Institute of Medical Science
4. AMPT - Agreement on Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility
5. APEC - Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
6. ATS - Anti-Terrorism Squad
7. BPTA - Border Peace and Tranquillity Agreement
8. BRI - Belt and Road Initiative
9. BSF - Border Security Force
10. CBMs - Confidence Building Measures
11. CNPC - China National Petroleum Corporation
12. COA - Court of Arbitration
13. CSIS - Centre for Strategic and International Studies
14. DGH - Directorate General of Hydrocarbons
15. FATA - Federally Administered Tribal Areas
16. FDI - Foreign Direct Investment
17. FIPIC - Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation
18. FOIP - Free and Open Indo-Pacific
19. GDP - Gross Domestic Product
20. GJF - Global Jihad Fund
21. HELP - Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy
22. ICIMOD - International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
23. IOR - Indian Ocean Region
24. Indo-Pacific Ocean Initiative (IPOI)
25. ISI - Inter-Services Intelligence
26. ISIS - Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
27. IS - Islamic State
28. ISRO - Indian Space Research Organisation
29. . IWT - Indus Water Treaty
30. JMB - Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh
31. JeM - Jaish-E-Mohammad
32. JWG - Joint Working Group
33. JuD - Jamaat-ud-Dawa
34. KLF - Khalistan Liberation Force

35. **LAC - Line of Actual Control**
36. **LeT - Lashkar-e-Taiba**
37. **LTTE - Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam**
38. **MDI - Markaz-e-Dawa-wal-Irshad**
39. **NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation**
40. **NCB - Narcotics Control Bureau**
41. **NCRB - National Crime Records Bureau**
42. **NELP - New Exploration Licensing Policy**
43. **NWFP - North West Frontier Province**
44. **OAPEC - Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries**
45. **OALP - Open Acreage Licensing Policy**
46. **OFAC - Office of Foreign Assets Control**
47. **PCA - Permanent Court of Arbitration**
48. **PFI - Popular Front of India**
49. **PLA - People's Liberation Army**
50. **PLI - Production Linked Incentive**
51. **PSU - Public Sector Undertaking**
52. **QUAD - Quadrilateral Security Dialogue**
53. **RAT - Remote Access Trojan**
54. **SIMI - Students Islamic Movement of India**
55. **SPECS - Scheme for Promotion of Manufacturing of Electronic Components and Semiconductors**
56. **TAPI - Turkmenistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan–India**
57. **TTP - Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan**
58. **UK - United Kingdom**
59. **UJC - United Jihad Council**
60. **UAV - Unmanned Aerial Vehicle**
61. **USA - United States of America**
62. **USSR - Union of Soviet Socialist Republics**

CHINA FRONT

Indo-Pacific and Maritime Security

Interview with Cmde SL Deshmukh (Retd.)

About the Guest Speaker

Commodore SL Deshmukh, Nausena Medal (Retired), has served in the Indian Navy for 32 years. He served on board ships & Aircraft carriers. He is specialist on maintenance of Fighter aircraft and Anti Submarines Warfare Helicopters. He held many operational appointments on board ships and administrative appointments including Principal Director at Naval HQ, Commodore Superintendent Naval Aircraft Yard, Director Naval Institute of Aeronautical Technology and Project Director of a major Naval Aviation Project. He is alumni of Defence Services Staff College (Wellington, Nilgiris). Post retirement from Indian Navy, he worked with Tata Group for 5 years and with SUN Group's Aerospace & Defence vertical as Senior Vice President (Industrial Cooperation) for 12 years. He is currently in Pune, guiding SMEs in the region- to undertake projects under Atmanirbhar Bharat policy, in conjunction with the global OEMs.

He is currently working with Manipal Institute of Technology (MIT) and Manipal Academy for Higher Education (MAHE) as Adjunct Faculty. He is an avid writer and writes on Defence, Technical and Geo-Political matters & issues of common interest. His many articles have been published by C3SI, DRaS and EJSSS. C3SI, Praghna Center for Research and KW Publishers have publishedd his books titled "Probable Sino-Russia Military Pact-Implications for India" and China's Game Plan in Ladakh-Imperatives for India. He has also presented papers at various National and International Seminars. He is Life Member of Aeronautical Society of India. He is also the Senior Advisory Board Member of Indic Researchers Forum.

Interviewer: Jay Maniyar
Independent Researcher

Guest Speaker: Cmde SL deshmukh
Senior VP, Sun Groups's Defense &
Aerospace Vertical; Adjunct Faculty,
MIT & MAHE Manipal

1. Jay Maniyar: Sir, my first question is that how India's maritime security and that of Indo- Pacific region, are interlinked?

Commodore S.L. Deshmukh: As we know, the Indo-Pacific region is critical for India's economic, geopolitical, and military security. While we may not have a direct geographical connection to the Indo-Pacific, the South China Sea plays a vital role as majority of our trade passes through it. Ensuring security and freedom of navigation in this region is crucial. It's worth noting that China views itself as the primary regional power in this area and the only country capable of competing with the United States. It also considers India as a major obstacle in its ambitions in the region. Consequently, China is likely to take all actions to keep India destabilized, hinder our economic growth, and delay our badly needed armed forces modernization, by keeping us engaged on multiple fronts like the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and the Himalayan borders. As far as Ind Pacific region in concerned, China has made its intentions clear, by creating artificial islands, militarizing them, encroaching in the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) of other countries, and disregarding the well-established international laws. Its hegemonistic attitude has now reached obnoxious proportions and hence unacceptable.

Additionally, China has also amply displayed its disregard for Lawas of the Sea UNCLOS . A classic example is China- Philippines maritime boundaries dispute. China initially agreed to arbitration, but then backtracked. This pattern reflects China's historical approach of surreptitiously usurping assets of other countries while preaching principles of equality to others. This hegemonic behavior of China would have direct implications for the broader Indian Ocean and Indo-Pacific regions. Considering this global scenario, China's actions in the South China Sea and the Indo-Pacific will have significant

geopolitical, economic, and military impacts on India's security. Therefore, India must closely monitor developments in the IOR and Indo-Pacific and take steps to protect its national interests. Every country has the right to defend its interests, and as they say, in geopolitics friends and foes may change, but national interests remain constant. Hence, we must focus on the Indo-Pacific region and assert our rightful place in global politics, given our capabilities. This is my perspective on the Indo-Pacific and India's security. Thank you.

2. Jay Maniyar: Continuing on the trail of the Indo-Pacific, would you say that the Indian Ocean region is integral to the Indo-Pacific region? I've got a couple more questions to add on: how would the Indian Ocean region and the Indo-Pacific region compare for India, and how important are they both in Indian strategic thinking?

Commodore S.L. Deshmukh: This is a pertinent question for several reasons. China has long been going through the "Malacca Strait Syndrome," which is a significant chokepoint. India certainly has a strategic advantage in the Indian Ocean region, due to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which allow us to monitor China's activities in this area. However, with China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) rapidly expanding from Gwadar to Abbottabad and its linkage with Karakoram Highway- leading to Lhasa, its dependence on the Malacca Strait is decreasing. With secure energy sources from Iran and Saudi Arabia, including the Yuan diplomacy, China is reducing its reliance on this crucial passage and the US Dollar. As China becomes less dependent on the Malacca Strait, it poses increasing challenges for India. Without economic leverage, China has every incentive to disrupt India's progress, preventing us from reaching the well-deserved top position, we aspire to. China is also engaged in undermining the blue economy of India and the littoral states by deploying mechanized fishing trawlers in the Indian Ocean, engaging in illegal and unreported fishing activities. This cannot be allowed to go on.

Furthermore, China is also engaged in eroding our maritime security by deploying survey ships near Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Bay of Bengal, IPR and berating then in Hambantota thus making its with intentions clear. While we may not have all the details, these so called survey ships are tp suspected carry advanced sonar equipment for seabed mapping and charting, facilitating the operations of China's tactical and strategic nuclear submarines around India. We must be vigilant and be prepared to counter this.It's essential to recognize that India has traditionally held primacy in the Indian Ocean region, acting as a security coordinator/facilitator with neighboring countries. However, with China's BRI and debt traps, countries like Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, the Maldives, Nepal have become effectively dependent on China compromising their economic security. Sri Lanka, for

instance, had to yield control of ports to China due to the mounting debt. We also need to conscious of China's String of Perals Projects and its implications.   WE must note that all these activities are interconnected, aiming to suppressing India's growth and clout.

In conclusion, we cannot separate the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) from the broader Indo- Pacific situation. It is imperative that India considers the IOR as an integral part of the Indo- Pacific region. When collaborating with the like-minded nations, we must emphasize the importance of this inclusivity and find collaborative way for addressing our legitimate security concerns in the IOR, to Peace and stability in the region and counter China's hegemonic behavior. Neglecting the IOR would be a significant strategic mistake for India.

3. Jay Maniyar: What do you feel India should do to secure the Indian Ocean region?

Commodore S.L. Deshmukh: For India the Indian Ocean region will always remain strategically important. The Indian government is now becoming increasingly aware of this fact, and requisite budgetary provisions are being made for the Indian Navy, for modernization at bit faster rate. But, in my opinion, it's too little, too late. We should have built our fleets sooner. Even now, as we debate the need for a third aircraft carrier, I genuinely feel sad. Today with China's increasing forays in IOR we need carriers on both our eastern and western seaboards, to safeguard our vast coastline, EEZ assets, blue economy, and military security, Thus the time for debate is over.

Further we must realize the need for modernizing our naval fleet is of utmost importance, and we cannot neglect it any further. We must stop endlessly dragging projects od importance, for instance the 75-I program.

WE must not forget that the Galwan Valley incident was a well-planned and well-executed by China, forcing us to concentrate our troops in spreading from eastern Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh. Now, we have been forced to enhance our efforts for security of the Himalayan and Northeastern region, which too requires modern weaponry and significant financial resources.

Additionally, it would be naive to ignore the fact that China has been supplying advanced ships and fighter aircraft to Pakistan at low or no cost. With this our western border security will be jeopardized. So, while we deploy on assets on the eastern borders, we cannot reduce the deployment on the western borders with Pakistan. If we are forced to spend our resources on extended troop deployment,

where will we find the funds to modernize the Indian Navy? This is the price we are paying for our neglect of the armed forces for decades.

MOW coming to MDA,,, we must realize that enhancing the maritime domain awareness (MDA) in the IOR is no more an option, but a necessity. It's important for our military and financial security. Although the government of India has appointed a coordinator for MDA, there is still much work to be done in this regard. We need to ensure that all our ships and aircraft are equipped with automated identification equipment, covering air, surface, and subsurface awareness. MDA is not just about surface awareness; many ships operate in the region, and achieving this requires substantial technology and funding. We need to be agile and partner with like-minded countries to share MDA assets. For example, our cooperation with Singapore in MDA development is positive, but Singapore, being a small country, can only contribute so much. Therefore, we must coordinate our efforts efficiently, allocate necessary funds, and maintain contacts with other nations in the region. Collaboration, such as coordinated patrols (CORPAT), is essential to reduce the financial burden and redirect funds for naval modernization.

Thirdly, we must not overlook the Andaman and Nicobar Command. Although we have made progress, more needs to be done to deter China from snooping around these Islands with survey ships. We need to deploy sufficient assets on these islands thereby creating a strong deterrence which would make China think twice before venturing into the area.

On the financial security front, India must shift from its "big brother" attitude towards its neighboring countries. We need to contribute to their development and establish economic and military partnerships. This would include investing in neighboring countries for military and industrial development and generating job opportunities. To fund these investments, we must address corruption and improve our labour productivity, which has hindered our trade balance with other nations. Finally, India should effectively leverage its large market potential, demanding high quality goods and technologies from countries like the United States, Australia, and Japan and Russia. This would lay a strong foundation for our overall growth. Let is not forget the Economic strength would be essential to deter China from creating trouble for us. We need to understand that if we need to be both economically and militarily powerful, to assist our neighbors for escaping the "China Trap".

Additionally, soft power against China needs to be be built through strong economic ties, not just military security. In conclusion, India must take a multifaceted approach to secure the Indian Ocean region. This involves modernising the navy, enhancing maritime domain awareness, strengthening the Andaman and Nicobar Command, improving relations with neighbouring and like- minded countries,

and boosting economic strength. These measures are crucial to protect India's vital national interests.

4. Jay Maniyar: What do you feel are the key geopolitical factors? If you look at the external environment, what are the key geopolitical factors that may impact India's geostrategic decisions?

Commodore S.L. Deshmukh: This is a critical question for India's financial, geopolitical, and military security. China manages to maintain good relations with most countries in the littoral and Indo-Pacific regions, despite its hegemonic behavior. But the cracks have now started appearing. For example, Australia, with its strong stand, has drawn retaliation from China through trade measures such as ban on beef and wool imports. It is arm-twisting Japan in a similar fashion. If China can play around with countries like Australia and Japan, it won't hesitate to challenge India. We must recognize the threat that China poses to India economically, geopolitically, and militarily. China's cyber warfare, psychological warfare, and economic warfare tactics are evident.

For instance, in the Eastern Ladakh region, we witnessed extensive cyber and psychological warfare. By imposing unacceptable conditions, China has ensured our exclusion form the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), a key economic framework in the region. To cite an example, China refused India's request for limits on exports and the banning of transiting goods through third countries. This would have resulted in uncontrolled dumping of goods in India through RCEP member countries, negatively affecting our economy. China also takes advantage of our negative trade balance with it and the ASEAN countries. Therefore, we must take a holistic view of the Indo-Pacific region, to avoid exacerbation of our already humungous problems. Bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs) need to be turned in our favor improving the quality and productivity of our goods, to compete effectively. On the geopolitical front, we need to foster good relationships with our neighbours without displaying a "big brother" attitude. Countries like Bhutan and Nepal need to trust that India will support them in their struggled against China.

5. Jay Maniyar: Sir my last question. How difficult is it for India to achieve what you have said so far in the real world, how difficult and how easy is it? And, you can also add your concluding remarks.

Commodore S.L. Deshmukh: Frankly speaking, the suggestions I've made are entirely feasible for India, provided we enhance our decision-making processes. Defence acquisitions should not be prolonged affairs. Furthermore, we possess significant capabilities in terms of skill development and industrial growth. We must harness and enhance productivity to boost our industrial production, economic prowess, and employment opportunities, thereby ensuring the well-being of our citizens.

Efficient decision-making is imperative, not only in the defence sector but across all civilian domains, including healthcare and food sctors. Our decision-making processes should be swift and adaptable, enabling us to respond promptly to changing circumstances.

First and foremost, the government must make decisions promptly, and adequate funding must be allocated. We must identify the necessary funding sources to ensure our country's survival, whether it's for building aircraft carriers, establishing industries, or addressing potential crises. We also need to be weary of possible annexations of Taiwan by China. Over 65% of India's semiconductor chips originate from Taiwan. The potential loss of more than half of our industries, spanning from automotive to defence, is a significant concern. Setting up semiconductor manufacturing plants, while a feasible goal, requires careful consideration of various aspects, including the source of the massive amount of water needed for chip production. We must approach these challenges holistically, avoiding knee-jerk reactions or mere propaganda. Tackling corruption is paramount, as its eradication is essential for serious development efforts to succeed. The benefits of policies must reach the intended beneficiaries, and the fight against corruption is central to achieving this goal. On the diplomatic front, realism and clear objectives are crucial for success. Collaborating with like- minded countries and committing adequate resources upfront, as in the case of Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), is essential. All the factors discussed so far are well within our capabilities. While the journey won't be easy, we are a democratic socialist nation, and we must navigate this path while accommodating diverse perspectives. The government should have the determination and ability to steer this course.

My humble request to all, including military planners, strategic thinkers, and financial planners, is to take these steps seriously. Once we do this and maintain strong relationships with major nations like the USA, Japan, Russia, and Australia, we will be better positioned for success. We must also safeguard our relationships in the Middle East, particularly with Iran, to ensure energy security.

In conclusion, India has made significant progress, and I am proud to be an Indian. I had the privilege to serve in the Indian Navy, for safety, and security of all our countrymen. I urge the government to unite decision-making processes to strengthen our nation financially, geopolitically, and militarily, enabling India to play a well-deserved prominent global role. Thank you for granting me this opportunity to provide the inaugural interview for the Indic Researchers Forum publication. Your well-informed questions and your deep understanding of the region has been helpful in navigating the difficult areas during our interaction and I am grateful for that. I wish you and this publication great success, and hope that it will become a vital reference document for researchers, academicians and the policy makers alike.   Jai Hind.

Stakeholder Perspective on The Situation In Indo-Pacific: An Evaluation

By Aanchal Sinha

About the Author

Aanchal Sinha, a research intern at Indic Researchers Forum, is pursuing her Master's program in East Asian Studies from Delhi University. She is working as an intern at the Centre for Joint Warfare Studies (CENJOWS).

Abstract

This report delves into China's strategic encirclement efforts in the Indo-Pacific region, with a specific focus on the security threats posed to India by it. By analysing the historical contexts, evolving geopolitical dynamics, and China's policy shifts, this study seeks to examine the multifaceted components of China's encirclement strategy. These components include growing militarism, infrastructure development, economic influence, and diplomatic manoeuvring. The report assesses the impact of these actions on India's security landscape, particularly its territorial integrity, maritime interests, and overall national security. Furthermore, the report will highlight and enumerate India's response, through evolving alliances, strategic partnerships, and defence policy, to safeguard its interests and maintain stability in the Indo-Pacific. The study also addresses the broader implications of China's strategy on regional security dynamics, international norms, and the potential for conflict escalation. The conclusion offers policy recommendations for India and regional stakeholders to navigate and respond effectively to security threats, emphasizing the importance of a rules-based order, diplomatic engagement, and comprehensive security partnerships to ensure stability and peace in the Indo-Pacific.

Introduction

Map 1

Image Source: UNCLOS

The concept of the Indo-Pacific is not a recent development, discussions about the significance of the Indo-Pacific region have been ongoing for a considerable period, ranging from Influential figures such as Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton highlighted the Pacific's importance, with the notion of free trade being viewed as a means to shape the Asia-Pacific region. The Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC) epitomised this concept by emphasising economic cooperation beyond national boundaries. At present, the region is at a crucial juncture that is characterised by competition between major nations and the capacity of regional entities to effectively address challenges while preserving their distinct identities.

If we look into the historical dimension, the India-Pacific concept primarily revolved around economic interests, aiming to establish inter-governmental frameworks to oversee the deepening trade and investment links between developing nations like ASEAN and China, and economic giants like the

USA, Japan, and Australia. In contrast, the Indo-Pacific concept has arisen from the necessity 9to

navigate the emerging security connections and interdependencies with the Asian region. This includes addressing concerns such as territorial disputes in the oceans and the growing security roles of countries like Japan and India. The escalating tensions between the United States and China serve as the primary catalysts for governments adopting the Indo-Pacific framework.

Moreover, the Indo-Pacific approach acknowledges India's stature as a regional power in a manner that the Asia-Pacific concept did not (Cruz, 2022). The remarkable ascent of China, coupled with an escalating rivalry between the United States and China, as well as a general reluctance or incapacity to uphold established regulations, has subjected the rules-based international framework to significant challenges. Amidst this unpredictable landscape, the maintenance of a rules-based Indo-Pacific has taken on paramount importance as it directly contributes to the achievement of a rules-based global order.

China has opted to "fragment" established rules, advancing its own "security and strategic interests" by delineating a fresh "geo-legal" domain. Additionally, certain smaller nations are inclined to acquiesce to China due to the attractive incentives and inducements offered by Beijing (Ngaibiakching, 2020). Likewise, Vijay Gokhale suggests that China having substantially benefited from economic globalisation and Western-led multilateral institutions, might not necessarily seek to dismantle the global order, instead, it could opt to assume control of the existing order. China's ambitions are driven by ideological foundations, aiming to reshape the current state of affairs. His analysis gets further corroborated by the various Beijing led initiatives like the Asian Investment and Infrastructure Bank and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) exemplify this intent.

The overall scenario portrays China as both a participant and an observer of the prevailing rules-based[1] international framework, selectively adhering to it when aligned with Chinese national interests, while simultaneously aiming to amend regulations and principles that are incongruent with its objectives. Creating a rules-based order within the vast Indo-Pacific region is a complex

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[1] In the words of Ngaibiakching, Rules-based order is a "system"—the basic principles and standards of conduct in a "society of states" where members share a "sense of common interest," rules and institutions,and seek to facilitate these rules effectively in the form of international organisations, treaties, and law.

undertaking. This area consists of numerous influential stakeholders, including ASEAN at its core, the 'Quad' alliance of Australia, India, Japan, and the United States, as well as regional powers such as South Korea. The effectiveness of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) strategy in upholding a rules-based order hinges on the willingness of regional players, particularly ASEAN, to fully embrace the strategy proposed by the Quad countries. Despite varying interpretations and some conflicting agendas surrounding the "Indo-Pacific" narrative, there exists a growing possibility of finding a common ground, this is due to the shared challenges faced by all these regional stakeholders from direct Chinese aggression.

Perspective of the Indo-Pacific region as seen from China's point of view

China perceives U.S. strategic actions in its neighbouring regions as direct challenges aimed at China itself. After experiencing over three decades of rapid economic growth, China seeks to leverage its amassed material capabilities to establish influential power and favourable outcomes across Asia and beyond. However, the substantial U.S. presence serves as a significant obstacle to China's ambitions. China's official stance toward the Indo-Pacific strategy has been to persistently refer to the Asia-Pacific. The Chinese government has exhibited reluctance to embrace the term "Indo-Pacific" and has refrained from endorsing or developing its version of the strategy. Chinese foreign ministry representatives consistently refer to the "Asia-Pacific region" even when discussing the "Indo-Pacific" concept.

Chinese scholars view the Indo-Pacific strategy as being closely tied to containing China's rise. This perspective leads them to see more similarities than differences in U.S. regional strategies before and after the introduction of the Indo-Pacific concept. They consider the U.S. regional strategy as a response to China's ascent and the shifting regional landscape.

Chinese scholars generally believe that the Indo-Pacific strategy will negatively impact China's security environment. The strategy's implications include exacerbating the existing maritime disputes, further intensifying the regional arms races, and creating strategic uncertainty between the U.S. and

China. While some Chinese observers dismiss the Indo-Pacific strategy's immediate impact, they recognize its intent to restrain China's growing economic influence. They note that the strategy lacks a robust economic dimension and that the U.S. will expect its regional allies to share the costs of maintaining the regional order.

Chinese scholars have perceived this lack of unanimous support for the Indo-Pacific strategy among regional states. India's stance is considered unresolved and has been perceived by them as the weak link within the Quad, as the inter-relationship between India and the other members is perceived as weaker than those of the U.S., Japan, and Australia. In light of heightened U.S.-China strategic competition, some Chinese scholars have even advocated for China to recalibrate its overall strategy. They have further advocated for there being a need to strike a balance between Sino-American relations and its neighbourhood diplomacy, arguing that the growing overexpansion could lead to resource constraints and external counterbalancing. This debate surrounding China's strategic posture is not confined to academic circles; it is influencing policy decisions and contributing to the ongoing adjustment of China's foreign policy.

The establishment of a Chinese naval base in Djibouti, termed a "supply centre" by Beijing, serves as a case that reflects a combination of geo-economic motives and geopolitical considerations. This development aligns with the "pivot" strategy, which is demonstrated through China's interest in Pakistan as a potential "pivot" state. Chinese policy analysts have suggested that Pakistan could fulfil this role , that of a pivot state, by contributing to China's western regions' security, facilitating its involvement in Indian Ocean affairs, constraining India, and enhancing maritime transport security through the Gwadar port. The expansion of China's security interests, driven by the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), has prompted Chinese policymakers to examine and modify the country's international security policies. Anticipated changes in the coming decade is expected to include strengthened military relations with BRI countries, greater participation of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in regional non-traditional security activities, an increased PLA presence in the Indo-Pacific region, the establishment of additional Chinese military bases or logistics centres in the Indian

Ocean area, and slightly more interventionist foreign policies in BRI regions by Beijing to secure its interests . However, China is also expected to adopt a cautious and gradual approach to these changes due to various factors, such as limited capabilities, regional sensitivities, China's domestic non-intervention principle, and concerns about geostrategic reactions from major powers.

While the BRI will not entirely reshape China's international security policy, it will likely lead to adjustments in some foreign and security policies. The BRI's influence has prompted Chinese policymakers to prioritise protecting BRI investments and ensuring the safety of Chinese nationals in various regions and countries. These shifts could eventually contribute to a new Chinese geopolitical strategy in the Indo-Pacific and Eurasian regions.

China's tactics in dealing with the Quad include attempts to entice India and pressure other countries as it sees fit. China's policy toward India is now considered part of its global strategy, acknowledging India's significance in the Sino-U.S. rivalry. China's expansion of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) includes admitting both India and Pakistan, reflecting its broader regional organisation efforts. The SCO serves as a cooperative multi-state organisation with elements of both alliances and security communities, addressing border conflicts and counteracting terrorism within its member states. India formally adopted the Indo-Pacific concept in 2012. Chinese scholar Minghao Zhao, affiliated with the Charter Institute in Beijing and a member of the China National Committee of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific, contends that this newly introduced terminology, coupled with the U.S.'s "Pivot to Asia," illustrates the U.S.'s heightened determination to employ India as a balancing force against the perceived threat of a rising China. Zhao also observes that the deployment of troops to Darwin serves as a strategic anchor connecting the Indian and Pacific Oceans (Zhao, 2013).

The adoption of the Indo-Pacific terminology by India in 2012 indicates its involvement in   the strategic balance. Chinese scholar Minghao Zhao highlights how the U.S. and India's collaboration aims to counter the rise of China. The informal meeting between Prime Minister Modi and President

Xi Jinping further illustrates China's efforts to engage India and prevent its inclusion in the U.S.-led Quad system.While analysing the Sino-Indian relations especially lately in both a bilateral and multilateral setting , it is important to state that China has broadly employed two tactics in response to the Quad. One strategy is to engage India through informal discussions, as evidenced by the recent meeting between Prime Minister Modi and President Xi Jinping in Wuhan, China, on 27-28 April 2018. China believes it can readily prevent India from becoming part of the U.S.-led Quad system due to India's history of non-alliance and its supposed shared goals with China, which include economic development and addressing global climate change, despite existing border disputes. The other tactic China employs is exerting pressure on countries at its discretion. This is evident in its recent actions toward Australia, where it denied or delayed visas to Australian ministers, preventing their attendance at the 2018 Boao Forum for Asia. China's approach to India extends beyond bilateral concerns, as India is now viewed as integral to China's global strategy. Additionally, the ongoing rivalry between China and the U.S. has positioned India with a distinctive strategic advantage. Recognizing India's significance, both Washington and Beijing accommodate India's position and interests in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region.

Furthermore, China has broadened the scope of its regional engagement through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which includes both India and Pakistan. Established in 1996 and co-sponsored by China and Russia, the SCO encompasses four Central Asian countries. While not a traditional alliance or security community, the SCO operates as a cooperative multi-state organisation that combines aspects of both alliances and security communities. Despite some scepticism and critique, the SCO has effectively managed border conflicts and countered terrorism among its member states. It ranked as the third most effective regional institution, following ASEAN and ASEAN-Plus Three, according to Respondents to the Asia Pacific Security Survey Report 2008 (Wilkins, 2010).

China's pursuit of territorial advantage has inadvertently given rise to a new form of proto-alliance, compelling the traditionally nonaligned India to participate in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, known as the Quad. This informal coalition comprises Australia, Japan, and the United States.

China's ongoing assertiveness along its disputed border with India resulted in significant incidents, including a major standoff in Doklam in 2017, a fatal clash in the Galwan Valley in 2020, and subsequent confrontations in 2021 and 2022. These actions prompted New Delhi to abandon its previous uncertainty regarding the Quad, leading to a decision to elevate the dialogue to the summit level and to strengthen defence connections with the other Quad participants.

Map 2: Double Fish Hook Strategy Deployed By India

Credits: https://www.defencexp.com
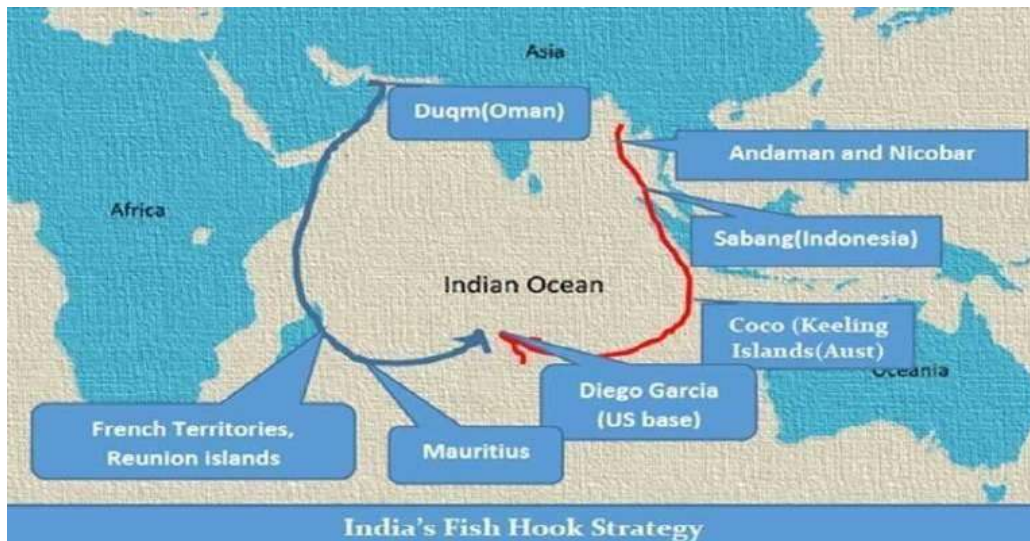
India employs the "Double Fish Hook Strategy," consisting of an eastern component extending from the Andaman-Nicobar Islands to Diego Garcia and a western component stretching from Duqm to Diego Garcia, with Diego Garcia being the focal point.

The Eastern Fish Hook comprises the Andaman-Nicobar Islands, Indonesia's Sabang Port, Australia's Cocoa/Keeling Port, and Diego Garcia. India strategically developed the Andaman-Nicobar Islands, housing military bases and harbours, making it a key transit point. This location benefits groups like the Quad (India, US, Japan, Australia) for operations. Oman's Duqm port is the tipping point for the western fish hook. India, through a Maritime Transport Treaty, is committed to developing it. The Western Fish Hook includes Indian Ocean Commission members, Diego Garcia, Duqm Oman, and

Reunion Island. India gained observer status in the Indian Ocean Commission in 2020. France and India cooperatively monitored the Reunion Islands. India is considering Djibouti's 'Horn of Africa' for material support in the Western Fish Hook. India's "Double Fish Hook" strategy involves partnerships and agreements to counter China's "String of Pearls" approach in the Indian Ocean region. Collaborating with the US, France, and Australia, India aims to curb China's influence. Key agreements include the LEMOA with the US for facility access, a logistics pact with Australia, and a port development program with Indonesia's Sabang Port. Complementing this, India's "Necklace of Diamonds"[2] strategy aims to build relations and naval presence strategically. The "Double Fish Hook Strategy" seeks to out manoeuvre China's encirclement efforts, while the "String of Pearls"[3] plan involves Chinese installations encircling India.

United States Approach to the Indo-Pacific Region

The United States is committed to fostering a free and open Indo-Pacific region that's interconnected, prosperous, secure, and resilient. Achieving this goal requires collaboration with like-minded partners due to evolving strategic circumstances and historic challenges. Traditionally, the U.S. and much of the world have viewed Asia solely through a geopolitical lens. However, today, Indo-Pacific nations play a significant role in shaping the global order, and the outcomes matter to U.S. allies worldwide. The US' strategy aligns with our closest allies, such as Japan, in promoting freedom, openness, and options. We support a strong India as a partner in this regional vision, aim for stability like Australia, enhance security through capacity-building like the Republic of Korea (ROK), recognize Southeast Asia's central role like ASEAN, and promote resilience in the rules-based order like New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and France. Additionally, we acknowledge the strategic value of the European Union's increasing regional involvement, aligning with the EU's principled, long-term approach rooted in democratic resilience as well.

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[2] This strategy focuses on encircling China, commonly referred to as the counter encirclement strategy. India is enhancing its naval facilities and building stronger ties with strategically positioned nations to counter China's tactics.

[3] China has implemented the "String of Pearls" strategy, which involves establishing a network of commercial and military installations in multiple countries. This strategy aims to safeguard China's trade concerns, as a significant portion of its trade relies on routes through the Indian Ocean and critical passages such as the Strait of Hormuz, Strait of Malacca, and Lombok Strait.

The Indo-Pacific Strategy of ASEAN

The ASEAN Summit of 2022, hosted in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, covered a wide array of topics. A central issue of discussion at the summit was the escalating geopolitical rivalries and challenges in the Indo-Pacific region. This is a matter of significant concern because it affects stability and growth in Southeast Asia. Indonesia, which will assume the ASEAN Chairmanship in 2023, emphasised the importance of the regional bloc striving to become a peaceful and stabilising force, upholding international law, and not aligning with any external powers. The increasing strategic relevance of the Indo-Pacific, both in terms of economic and security aspects, has prompted ASEAN to reconsider its approach and seek collaboration with external partners to address common concerns. The Indo-Pacific concept, focused on ensuring a safe and secure maritime space through inclusivity and multilateralism, is a shared objective among ASEAN member states and external powers. ASEAN centrality remains a key principle in shaping the evolving Indo-Pacific architecture, a perspective that aligns with India's vision for regional peace and prosperity.

In June 2019, the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) was adopted to advance a regional order in the Indo-Pacific based on established rules. The AOIP serves as a blueprint for ASEAN's involvement in the Indo-Pacific, prioritising ASEAN's central role and advocating for ASEAN-led mechanisms to enhance cooperation at both regional and sub-regional levels. This approach aims to contribute to the preservation of peace, freedom, and prosperity in the region.

In terms of geographic scope, the AOIP outlines two key assertions: firstly, ASEAN defines the Indo-Pacific as encompassing the Asia-Pacific region and the Indian Ocean Region. The joint statement between ASEAN and India in 2022 reaffirmed support for ASEAN's central role in the evolving Indo-Pacific framework, recognizing its significance for regional peace, security, and prosperity. India's Indo-Pacific Ocean Initiative (IPOI), announced in 2019, complements ASEAN's broader areas of cooperation within the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP). The United States, having elevated its Strategic Partnership with ASEAN, also backs ASEAN's centrality in shaping the Indo-Pacific landscape. The U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy includes various core efforts,

such as the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF), aimed at strengthening economic ties with Southeast Asia and contributing to a peaceful Indo-Pacific.

While commitment to the Indo-Pacific concept varies among ASEAN member states, the region plays a pivotal role in a complex and evolving architecture. Security challenges in the region have expanded beyond territorial disputes to encompass issues like food security, health, and climate change. ASEAN recognizes that a stable Indo-Pacific is crucial for global peace, security, and prosperity, motivating the establishment of the AOIP to promote cooperation over rivalry. Operationalizing the AOIP is a top priority for ASEAN leaders, given the significant shifts in the global security landscape. The 40th ASEAN Summit in 2022 highlighted the Indo-Pacific by mainstreaming the four priority areas of AOIP. ASEAN aims to enhance cooperation with external partners, reinforcing ASEAN centrality and promoting openness, transparency, inclusivity, and a rules-based framework within the region. This declaration underscores the growing importance of the Indo-Pacific and its recognition within the ASEAN regional bloc.

India and ASEAN have strengthened their relationship over three decades, marked by the recent upgrade to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. India's engagement with ASEAN began in 1992 through the Look-East policy, which was revitalised as the Act East policy in 2014, emphasising strategic ties with ASEAN and other East Asian nations. India's Indo-Pacific vision, initiated in 2018, centres on ASEAN's centrality in upholding international rules and Indo-Pacific stability.

ASEAN in its major policy document which is the - 'ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific' has emphasised the requirement for promoting community-building and ASEAN-led mechanisms, further aligning with India's inclusive and ASEAN-centric Indo-Pacific concept. However, geopolitical shifts, including the US-China rivalry and the Russia-Ukraine conflict, challenge ASEAN's role amidst great power competition.

In their 19th Summit, India and ASEAN emphasised civilizational links, maritime connectivity, digital economy corporation, and maritime security. They aim to combat terrorism, and

transnational crimes, and enhance space sector collaboration. Trade between India and ASEAN has grown significantly. India has bolstered maritime security and launched initiatives like the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI). India-ASEAN and trilateral mechanisms like the Australia-India-Indonesia trilateral address Indo-Pacific developments, security challenges, and China's actions.

Countering China's influence in Southeast Asia is India's objective, but China remains a major economic partner for ASEAN. India faces challenges due to ASEAN member country divisions but seeks to align the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with ASEAN's Indo-Pacific Outlook and IPOI. Both India and Southeast Asia should align their Indo-Pacific strategies, considering security and economic interests and promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific, in collaboration with partners like the Quad.

NATO's Strategy in the Indo-Pacific

China's military expansion, development of advanced weaponry, and territorial claims in the South China Sea have disrupted the global order and posed security challenges to numerous nations. NATO's strategic concept identifies China as a "strategic challenge" and acknowledges the need for the alliance to respond to the security implications arising from China's ascent. In the post-Cold War era, NATO has undertaken various initiatives in the Indo-Pacific region. This includes bolstering partnerships with Indo-Pacific nations to address global security concerns and safeguard the rules-based international order, as outlined in the NATO 2030 agenda. Notably, in June 2022, Indo-Pacific partners participated in a NATO Summit for the first time in Madrid. Furthermore, NATO launched 'Futures in the Indo-Pacific' in January 2023 to assess Indo-Pacific developments and their potential impact on Euro-Atlantic security. NATO has also forged new partnerships with countries beyond its membership, such as Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand, aimed at enhancing cooperation and regional stability. To counter emerging threats like cyber threats, terrorism, and weapons proliferation, NATO has adapted its military capabilities and strategies, conducting joint military exercises with Japan and South Korea to foster interoperability and regional stability. Additionally, NATO contributes to Indo-Pacific maritime security through

patrols, monitoring, and participation in counter-narcotics operations, while also prioritising cybersecurity in the region. This includes establishing a cyber defence partnership with Japan and conducting cybersecurity training and capacity-building activities with South Korea. NATO's increased presence in the Indo-Pacific offers an opportunity for enhanced cooperation with India, which can help balance China's influence and contribute to regional security. Furthermore, NATO's partnerships with other Indo-Pacific countries can facilitate trilateral cooperation involving India, strengthening regional security and stability.

Recent Events in the Indo-Pacific Region

China views itself as a significant player in the Indian Ocean, and it is in the process of expanding its naval capabilities beyond its borders. This move aims to secure crucial supply routes that traverse the Indian Ocean, which is vital for China's strategic interests. Consequently, China seeks to establish a military presence in this region. Additionally, the Indian Ocean's location within the broader Indo-Pacific framework compels China to enhance its diplomatic engagement there, as part of its development diplomacy strategy. China has proposed collaborative measures like maritime disaster prevention and financial aid to foster influence among Indian Ocean nations. Notably, China has strategically invested in ports and infrastructure in countries like Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives, even securing long-term leases like the ninety-nine-year lease of Hambantota port in Sri Lanka. This expansion aligns with China's broader ambitions in the Indo-Pacific.

China's efforts to minimise India's influence in the region are evident. The Indian Ocean, integral to India's strategic concerns due to its connection with the Indo-Pacific, has become a focal point. China's intention to diminish India's role in the Indian Ocean and assert its presence there poses concerns. Notably, the Indian Ocean is a vital part of global supply chains, and China's ambitions to strengthen its influence along these routes raise alarms for India. China's focus on reducing India's influence demonstrates its prioritisation. While China may downplay India's role in forums like the China-Indian Ocean regional forum, disregarding India in shared development efforts is counterproductive. Given India's importance in the Indian Ocean, sidelining it could exacerbate tensions between the two nations.

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Furthermore, India demonstrated its strategic intentions by providing an active-duty missile Corvette, INS Kirpan, to Vietnam, a Southeast Asian nation with longstanding territorial conflicts with China. This move symbolised the growing defence partnership between India and Vietnam, driven by shared concerns over China's assertive actions in the South China Sea.

India's proactive engagement is evident in its interactions with Australia as well. By dispatching two military aircraft to Australia, India aimed to enhance interoperability between the two countries' armed forces, further solidifying its role in the Indo-Pacific.

These actions collectively showcase India's aspiration to serve as a guardian in the Indo-Pacific, especially for nations adversely affected by China's expansionist pursuits. While some perceive these moves as symbolic yet vital, they acknowledge that these actions should have been taken earlier. The Pacific Island states , as well , view India's efforts positively, recognizing it as a balancing factor amid the ongoing competition between China and the US in the Indo-Pacific. These nations seek to avoid being caught between the two dominant powers and consider India a preferable option.

Notably, India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific extends beyond partnerships and into bolstering its capabilities. Recent discussions with France to develop six nuclear-powered attack submarines underline India's commitment to strengthening its naval prowess. This initiative comes in response to China's substantial submarine fleet, which includes nuclear ballistic missile submarines and nuclear attack submarines. India's conventional submarine fleet, mainly from the 1980s, is being upgraded to address concerns over outdated capabilities. Given China's well-known ambitions in the Indo-Pacific, including controlling strategic ports, warships, and trade routes, some countries acquiesce to China's assertive behaviour due to economic and domestic considerations. India, however, can serve as a counterweight to Chinese dominance, offering an alternative to nations seeking to avoid confrontations with Beijing. (Saha, 2023) India's presence in Southeast Asia is gradually evolving into that of a strategic player. The bilateral relationships between India and most

ASEAN member countries have maintained a friendly disposition. While India's reputation for its soft power attributes and historical cultural ties with the region persists, it's increasingly becoming recognized as a trustworthy and reliable security and strategic ally in this part of the world.

In a significant move, India has transferred the INS Kirpan, a 1,450-tonne Khukri-class missile corvette, to Vietnam. This vessel, manned by 12 officers and 100 sailors, served in the Indian Navy for 32 years before being decommissioned. The visit of Vietnam's Defence Minister, Phan Van Giang, to India in June 2023, saw discussions revolving around augmenting training for Vietnamese military personnel involved with submarines and fighter jets. Collaborative efforts in fields like cybersecurity and electronic warfare were also on the agenda. The Philippines has experienced an upward trajectory in its bilateral relationship with India, especially following the finalisation of a significant US$374.96-million deal with BrahMos Aerospace Private Limited in January 2022. This positive momentum was evident during the recent visit of the Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, H.E. Mr. Enrique A. Manalo, to India in June 2023. A joint statement released after his meeting with Indian External Affairs Minister, Dr S. Jaishankar, during the fifth India-Philippines Joint Commission on Bilateral Cooperation, highlighted noteworthy developments. For the first time, India acknowledged the legitimacy of the 2016 arbitration ruling by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, which favoured the Philippines' sovereignty claims over China in the South China Sea. This significant recognition marked a milestone in their relationship.

During the same visit, India extended a line of credit to the Philippines for procuring Indian defence equipment. The prospect of sending an Indian defence attaché to Manila was also discussed, emphasising the intention to enhance mutual defence cooperation. Furthermore, both countries expressed the need for increased engagements between their respective defence agencies. In 2023, India played a co-hosting role in the inaugural ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise held in the South China Sea. The exercise saw India's indigenous naval assets, including the destroyer INS Delhi, stealth frigate INS Satpura, maritime patrol aircraft P8I, and integral helicopters, engaging with naval ships from Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

This collaborative effort strengthened maritime cooperation among these nations. Additionally, India's defence partnership with Indonesia has been on an upward trajectory. Notably, an Indian Kilo-class conventional submarine made its first-ever port call to Indonesia in February 2023. This engagement signified growing ties between the two countries in the defence arena.

India's concept of the "Indo-Pacific" encompasses a vast area extending from the Eastern coast of Africa to the islands of the South Pacific. Within this expansive region, the South Pacific, including the Pacific Islands, has become a focal point for significant power competition. China's increasing influence in this area is evident through the security pact with the Solomon Islands, while the United States is actively working to dissuade Pacific Island nations from forming security partnerships with Beijing. Notably, the US recently concluded a defence agreement with Papua New Guinea (PNG). (Saha, 2023)

India has maintained a level of attention on the Pacific region, driven by factors such as the substantial Indian diaspora in Fiji and initiatives like the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC). This year, India elevated its engagement with the Pacific through two high-level visits. In May 2023, Prime Minister Modi's visit to Fiji coincided with the third FIPIC Summit, during which he met with Prime Minister H.E. Mr. Sitiveni Ligamamada Rabuka. This occasion saw Prime Minister Modi being honoured with the highest distinction of the Republic of Fiji, the Companion of the Order of Fiji (CF), bestowed on behalf of Fijian President H.E. Mr. Ratu Wiliame Maivalili Katonivere by Prime Minister Rabuka.

Furthermore, in the same month, Prime Minister Modi paid a visit to Papua New Guinea (PNG). During this period, two Indian naval ships, INS Sahyadri and INS Kolkata from the Eastern Naval Command, made a port call at Port Moresby. This initiative was part of ongoing efforts aimed at enhancing maritime partnership and cooperation with PNG.

The strategic significance of the Pacific region was underscored during PM Modi's visit to Paris, where India and France concluded an agreement for enhanced cooperation in the Pacific. This agreement laid out a roadmap for the Indo-Pacific, emphasising the necessity for collaborative initiatives in the Pacific region.

Recently, former heads of India's three armed services were in Taipei, engaging with various levels of Taiwanese leadership to convey India's perspectives. This delegation includes Admiral Karambir Singh, the former Chief of the Indian Navy; General MM Naravane, the former Chief of the Indian Army; and Air Chief Marshal R.K.S. Bhadauria, the former Chief of the Indian Air Force. This move is widely interpreted as India openly opposing China's ambitions across the entire Indo-Pacific region. India's message to Beijing is both strong and clear. Moreover, India's participation signals its intention to play a more substantial role in the Indo-Pacific. Their presence at the 2023 Indo-Pacific Security Dialogue in Taipei has led to speculation, particularly about India's stance on China's aggressive actions concerning Taiwan. In essence, India is taking a firm stance against China throughout the Indo-Pacific. China's strategy involves expanding its influence across the entire Indo-Pacific region. Using mechanisms like the "nine-dash line,"[4] China has claimed and occupied a significant portion of the South China Sea, including areas like the Paracel Islands, Spratly Islands, and Scarborough Islands. In a recent development, India and Indonesia have entered an agreement wherein Indonesia will purchase supersonic BrahMos missiles from India. This collaboration aims to counter China's dominance in smaller regions. On August 2nd, two Indian Navy ships, namely the INS Kolkata guided missile destroyer and the INS Shivalik frigate, made a visit to Papua New Guinea after covering a distance of 5500 nautical miles in a two-day journey. This visit aimed to enhance maritime cooperation and security in the Pacific Island region. This development carries significance due to China's position as Papua New Guinea's largest trading partner. Notably, a month before this event, India had supported the Philippines in a territorial dispute with China and reevaluated its stance on the 2016 South China Sea Arbitration. New Delhi has also reiterated its commitment to a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific and emphasised the necessity of peaceful dispute resolution in alignment with international law.

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[4] China has implemented the "String of Pearls" strategy, which involves establishing a network of commercial and military installations in multiple countries. This strategy aims to safeguard China's trade concerns, as a significant portion of its trade relies on routes through the Indian Ocean and critical passages such as the Strait of Hormuz, Strait of Malacca, and Lombok Strait.

Map-3: "These nine-dash lines are not geographical boundaries but are interpreted by China to advance its claims"

Image Credits: Drishti IAS

Conclusion

In the 21st century, the geopolitical landscape has undergone significant shifts, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region, connecting two vital bodies of water. This area has become a focal point in global foreign policy discussions, with China emerging as a major player capable of disrupting the regional political order. The Indo-Pacific narrative revolves around the interests of key powers such as China, India, Japan, and the United States, along with other participants like Australia, South Korea, and Southeast Asian nations. Consequently, it is evident that the Indo-Pacific is characterised by a complex interplay of multiple powers, leading to either a multi-polar order or a state of disorder. The repercussions of this extend beyond the region's physical boundaries, impacting global dynamics. Effectively addressing China's aggressive actions requires a broader coalition. The security dynamics in the Indo-Pacific are intricately linked to today's global realities, encompassing economic interdependence, climate change, terrorism, and robust, diverse value chains. This situation makes the region a shared global asset, where historical rivalries, strategic tensions, and mistrust coexist with collaborative efforts in the form of bilateral and multilateral forums, treaties,

and joint military activities. Despite these challenges, the security landscape in the Indo-Pacific also involves shared interests and non-military norms.

To minimise conflicts and promote effective cooperation, it is essential to establish more comprehensive guidelines for managing global shared resources. This includes upholding principles such as the freedom of navigation, ensuring equal access to common spaces in the sea and air as guaranteed by international law, facilitating uninterrupted commerce, and resolving disputes peacefully in accordance with international legal norms. Additionally, adherence to global environmental standards, safeguarding intellectual property rights, and following rules governing the digital economy are all crucial components of this approach. By implementing these measures, the region can achieve deeper integration instead of solely responding to tensions with a narrow focus on national security concerns.

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Understanding Border Disputes between India and China: Causes, Implications, and Resolution Mechanisms

By Anchal Gautam

About the Author

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Abstract

Border disputes between India and China have been a longstanding and complex issue, characterised by historical grievances and territorial claims. This abstract provides a comprehensive overview of the causes, implications, and resolution mechanisms pertaining to these contentious disputes. The origins of the border disputes can be traced back to colonial-era demarcations and differing interpretations of historical records. Competing territorial claims in regions like Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh have fueled tensions and led to multiple military confrontations, including the 1962 Sino-Indian War. Disagreements over the McMahon Line, which separates Tibet from India's northeastern states, further contribute to the complexities of the disputes. The implications of the border disputes are multifaceted. They have a significant impact on regional security dynamics, often disturbing peace in the Asian continent. The disputes have also hampered economic cooperation and connectivity initiatives between the two Asian giants, affecting the broader stability of the region. Efforts to resolve the disputes have been ongoing through various bilateral mechanisms. Diplomatic dialogues, confidence-

building measures, and agreements like the 1993 and 1996 border peace agreements aim to manage tensions and maintain peace along the border. Despite these initiatives, a comprehensive and lasting resolution remains elusive due to deeply entrenched historical narratives and geopolitical interests.

Introduction

Nations have experienced both friendly and hostile relationships throughout history, resulting in both peaceful and violent phases. Conflict between nations is a complex and multifaceted problem , which can arise from a range of situations, such as territory disputes, ideological disagreements, competition for resources, historical grudges, struggles for power, or distinct political structures.

One of the most critical theatres of great power conflict today is South Asia and the Indian Ocean region (IOR) , the region is increasingly emerging as the focal point of a major power struggle between China and India. This rivalry has had a significant impact on Chinese engagement in other South Asian nations, most notably the close ties between China and Pakistan. It has also served as a significant driver for India to collaborate with the USA and several of its allies and partners. The two nuclear powers have the longest unresolved border in the world with opposing territorial claims. Chinese claims extend to the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh in the east, while Indian claims reach Aksai Chin in the west of their frontier. Their boundary dispute has led to a war between the two nations in 1962, resulting in an Indian defeat and leaving the relationship with historical baggage that has yet to be removed. Then followed up with a major confrontation in 1967. Subsequently, it has generated a series of subsequent confrontations.

The current border dispute between India and China is the most serious in decades. The tensions across the LAC began running high from May 2020 and then became potentially destructive in June 2020. The conflict between India and China poses a threat to regional security due to their nuclear arsenals and military capabilities. Therefore, it becomes necessary to resolve the conflicts peacefully. Throughout the years, different nations have used various methods to resolve their conflicts peacefully. India and China have also taken steps to resolve their conflicts peacefully through diplomatic dialogues, negotiations, and confidence-building measures. These attempts to maintain

peace have been successful for a few years but have not been fully effective in resolving the conflicts.

India-China Relations and Issues

Relations between India and China can be characterised by a mix of cooperation, competition, and disagreement. Although the two countries have a long history of cultural and trade exchanges, their modern relationship has been overshadowed by a border dispute centred on the Line of Actual Control. From 1962 to the present time, this border dispute has resulted in military confrontations and standoffs. Both countries are establishing themselves as regional powers, resulting in heightened competitiveness. Their trade and economic connections have developed significantly. Furthermore, as developing regional powers, India and China compete strategically, especially in terms of influence and geopolitical posture.

Map 1

Credits:https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/world/japan-joins-india-others-in-rejecting-new-china-map-542088

Border Dispute

Border disputes between India and China are not new. Despite having almost $100 billion in trade,

China and India have been unable to resolve their border disputes. Increased economic cooperation between the two countries was expected to force them to reconcile their political differences in the 1980s and 1990s, but this failed to happen. Military standoffs and skirmishes between Indian and Chinese border guards are frequent. They have had multiple discussions to address their boundary issues, but no major outcome has yet resulted. India and China share a 3488 km border that runs along the Himalayan region on both the eastern and western sides, passing through various Indian states and UTs such as Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh; and this Himalayan region is significant for both India and China. The Himalayas are regarded as a "Natural Barrier" that separates the two countries. Relations between the two countries worsened due to different understanding of the borders between the two countries and the subsequent discord which arises from the same in the Himalayan region, resulting in ongoing contention. For a better understanding the Border issues can be divided into three categories: western, middle, and eastern.

The Western Sector

The western sector is estimated to be 2152 km long, bordering J&K, Ladakh, and Sinkiang—specifically, the Chinese provinces of Sinkiang (Xinjiang) and Tibet (Xizang). Aksai Chin is the contested area in this region. The Aksai Chin issue can be traced back to the failure of the Colonial Empire to establish a clear border between India and China. The British offered two boundary lines: the Johnson Line (proposed in 1865), which kept Aksai Chin in Jammu Kashmir, i.e., under Indian administration, and the McDonald Line (proposed in 1893), which brought Aksai Chin under Chinese authority and thus considered the major borderline by China. LAC is currently the borderline separating Indian Jammu and Kashmir from Aksai Chin, which is concurrent with Chinese-claimed Aksai Chin.

The Middle Sector

In this region, India and China share a 625-kilometre-long border that stretches along the watershed from Ladakh to Nepal. In this region, the states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand share a

boundary with Tibet (China). Despite China's recognition of India's sovereignty over Sikkim and the start of trade at Nathu La, the Doklam crisis in 2017 was a setback in this sector, though India and China have moved on. Bhutan and China both have claims over Doklam. Although India has no claim to Doklam, it has backed the Royal Bhutan Army when China built a road through the territory.

The Eastern Sector

India and China share a 1,140-kilometre border in this sector. It stretches from Bhutan's eastern boundaries to a point near the Talu Pass, which connects Tibet, India, and Myanmar. The boundary line is known as the McMohan Line in this region. China regards the McMohan Line as illegitimate and undesirable, claiming that the Tibetan representatives who signed the 1914 Shimla convention that created the McMohan Line on the map were wrong. Furthermore, the most contentious territory is the Arunachal Pradesh border, which China still claims as its own.

India's Role in the Tibetan Movement

Map 2

Source: Tibet's annexation by China. (n.d.). https://savetibet.org/occupation/

When the People's Liberation Army of the People's Republic of China first entered Tibet in 1949, it marked a watershed moment in Tibetan history. The Chinese government imposed the so-called "17-

Point Agreement for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet" upon the Tibetan government in May 1951, following the defeat of the small Tibetan army and the seizure of half of the nation. This agreement was invalid under international law because it was signed under duress. With 40,000 troops in Tibet, the looming threat of a swift takeover of Lhasa, and the potential for the complete annihilation of the Tibetan state, the Tibetans had few options.

As resistance to Chinese rule grew, particularly in Eastern Tibet, Chinese oppression rapidly expanded, including the demolition of religious sites and the imprisonment of monks and other community leaders. By 1959, the popular movement had led to massive protests in Lhasa. By the time China quashed the revolt, 87,000 Tibetans had been killed in the Lhasa region alone, and the Dalai Lama had fled to India, where he now leads the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, headquartered in Dharamsala. In 1963, the Dalai Lama issued a constitution for a democratic Tibet, which the Government-in-Exile has successfully implemented to the best of its ability. Tibet's annexation by China and India's subsequent sheltering of the Dalai Lama played a significant role in the 1962 Sino-Indian War.

Panchsheel Agreement

A set of five principles, collectively known as the Panchsheel Agreement, was formulated in a significant manner by former Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and served as the framework for the Trade and Intercourse Agreement, signed on April 29, 1954, between China's Tibet region and India. The five principles are as follows:

1. Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

2. Mutual non-aggression.

3. Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs.

4. Equality and mutual benefit.

5. Peaceful co-existence.

Sino-Indian War of 1962

The Sino-Indian War occurred in 1962, pitting China against India. The primary cause of the conflict was a dispute over the Himalayan border, although other contributing factors played a significant role. A series of violent border incidents erupted during the 1959 Tibetan uprising when India offered refuge to the Dalai Lama.

On October 20, 1962, amid a lack of political consensus regarding the disputed territory along the 3,225-kilometre-long Himalayan border, China launched simultaneous offensives in Ladakh and across the McMahon Line. It's noteworthy that this happened during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Chinese forces triumphed over Indian forces in both regions, capturing Rezang La in Chushul in the west and Tawang in the east. China declared a ceasefire on November 20, 1962, and announced its withdrawal from its claimed "line of actual control." It's important to mention that China's buildup and offensive coincided with the 13-day Cuban Missile Crisis (October 16-28, 1962), during which the USA and the Soviet Union were in a confrontation. India received no assistance from these two world powers until the Cuban Missile Crisis was resolved.

Indian troops were significantly outnumbered by Chinese forces, and the Indian Army was ill-equipped for a major battle. Throughout the month-long conflict on both the eastern and western fronts, approximately 3,000 Indian soldiers were killed, with around 1,000 injured. Following the 1962 war, two major events unfolded: first, an armed conflict between India and Pakistan, which was resolved through Soviet Union mediation with China firmly supporting Pakistan; and second, China's launch of nuclear weapons.

Sino-Indian Skirmish of 1967

In September 1967, India and China became embroiled in a military confrontation at Nathu La. A scuffle initially erupted between troops from both sides before the situation escalated to involve artillery fire and threats of fighter jets. This clash resulted in the deaths of 88 Indian troops and over 300 Chinese troops. In the weeks and months leading up to the clash, the Indian side had chosen to

reinforce the border with three layers of barbed wire. On September 5, as the barbed wire fence was being upgraded to a concertina coil, the Chinese Political Commissioner engaged in a dispute with Lt. Col. Rai Singh, the commanding officer of the Indian troops, leading to a temporary halt in the work. However, work resumed on September 7, prompting the Chinese side to launch an attack.

Doklam Issue

Doklam (also known as Zhoglam, Droklam, or Donglang) is a narrow plateau situated in the regions of India, China, and Bhutan. China regards Doklam as a disputed area between Bhutan and itself, considering the presence of Indian troops in the region as a transgression. Additionally, Bhutan and India share a strong friendship, solidified by a 'Friendship Treaty' signed in 2007, which commits India to protect Bhutan's interests and emphasises close coordination between their forces.

The Doklam issue first arose in 2017 when India, specifically the Indian Army, objected to the construction of a road by the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) in the Doklam Plateau, an area China claims as part of its Dangalang region. India opposed this construction, leading to accusations from China of Indian forces invading its territory, while India accused the Chinese of destroying its bunkers, including an old Indian Army bunker at Doklam. In response, China suspended pilgrimages to Kailash-Manasarovar via the Nathu La route in Sikkim. The contested area is near India's Siliguri Corridor, which connects seven northeastern states to the Indian mainland. Consequently, India is concerned that if the Chinese complete the road, it would provide China with greater access to India's strategically vulnerable "Chicken's Neck" (Siliguri Corridor).

Galwan Valley Issue

The Galwan River Valley, situated near the Line of Actual Control (LAC), is a significant part of the Ladakh region. Originating in the Karakoram Mountains, the Galwan River flows through Aksai Chin and Eastern Ladakh before joining the Shyok River. Given its proximity to the LAC, the Galwan Valley holds strategic importance for both India and China. This valley was a flashpoint during the Indo-China war in 1962 and is named after the Ladakhi adventurer Ghulam Rassul Galwan.

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Historically, China has laid claim to the territory west of the river, bordering the Shyok River basin, while India asserts the entire Aksai Chin region as part of Ladakh. These conflicting claims led to a military standoff between India and China in the Galwan River basin in 1962. China's initial assertion over the Aksai Chin region dates back to the early 1950s when it constructed the approximately 2300 km China National Highway 219, connecting its western state of Xinjiang with Tibet.

Tensions between Indian and Chinese forces flared up again on May 5, 2020, due to Chinese opposition to Indian road construction in the region. India had constructed a new road along the Shyok River to Daulet Beg Oldi (DBO), which irked China since they consider the Galwan Valley as Chinese territory. The situation escalated to a deadly confrontation on June 15, 2020, resulting in the deaths of twenty Indian soldiers, including the commanding officer of an infantry battalion, and an undisclosed number of Chinese soldiers. This incident marked the deadliest confrontation between Indian and Chinese forces in four decades. Despite 19 rounds of military-level talks since the Galwan clash, disputes in the Depsang plains and Demchok region remain unresolved.

Water Issue

The China-India water dispute, intertwined with broader territorial and political conflicts, has exacerbated tensions surrounding water resources between the two countries. The Himalayan waters are crucial for both nations, but rapid economic development and population growth have strained their water supplies.

The Brahmaputra River, also known as Yarlung Tsangpo, is the most significant shared water resource, flowing from Tibet into India's Arunachal Pradesh. India administers this region, although China claims it as Southern Tibet. In November 2020, China announced plans for hydropower projects on the Brahmaputra near India's border, sparking outrage in India. Of particular concern is China's proposal to construct a mega dam just before the Brahmaputra enters Indian territory. These intentions were declared amid strained relations following the Galwan Valley conflict.

Allegations have also arisen that China, in the aftermath of the border clashes, disrupted the flow of the Galwan River, originating from the disputed Chinese-administered Aksai Chin region into India's Ladakh region. Some observers speculate that, in the event of a military confrontation, China might use water as leverage, either by cutting off the flow or increasing water levels to flood India. There is no existing water-sharing agreement or joint river commission to manage their shared river resources, exacerbating the challenges in dealing with their shared waterways. Coupled with water scarcity issues, these factors have led to predictions of potential "water wars" between the two nations.

Grazing Rights Issue

Grazing rights have emerged as a source of tension along the disputed India-China border in the Himalayan region. Both nations lay claim to parts of this border area, known as the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Grazing rights pertain to the traditional practice of nomadic herders from both sides allowing their livestock to graze in these border areas. Disagreements over grazing rights have occasionally escalated into border skirmishes, forming part of the broader territorial and boundary disputes between India and China.

Steps Taken to Resolve Boundary Dispute

The initial attempt to settle the boundary dispute following the 1962 conflict took place in Colombo. From December 10-12, 1962, representatives from six non-aligned Afro-Asian countries convened in Colombo to break the deadlock between India and China. These countries included Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Burma (Myanmar), Indonesia, Cambodia, the United Arab Republic, and Ghana. In the western sector, it was suggested that a demilitarised zone 20 km wide be established around the Ladakh cease-fire line, to be jointly administered by civilian posts from both sides. In contrast, in the eastern sector, the proposal was to keep the armies of India and China separated without the necessity of a formal demilitarised zone.

However, China unilaterally established seven posts in the Western sector after rejecting India's proposal for civilian posts. Following the 1962 War, Jawaharlal Nehru took the first significant step

toward resuming border negotiations on May 17, 1964, by expressing India's willingness to engage with China if the Chinese government agreed to dismantle its installations in Ladakh. China's Premier, Zhou En-Lai, vehemently rejected this offer, alleging that India was presenting an "array of obstacles" to complicate negotiations. Despite Pandit Nehru's various constructive approaches, including suggesting international arbitration, to peacefully resolve the boundary problem in a letter to Zhou En-Lai, the Chinese government remained unresponsive.

Relations between the two nations remained strained after 1962. China supported Pakistan during its 1965 conflict with India and established a second route through Indian territory connecting Xinjiang to Pakistan. Furthermore, the 1963 boundary agreement between China and Pakistan, which ceded territory to China, further exacerbated tensions as this region was also claimed by India. However, under the leadership of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1975, India's approach toward China underwent significant changes. In July 1976, fifteen years after diplomatic relations were downgraded in 1961, India dispatched an ambassador to China. Additionally, she directed India's special border forces to withdraw at least 10 km from their initial positions along the Indo-Chinese border.

After Mrs Gandhi reclaimed power in India in June 1981, Huang Hua, the then-Chinese foreign minister, visited the country. During this visit, both sides agreed to continue border talks at the vice-ministerial level in their respective capitals on an annual basis. Nonetheless, periodic border clashes persisted, intensifying in the mid-1980s amidst significant shifts in the global order.

The Wangdong incident in the eastern sector in 1986 raised the prospect of another full-fledged border war between the two nations. Chinese troops entered territory claimed by India in the Sumdorong Chu Valley in Arunachal Pradesh, establishing helicopter landing facilities. In response, Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited China in 1988 for talks on boundary issues. In 1988, India and China decided to establish a Joint Working Group (JWG) to address their boundary concerns. Subsequently, in 1993, they formed an expert panel consisting of diplomats, military officials, and cartographers. This panel aimed to comprehensively review each side's positions and clarifications regarding the Line

of Actual Control (LAC).

On the military front, the two armies agreed to limit the number of field troops, border defence forces, paramilitary forces, and major categories of armaments along the LAC. They also committed to avoiding large-scale military exercises near the LAC, notifying the other side of drills involving one brigade (5,000 troops), and refraining from discharging firearms, causing environmental degradation, using hazardous chemicals, detonating explosives, or engaging in firearm hunting within two kilometres of the LAC.

To further de-escalate tensions, the two nations signed a treaty in 2005 outlining guiding principles for managing border incidents, with the hope of ultimately achieving a peaceful resolution to all boundary disputes. Additionally, in 2013, India and China entered into a border defence cooperation agreement to prevent border patrols from resulting in exchanges of fire between the two sides' border guards. Unfortunately, differences between the two nations persist.

Confidence-Building Measures Between India and China

Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) addressing mutually beneficial issues can lay the groundwork for increased cooperation between India and China. Terrorist violence threatens both nations, and CBMs can be instrumental in combating this threat. Beijing and New Delhi have already initiated collaboration on counterterrorism, coordinating joint military exercises and engaging in high-level strategic dialogues. Moreover, both China and India maintain nuclear weapons philosophies that promote disarmament and a No First Use policy, which provides room for dialogue on achieving a stable nuclear balance in the region.

To harken back to the early phase of Sino-Indian CBMs, India was the first non-communist and the fourth Asian country to recognize Mao's communist regime, establishing diplomatic ties with Beijing shortly after China's October revolution in 1949. As a gesture of goodwill towards the new China, India relinquished all military and administrative presence in Tibet, recognizing Tibet as an

autonomous region within the Chinese Republic. In 1988, Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi attempted a diplomatic breakthrough by visiting China, initiating a series of visits and cultural interactions between Indian and Chinese leaders. These interactions paved the way for the signing of two significant Confidence-Building Measures that have proven extraordinarily effective in ensuring peace and tranquillity along their disputed borders.

First CBMs

The first CBMs were established as a result of the 1993 "Border Peace and Tranquillity Agreement" (BPTA) or "Agreement on Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility" (AMPT). This agreement led to the concept of a "Line of Actual Control (LAC)," demarcating their Himalayan border. Due to conflicting ideas about the LAC's location, both parties agreed to inspect and rectify sections of the line where they held "different views as to its alignment." As part of this, they also committed to a gradual reduction of their military deployments along the LAC to a "minimum level," based on a mutual and equal security agreement.

Second CBMs

The second CBM consisted of twelve articles and was signed during President Jiang Zemin's visit to New Delhi in November 1996, an event considered unusual and noteworthy. These initiatives aimed to expand the existing CBMs into more specialised and sensitive areas within the military sector. They proposed various methods to clarify the LAC and determine the limits of military and various armaments deployed along the LAC, such as tanks, infantry combat vehicles, and howitzers.

Third CBMs

The third significant military CBM, the 2005 "Protocol on Modalities for the Implementation of Confidence Building Measures in the Military Field Along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas," built upon the 1996 accord. This agreement outlined the standard operating procedures for handling situations where patrols from both countries encountered each other on disputed territory.

Fourth CBMs

In January 2012, both sides signed the fourth CBM, establishing a functional structure for consultation and cooperation on India-China border issues. This framework replaced the existing joint working group that connected the two foreign ministries. However, it proved insufficient in preventing the Depsang conflict in March 2013.

Fifth CBMs

Following the Depsang conflict, the fifth accord, known as the Border Defence Cooperation Agreement (BDCA), was signed on October 13, 2013. Unlike previous CBMs and MoUs, which were signed by civilian officials, the BDCA was signed by India's Defence Secretary and Admiral Sun Jianguo, Deputy Chief of General Staff of the PLA. This agreement retained the provisions of earlier accords while enhancing communication between military operations departments and defence ministries.

Impact of Border Tensions on Regional Stability

The border tensions between India and China have significant implications for the security and stability of the region, affecting not only India and China but also neighbouring countries. Here are some key impacts:

1. Regional Security: The border tensions create a sense of insecurity in the region. Both India and China are nuclear-armed nations, so any escalation in hostilities could have far-reaching consequences for regional security.

2.Problematic for Neighbouring Countries: Neighbouring countries like Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh closely monitor these tensions as they share borders with either India or China. They often find themselves caught in the middle, attempting to maintain balanced relationships with both countries.

3. Economic Impact: The region is home to some of the world's fastest-growing economies. Border tensions can disrupt trade and economic cooperation, impacting the stability and growth of the entire

region and the world as well.

4.Geostrategic Implications: The India-China border dispute has significant geostrategic implications. It can affect alliances and partnerships in the region, potentially leading to shifts in the balance of power.

Conclusion

The border disputes between India and China have deep historical, geopolitical, and cultural roots. Currently, these conflicts encompass not only territorial claims but also strategic interests. The implications of these disputes are multifaceted, affecting regional stability, international relations, and economic development. To achieve a resolution, both countries must engage in sustained diplomatic efforts, bolster confidence-building measures, and explore mutually acceptable solutions, drawing valuable lessons from previous agreements. Ultimately, a peaceful and negotiated settlement is essential for fostering stability, cooperation, and prosperity in the region.

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Data Theft, Cyber Security and Gamble for Economic Benefit

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Abstract

In the aftermath of the 1990s, China witnessed a surge in cyber activity, accompanied by the introduction of cybersecurity regulations. From the early 2000s onwards, China strategically positioned itself as a prominent cyber and internet hub. Several legislations addressing data and cyber protection have been enacted within the nation. Reports indicate that China boasts the highest incidence of data espionage against other countries , with detected cybersecurity risks originating from Chinese territories across the globe. Notably, China ranked at the top of data breach incidents during the second and third quarters of 2022. The United States has emerged as the principal target for Chinese cyberattacks, with the frequency of such attacks steadily increasing. This report delves into the significance of this escalating cyber activity, exploring how China intends to leverage this information to advance its economy forward. The study sheds light on the economic motivations behind data collection and the surge in cyber espionage originating from China. A key question arises: does China genuinely pose a threat, or is this narrative a fabrication orchestrated by hegemonic powers seeking to subdue competition?

Furthermore, the paper examines the intricate relationship between China and India, specifically in the

context of the cyber threat posed by China. The economic trajectories of both nations are scrutinised, emphasising China's continued dominance in trade relations with India.

Introduction

Data has become the new oil in the twenty-first century. The security of this area has emerged as a new concern for authorities due to the upsurge in interest in and use of cyberspace. The number of people using computers, smartphones, and other electronic devices on a daily basis has greatly expanded since the early 2000s. With the development of the internet, the threat these devices pose has also increased. We are currently living in the 5G era, and the nature of combat is evolving, changing the international domain. Cyberwarfare is an expression of hard power and soft power taking a middle path. The cyber capabilities of nations are also growing with increasing technology and the world of AI.

The evolving space of technology and the internet has given birth to concepts like Dark Web, Malware, Hacking, Phishing, and so on. These activities were previously carried out by individuals and groups of people trying to access sensitive information and earn it through illegal means. However, along with changing times, these activities and their access have also evolved. Countries, as political entities, have used these measures to apply in order to access the sensitive information of their enemy states or to access the information of their opponents. Countries like the USA, Israel, Russia, and China have the highest record of using the dark web or engaging in different types of illegal activities.

Terrorists have utilised social media to carry out their hazardous and covert operations because some social media platforms allow users to send messages that are not encrypted. However, in response to the increase in terrorist activities, governments are taking action to prevent social media apps from becoming safe havens for terrorists. In addition to terrorist attacks, these actors use phishing, cyber threats, and other tactics to protect their interests. Russia, China, and the USA are prominent key

players in the realm of data espionage and cyber threats. These nations have received numerous concerns for their increased involvement in cyber threat activities. Many countries view China as a threat since a number of cyberattacks and data espionage activities have been reported from Chinese land. The paper examines the arguments behind other nations' perceptions of Beijing as a danger and a primary target of cyber threats.

China has focused mostly on its neighbours. Numerous economic espionage attempts, data espionage cases, and cyber threats against India have been reported, and several state-sponsored data breaches and attacks have been confirmed by the US-based cybersecurity firm Recorded Future. Beijing has repeatedly targeted India despite their multilateral agreement and efforts to maintain peace between them. China attacks India, an immediate neighbour and a prime target for them, as a means of gaining economic advantage.

There are countless examples of how the internet and cyberspace have been used and abused throughout history. Cyberspace and its associated activities are no longer just used in conflicts; they are also now a source of financial benefits. Numerous actors have used both legal and unlawful methods to gain these economic benefits. The paper examines China's role in economic cyberespionage against India and other nations, as well as its operations involving other international entities.

What is Cyber Espionage

The unauthorised users who attempt to acquire sensitive or private information about a person, organisation, or state are engaging in cyber espionage. However, the espionage committed by actors might be done singly or in a group. An individual, an organisation, a region, or an entire state can get targeted by these hackers. Although it is simple to get targeted by these hackers, it is more difficult to determine who is behind the attacks or where they are coming from. [1]

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Threat Posed by China to the World

China has engaged in various cyber threats and espionage operations, both by state-sponsored and non-state-sponsored groups. China engages in numerous forms of cyber espionage around the world. The target is also made to fall into the trap easily using a variety of techniques. Creating false or Trojan apps has been regarded as one of the simpler methods of tricking users into sharing their sensitive information from their devices. By distributing malicious links or webpages, watering hole attacks have also been commonly used to break into a particular social media account or device. Between 2003 and 2005, the Chinese military threatened the USA for stealing its private information, and China also repeatedly attacked the UK with the Titan Rain Attack.

In addition to this, China engaged in a range of additional cyber threats and espionage activities. In the case of Night Dragon, Chinese hackers attempted to attack the energy sectors of Europe and America. McAfee, an American global security software company, stated that this attack took place in China. However, it was made clear that it was from China; whether it was a government-sponsored attack or a private hacking attempt by an unidentified hacker is not clear. [2] Along with the US and other countries across the world, the Night Dragon action took place in the Netherlands.

The information about the nation's oil and gas services as well as the investment industry has been targeted by hackers the most. Reuters stated that while it is possible to identify a hacker's precise location, doing so is not always simple. Additionally, hackers are not necessarily supported by the government; in fact, according to Reuters, who interviewed an analyst from the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), these hackers also participate in intra-national conflicts. [3]

Hackers operating from Chinese territories have targeted 17 countries all across the globe, as per the record published by Recorded Future, an American privately held cybersecurity company. [4] Red Hotel, a Chinese state-sponsored hacking group accused of hacking Southeast Asian countries along with other countries, governments, and institutions. This group, along with APT41, primarily works on intelligence gathering and economic espionage. These actors use different types of malwares to target institutions and organizations.[5] Although China has been accused of targeting countries, it has

claimed that the US has also targeted Beijing and has tried to breach its security. Additionally, US President Joe Biden charged China, contrasting it with Russia, with not only supporting these hackers but also attempting to shield them. The US and its allies have named both countries as the primary perpetrators of the cyber threat.[6] The U.S. and its allies have listed several cases against China, terming it as a cyber threat-supporting country and dangerous for the national security of various countries. However, China has rejected all these claims, calling it a conspiracy by the Western world. While analysing the claims of China and considering the idea of a Western conspiracy, it can be seen that not only Western countries but countries across the globe have faced direct cyber threats from Chinese territories. The table below shows the Chinese attempt to breach security and its attempt at a cyber threat in different countries around the world.

Table 1: Image Source: 1 (ORF)

Month & Year	Country	Target	Incident
2010	The Netherlands	KPN mobile phone network	A hidden backdoor by Huawei on the Netherlands's largest mobile network KPN allowed Huawei to gain unlimited access to call records and customer data, including the conversations made by government ministers. A risk-analysis report by Capgemini consultancy on KPN's telecom network revealed this instance of espionage.
January 2017	Ethiopia	African Union (AU) headquarters	Technicians at the AU headquarters building in Addis Ababa discovered that a backdoor inserted by China allowed the transfer of data every night from computers in the building to servers in Shanghai for five years. Beijing had constructed the building. In 2020, reports again noted that China-based hackers had been filching security camera footage from inside the AU headquarters building.
April 2019	Italy	Vodafone telecom network	Vodafone Group acknowledged that it had found vulnerabilities with Huawei equipment deployed for the carrier's Italian business. The vulnerabilities, which had been running for years, could have given Huawei unauthorised access to the carrier's fixed-line network in Italy.
August 2020	Papua New Guinea	National Data Centre	A report from the Australian government and Papua New Guinea's National Cyber Security Centre noted that the latter's National Data Centre, built by Huawei in 2018, is marred by various cybersecurity issues, which exposed secret government files to being stolen.
October 2020	United Kingdom	National telecom network	UK intelligence agency, Government Communications Headquarters, discovered a 'nationally significant' vulnerability in Huawei equipment. The vulnerability was so severe that it was withheld from the company.

The threat posed by China to India

Both India and China share a border and have experienced fluctuations in their bilateral relations throughout history. India shares a border with China in the North and North-East parts of its territory. Despite India's efforts to maintain cordial relations with Beijing, the predominant threat has been from China. The two nations primarily engage in trade, whereas India heavily relies on China for technological equipment. Even amid border skirmishes in Ladakh, India continued its economic

activities with China. However, China, seeking to bolster its economy, has sought to breach the cyber domain of Indian institutions and its defence sector. India has faced multiple instances of data theft and cyber-attacks in the Energy, IT, and defence sectors. The Indian Air Force, in particular, has encountered cyber threats from China, suspected even in incidents like the Sukhoi 30 fighter jet crash that claimed the lives of two trained Air Force pilots [7].

During the border standoff, the power grid in Ladakh faced threats due to deteriorating relations between India and China, posing an open challenge from India's adversary. Mumbai's energy sector also experienced threats [6]. In 2018, nearly 35% of India's cyber threats originated from China, according to data published by the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In). A recent cyber attack on AIIMS involved Chinese hackers blackmailing India for 200 crore rupees in Bitcoin to prevent the disclosure of the hospital's private information, compromising the health data of millions of patients [8].

According to America's Recorded Future, the Ladakh power grid was hacked by Chinese hackers using the Trojan Pad, formally known as Shadow Pad Advanced Modular Remote Access Trojan (RAT), sponsored by the Chinese government [9]. The October 2020 power grid incident in Mumbai was also declared a threat from Chinese hackers, although the state energy minister denied China's involvement in hacking Mumbai's power grid.

Apart from sensitive information hacked by Chinese hackers, Singapore-based cybersecurity firm CyFirma highlighted Chinese attempts to hack the information technology of vaccine firms Bharat Biotech and Serum Institute of India (SII). Three primary perspectives should be considered in this context:

Firstly, the geopolitical nature behind the hacking of sensitive data from these companies, as India led in providing vaccines globally, enhancing its image, while China faced allegations related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Secondly, the increasing engagement between India and the United States, concerns Beijing due to

India's close ties with Washington, especially in the context of the QUAD alliance. Thirdly, the economic aspect between India and China, where continuous cyber threats have led India to ban several Chinese apps, despite a trade deficit exceeding $100 billion. India, now diversifying its sources of imports, has built bilateral and multilateral trade alliances with various countries, reducing dependence on China [10]. China attempts to maintain its supremacy through cyber threats and economic espionage, making India's position vulnerable.

India's Stand to Secure Itself from Cyber Threats

The Indian government has adopted several measures to combat cyber threats from its neighbouring countries, particularly in anticipation of the G20 meeting in New Delhi. India has implemented special measures to prevent cyber threats that could result in the disruption of sensitive information. The "Zero Trust Model" has been installed, specifically targeting cyber threat activities against the IT sector. Under this policy, "authentication and authorization" have become mandatory steps to access resources. [11]

Furthermore, India's budget for cybersecurity has increased in tandem with technological advancements and the growing threat to the country's IT sector. According to the business standard report, the budget estimates for the year 2021-22 have surged to 515 crore, a tenfold increase compared to the previous budget in 2014-15. [12] In response to the escalating cyber attacks, New

Delhi has decided to further increase its budget for 2023, particularly in light of the cyber threats in the Asia Pacific Region (APAC). [13]

Nevertheless, the policies, laws, and actions taken to secure the country's cyber domain are deemed insufficient to address various types of attacks and malware practices conducted by hostile nations towards India. Major cyber incidents, such as the attack on the Kudankulam nuclear power plant, Air India, and the Management Information System (MIS) at Jawaharlal Nehru Port Container Terminal (JNPCT), highlight the vulnerabilities in India's cybersecurity policies and budget allocation. Despite

these significant cyber attacks, India has been actively enhancing its cybersecurity measures, aiming to strengthen both policies and their implementation.

Table 2: Various measures taken by the Indian Government

Number of policies and initiatives	Name of the policies and initiatives	Target of the policies and initiatives
1	The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In)	- Address the cyber threat in the country. - Played a crucial role in reducing the cyber threat case in India
2	Cyber Surakshit Bharat	The aim is to secure India's cyber security domain Launched by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology in partnership with the National Electronic Governance Division (NeGD)
3	National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Center (NCIIPC)	-Providing cyber security, especially in the defence sector, public health sector and economic sector.

4	Appointment of Chief Information Security Officers	-App, infrastructure, compliance safety and security
5	Personal Data Protection Bill	Data localisation Cyber safety of people in India Making social media companies accountable in the country
6	Cyber Swachhta Kendra (Botnet Cleaning and Malware Analysis Center)	-Initiative taken under the Digital India drive -Protect the internet services and the cyber domain of the country
7	National Cyber Security Policy	-Working on the policies and laws related to cybersecurity

above table- table number-1 (Author's Own)

How is China benefiting economically through its data theft and illegal cyber threats?

China's role has also increased in the fintech domain, where it is rapidly assimilating newer technological developments in the financial sector. China has made significant contributions to fintech, digital banking, and tech entrepreneurship. The integration of technology into finance began in the 1990s, with Beijing's first initiative lasting from 1993 to 2004. From 2004 to 2016, online platforms were established for digital payments, and a fintech business was launched. From 2016 to the present, fintech has been considered a vital key in the rapidly expanding fields of AI and the digital world, contributing immensely to the Chinese economy, and making China the world's leading fintech investor [14]. With the increasing use of technology and digital means in dealing with the financial sector, China has also witnessed several activities related to economic espionage and data theft. These cyber threat activities have been attempted by actors within and outside the country.

Non-funded Chinese hackers have targeted pharmaceutical firms and industries to gain access to their intellectual property rights. After obtaining patent rights, it becomes easier for these hackers to benefit economically. Following the agreement not to conduct intellectual theft between the US and China, the focus of these hackers shifted [15][16]. The Chinese hacking group APT41 stole $20 million from the US Covid relief fund, unemployment fund, and various other facilities [17]. This wasn't limited to just one US state but occurred in six other states, causing concern in Washington [18]. APT41 has previously been accused of stealing and hacking from the US and other countries. Recently, the Biden administration announced penalties on China for its espionage activities. Over the past two decades, the US has lost $600 billion due to these espionage activities by China.

Understanding China's reliance on espionage is critical. China aims to reduce spending on research and development and instead focuses on technology to manufacture products after obtaining sensitive information from firms such as pharmaceuticals and other industries. The CSIS article discusses how China copies even small items to cut costs and fuel the explosive growth of the country's economic activities. China carry outs data espionage activities exploits data espionage to bolster its economy by

stealing intellectual property rights and millions of people's personal information and sensitive data. The cyber threat posed by China has been declared a growing concern and threat by Chief of Defense Staff Bipin Rawat to India and its national security [19]. However, an increasing number of cases have been reported from Chinese territory, but it does not mean that China has not faced cyber threats from other countries. China has reported increasing cyber threats from the US, where China has accused the National Security Agency of the US for hacking Chinese systems [20].

China expands its economy mainly through intellectual property theft, stealing ideas and newer technology, cyber theft, piracy, etc. China attempts technology transfer to access its market. Besides this, China has also exploited African countries for its economic gain. Continuous economic interference by developing infrastructure in African countries has contributed to Chinese economic growth. In a recent case, China attempted to steal sensitive information from organisations, with the African Union being a prime example. Economic espionage carried out by China contributes $180 billion to $540 billion to its economy annually [21]. When considering cyber threats globally, the activity has increased considerably. According to statistics, cyber theft and attacks have increased tremendously, especially after 2010 [22]."

Table 3: Cyber attack incidents with $1 Million + in reported losses
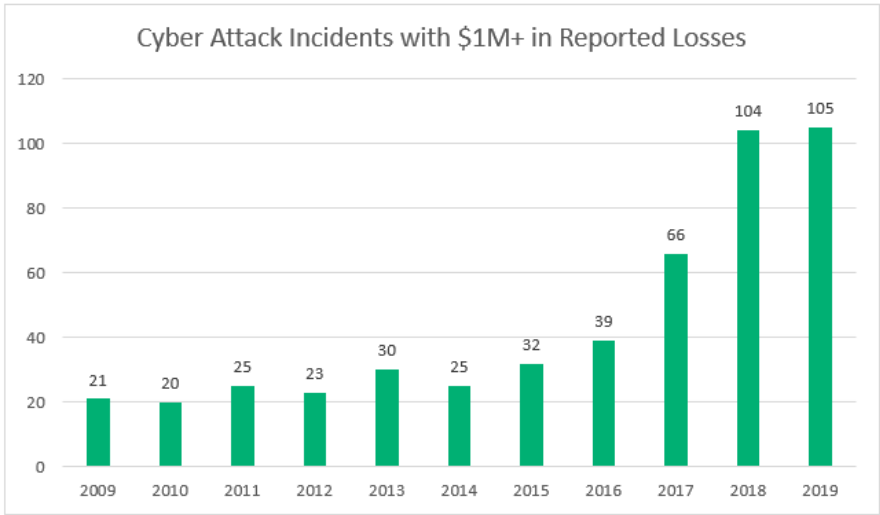
Table 4:

Year	Famous Cyber Attacks statistics
2009	1. The FBI's IC3 Received a Total of 336,655 Consumer Complaints of Fraud and Scams 2. Hacking Involved in 60% of Identity Exposure Cases 3. Botnets Sent 85% of Spam Emails
2010	1. The FBI's IC3 Received a Total of 303,809 Consumer Complaints of Fraud and Scams 2. Kaspersky Lab Reported 580,371,937 cyber attacks Against Users 3. 4 Companies Were Responsible for Kaspersky's Top 20 Software Vulnerabilities
2011	1. U.S. Intelligence Performs 231 Cyber Operations 2. The FBI's IC3 Received More than 300,000 Consumer Complaints of Fraud and Scams 3 Annual Browser-Based Attacks Increase to Nearly 1 Billion 4. 77 Million Users Impacted by PlayStation Network and Qriocity Breach
2012	1. Attacks on Critical Infrastructure Increased 52% 2. Browser-Based Attacks Jump to Nearly 1.6 Billion 3. Botnet of 700,000 Infected Apple Computers Discovered
2013	1. The Stock Market Nosedived $136 Billion Due to a Social Media Cyber Attack 2. 3 Billion Yahoo Accounts Hacked in Massive Data Breach

	3. Browser-Based Cyber Attacks Surpassed 1.7 Billion
	4. 552 Million Identities Exposed by Data Breaches in 2013
	5. "Human Error" Contributes to 95% of Cybersecurity Incidents
	6. Mobile Malware Reaches New Levels with 148,427 Modifications
2014	1. 3 Industries Targeted by 62% of Cyber Attacks
	2. The FBI's IC3 Received a Total of 269,422 Complaints of Fraud and Scams
	3. More than 1.4 Billion Browser-Based Attacks Reported
	4. More than 6.1 Billion Threats Detected & Neutralized in 2014
2015	1. 91% of IT Service Providers' Clients Victimized by Ransomware
	2. 431 Million New Malware Variants Discovered
	3. 9 Data Breaches Exposed a Minimum of 10 Million Identities Per Event
	4. 191 Million Registered Voters PII Exposed
2016	1. Only 15% of Organizations Report Ransomware Attacks
	2. More Than 750,000,000 Web-Based Attacks Were Thwarted
	3.Cyber Attacks Cost the U.S. Economy Up to $109 Billion in 2016
	4. Hacking of Adult Website Resulted in the Exposure of 412 Million Users

	5. Cyber Attacks Measuring 1 Tbps Affected Service Providers
2017	1. Nearly 1.2 Billion Web-Based Cyber Attacks Repelled

2. Cybercrime Cost Global Consumers $172 Billion in 2017

3. 41% of Consumers Globally Don't Trust Governments with Their PII |
| 2018 | 1. Nearly 1.9 Billion Web-Based Cyber Attacks Repelled

2. Information on Up to 500 Million People Exposed in Marriott Data Breach

3. Ransomware Attack Costs the City of Atlanta $2.6 Million |
| 2019 | 1. $26 Billion Lost to BEC/EAC Scams

2. Nearly 1 Billion Web-Based Cyber Attacks Repelled

3. More than $675 Million Stolen by North Korean Nation-State Actors

4. 400% Increase in Threats to Mac Devices |

Therefore, security dangers are created not only for India but also for other nations around the world as a result of these attacks and ongoing cyber espionage operations carried out from Chinese territory. As part of many narratives, China has also refuted the accusations made against it, characterising them as Western propaganda intended to portray China negatively and as an international threat. Despite these assertions, China has been held accountable for its rising cybercrime and previously described illegal economic espionage actions.

Conclusion

China, a country with an emerging and developing economy, has been accused of committing multiple acts of economic espionage, both by individuals and by groups supported by the government. It has become an essential priority for nations to protect their security using all available measures in the expanding world of AI and technology. China has drawn widespread criticism for its use of cyberwarfare because it is the country most frequently accused of committing cybercrime.

The international situation is becoming worse due to China's escalating attacks on its neighbour India. China has accused the USA and Western media of not showing the attacks taking place from the US and Europe to Chinese firms and the Chinese government. However, according to records, China has been responsible for the majority of cyber threats and economic espionage, and it has additionally violated international law and interfered with the national security of other countries worldwide. The Chinese government's escalating cyber threat activities have backfired on China in its bilateral and multilateral relationships with other nations. Resulting into the growing trust gap between China and the rest of the world has forced China to reevaluate its stance on economic espionage and cyber threats.

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Manipur Crisis and Roadmap to Peace
Interview with Lt. Gen. Shokin Chauhan (Retd.)

About the Guest Speaker

Lt Gen Shokin Chauhan, PVSM, AVSM, YSM, SM and VSM, was the Chairman of the Cease Fire Monitoring Group in August 2018. He was the Director General of Assam Rifles, India's oldest and largest Para Military Force. He has had held several key appointments during his long career in the Army. He has served at the Apex level in the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Home Counter Insurgency, Counter Terrorism, Border Guarding and Human Resource Management. He also has vast experience in military diplomacy since he was the Defence Attaché in the Indian Embassy in Nepal for three and half years (2004-07). He regularly contributes articles/columns in various scholarly magazines and is a constant invitee and participant/ speaker at Seminars and leadership forums including the IDSA, the Defence Services Staff College, the Army War College, the Officers Training Academy, the Armoured Corps Centre and School, the United Service Institute, the FICCI, the India Foundation and the National Security Guard. He was awarded the Field Marshal KM Carriappa Chair of Excellence by United Services Institute of India. He also serves as the Senior Advisor to Indic Researchers Forum.

Interviewer: Arghish Akolkar
Associate Editor, Indic Researchers Forum

Guest Speaker: Lt Gen shokin chauhan
Former Director General, Assam Rifles
Former Chairman, Ceasefire Monitoring Group

1. Arghish Akolkar: Sir, lately, we have been hearing voices that highlight growing resentment towards State and National Government Institutions from both Kuki and Meitei communities. What confidence-building measures can the Central and State Governments take to ensure that these voices do not amplify in the long term?

Lt. Gen. Shokin Chauhan: The first issue is to establish peace in Manipur, meaning the absence of violence and fear. Currently, there are two conflicting sides—the Kukis and the Meiteis—with approximately 10,000-plus weapons, nearly 6,000 of which were looted from the Manipur police. The immediate priority is for the government to retrieve these weapons. Once violence subsides, a Peace Committee comprising eminent individuals from both communities and those with a genuine concern for Manipur should be formed. The aim is to facilitate discussions among them to reach a consensus on necessary steps. These initial measures are crucial. The third priority is addressing the plight of nearly a lakh people in relief camps whose houses were burned. Rebuilding these houses and fostering cohabitation among communities are essential first steps. While more challenges may arise later, these are the initial actions required.

2. Arghish Akolkar: Sir, you mentioned disarming and retrieving weapons. My next question aligns with that. Even after this conflict ends, as seen in previous instances, what measures can local and central authorities take to effectively disarm ethnic militias and prevent future crises?

Lt. Gen. Shokin Chauhan: I wonder if you're aware of the number of nationalities or several different tribes that are there in Manipur. Let me just give you an idea of the tribes that are there. In the northeast of Imphal, you have the Tangkhul tribe, who live mainly in the Ukhrul district. In the Northwest, you have the Churachandpur District. You have a conglomeration of different types of people, all of whom belong to the largely broad Kuki tribes. Further, in the hills of Senapati, you have a whole lot of other Naga tribes that are there. And in the valley, which is about 10 kilometres square or 12-kilometre square, depending on where you start counting it, you have 99% of the Meiteis who live in Imphal and who dominate the political space of Manipur.

So, there are three separate battles here. One is the battle of the political space, where Meiteis have always been in power. Biren Singh, who is a Meitei, has been Chief Minister before this; he was Deputy Chief Minister. The Meiteis have almost 40 MLAs, and the balance 20 come from different tribes, of which there are 10 MLAs from the Kukis and the balance 10 from different Naga tribes. But the first issue is the issue of what they call equality. The Meiteis have not got scheduled tribes status, for which they feel aggrieved. Whereas the other tribes in Manipur have scheduled tribe status by the government of India and, therefore, are entitled to some kind of reservation.

There is also an issue of land. The Meiteis have control of the valley, but there is no problem in buying land in the valley. But in the hills, as per Article 371 (Charlie) of Manipur, the land belongs to tribals, the hill tribes, and therefore cannot be sold or transferred to anybody and is not available for the Meiteis to go and settle down. So, this battle is about inequality. This battle is about political power; the battle is about wanting greater power, or someone preventing that greater power. The battle is also about narcotics. There's been a lot of word in the media about the Kukis growing poppy in the field and in the hills and the Kukis then selling it to Myanmar from where it is processed and redistributed as heroin. While that may be true, there is also a large group of people who are profiting from this narcotics distribution, and they could also be senior political leaders and Meitei leaders in Manipur. There is a lot of smuggling, the borders are open.

A similar battle has been carried forward in Myanmar, where the Kukis and Meiteis are on opposing sides of the battle in Myanmar. In Myanmar, the Meiteis insurgent groups are supporting the Myanmar army in their areas of influence, and the Kukis are fighting the Myanmar army. But the problem is that when you look at this, to add to this confusion, the state of Mizoram is entirely made up of chins, the dominant community are chins. Chins are also in Myanmar, bordering Manipur and Mizoram, and chins also are a part of the larger Chinzos tribe, which comprises the Kuki community. So, if you put and push one tribe against the other, you will have a problem in the Northeast itself, because the Meiteis will not accept this reduction of political power to the Kukis. After all, they are a part of the same clan. So, there has always been in the Northeast a very delicate balancing act, and unfortunately, this problem in Manipur has upset that balancing act.

For years, these tribes have fought each other, and we were hoping that by giving them this balance, we would be able to prevent the future generation, the younger generations, from carrying the baggage of the problems that occurred between these tribes earlier. But unfortunately, with this, I'm afraid the younger generation and the next three generations will probably carry the same hatred toward each other. It is impossible to prevent

violence there. The reason is that the border is open, and you can't block it because tribes of the same community exist on both sides. And we have what is known as a free move regime, a 16-kilometre free move regime, 16 kilometres on each side. It's where the tribes are allowed to move with headloads to trade as they used to over the last many generations and many centuries.

So, the idea is, this is what I've been advising most people, firstly, an understanding of these dynamics. There are no clear black-and-white situations here. There is an understanding that each movement of each tribe or community will create a problem with another community; you have to create a balance. For that balance, you need a government that has not shown itself to be so partisan. So you need a nonpartisan government. You need a community of elders, a community of young people who get together and say, let's stop this violence. And let's stop it so that our future generations get an education with jobs and become major contributors to the larger idea of India. But these are issues, Arghish, that we need to understand. As I've said, the first step has to be to stop violence. And then the stoppage of violence, the first step has to be the returning of weapons, which has not happened at all; only about 100 odd weapons were returned, after that no further weapons were returned.

3. Arghish Akolkar: Sir, you mentioned the delicate balancing act that has historically addressed the grievances and interests of tribal communities, sir. Lately, many people have noticed increased calls, especially from the Kuki community, for a separate state in the hill areas of Manipur itself, named as Kukiland or something similar. Sir, do you think the creation of such a state within the Republic of India will be feasible? And if done, what might be the ramifications of such an action?

Lt. Gen. Shokin Chauhan: Okay, I wonder if you remember—you're all too young to recall—the Bodoland agitation of the 1990s and how, at that time, we ended this agitation and violence through the creation of a hill council for the Bodos within the state of Assam. These are also solutions that, as you're aware, I used to be in

the Ceasefire Monitoring Group in Nagaland, where I engaged with various communities and tribes, attempting to secure a final treaty with the Government of India. This is something the government of India is considering with the Nagas—creating separate hill councils, providing them with financial capabilities, and fostering an environment where people can coexist peacefully without perceiving inequality. So, Arghish, this isn't an unfamiliar approach.

After all, you're aware that the states of Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya, and Mizoram emerged from the state of Assam. The Mizos fought a prolonged battle before the creation of Mizoram, which culminated in the Mizo Accord of 1986. This accord, held today as an example of lasting peace, resulted from power-sharing and financial investment at the local level. It's crucial to understand that upsetting one balance can affect various tribal issues at play here. If these two communities cannot coexist, as seen in the past, establishing a hill council may be a necessary step to maintain peace.

Ultimately, achieving peace is paramount. We can't pursue the Act East policy or the development of the northeast with ongoing violence, as it sets us back by a decade in these regards.

4. Arghish Akolkar: Sir, you had mentioned the Naga angle earlier, discussing the history of the Nagas. In the context of Manipur, I'd like to highlight an anomaly: there has been radio silence from the Naga community, considering the anti-Kuki riots by the Naga community in the 80s. Given this context, I'd like to ask, especially since there's radio silence from the NSCN-IM, located at the Manipur border. While Naga civil society and protests advocate for peace, the NSCN-IM recently expressed the need to keep the Naga out of the conflict. Could this be seen as a peace gesture, or is there more to it than it seems, Sir?

Lt. Gen. Shokin Chauhan: Okay, concerning the Naga or Tangkhul-Kuki riots, in 1988, I was in the middle of it as a young company commander, a major commanding a post in Ukhrul. Part of my

responsibility was to safeguard Kuki villages from destruction by the Tangkhul Naga and NSCN-IM. I have an old friend from Tangkhul, and I've invested a lot of time there. I maintain communication with the entire leadership at Hebron and have visited Hebron myself. However, there are two main issues. Firstly, the Tangkhul and a significant portion of the Naga community believe it is not their battle. Secondly, the Kukis have always

been viewed as outsiders by the Naga community, despite the term "Kuki Nagas." There is a delicate balance of relationships between separate communities in Manipur, Nagaland, and Arunachal due to Nagas residing in these areas. The Tangkhuls and the NSCN-IM leadership wisely chose to stay away from this problem. Their intervention could have created a separate, complex problem. Notably, the NSCN-IM is a powerful insurgent group with significant weaponry and a trained cadre. They have been in a state of war with the Indian

government for nearly 60 years until the ceasefire. Even during the ceasefire, they haven't relinquished weapons or halted recruitment, posing a considerable threat to the security of the Northeast. I've been hopeful that they do not get involved in this issue for two reasons. First, the Meitei community hasn't targeted them. If the Meitei community did, the NSCN-IM would likely retaliate. Second, the NSCN-IM harbours suspicions about the Kukis and believes that intervening would not be beneficial. They are highly transactional, waiting for opportunities that suit them best within their own framework. In my conversations with them, I've found them to be good friends with their unique thought processes and ideas about their existence within the broader framework.

5. Arghish Akolkar: For example, you can observe both the humane and the extremely pragmatic approach adopted by the Naga community in general, sir.

Lt. Gen. Shokin Chauhan: The leadership of the NSCN-IM demonstrates a pragmatic approach. Okay. Nagaland, on its own, is a peaceful state at the present moment with Mr. Rio as the chief minister. He is making earnest efforts to prevent the 16 Naga tribes from getting involved in the problems of Manipur.

6. Arghish Akolkar: Sir, in your previous answer to one of my earlier questions, you mentioned the Meiteis and various other communities actively participating in the current Burmese Civil War, aligning with either the anti-junta or junta forces. Recently, General Manoj Naravane also spoke about the involvement of insurgent groups from the Indian northeast in supporting either pro-junta or anti-junta factions in Burma. In your opinion, Sir, although these actions haven't resulted in on-ground repercussions in India currently, what are the potential long-term consequences, especially concerning India's National Security in the Northeast, once the Burmese Civil War concludes?

Lt. Gen. Shokin Chauhan: Okay. Let me first affirm that Manoj is correct. He has firsthand experience from our earlier engagements in the Kohima region, so his insights are valuable. Now, let me provide some context.

Firstly, the Indo-Myanmar border is porous, and our relationship with Burma is longstanding. With a 1770-kilometre-long shared border, the tribes residing on both sides share similar ethnicities, fostering a close relationship. Events in Burma significantly impact India's northeast. Secondly, the involvement of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) or Meitei groups in regions like Moreh, dominated by the Meitei community, raises concerns. The Kuki community is also present in these areas. The Chin State, bordering Manipur, Nagaland, and Mizoram, is in focus due to the conflict between the Chin people and the Myanmar Army. Meitei insurgent groups, such as the PLA, UNLF, and PREPAK, operate in coordination with the Myanmar army to maintain peace in the Chin State, where the Myanmar army cannot reach. This situation has historical roots and has persisted for several decades.

There are 16 other insurgencies within Myanmar, but their impact doesn't extend beyond Moreh. It's noteworthy that Indian insurgent groups have had camps in Myanmar, and despite the Myanmar army lacking resources to address these insurgencies, they haven't confronted these groups. This has been an ongoing issue for the past 20-30 years. The developments in Burma have repercussions in India, evident in the presence of Chin refugees in Mizoram and Manipur, with tensions directed towards them. Understanding the complexities of this issue requires delving into the origins of each community involved. Looking ahead, when peace is restored in Myanmar, it bodes well for India's Northeast. Communities that have endured years of conflict will experience stability, leading to overall peace in the region.

Consequently, this positively addresses your question about the aftermath of peace, and it is indeed a favourable outcome.

7. Arghish Akolkar: In this question, sir, I want to look at the social effect, for example, especially of the immigration that we have seen inside the state of Manipur itself. Sir, we have seen that there has been an increase in ethnic or tribal ghettos, for example, in the valley, and Churchandrapur at one point in time used to be slightly more cosmopolitan. But, sir, we have lately seen that the demographics across Manipur are innately

becoming extremely ghettoised. So, there have been various research papers and various policy papers from the government itself, which I've seen, that have said that where there has been ghettoization in a conflict-ridden society or where conflict has not been addressed, especially. So, this can be a recipe for future disasters or future problems. Sir, in your opinion, what are the prospective measures which the government can take in order to not forcefully undo such ghettoization and ensure that, for example, people who used to previously live in the hills or the hills and valleys go back and ensure there's a cosmopolitan nature? So, rather than a ghettoised situation of hostility.

Lt. Gen. Shokin Chauhan: Arghish, the way you talk about cosmopolitanism is not the Cosmopolitan of the Northeast; the tribes of the Northeast have always held that tribal identity much more strongly than anybody else. That's the first thing you must realise. Because they are small in numbers, they feel that they will be engulfed in the larger cultural identity of India, which they don't want to be. The second is this ghettoization could only be reduced through the absence of fear. When I started my talk to you all, I was telling you that we were expecting the furtherance of peace. Because the Kuki and the Meitei and the Tangkhul community started to mix, your generation of students, your generation of people had started mixing with each other and started intermarriage. And that was a very, very good thing. But with this inter Meitei-Kuki problem that will come about, with the Kuki having been absolutely removed from Manipur from the Imphal Valley, absolutely 100% has been revoked. They have no other place to go, but to Kuki-dominated area, which is Churachandpur, where they have created this ghetto, they will create five more villages, and they will live there. And they will forever have to have an insurgent group to protect them.

This Kuki insurgent group came about to protect the Kuki community. Today, there are 26 such insurgent groups, all in ceasefire with the Government of India through what we call the suspension of operations agreement. So, absence of fear is the only way by which you can reduce ghettoization. That was the first thing I said: absence of fear comes from peace, and peace comes from returning the weapons, getting people to sit down with each other, and talking to each other in removing the suspicions that are there between each community. I am confident, Arghish, that if the South Africans could do it, the black South Africans and the white South Africans could live together in South Africa. And they have a history of violence between each other with a history of suspicion between each other because there's been a long subjugation of the blacks. If they could be brought to live with each other, I see no reason why the Kukis and the Meiteis do not live with each other. You only need sagacity and political leadership. You only need a community of your age, younger people standing up from both committees and saying we want peace. Remember, Arghish, the old do not change anything, people like us have lived our lives. It is only the youth that can change this. So, through your forum, I call upon both the Meitei and the Kuki communities. The youth leadership which is absolutely absent today, to sit down with each other and talk to each other and bring about peace. They're at the forefront of this war, they must be at the forefront of the peace.

8. Arghish Akolkar: An interaction with the youth, especially concerning the future, is crucial, and I believe it should be, as you mentioned, one of the primary measures taken by every government. My next question, sir, pertains to your discussion about the various forces that have already been deployed. Some communities claim that the Manipuri police favour one group over another, and there have been instances of conflict, such as the viral video showing a scuffle between the Manipuri police and the Assam Rifles. Similar conflicts have occurred with other central forces. Sir, what could be the root cause of this inherent discord, and what measures can be taken to prevent such discord, particularly in an already tense situation?

Lt. Gen. Shokin Chauhan: Firstly, be clear that the Manipur police are predominantly made up of the Meitei community. Therefore, they are seen as supporting the Meitei community and not others, so there should be no doubt about their allegiance. Second, the Assam Rifles, a central force comprising officers

from the Indian Army, are committed to maintaining peace and are making efforts to assist all communities. Their mandate is to help all communities, creating a conflict with the Manipur police, which

appears to be focused on supporting only one community. This is the primary issue that needs clarification.

The second issue is that the Assam Rifles is putting in tremendous effort. As a former director general of the force, I can attest to the hard work of this 70,000-strong force. Unfortunately, they are facing criticism from the Meitei community, which claims that the Assam Rifles is also helping the Kukis, as per their duty. The Assam Rifles is obligated to assist all communities and cannot show favouritism. Similarly, the Indian Army, whose officers are part of the Assam Rifles, is also being targeted by the Manipur police. This is regrettable as state forces should ideally collaborate and operate alongside the armed forces rather than against them. However, the

situation has escalated to a point where controlling public sentiments seems challenging. I can only hope that, as mentioned earlier, we need leaders akin to Mandela to bring about peace. Youth leadership is crucial in this regard, and people must understand that state forces must remain impartial and assist all communities in times of trouble. They should not be exploited for political gains. This is the core issue here. Efforts are being made to resolve the matter; the director general of the Assam Rifles met with the Chief Minister of Manipur to address the concerns. I hope we can see reason prevail in this difficult situation.

Energy Security Concerns And Resources Control

By Rugveda Mayakuntla

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Abstract

Energy security has become a paramount national interest for India, driven by its increasing industrial and economic activities. To meet its energy needs, India heavily relies on imports, rendering it vulnerable to various energy security concerns such as disruptions in the supply chain, price fluctuations, geopolitical implications, insufficient infrastructure development, environmental issues, and climate change. A significant security concern for India is the strategic competition with China for access to energy resources and control over transit routes, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region. India is wary of China's extensive Belt and Road Initiative, which involves infrastructure development in energy-rich regions like West Asia, Africa, and Central Asia, providing China with access to crucial energy resources. China's growing naval presence in the Indian Ocean region raises concerns for India, as it could grant China more influence over vital energy supply lines and chokepoints, emerging as a key energy security challenge for India. China's assertive actions to claim disputed territories in the South China Sea, aiming to control the region, pose a threat to India's maritime energy supply routes.

To address these energy security challenges posed by China, India should adopt a multifaceted approach.

India's energy strategy should involve forging bilateral agreements, establishing strategic alliances, and initiating infrastructural development projects with energy-rich nations to ensure long-term energy supply. Given the importance of the Indian Ocean for energy resource transportation, India should prioritise the development of maritime security and enhance its naval operations in the region. Additionally, India should reduce its reliance on fossil fuels, diversifying its energy resources by investing in renewable energy. While facing inevitable competition with China, India should pursue a balanced approach, combining competition and cooperation with China in mutual interest areas, such as opposing Western countries' proposals to ban the use of fossil fuels.

Introduction

This report discusses the current energy scenario in India, energy developments, energy policy, and potential alternatives such as the renewable energy prospects in India. However, India faces energy security threats, including geopolitical implications, supply chain disruptions, infrastructure challenges, lack of investments, and climate change. India is encountering strategic competition from China for control over various energy resources in West Asia, Africa, Central Asia, and the South China Sea. The increasing Chinese footprint in the Indian Ocean Region poses a significant threat to India's maritime security and energy supply routes. The government of India has initiated various measures to address its energy security concerns, such as diversifying energy supply to various energy-rich nations, domestic exploration and production of energy resources, and expanding the use of renewable energy to reduce carbon emissions.

Energy Scenrio in India

Energy security, as defined by the IEA, involves ensuring the continuous supply of energy sources at affordable prices. While this definition holds for energy-importing countries, it takes a different form for energy-exporting nations. For energy-exporting countries like India, energy security can be characterised as the uninterrupted demand for energy resources that generate substantial revenues. Despite being a net exporter of power, India relies heavily on energy imports to meet its domestic needs. In 2022, India's total energy consumption reached 10,123.44 TWh, with the highest share coming from coal at 55.13%, followed by oil at 27.58%, gas at 5.75%, hydropower at 4.5%, and other sources such as wind, renewables, and nuclear

energy. Ranking third globally in energy consumption after the US and China, India witnessed a 4.7% annual increase in power consumption, and if the current trend persists, the

country's energy consumption may more than double by 2040. This upward trajectory is attributed to factors such as population growth, urbanisation, and economic expansion. The demand for electricity, in particular, has surged due to increased industrial activity, household expansion, and commercial growth. However, India's energy production growth has not kept pace with the rising consumption levels, resulting in an increased dependence on imports, which rose from 34.2% in 2012-13 to 41% in 2021-22. The escalating energy needs pose a challenge, intensifying India's reliance on imported energy.

On a positive note, India has transitioned into a net exporter of power, sending electricity to neighbouring countries such as Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Myanmar. In 2022, India exported 2,410 million units of electricity, securing its position as the 30th largest power exporter globally.
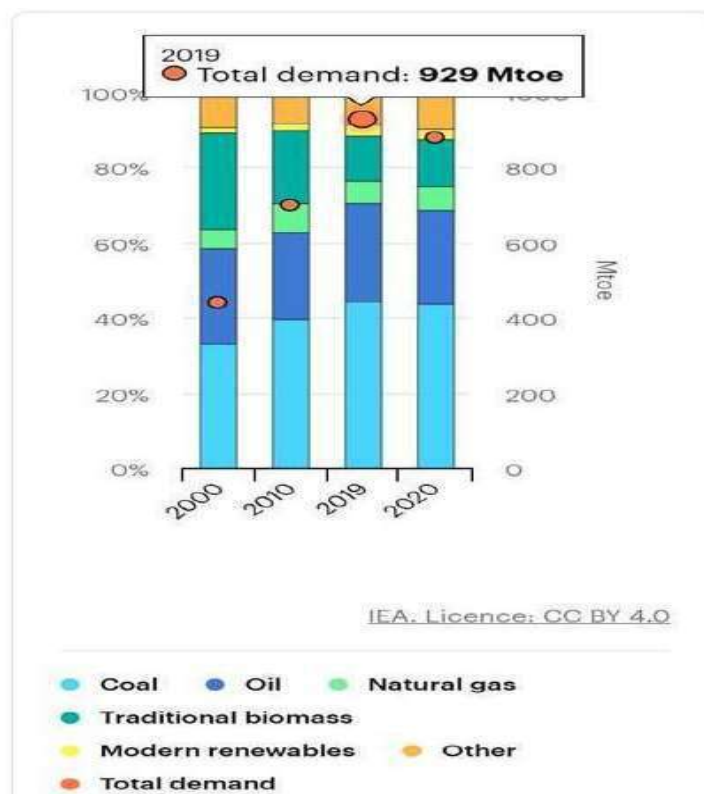

Image source: International Energy Agency

Energy Security: Concerns For India

Since the definition of energy security differs for every country, the energy security concerns they face are

also different. There are several energy security issues that India must address since they have a significant impact on the nation's overall growth, security, and economic stability. The following are some of India's primary energy security concerns:

Geopolitical Implications

For any nation, geopolitics plays an important role in its national energy policy and decision-making. India's heavy dependence on energy imports and access to energy resources, greatly influenced by complicated international relations, exposes India's energy security to geopolitical tensions. Geopolitical issues in energy-producing and exporting countries will strongly affect the energy security of India. This can be seen clearly in the case of Iran; previously, it was our primary supplier, but sanctions imposed on the Persian Gulf nation by the US have forced India to stop buying oil from Iran since 2019. Geopolitical tensions in oil-rich nations like West Asian countries, for example, Iran's attacks on Saudi Aramco oil processing units, interrupted oil production and reduced around 5% of the global oil supply, raising global oil prices.

During the 1973 oil crisis, OAPEC countries significantly reduced oil production and exports by initiating an oil embargo against the US and other Western countries for supporting Israel in the Yom Kippur War against Arab countries. As a result, there was a massive decline in world oil supply and a four-times increase in oil prices adversely affecting every country, including India. The Iran revolution and the Iran-Iraq war led to the 1979 oil crisis. Political unrest in Iran hindered oil production and exports, causing oil prices to rise again globally. Since India is a net importer of oil, higher oil prices and supply disruptions damaged India's economic growth.

Supply Chain Disruptions

Supply chain disruptions can have serious repercussions on the energy security of India. Factors like geopolitical disputes, wars, natural disasters, transportation or logistic issues, man-made errors, terrorism, cyber-attacks, etc., can influence the interconnected international energy market by destabilising the energy supply chain. For example, the Covid-19 pandemic caused challenges to energy demand due to decreased industrial and economic activity and energy supply chain disruptions, affecting both energy production and

energy transportation due to labour shortages and restrictions on movements. Disruptions in the supply chain are also caused by global political events. Armed conflicts, political tensions in energy-producing countries, trade routes, and choke points will lead to a decrease in energy supply causing energy shortage and a spike in global energy prices. The Russia and Ukraine Crisis has caused severe uncertainties in the global energy market. Though India is not directly impacted by this, an increase in energy costs overall affected the energy market in India.

Infrastructure Challenges

The smooth flow of energy resources can be hampered by a lack of adequate energy infrastructure, like storage facilities, pipelines, and transit routes, creating risks to the energy security of India. The lack of infrastructural development makes it difficult for India to access energy sources. India is facing infrastructural challenges due to political tensions and border disputes with neighbours, lack of investments, bureaucratic delays, etc. The TAPI natural gas pipeline's projected route from Turkmenistan to India passes via Pakistan and Afghanistan, which would diversify India's energy security by discharging 33 billion cubic metres per annum is delayed due to political tensions and security concerns among the members.

Image source: Mantraya

Lack of Investments in Natural Gas and Petroleum Exploration

Despite allowing 100% FDI in natural gas and petroleum exploration, India has been unable to bring in foreign investments for its domestic hydrocarbon development. In order to encourage investment and enhance exploration and production operations in the nation's hydrocarbon industry, India adopted the New

Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP), which was a failure due to unattractive fiscal structures and bureaucratic red tape. Though the Indo-US nuclear agreement provided India with access to vital technology in key strategic sectors boosting its domestic power plants, it did not result in India installing foreign-built reactors.

Climate Change

Climate change is one of the biggest challenges to energy security, especially in developing countries like India, where energy is the biggest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Though developed nations are to be blamed for this situation, developing nations are facing this dilemma of both climate change casualties and meeting their energy needs. India, being a member nation of many international climate agreements, took responsibility for reducing climate change casualties by switching to greener energy sources.

India's Energy Security Threats From China

China is the world's largest energy consumer and the world's biggest importer of oil and natural gas. Due to its rapid industrial growth, its dependency on gas imports has risen to 43%, and oil imports to 72%. Both China and India, being the largest energy-consuming nations, are striving to meet their domestic energy needs, leading to competition for the same energy resources. Geopolitical tensions between India and China have intensified, primarily due to China's dominant role in pursuing resources, especially in the Indian Ocean region. Over 40% of China's nonrenewable energy, mostly crude oil, is imported from West Asian countries, making China vulnerable to the implications of heavy dependence on energy imports. Additionally, 90% of its oil imports pass through the Indian Ocean region, particularly through the Straits of Malacca. Any geopolitical tensions or blockade in this chokepoint, or interference from the US naval bases in the area, could pose a significant threat to China's energy security. Therefore, China is actively establishing a strong foothold in the Indian Ocean region, exemplified by the establishment of a military base in Djibouti Port and control over Hambantota and Gwadar ports, addressing the 'Malacca dilemma' and ensuring the safeguarding of its transit lanes. The Indian Ocean region is crucial for China's energy diversification strategy, posing a potential threat to India's energy supply routes as China expands into historically important maritime and geopolitical areas.

Image source: U.S Energy Information Administration

The South China Sea holds geopolitical significance as both China's and India's transit routes pass through it. China's territorial claims in the South China Sea threaten India's energy security by potentially restricting its access to the region's energy resources. India is also concerned about China's offshore oil rig in the South China Sea, as India seeks to explore the 11 billion barrels of untapped oil and 190 trillion cubic feet of natural gas in the region.

India is further alarmed by the implications for its energy security arising from China's increasing economic presence, particularly through the Belt and Road Initiative, in energy-rich nations. Notably, Chinese investments in the African energy industry exceeded $15.5 billion between 2014 and 2019. China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) has constructed critical natural gas and oil pipelines such as the China-Central Asia Gas Pipeline (Line A) and China-Kazakhstan Oil Pipeline (Line B) in the Central Asian region, aiming to secure energy supply and enhance regional connectivity. Amidst these geopolitical tensions, the One Belt and One Road initiative gives China a strategic advantage by impeding India's access to energy resources.

Moreover, China's practice of dumping goods like stainless steel tubes, solar modules, and panels into the Indian market poses a direct threat to India's energy security. These items are essential in natural gas and liquid transportation, as well as in the generation of oil, thermal, nuclear, and atomic energy. In 2017, 84% of the equipment used for the National Solar Mission in India was imported from China. This dumping not only adversely affects domestic manufacturing industries but also increases India's dependence on

Chinese goods for energy security. In response, India has implemented an anti-dumping duty on stainless steel tubes, solar modules, and panels for five years, aiming to curb the influx of Chinese goods, protect domestic industry, and reduce the widening Indian trade deficit with China.

Steps Taken by India to Strengthen Its Energy Security

Diversification of Energy Supply

Indian PSUs have diversified their petroleum baskets to secure the safety of crude oil supply and reduce the threat of relying on supplies from one particular location, such as West Asia. The Indian government is seeking to diversify the nation's energy mix by sourcing crude oil from non-OPEC suppliers like Russia, Brazil, Central Asia, Norway, Egypt, Congo, etc. India's ample alternative energy sources will reduce supply chain disruptions and geopolitical implications for energy security.

Exploring Domestic Energy Resources

To reduce import dependence, the government of India has implemented policy reforms like the Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP) and Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP), which also help increase domestic exploration and production of energy resources. In the quest to identify possible hydrocarbon-bearing regions, the Directorate General of Hydrocarbons (DGH) has aggressively promoted exploration through seismic surveys, geological research, and data exchange. The government is also encouraging the exploration of untapped energy resources like shale gas and coal bed methane in regions such as Cambay, Krishna – Godavari, Cauvery River basin, Damodar Valley, etc.

Expanding the Use of Renewable Energy

To meet its energy efficiency ambitions, address environmental concerns, achieve net-zero targets, and fulfil sustainable development goal 7 (ensuring access to affordable and clean energy), India is focusing on increasing the production and consumption of renewable energy resources, especially solar and wind energy. India has set an ambitious target of producing 500 GW of renewable energy by 2030. Given that most parts of India receive sunshine almost every day of the year, the production of solar energy can significantly contribute to India's energy independence by narrowing the gap between energy demand and supply. The International Solar Alliance (ISA), headquartered in Gurugram, India, was launched in 2015 through joint efforts by India and France to develop solar energy solutions for climate change problems and enhance solar energy technology in the least developed countries (LDC).

However, India faces challenges due to the lack of production materials like semiconductors, solar panels, batteries, etc., relying on imports from Taiwan, China, and Europe. Therefore, the government of India has introduced schemes like PLI (Production Linked Incentive) and SPECS (Scheme for Promotion of Manufacturing of Electronic Components and Semiconductors) to provide incentives for companies to start manufacturing these materials. Wind energy in India complements solar energy with a production capacity of 40 GW. The Indian government has initiated the National Green Hydrogen Mission, allocating Rs. 19,744 crores to create a green hydrogen manufacturing unit with a minimum capacity of 5 MMT (Million Metric Tonnes) per year. Additionally, the government of India has set a target of blending 20% ethanol in petrol by 2030 to reduce dependency on oil imports.

Way Forward

The major challenge facing India is to transition from being an energy-importing country to an energy-surplus country. To achieve this, India must develop an independent, holistic, and comprehensive energy strategy that incorporates every aspect of the energy sector with specific time frames to become self-sufficient in its energy demands, turning India's energy security into a reality. India's energy policy should include a blend of energy resources, including oil, biomass, coal, natural gas, solar, wind, nuclear, thermal, hydrothermal, and green hydrogen energies. Given the importance of the Indian Ocean region for energy transit, India should prioritise

maritime security by expanding naval operations and enhancing regional surveillance. While rivalry with China is inevitable, India could pursue a more balanced strategy that encourages collaboration in mutually advantageous fields, such as rejecting the developed countries' idea of banning the use of fossil fuels. India needs to reduce total energy consumption by implementing energy-efficient technology and practices across industries and households. While encouraging domestic production and exploration, the government is equally responsible for upholding environmental guidelines and fostering eco-friendly actions in the energy industry for a safer planet.

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Countering Extremism: Insights into Radicalisation in Contemporary India

By Uma Shankar Sahu

About the Author

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Abstract

This report delves into the complex issues of radicalization and extremism in India, with the aim of gaining a comprehensive understanding of the processes, contributing factors, and potential preventive measures. The main objectives of the study were to analyse the dynamics of radicalization in the country, identify the root causes leading to extremism, and explore effective de-radicalisation strategies.

The research employed a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative analysis of case studies with quantitative data on extremist incidents. The study revealed that the radicalization process involves a combination of social, political, economic, and ideological factors, often influenced by online propaganda and external networks. It was found that marginalised communities, youth vulnerability, and communal tensions played significant roles in promoting extremist ideologies.

To combat radicalization and extremism, the report highlights the importance of community engagement, early intervention, and tailored rehabilitation programs for individuals at risk of radicalization. Additionally, it emphasises the need for collaboration among digital platforms to curb the dissemination of online extremist content. Strengthening law enforcement and intelligence efforts, promoting religious tolerance, and fostering social cohesion were also identified as key elements in preventing radicalization.This report underscores the

urgency of addressing radicalization and extremism in India through a multi-dimensional approach involving various stakeholders, such as government agencies, civil society organisations, religious leaders, and educational institutions. By implementing evidence-based preventive measures and de-radicalization initiatives, India can strive towards a more inclusive and secure society.

Introduction

Radicalisation and extremism have emerged as formidable challenges in contemporary societies, posing threats to peace, stability, and social cohesion. India, a nation celebrated for its rich diversity, is also grappling with the complex interplay of factors that contribute to radicalization and extremism. The rise of extremist ideologies and activities within India necessitates a comprehensive understanding of the underlying causes, mechanisms, and potential remedies. The landscape of radicalization and extremism in India is marked by a history of communal and ethnic tensions, which have often escalated into violence and conflict. These tensions have been further exacerbated by socio-economic disparities, political polarisation, religious intolerance, and external influences. Recent years have witnessed a surge in extremist activities across different regions of the country, raising significant concerns for national security and social harmony.

This report will delve into the key aspects of radicalisation and extremism in India, shedding light on their origins, manifestations, and potential avenues for intervention. By gaining a clearer understanding of these issues, we can work towards a future where diversity is celebrated and extremism finds no fertile ground to take root. This report aims to explore the complex dynamics of radicalization and extremism in India, focusing on key research questions and providing a comprehensive analysis of the factors, processes, and strategies that have shaped this phenomenon in the country.

By exploring the multifaceted landscape of radicalization and extremism in India, this report seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on combating these challenges. Through a closer examination of the factors that fuel radicalization and extremism, we can better equip ourselves to develop effective strategies that promote tolerance, unity, and resilience within Indian society. To address radicalization and extremism requires a holistic approach that encompasses social, economic, political, and psychological dimensions. By

delving into these complexities, we hope to pave the way for informed discussions and evidence-based actions that can lead to a safer, more harmonious India.

Definitions

Radicalisation is the process through which a person or organisation acquires extremist ideologies and views, frequently advocating the use of violence to advance their objectives. This occurrence significantly impacts security and societal issues. The promotion of such radical viewpoints, often resulting in violent behaviour or social unrest, is referred to as extremism. De-radicalisation tactics, on the other hand, aim to halt this development and reintegrate individuals into society as a whole (Schmid, 2013).

Political, social, economic, and psychological factors all play a role in the complex process of radicalisation. These elements might lead to feelings of resentment, alienation, or identity crisis, making individuals more susceptible to radical ideas. Online platforms such as social media and extremist websites, by providing echo chambers that support extreme ideologies, can expedite this process. Extremism takes the form of behaviours or speech that defy social standards, often advocating violence to further ideological goals. Religious, political, or ideological extremist groups can exist, engaging in anything from peaceful protests to terrorism. Examples include ISIS, far-right extremists, and eco-terrorists.

De-radicalisation techniques encompass methods to thwart extremist ideology and rehabilitate those who have engaged in radical activity. Psychological, educational, religious, or societal approaches are all viable options. Counter-radicalisation initiatives place a strong emphasis on prevention, focusing on vulnerable individuals before they become fully radicalised. Rehabilitation organisations seek to reintegrate former extremists into society through alternative narratives, training, and support systems (What is radicalization and extremism, n.d.).

Stages of Radicalization and Extremism

The radicalization process is a complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon that encompasses several distinct stages, each contributing to an individual's progression toward adopting extreme ideologies and potentially

engaging in violent actions. This process is not uniform and can differ based on cultural, social, and contextual factors. A typical radicalization process is often divided into four broad stages: pre-radicalization, self-identification, indoctrination, and jihadism.

2. **Pre-radicalization Stage:** During the pre-radicalization stage, individuals experience a sense of grievance, resentment, or alienation from society. They may feel marginalised, voiceless, or disenchanted with the status quo. This stage is marked by the search for a sense of identity, belonging, and purpose that provides validation for their grievances. The individual may be in a vulnerable state, seeking to address personal or societal issues.

3. **Self-identification Stage**: In the self-identification stage, individuals begin to align their personal identity with a specific extremist narrative or ideology. They are exposed to radicalising content, often disseminated through online platforms, which resonates with their grievances and offers a sense of purpose. This exposure can lead to a psychological connection with like-minded individuals or groups who share similar beliefs. The sense of belonging and validation gained from this alignment can be alluring, further drawing them into the extremist worldview.

4. **Indoctrination Stage:** The indoctrination stage involves the internalisation of extremist ideas and beliefs by the individual. They immerse themselves in echo chambers that reinforce and intensify their radical views. This isolation from mainstream society facilitates a cognitive shift, where extremist ideologies become the dominant lens through which they perceive the world. Social interactions become restricted to those who share their beliefs, deepening their commitment to the extremist cause.

5. **Jihadism Stage:** The final stage, jihadism, signifies a willingness to use violence to further the chosen extremist ideology. At this point, the individual's beliefs have solidified, and they may perceive violence as a legitimate means of achieving their goals. This stage involves a transition from holding radical ideas to actively planning and executing acts of violence in pursuit of the ideological objectives they've embraced (What are the stages of radicalization?, 2021).

For different parts of India, the manifestation of these stages can be different. For example, in Kashmir, people may be pre-radicalized due to their grievances about political conflicts and human rights violations. This can lead to self-identification with separatist or Islamist groups, as well as exposure to militant propaganda and eventual jihadism. In northeast India, ethnic tensions can lead to people pre-radicalizing due to perceived ethnic discrimination. This could include joining separatist or insurgent groups or adopting militant ideologies to gain autonomy or independence. In central India, economic disparities and land issues can lead to people joining Maoist groups to address social and economic inequality or obtaining training in guerrilla warfare tactics. Finally, in areas with communal tensions, religious discrimination can lead to people becoming pre-radicalized and joining extremist religious organisations or even radicalising through their interpretations of religious texts and encouraging violence.

Vulnerability of Youth to Radicalisation

Youth are particularly vulnerable to the lure of extremist ideologies in India. The young population of India is large, educated, and diverse but also deeply disillusioned with the existing political and social system. It is said that several factors make youth vulnerable to radicalisation, such as social isolation, identity crisis, and disillusionment with mainstream politics. The lack of viable economic opportunities and a sense of purpose also make youth more susceptible to extremist ideologies that promise instant solutions and radical change. Economic deprivation and lack of education are two of the most popular explanations for radicalisation. The argument for radicalisation, and especially extremism, is often based on the idea that those with less to gain are more likely to turn to violence to achieve their objectives. The counter-argument to radicalisation is that it requires a high level of dedication to the objectives of the terrorist organisation, which are often deeply political. There are many incidents that prove that socioeconomic factors are not the main reasons for the radicalisation of youth.

In 2014, there were a number of cases of young radicalised men, many of whom were engineers or engineering students from middle-class families, who turned to terrorism. In March 2014, two engineering college students based in Jaipur were arrested with a large cache of explosives. The accused were associated with the Indian Mujahideen. This was the first time that a local person was involved in terrorism in Rajasthan (Parihar, 2014).

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Recent news of a group of Indian nationals joining the ISIS organisation has raised worries that a growing number of young professionals may be turning to global jihadist groups. This is a departure from the past, where Indian nationals have not been involved in terrorist activities within the country. There has been no evidence of Indian nationals joining Al-Qaeda or other global terrorist groups. Some have suggested that the jihadist movement in India is not based on a specific interpretation of Islamic scripture, and is instead a result of dissatisfaction with political and social issues. This dissatisfaction, in combination with religious conservatism, may lead to jihadist tendencies (Swami, 2009).

Many of the accused in this report have been radicalised online, at religious gatherings, or by family and friends. One commonality in the radicalisation narratives of these young men is the polarisation of communities in India following the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992 and the Gujarat riots in 2002. Since the advent of the IS, many of them have also been radicalised by the notion of a global jihad campaign. Ideological factors, such as religious and sectarian ideologies, are also important drivers of radicalisation in India.

Gaming platforms are also being used to radicalise the youth. The process of radicalisation through gaming involves two main aspects: content-driven indoctrination and covert communication among users. In content-driven indoctrination, games are designed to align players with radical ideologies, yet

identifying such content proves challenging due to subjectivity. Covert communication occurs when individuals manipulate game structures to recruit, seen in instances where players are coerced to recite specific verses. The anonymity provided by gaming platforms allows perpetrators to hide their identities while using private chat rooms for protection. 'Gaming jihad' is a term also used in academia for the Islamic State's recruitment through shooter games. Pakistan's Jamaat-ud Dawa exploits games to radicalise youth. As India's gaming market grows, understanding and countering this threat is crucial (StraTechos, n.d.).

Social media and online platforms also make it easier for these groups to recruit and target young people who are more likely to be influenced by online narratives and social pressures. Social media has now become an

inevitable part of everyone's life. In one way or another, social media is impacting people and their daily lives. In the 21st century, social media is being used to disseminate radical and extremist ideologies. We are now living in a world where terrorism is not only transnational. These are individuals who are brainwashed by a specific ideology and are motivated to commit specific acts of terrorism. These individuals acquire this ideology and radicalise in a short amount of time. It used to take a long time to select people, analyse their preferences, train and evaluate them based on a particular ideology. Today, social media gives you a degree of privacy, so it becomes a great tool for people to spread their ideology without being noticed.

India and Its De-radicalisation Programmes

With the rise of radicalisation and terrorism, it has become a major threat to global security and social harmony. India, with its diverse population and complex political system, has implemented various programs to help de-radicalise individuals. These programs focus on combating extremist ideas, assisting those affected by radical narratives, and preventing re-radicalisation. India's strategy is to understand the multifaceted nature of radicalisation, emphasising community involvement, education, and mental health care. Governments worldwide are implementing comprehensive strategies to ensure the safety and security of their citizens. India, having experienced terrorism and extremism, has established specialised divisions to combat these threats.

The Counter-Terrorism and Counter-Radicalisation Division of the Indian government is a dedicated entity aimed at safeguarding national security, countering extremist ideologies, and preventing acts of terrorism (Ministry of Home Affairs, n.d.).

In many parts of India, security forces have implemented de-radicalisation programs, such as the Civic Action Programs by the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) along the Indian borders with Nepal and Bhutan. The SSB, responsible for monitoring border regions and conducting anti-naxal operations in Bihar, has successfully provided vocational training, skill development, career counselling, welfare programs, and similar initiatives to communities along the border areas. In Assam, following the Bodoland insurgency, regional development and de-terrorism programs have been implemented by local NGOs over the last decade. Community-building and post-conflict initiatives are often spearheaded by numerous NGOs, including the Action North-East Trust.

Similar approaches have been adopted by the Ministry of Home Affairs in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh. Counter-radicalisation efforts in these areas are primarily managed by the army, paramilitaries, or police, with limited de-radicalisation programs implemented by the government. The government has approved a media plan scheme to counter Maoists, organising activities such as Tribal Youth Exchanges and distributing brochures among tribal communities, resembling de-radicalisation programs (Ministry of Home Affairs, n.d.). However, a more comprehensive approach involving social-based community programs is still needed in these vulnerable areas to promote reintegration and de-radicalisation.

The states of Maharashtra and Kerala have implemented policies to address this issue. The Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) is one organisation that has adopted a softer approach to de-radicalisation, yielding many success stories. ATS has implemented various programs for individuals and communities, successfully reintegrating almost 114 men and 6 women radicalised by extremist ideologies. According to the 2019 reports, the program aided in the reintegration of nearly 114 people, including six women, who had been radicalised ("Patience and dialogue can counter radicalization," 2019).

The process of de-radicalisation has also commenced in Kerala. According to senior police officials, close to 3,000 people have undergone de-radicalisation in 21 government centres and are under follow-up (SIYECH, 2019). Kerala has launched an Anti-Terrorism Unit tasked with conducting internet searches for suspicious activity, monitoring the movement of chemicals and electrical components, and enhancing coastal surveillance (Anand, 2019).

Similar initiatives are now underway in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh. While internal management of the issue has seen relative success, there is a need to extend these initiatives from a state-level to a nationwide approach (Karmakar et al., n.d.).

Recommendations

Addressing the challenge of radicalization and extremism in India necessitates a holistic and nuanced

approach. The recommendations focus on creating a resilient society by addressing the roots of radicalization while promoting a sense of solidarity, compassion, and common purpose. By implementing these human-centred approaches, India will be able to effectively address the challenges associated with radicalization and extremism, paving the way for a safer and more inclusive future for all.

2. Create and implement holistic education and awareness programs that emphasise critical thinking and empathy, as well as the understanding of different perspectives. Integrate these programs into schools, community centres, and online spaces to promote an open dialogue and counter extremist narratives.

3. Encourage community involvement and support: Provide a safe environment for people to voice their grievances and concerns, and encourage community leaders, religious leaders, as well as local influencers, to act as role models and guide vulnerable people away from radicalization.

4. Encourage social media responsibility and accountability: Work with social media companies to monitor and combat extremist content.

5. Encourage positive narratives that promote diversity, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence as an alternative to radical ideologies.

6. Encourage inter-communal dialogue and collaboration: Build bridges between communities to heal the divisions caused by past tensions.

7. Effective law enforcement and rehabilitation: Enhance law enforcement efforts that focus on the reintegration of radicalised individuals into society, in addition to punitive measures.

Conclusion

The report presents a detailed analysis of the challenges of radicalization and extremism in India, emphasising the need for a multi-faceted approach to tackle these complex issues. The history of communal and ethnic

tension, socio-economic inequalities, political polarisation, and religious intolerance, as well as external influences, has led to the rise of radical ideologies and activities in India.

According to the report, radicalization and extremism are complex processes that individuals go through before adopting radical ideologies and potentially committing acts of violence. It is important to note that the stages of radicalization are not homogeneous and can vary depending on cultural, social, and contextual factors. Understanding the different dynamics of each region in India is essential for designing effective intervention strategies. This report also highlights the vulnerability of young people to radicalization, attributed to social isolation, identity crises, frustration with mainstream politics, and lack of economic opportunities. It also acknowledges that other ideological, religious, and political factors can contribute to radicalization.

The report underscores India's efforts to de-radicalize individuals through community involvement, education, and mental health care, as well as through the use of anti-narratives and de-radicalization programs. De-radicalization initiatives in the state of Maharashtra, as well as in the states of Kerala, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh, have proven successful in rehabilitating individuals affected by extremist narratives.

In summary, the report presents a comprehensive view of radicalization and extremism in India, highlighting the complexity and interplay of factors contributing to these threats. It emphasises the need for informed debates and evidence-based measures to effectively address these threats. By understanding the root causes and taking a holistic approach that includes society, government, and community involvement, India can create a future that celebrates diversity and leaves no room for extremism to thrive.

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Etymology of Terrorism

By Kashvi Chaudhary

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Abstract

Terrorism has been in existence as long as civilisation has; although different nations perceive terrorism with different definitions, it is largely agreed that it involves serious violence and/or threats to human life. This report seeks to detail the nature of the perquisites for there being a spurt in radicalization in a said society, ranging from the established perspectives of relative deprivation theory , understanding through the Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the role of the internet , while also examining the role of ideology . The report further also seeks to shed light on the nature and types of terror attacks which have taken place. The report's findings are then enumerated by doing a case study of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks.

Introduction: Ideology and Nature of Mainstream Terrorism

Terrorism generally involves the unlawful use of violence or the threat of violence and could be driven by political or ideological motivations. Different governments define terrorism in different ways, which is largely influenced by their current political structures, objectives, and threat and security concerns. Usually, it is agreed upon that acts of terrorism target civilians.

The mainstreaming of terror threats has been marked by 9/11. It inherently altered the nature of terrorism, from having a nationalist agenda to being driven by radical religious ideolgy. Four commercial airlines- two American Airlines and two United Airlines flights were hijacked by 19 Al-Qaeda terrorists. The terrorists were trained pilots and crashed into the North and South towers of the World Trade Centre in New York, one at the Pentagon in Virginia, which is the headquarters of the Department of Defence, and the fourth plane was intended to be crashed into the Capitol in Pennsylvania but crashed into a field nearby.

Terrorism was now seen as a "religious duty" rather than a political strategy. The systematically planned terror attack was carried out by Al-Qaeda, which was formed in 1988, and led by the Saudi-born Osama Bin Laden. The organisation's ideology is global jihad, a fight against non-believers of Islam. The significant

reasons why Al-Qaeda attacked the US were because they saw the country as one of non-believers, and because of the Gulf War, where the US stationed its military around Mecca and Medina, two of the most sacred spaces in the Islamic world, located in Saudi Arabia.

The ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), is known as "Daesh" in Arabic, which roughly translates to "crushing down". It emerged in the 1980s and was earlier known as "Al-Qaeda in Iraq", before capturing parts of Syria and declaring autonomy from Al-Qaeda. The organisation controled an area roughly the size of the United Kingdom. Their ideology is to adhere to strict Islamic codes and to slaughter Muslims and non-Muslims who do not abide by them. The organisation follows Sunni Islam and holds an agenda against Shiites. ISIS has further also encouraged lone-wolf terror attacks using the internet, and between 2014 and 2017, the fundamentalist regime claimed responsibility for nearly 100 terror attacks.

Forms of Terrorism

Terrorism can be classified briefly into three forms – systematically planned terrorist attacks, suicide attacks, and lone-wolf terrorism. Systematically planned terror attacks are the prime focus of this report and are essentially organised forms of terrorist attacks carried out by terror outfits and organisations. The premise of suicide attacks and lone-wolf terrorism have been further discussed in this section:

A. Suicide Attacks

Suicide attacks typically refer to an attack where an individual personally delivers the explosives or is first-hand carrying out the attack (such as the 9/11), sacrificing their lives in the process. The first incident of a suicide attack can be traced back to the reign of Tsar Alexander II, outside the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg in Russia, carried out by a left-wing organisation named "The People's Will". The envoy carried a bomb that killed himself and the Tsar. The envoy was a man named Ignacy Grinevitsky and the first-ever suicide bomber, on record.

Suicide terrorism, one of the embodiments of fundamentalism, is based on the narrative of "martyrdom" and duty. These attacks in particular have been carried out by Al-Qaeda and Hezbollah since the 1980s, and have significantly increased each decade. Apart from the 9/11 attacks, which were a case of large-scale suicide attacks, the 2005 London train bombings were also a series of coordinated suicide attacks, famously known as 7/7. Such attacks also took place in Madrid, Spain in 2004, targeting trains. Palestinian organisations such as Hamas have carried out suicide bombings against Israel amid talks for a peace process, while Iraq has recorded the greatest number of suicide attacks in the world, with more than 12,000 civilians being killed between 2004-2010.

Suicide attacks have been carried out for nationalist agendas, and one of the most well-known cases is the one involving the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), in Sri Lanka. The group carried out suicide attacks

frequently and trained under Hezbollah. The Indian PM Rajiv Gandhi was killed in a suicide attack by a 22-year-old woman and a member of the LTTE, in 1991.

B. Lone-Wolf Attacks

Lone-wolf terrorism refers to a violent attack carried out by an individual without support or operational involvement from a terrorist organisation. However, lone-wolf attacks could be motivated or inspired by several factors, such as the ideologies of a terror organisation.

Lone-wolf terrorism traces its roots back to a modern-day form of terrorism, known as "white nationalist terrorism", which emerged in the 1990s. A well-known incident of white nationalist terrorism is the 2019 shootings of two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand. The motive behind the attack was suspected to be islamophobia and the belief that the presence of non-whites and mass migration has led to a drop in the white population.

In 2022, a 45-year-old man from Uttar Pradesh taught himself to make bombs through YouTube, using wires that were easily accessible to him. The internet serves as a tool in modern-day terrorism. This is a significant aspect of "lone-wolf terrorism".

Lone-wolf terrorists are often inspired by (religious) ideology or a terrorist organisation's ideas. These terrorists do not have previous criminal records, they are also not associated with specific terror groups and function without external assistance, hence, it has been challenging for governments to extract their background information or track them down.

The NIA revealed that the brutal beheading of Kanhaiya Lal Teli by two Islamic extremists in 2022 wasn't just a heinous murder crime, it was a terror plot, and a significant example of the complexity of lone-wolf terrorism (in India).

Exploring the Psychology Behind Terrorism, Fundamentalism and Radicalisation

Studies conclude that it is untrue that terrorists are "psychopaths"; they simply believe terrorism is a good means for political action. It is a way to express their ideology, political views and struggles, and to change others' political views. While a history of childhood abuse or trauma is not an explanation for terrorism, statistically, it appears to be a characteristic among terrorists.

A fundamentalist mindset also emerges from a deep sense of isolation and dissatisfaction with one's current environment or government. Abraham Maslow's 'Hierarchy of Needs' can be directly linked to such a sense of deprivation, wherein an individual's (social) safety needs may not be fulfilled when the government does not function according to their or their community's ideologies. Similarly, economic needs/disadvantages are linked to a sense of self-esteem, which can hamper when one is less well-off than others.
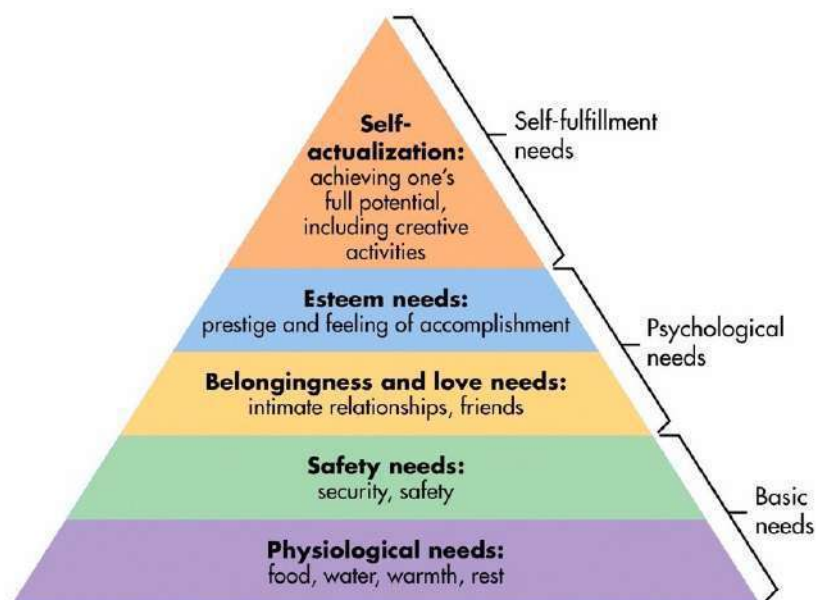
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

While the psychologies of terrorist organisations and individual terrorists vary, psychologists have largely agreed that terrorism is not impulsive, it is most often strategically planned, coordinated and executed.

Dr Erin Marie Saltman, the Director of Programming at the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT), elucidates the idea that far-right extremist groups often feel that their 'in-group' is under attack and the larger powers are not doing anything to help. Since the members of these groups come from disadvantaged backgrounds and/or are dissatisfied with their environment, terror/extremist groups offer them a sense of brotherhood or sisterhood, a spiritual purpose, and a sense of empowerment.

Further, analysts believe that the way two communities in a region interact with each other may become a breeding ground for terrorism. The attack on the Israeli Olympic Team by the Palestinian 'Black September' organisation is an embodiment of a situation such as this. On 5th September 1972, in Munich, Germany, Palestinian terrorists killed two Israeli Olympians and held nine of them hostage. The purpose of this attack was to demand the release of 236 Palestinian prisoners: 234 were imprisoned in Israel, and the rest two were leaders of the German Red Army Faction, also known as the 'West German Baader-Meinhof' terrorist group.

A Psycho-Economic Angle of Terrorism – The Relative Deprivation Theory

The concept of 'Relative Deprivation' emerges out of the feeling that one is worse off than others. According to American Author and Political Scientist, Ted Robert Gurr, people feel a sense of 'relative deprivation' when an obstacle emerges between them and their goal. When individuals believe they are facing a situation of deprivation or disadvantage, which may not be necessarily material, but also ideological, they may join terrorist or rebellion groups because of low opportunity costs and high potential gains. For example,

impoverished youth fought under the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone. They reported social justice and economic reward and had access to the diamonds the Front mined to fund their rebellion.

Since terror groups typically emerge in economically weak or politically unstable states, the government cannot put an end to terrorist activities. Terrorist organisations often gain much of their wealth by exploiting the state resources, through (illegal) arms trade, or donations by those who believe in their cause; they can overpower the country's government and persist.

As the Relative Deprivation Theory underpins, recruitment processes appear in areas with a dissatisfied and disadvantaged population. However, on the flip side, many terror attacks such as the 26/11 and London Bombings of 2005 were carried out by middle-class, educated, brainwashed Islamic subjects. David Coleman Headley, a rather prosperous Pakistani-American was involved in the logistics of 26/11.

Scholars further add that the other side of this argument is that the theory does not explain why people who are disadvantaged or deprived do not go out and seek certain resources or rights to combat this deprivation.

Terrorist organisations also often claim to fight against capitalism, corruption and globalisation. The flow of goods, ideas and knowledge across countries has served as a "counter-revolutionary force" (Martin) to their ideology. Tablighi Jama'at is a global educational missionary movement encouraging Muslims worldwide to be more observant. On paper, it started as a pacifist movement but was banned by Saudi Arabia in December 2021, calling it "one of the gates of terrorism".

How the Internet Functions as a Tool for Terrorism

The Internet is famously called a hotbed for terrorist recruitment. The recruitment almost exclusively takes place among the youth, through internet contacts and chat groups, and sometimes through family members and friends. Terror groups online often target civilians by tracking their internet activities. Among lone-wolf terrorists, almost all of the radicalisation is done online. Terror organisations do not just exist on the dark web or in secrecy, they have also made appearances on social media platforms such as Twitter, and have chat rooms on mainstream social media platforms.

The Internet enables terrorists around the world to be a part of a community of like-minded individuals (Ganor). It has enabled terrorist organisations to essentially become more influential, carry out propaganda and contribute to the ubiquity of radicalisation. Terror attacks can be planned among individuals on the Internet, without ever seeing one another. Terrorist organisations such as ISIS and Hamas have encouraged individuals to carry out attacks locally. Even when these organisations lose territories, such as ISIS did from 2015 to 2018, they have the ability, through the Internet, to call upon individuals to carry out attacks in different regions of the world.

Terrorist organisations have also released propaganda videos threatening several countries, such as the United States. In 2017, ISIS released a video of a 10-year-old boy, named Matthew, threatening an attack on New Orleans. Currently, the boy has been brought back to his home in the US along with his mother, by the country's military.

The Funding of Terrorist Groups

Terrorists may rely on "ideologically-aligned states" (Australian Strategic Policy Institute) and organisations for routine funding, and on donations from individuals who agree with their ideology. Cases of uncontrolled flow of drugs and human trafficking have also been highly suspected among terrorist groups.

The rise of Al-Qaeda traces back to the US involvement with Afghanistan in the 1950s, initially related to infrastructure development in the country. Fast-forward to the Cold War era, in the 1970s, Daoud Khan, the former Afghan President, who led a coup to overthrow the monarchy, started to side with the Soviet Union. The United States then started to fund resistance movements in Afghanistan. These resistance movements against the USSR were carried out by the Mujahideen (a term used for people who engage in jihad). When the Soviet Union suppressed these rebellions, they set up camps in the neighbouring country of Pakistan, where their training was funded by the US and Saudi Arabia.

After the Cold War ended, these groups started to represent more dangerous ideas. Currently, intelligence agencies throughout the world have been perplexed by the question of how terrorist organisations such as Al-Qaeda fund their terror activities; there is good reason to suspect they get their fortune from donors around the world, certain mosques and imams, and non-governmental organisations such as charities. Osama Bin Laden was known to be influential in the Muslim world and came from a prosperous family in Saudi Arabia, hence, he was able to secure donations to the "cause". There is no evidence of a "central bank" from which Al-Qaeda draws its fortune (International Centre for Counter-Terrorism).

ISIS controls vast lands in Syria and Iraq, and it is way wealthier than Al-Qaeda. The roots of ISIS's money are found in oil and gas, which they often steal and trade on the black market, earning close to 3 million dollars a day, in cash. Since they control an area roughly the size of the UK, they also flourish through tax collection and extorting local businesses. Similar to how Al-Qaeda gains its fortunes, ISIS also receives donations from the Islamic world, including citizens, who believe in jihad. Donations also include weapons.

Lashkar-e-Taiba, the Pakistan-based militant group mainly fights India by engaging in acts of barbarity in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Several intelligence agencies back the claim that Lashkar-e-Taiba has been supported by Pakistan's ISI since the 1990s, although in 2002, Pakistan banned LeT. This terrorist organisation also receives funding from citizens across the Islamic world, mainly Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

Case Study: 26/11 and The Lashkar-e-Taiba

26th November 2008 perhaps haunts us even a decade and a half later. Parading with guns were men who inked a permanent name in India's history with the blood of Mumbai. The attack was so horrific that it is commonly called "India's 9/11".

The attacks started at 9:30 PM on 26ᵗʰ November 2008. Pakistani terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba's ten members arrived at the shores of the Taj at 7 PM, Ajmal Kasab in the forefront. He confessed his family was struggling with poverty and therefore decided to lead the bloodshed which would go on to become possibly one of the most horrific terrorist expeditions the world has seen. The group carried with them automatic rifles, guns, grenades and substances which eliminated the need for food and sleep. The terrorists also carried out gunshots at several sites including the Leopold Café and the Cama Hospital, before two of them headed towards the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminal, two others headed towards Nariman House, and the third group headed towards Oberoi-Trident Hotel in a taxi, while the rest, including Kasab, took the Taj hostage. Two taxis were blasted using time bombs, which previously carried the terrorists to the attack locations. The terrorists had been interacting with their alleged mastermind Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi through a telecommunication service of a Russian IP address.

The British, American and Indian intelligence agencies had been receiving traces of activities being carried out by a Lashkar-e-Taiba tech expert from the hills of Pakistan, disguising their location as New Jersey, but failed to put the pieces together until the attacks.

David Coleman Headley (also known as "Daood Gilani") a Pakistani-American, scouted target locations for the attacks, as per several of his email exchanges with Lashkar-e-Taiba. He was born in America to a socialite and a Pakistani Embassy official, and was familiar with the worlds of Islam and Christianity, but eventually decided to digress to fundamentalism.

The attack's logistics were provided by Dawood Ibrahim, an insider, born in Mumbai. India's western ends become porous to terrorism as it shares borders with Pakistan, which helped Lashkar-e-Taiba's appendages to seep into Mumbai through the sea via Karachi in a hijacked boat, called "Al Husseini". They captured the crew of an Indian boat "Kuber", to digress speculation from the Indian Navy. They had killed the captain of the boat upon reaching the shores.

According to Indian intelligence, the attack was coordinated by the Pakistan Intelligence Agency, ISI. Analysts believe that foreign nationals and officials were a special target during this act, to gain the maximum amount of international attention, and this speculation was supported by an Oberoi-Trident staff interview who informed that the gunmen kept asking where the VIPs were staying at the hotel. It was also an attack on another religion, demonstrated by the gunshots at Nariman House, a Jewish centre located in Colaba.

Lashkar-e-Taiba's greater mission is to establish a pan-Islamic Caliphate, and it mainly operates in Kashmir against the Indian forces. Several reports are linking the fact that Lashkar-e-Taiba provided some assistance to Al-Qaeda but later separated while planning 26/11, during which they kept a low profile. The Pakistan government froze nearly 600 properties belonging to Lashkar-e-Taiba, including schools, colleges, mosques,

dispensaries, boats and buildings (Australian National Security) and their bank accounts. This was done around 2001 when Pakistan banned all terrorist outfits after Jaish-e-Mohammed attacked the Indian Parliament in the winter of the same year. However, several reports state Lashkar was still allowed to operate and maintain training camps throughout Pakistan. Ownership of public property gave LeT easier access to the Pakistani population, specifically the youth.

Lashkar-e-Taiba has strong links with Jama'at-ul-Dawa, a registered charity, which has its offices in Kashmir. The founder of LeT, Hafiz Saeed is also the head of JuD. In India, Lashkar-e-Taiba supports the Indian Mujahideen and the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), a banned terrorist organisation that emerged from Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh. LeT maintains links with Al-Qaeda, and Jaish-e-Mohammed, another militant group operating in Kashmir, which was responsible for the 2019 Pulwama attack.

India's Immediate Response to 26/11: Operation Black Tornado

Two counter-terrorism units were employed: MARCOS, which specialises in counter-terrorism in all types of terrains and is a unit of the Indian Navy, and the NSG (National Security Guards), whose commandos are commonly known as "Black Cats", a unit of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Meanwhile, the Indian Intelligence Agency tapped the terrorist's phone calls and traced them back to Karachi.

The MARCOS commandos reached Taj, the Trident, and Nariman House after midnight, while 200 of the NSG commandos reached Mumbai on the morning of 27th November. The Trident was the first location to be cleared, and soon, Nariman House was also free of terrorists. However, the Taj stayed under attack for 59 hours and two MARCOS commandos lost their lives.

At a point during the encounter, Ex-Marine Commando Force personnel Praveen Kumar Teotia was caught in a room with all the four terrorists at the Taj, he took four bullet wounds and refused to let the gunmen leave the room, while the rest of the commandos helped nearly 150 people escape from the hotel in the rooms nearby.

The Ram Pradhan Committee, in charge of policymaking in the face of the aftermath of 26/11 released a report on 24th November 2009 stating the measures they have taken include augmenting the strength of the para-military forces in India, stationing of the NSGs in major cities such as Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai and Hyderabad, whereas, before the attack, the NSG was solely stationed in Manesar, Gurgaon. The committee also called out for prompt NSG aircraft movement during emergencies, and for the multi-Agency Centre, and its various units such as the R&AW to function 24/7. The committee also stated that the central government would provide funds and assist states to strengthen their weaponry, security and other development aspects.

An Overview of Global Counter-Terrorism, with an Emphasis on India's Efforts

Counter-terrorism refers to efforts directed towards combating terrorism, both in the context of internal and external security of the country. The idea of stepping up external as well as internal security was prompted by the 9/11 attacks during President Bush's regime. The "War on Terror" has been a controversial demonstration of counter-terrorism efforts by the US. Subsequently, the 2005 London bombings and 2004 Madrid bombings led individual countries to heighten their counter-terrorism strategy. Suicide attacks and lone-wolf terrorism are a major push to advance internal security strategy.

The UNCTC (United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee) was established in 2001, post 9/11. the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) subsequently adopted Resolution 1373 for counter-terrorism efforts.

On September 24, 2014, the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2178 on FTF (Foreign Terrorist Fighters). The resolution includes measures for preventing suspected FTFs from entering the state's territories and building laws to prosecute them, with a special emphasis on FTFs who have joined ISIS, Al-Qaeda and other such terrorist organisations. The misuse of the internet in inciting terror activities has been discussed in this, as well as almost every counter-terrorism resolution. The resolution requires countries to suppress the transportation, financing, and organising activities of terrorist groups. It calls for better coordination among and within countries to detect and eliminate terror activities. India chaired the United Nations talks on counter-terrorism on 28 September 2011, in the wake of the 26/11 aftermath.

The aftermath of 26/11 saw overwhelming protests pleading for a change in the government. Officials were laid out of their jobs; demands were made to restructure security practices. The Indian Navy was made responsible for maritime security and the ICG (Indian Coast Guard) was specifically designated for coastal security. A high-functioning intelligence network, NC3I was introduced as a surveillance mechanism, which would share information regarding coastal activities to fisheries, ports and shipping sectors. The Indian Navy, in 2019 coordinated the largest ever coastal defence exercise, named "Sea Vigil". Security checks named "Sagar Kavach" are conducted twice a year to keep in check the security preparedness of the maritime forces.

The 2019 Pulwama attack was a suicide attack carried out by an envoy of Jaish-e-Mohammed. The personnel drove a vehicle into a CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force) bus in Pulwama, Jammu and Kashmir. Twelve days after the attack, Indian forces used 2000 Air Force jets and bombed JeM's biggest camp in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

India hosted the UNCTC in New Delhi on the 28th and 29th of October 2022, the first to be held outside New York since the committee's commencement. This was also held as a tribute to the victims of 26/11. It brought to light the violent extremism that South Asia has faced in the past and the terrorism that poses a very real threat to the future of the region, especially India. The committee also discussed terror financing through modern-age tools such as cryptocurrency, and the use of drones in "new-age terrorism".

Further, India's TADA (The Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Prevention Act) was first adopted in 1985, following the Khalistan insurgency in Punjab in the 1980s. It gave the following backdrop of terrorism,

"Whoever with intent to overawe the Government as by law established or to strike terror in the people or any section of the people or to adversely affect the harmony amongst different sections of the people does any act or thing by using bombs, dynamite or other explosive substances or inflammable substances or lethal weapons or poisons or noxious gases or other chemicals or by any other substances (whether biological or otherwise) of a hazardous nature in such a manner as to cause or as is likely to cause the death of or injuries to, any person or persons, or loss of or damage to, or destruction of, property or disruption of any supplies or services essential to the life of the community, or detains any person and threatens to kill or injure such person in order to compel the Government or any other person to do or abstain from doing any act, commits a terrorist act."

The act reversed the idea of "innocent until proven guilty", wherein the detained had to prove their innocence, otherwise, they were considered guilty. With this act, the government has the right to detain

any individual on the grounds of speculation and does not need a formal warranty to do so. As TADA had a sunset clause , the Unlawful Activities Act (which was amended 7 times with the recent amendment being in 2019) and the Prevention of Terrorism Act(which was brought to force in 2002 but repealed in 2004) were introduced.

Conclusion

Terrorism has perhaps existed as long as civilisation has, in various forms with specific ideologies at the forefront; but the concept of mainstream terrorism has come to affect and overthrow entire governments and threaten geopolitics to a monumental extent. Mainstream terrorism has used modern technologies to advance its agenda, using the internet as a training ground for terrorist activity, encouraging lone-wolf attacks, and using the platform to orchestrate fundamentalist ideas. This study further delves into the relative deprivation theory, which provides an economic angle to why terrorism happens. It also touches upon a psychological angle, explaining how an individual may be receptive to fundamentalist organisations or ideologies when they are dissatisfied with their current environment, government or financial situations, and the authorities are not necessarily functioning according to their vantage point. This leads to a feeling of relative disadvantage or "deprivation", which is also fuelled by when others seem to doing better than oneself. Maslow's hierarchy of needs talks about how these feelings of deprivation could harm one's safety and esteem needs. The question that ultimately arises in the study is how are terrorist organisations able to sustain themselves- this often takes place through patronage and donations by those who support the terrorist group's ideas and activities, these groups frequently exploit and/or steal the state's resources such as oil and gas and practice illegal trade, in exchange of money or ammunition. India fell victim to one of the most deadly terrorist attacks in history,

known as the "26/11 attacks". These attacks were carried out by a Pakistani terror outfit called "Lashkar-e-Taiba", which operates in Kashmir and holds the "liberation" of Kashmir as its agenda. India's immediate response to these attacks was the "Operation Black Tornado", which employed the MARCOS and the NSG for the rescue operation. Finally, most countries have experienced some form of terrorism, and hence numerous global counter-terrorism organisations and laws have been structured, including the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee, which has been chaired by India as well. One of the biggest counter-terrorism laws in India is the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Prevention Act, which was adopted in 1985 following the Khalistan insurgency in Punjab. A major aspect of the law is if an individual is accused of terrorism, they are considered guilty until proven innocent.

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PAKISTAN FRONT

Pakistan Army's Terror, Pashtun Tahafuz Movement and the Durand Line

Interview with Fazal Ur Rehman Afridi

About the Guest Speaker

Fazal-Ur-Rehman Afridi is a journalist, writer, and human rights activist. He obtained his master's in public administration from Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan, Pakistan, where he graduated as a gold medalist. Currently, he serves as a focal person for the Pashtun Tahfuz Movement on issues related to missing persons, extrajudicial actions, summary executions, and arbitrary detentions with the United Nations. He is a former columnist at The Frontier Post and a former member of the editorial board of "Loyal Dale Exile," a magazine of Maison-based journalists in Paris. Additionally, he was a former visiting faculty member at the International Islamic University in Islamabad, teaching management science. Mr. Afridi has represented the Pashtun people of Pakistan and Afghanistan at the United Nations Human Rights Council, participating in general debates, organising side events, conferences, and protests to raise awareness about human rights violations committed by the Pakistani state and its Army against Pashtuns in Pakistan. He, along with various human rights activists, has initiated a campaign to register women voters in Khyber agency and the FR cohort region of tribal areas. He has worked tirelessly for the rights of women and children in the perilous tribal areas of Pakistan, adjacent to Afghanistan. He has also launched the Malala Prize for Peace, Education, and Freedom of Expression in France to encourage human rights journalists and other citizens in Pakistan and Afghanistan to speak up for the promotion and protection of women and children's rights in this war-torn region, opposing terrorism. He has recently been elected as the head of the PTM committee on international advocacy and foreign affairs.

Mr. Fazal Ur Rehman Afridi: Thank you for the introduction. Recently, PTM Europe organised elections in different countries of the European Union, and last week, on September 2, we held a convention and an International Conference on extremism and terrorism in the APOC region. We elected our coordinator for Europe in those elections, and I was chosen as the head of the PTM committee on international advocacy and foreign affairs. So, that was just an update on what we are doing here in Europe. We are very active and plan

to participate in the upcoming session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, which starts on September 11, 2023. During the session, we will intervene directly in general debates on item 3495 and organise various events and protests in front of the United Nations to draw attention to the atrocities committed against the Pashtun ethnic minority. This includes the recent arrests and crackdowns against PTM workers, as well as the use of torture against PTM workers, Pashtun journalists, and academics, which is being employed as a weapon to suppress our freedom of expression. Thank you.

Interviewer: Arghish Akolkar
Associate Editor, Indic Researchers Forum

Guest Speaker: Fazal Ur Rehman Afridi
Head, PTM Committee on International Advoacy and Foreign Affairs

1. Arghish Akolkar: We extend our wholehearted moral support to your movement aimed at advocating for the rights of Pashtuns in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Now, moving on to our first question: In 2012, in an interview published in the British magazine Caravan, former Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan mentioned that he had overheard instructions to kill Bengalis in 1971, describing them as small or dark, and to "teach them a lesson." He stated that he was hearing similar instructions within Pakistan in 2012, which were now being applied to Pashtuns, who were being picked up and thrown into jail simply because they were Pashtuns. Given this backdrop, and considering historical incidents like the Babara Massacre of 1948, do you believe Imran Khan's comparison between the Bengali genocide of 1971 and the treatment of Pashtuns today, since the creation of Pakistan, holds true?

Mr. Fazal Ur Rehman Afridi: Yes, Imran Khan's statement is highly pertinent. He enjoyed considerable support in Pashtun areas of Pakistan when he was Prime Minister, and during that time, he denied such facts. However, after a crackdown began against him and his workers following May 9th, he started speaking the

truth. When these individuals are in power, they often deny these facts because they are beholden to the military establishment. The Pakistani parliament is often seen as a rubber stamp, and the judiciary has also faced allegations of compromise. Most institutions in Pakistan appear to be under the control of the military. When politicians are in the opposition, they tend to support us and acknowledge these atrocities, but when they come into power, they deny them. Regarding Imran Khan's statement, I must inform you that over the past 17-18 years, approximately 13 military operations were conducted in various parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, particularly in the tribal areas. These operations were conducted under the pretext of the so-called "war on terror," which, in reality, was a means to receive financial support and to target Pashtun people. Approximately 80,000 Pashtuns were killed by the Pakistan Army in these operations. The Army deployed helicopters and F-16 jets, which are not typically used against India, against its own innocent civilian population. They employed heavy artillery against Pashtuns. Furthermore, during the last 18 years, approximately 32,000 Pashtuns were forcibly disappeared by the Pakistan Army. About 25,000 shops and 200,000 houses were destroyed during these operations. Three million Pashtuns were displaced from their homes, and they continue to reside in camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan. This relentless oppression has resulted in a slow genocide of the Pashtun people. As for specific incidents, you mentioned the Babra Massacre of 1948 and the May 19th incident in Harkaman, where the Pakistani Army opened fire on innocent civilians, killing 16 people and injuring 25 others. Even the injured were not spared; they were killed point-blank. Torture has become routine, exemplified by the case of Shaktoi in Waziristan, where Pakistan Army personnel subjected a 13-year-old boy and a 70-year-old man to collective torture. We have documented 27 such cases and submitted them to the United Nations and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture. Pakistan is a signatory to the United Nations Convention Against Torture, yet they persist in torturing innocent civilians in Pashtun areas. It's evident that Pashtuns are the primary targets, alongside Baloch and other ethnic and religious minorities in Pakistan. I believe that Pashtuns have now realised the truth and are developing their strategy to counter these injustices.

2. Arghish Akolkar: Next, let's discuss Pakistan's policy of seeking strategic depth in Afghanistan. This policy has been disastrous for the region, particularly for the people of Afghanistan, as persistent cycles of war have brought Pashtun people three D's - Death, Destruction, and Displacement. With the Taliban now

back in Afghanistan and the ongoing turmoil caused by groups like the TTP, how does Pashtun society plan to confront this challenge?

Mr. Fazal Ur Rehman Afridi: Pakistan's strategic depth policy has indeed been catastrophic, not only for Afghanistan but also for the Pashtun people. As I mentioned earlier, Pakistan has received more than $50 billion solely from the United States for participating in these wars, which affected both Afghanistan and the Pashtun areas of Pakistan. These wars have brought death, destruction, and displacement to our communities. Pakistan's claim to have made sacrifices during the war on terror conveniently overlooks the fact that the overwhelming majority of these sacrifices were Pashtuns, whether they were innocent civilians, members of paramilitary forces, or the police. All these deaths occurred among Pashtun people, not Punjabis or other groups. This truth has now become evident to Pashtuns, who initially believed that Pakistan and its Army were their saviours. They welcomed the Pakistan Army's entry into the tribal areas. However, they subsequently realised that both the TTP and Pakistan Army were essentially the same. The situation has awakened Pashtun people to the fact that Pakistan is not sincere in its dealings with them. The Pakistan Army is actively targeting Pashtuns and their infrastructure. This realisation has led to the emergence of the Pashtun Tahfuz Movement (PTM) in 2018. PTM seeks to secure our fundamental rights and stop the exploitation of our resources by Pakistan, which we now regard as Punjab-centric rather than Pakistan as a whole. Given the current situation, I believe that the strategic depth policy will backfire on Pakistan. The Pashtun people have realised that Pakistan is not their true friend, and the Pakistan Army is responsible for the destruction of our infrastructure and other atrocities. Even the Taliban are not entirely aligned with Pakistan's interests, and Pashtuns now view Pakistan as insincere in its dealings with Afghanistan. They may seek better relations with countries like India. I have been following the statements of former Prime Minister Imran Khan and former Defense Minister when they said that Pakistan must get the Americans out of Afghanistan. The situation is undergoing significant changes, and the dynamics are different from what they used to be.

3. Arghish Akolkar: Certainly, the evolving dynamics in the region are complex and critical. Let's move on to discuss TTP (Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan). Recently, there have been reports of TTP potentially merging with al-Qaeda, and some security experts have even warned of the possibility of TTP collaborating with ISKP

(Islamic State Khorasan Province), despite not being endorsed by the Afghan Taliban. What are your thoughts on the future of terrorism in the region, given this context?

Mr. Fazal Ur Rehman Afridi: Pakistan is already engaging in these activities, including bringing TTP members to Pakistan and providing them with safe havens in various tribal areas. We understand this and are actively resisting it. There are unconfirmed reports that Pakistan is supporting both TTP and ISKP, possibly to use them against the Afghan Taliban in the future. Pakistan is known for playing a double game with the Afghan Taliban as well as with the United States. This could lead to greater destruction in Pashtun areas of Pakistan and in Afghanistan. The international community should take these concerns seriously, as unchecked terrorism and extremism could escalate not only in Pakistan but also in neighbouring countries like China and India, as well as in the Central Asian republics. The situation poses a significant danger to the region, and it is crucial for India and the international community to take proactive measures to address it and inform the global community about these developments. Otherwise, it could pose severe threats to regional stability.

4. Arghish Akolkar: Indeed, the potential consequences are deeply concerning. Moving forward, let's discuss the popular slogans associated with PTM, particularly "Da Sanga Azadi da" (What kind of freedom is this?) and "Yeh jo deshatgardi Hai, iske peeche wardi hai" (Behind this terrorism is the military or the uniform). These slogans have gained traction among protesters, including civilians who are now questioning the military's role and how years of military rule have adversely affected Pakistan's social fabric and economy. Do you see this as a significant step toward victory for PTM, where your message is gaining acceptance even in regions like Punjab, which is considered the heartland of Pakistan?

Mr. Fazal Ur Rehman Afridi: Absolutely, these slogans have struck a chord with the people and have played a vital role in breaking the fear that had gripped the minds of civilians in the past. Previously, if someone's family member was forcibly disappeared by the Pakistan Army, they often remained silent out of fear. The military would threaten them with dire consequences if they dared to speak out. There was a widespread belief that the Pakistan Army could do no wrong, a belief that persisted even after incidents like the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War and the Kargil conflict. However, PTM has successfully shattered this

fear and openly stated the truth – that the Pakistan Army is responsible for the atrocities. These slogans have been instrumental in helping people understand who is behind the terrorism and violence. The fear of speaking out against the military has diminished significantly. The credibility of the Pakistan Army is eroding, and people are openly questioning it. Even politicians are using these slogans, and some political parties, whether in power or in opposition, are now openly criticising the military establishment. The military's strategy of playing political parties against each other has backfired. Pakistan's military is in a state of confusion, and they are struggling to counter these narratives effectively. Recent events, including Imran Mazari's statement about terrorists within GHQ in Islamabad, demonstrate the extent to which people are now openly challenging the military's actions. The military's credibility has eroded significantly, and this marks a significant shift in public perception.

5. Arghish Akolkar: It's indeed a remarkable change in public sentiment and perception. Finally, let's discuss the slogan "Lowlands or Highlands, We Are One." This slogan has not been well received by the Pakistani establishment. Can you explain the meaning behind this slogan and clarify PTM's end goal? Is PTM advocating for an independent Pashtunistan, or is it primarily focused on securing rights within the framework of the Pakistani state?

Mr. Fazal Ur Rehman Afridi: The slogan "Lowlands or Highlands, We Are One" has unsettled the Pakistani establishment because it unites Pashtun nationals on both sides of the Durand Line, challenging the division that has separated Pashtun people. PTM asserts that we are one nation with a shared culture, and there is no difference between Pashtuns in Pakistan and Afghanistan. This narrative has alarmed the Pakistani establishment because they fear that Pashtuns may reject the Durand Line altogether and seek either a greater Afghanistan or an independent Pashtunistan. This fear is well-founded because, during talks between PTM and the Pakistan Army, one of the Army's demands was to halt this slogan. They also demanded that we cease directly criticising the Army and advocating at the United Nations.

PTM's stance is clear: we are not interested in becoming a mainstream political party within Pakistan's current political system, which we consider a rubber stamp Parliament. If we were to enter Parliament and take an

oath to protect Pakistan and its Constitution, we would be constrained in our ability to advocate for our people's rights effectively. Instead, PTM is committed to working outside of the parliamentary system, advocating for the rights of our people. We document cases of human rights abuses and forced disappearances and submit them to international bodies. As a result, we have already submitted 250 cases under special procedures, and this number is growing. We are developing a counter strategy and narrative to empower Pashtun people to resist radicalization and terrorism. Our goal is to ensure that Pashtuns do not support terrorist and radical groups and, instead, rally behind PTM, which they view as a beacon of hope for their rights and justice. We are committed to standing up for our people and their rights.

Arghish Akolkar: Thank you Mr. Fazal Ur Rehman Afridi, for providing us with valuable insights into the Pashtun Tahfuz Movement and the complex dynamics in the region. Your perspective sheds light on the challenges and aspirations of the Pashtun people and their struggle for justice and rights. We appreciate your time and expertise.

Mr. Fazal Ur Rehman Afridi: It's essential to continue raising awareness about the issues facing Pashtuns, and I hope that through dialogue and advocacy, we can work towards a more just and peaceful future for our people and the region as a whole.

Lashkar-E-Taiba (LeT): A Holistic picture of its Global Terror Network

By Mohit Gajbhiye

About the Author

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Abstract

This research report provides a comprehensive analysis of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), a significant radical Islamist group originating in Pakistan. Firmly rooted in the Ahle Hadith movement, LeT aims to establish a Muslim caliphate in South Asia, utilising methods of violence and terrorism. The study offers an in-depth exploration of LeT's core ideologies, historical origins, leadership framework, notable aggressive actions, and strategic partnerships. It sheds light on the organisation's evolution since its inception in the late 1980s, its intricate links with Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), and its broader global aspirations that transcend regional boundaries. The report delves into LeT's transformation from a regional player to a formidable global concern, facilitated by collaborations with extremist entities on a worldwide scale. This narrative emphasises the complex challenge of addressing LeT's multifaceted presence, its simultaneous involvement in societal development, and terrorist activities, and the interplay between its local and global dimensions. Ultimately, this research underscores LeT's pivotal role in shaping global terrorism dynamics and networks, highlighting the need for joint collaboration to mitigate its extensive influence and threat to global peace and security.

Introduction

Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), an Ahle Hadith movement (the Indian version of Salafism) rooted in Pakistan, has executed a series of devastating attacks in Afghanistan, India, and other nations, raising serious global concerns. This well-organized and well-funded organization has established an extensive network spanning over 20 nations and has developed ties with groups such as al-Qaeda. LeT's primary objective, pursued through terror and violence, is the establishment of a Muslim caliphate in South Asia. Past attacks against India, notably the horrifying 2008 Mumbai attacks that claimed nearly 200 lives, underscore the gravity of the threat. However, LeT's influence extends beyond India, reaching Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and other countries, casting an unsettling shadow over international peace and security.

Understanding the workings of LeT's extensive global terror network is essential as the world grapples with the threat it poses. This paper aims to shed light on the entire spectrum of its global terror network by exploring its history, ideology, organisational chart, funding sources, ties, and notable terrorist attacks. Identifying the challenges in halting this dangerous network and researching viable solutions to mitigate its threat are equally crucial. While LeT gained international attention with its deadly strikes in Mumbai in 2008, its origins trace back to 1987, a period when Pakistan was fervently embracing Islam. This organisation, supported by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate, adheres to an extreme ideology, blending aggressive behaviour with religious teachings to establish a global Islamic caliphate.

LeT's global dominance relies on several crucial elements. Its distinctive ideology promotes collaboration with other extremist groups, and its unwavering allegiance to Pakistan strengthens its resolve to defend its patron state from internal and external threats. The organisation's strength also stems from a diverse network, facilitating resource mobilisation, international expansion, and recruitment, reducing its dependence on state support. LeT's strategy, involving both terrorism and social development simultaneously, reflects an unusual dichotomy. This adept manoeuvre advances its ideological goals while simultaneously complicating Pakistan's defences. LeT demonstrates a remarkable level of proficiency in both violent actions and the administration of social programs, supported by a robust hierarchical structure. Its adept use of technology, connections to other countries, and exploitation of weaknesses within states amplify its political objectives. Undoubtedly, LeT is a formidable adversary with a global presence, thriving beyond its South Asian roots.

This research aims to unveil the details of LeT's international terror network and the complex challenges associated with containing its threat.

Ideology and Formation

Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), a radical Islamist terrorist organisation, seeks to Islamize the Indian subcontinent by opposing a secular India, deeming it 'anti-Islamic'. Its primary goal is to establish an Islamic state by uniting Muslim-majority regions surrounding Pakistan. LeT targets non-Muslims, foreigners, and Indian institutions, advocating Kashmir's separation from India and merger with Pakistan. The group's ideology, centred on Muslim ummah (brotherhood), emphasises confronting 'anti-Islamic' forces globally. LeT perceives jihad (holy war) and da'wah (education) as crucial for 'Islamic Politics'. Unlike Al Qaeda, LeT combines armed struggle with education, considering both as essential components of their long-term approach. Hafiz Saeed, its leader, envisions liberation for Kashmir and reshaping the regional map. LeT's pro-Pakistan stance, opposition to the US and Israel, and its emphasis on 'Islamic Politics' further its goal of establishing an Islamic state in South Asia.

Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD), the renamed Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) in Pakistan, traces its origins to the Markaz-e-Dawa-wal-Irshad (MDI) formed in 1986 by Hafiz Mohammad Saeed and Zafar Iqbal, supported by the ISI. Abdullah Azzam, tied to Bin Laden and affiliated with the precursor to Al Qaeda, also aided. This initiative emerged when Ahle Hadith movement teachers from Lahore's University of Engineering and Technology decided to aid the Afghan war. Hafiz Saeed, formerly a Professor, led MDI, motivated by Saudi Arabia's promised support. The group operated in Afghanistan, focused on Jalalabad, Nooristan, and Sarobi under Afghan Ahle Hadith commander Sheikh Jameel-ur-Rahman.

After Afghanistan, MDI transitioned to Kashmir in 1989, working covertly as Al Barq. In 1991, with ISI's backing, Hafiz Saeed formed LeT. By 1993, LeT operated in Kashmir, launching attacks against Indian security forces, gaining notoriety. Its militants received training in Maskar-e-Aqsa and Maskar Abdullah bin Masood in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. LeT's evolution stemmed from the Indo-Pakistan rivalry, Afghan conflict, and anti-Soviet efforts.

Post-9/11, LeT persisted due to ISI support, welfare programs, and its Kashmir proxy role. It expanded to

confront perceived threats against Islam and coordinated operations adeptly. Sharing ideologies with Al Qaeda, LeT expanded post-2008 in Afghanistan, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia. Despite its initial focus on Kashmir, it participated globally, including in Tajikistan and Bosnia-Herzegovina. It later extended operations into India, recruiting citizens and cultivating the Indian Mujahideen. The interplay between LeT's history, affiliations, and evolving roles underscores its complex nature and significance on both regional and global levels.

Leadership and Notable Terrorists

10. **Hafiz Muhammed Saeed** is the founder of LeT and JuD. He was once an Islamic Studies professor and co-founded MDI, working in Afghanistan and Kashmir. He later started LeT as a separate terrorist group. He's a recognized global terrorist with a $10 million bounty from the US for his role in the 2008 Mumbai attacks. In 2017, he was arrested for raising funds violating UN sanctions for JuD but was released due to insufficient evidence. He was arrested again in 2019 and in 2020 got a 10-year jail term for his involvement in an anti-terrorism court.

11. **Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi**: He is one of the co-founders of LeT and the chief of operations of the outfit. He was instrumental in recruiting a large number of youth from Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh. He conducted operations in foreign countries like Bosnia, Chechnya, and Iraq and was also the primary handler for the fidayeen team, which attacked Mumbai on November 26, 2008.

12. **Abdul Rehman Makki**: He is Hafiz Saeed's brother-in-law and also acts as the second-in-command and head of the Department of External Affairs of the outfit. He was closely affiliated with Mullah Omar (the late Taliban leader) and the present leader of Al Qaeda, Ayman al-Zawahiri. The USA has placed a $2 billion bounty on his head for his involvement with terrorist activities.

13. **Haji Mohammed Ashraf:** He is the outfit's chief of finance and has travelled often to the Middle East to collect funds for LeT.Mahmoud Mohammed Ahmed Bahaziq: He is a key Saudi financier for LeT. He coordinated with NGOs and businessmen based in Saudi Arabia to raise funds for the outfit while also taking part in propaganda and media operations.

14. **Yahya Mujahid**: He is a close associate of Hafiz Saeed and acts as the spokesperson and general secretary for JuD.

15. **Amir Hamza**: He acts as the head of the publication division of LeT. He also heads the Tehrik Hurmat Rasool, which is a proxy for LeT. He has written extensively on various themes, including jihad in Kashmir and an overview of the group's training facilities.

16. **Azam Cheema**: He is the intelligence chief of LeT and also acts as the second-in-command to Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi. He operates a weapons lab and conducts training in handling explosives at his base in Bahawalpur, Punjab (Pakistan). He was involved in mass recruitments in Mumbai following the 2002 Gujarat riots and was also responsible for the 2006 Mumbai serial train bombings which killed more than 200 people.Current breakthrough in LeT in terms of its important member:

17. A militant named **Sardar Hussain,** linked to Hafiz Saeed's Jama'at-ud-Da'wah (JuD), was assassinated in Karachi by nationalist militants from Sindh. The newly-formed Sindhudesh Liberation Army claimed responsibility for the attack. Hussain, an agent of Pakistani agencies, led the religious extremist group Jamait-ul-Dawa (Lashkar-e-Taiba) and contested the 2018 elections through the political front of LeT. He played a key role in the Punjabi Settlement in Nawabshah District and was reportedly involved in running LeT and JuD's Madrassa network in Pakistan.

18. **Riyaz Ahmad**, a prominent Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) commander and a key figure in the Dhangri terror attack, met his demise in a Rawalkot mosque in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir. Unidentified gunmen targeted him during Friday prayers, marking the end of his two-decade-long involvement in terrorism. Originally from Jammu, Ahmad was instrumental in reigniting terrorism in border districts. He operated mainly from the LeT's Muridke base camp but had recently relocated to Rawalakot. Known for his close ties to LeT's chief commander, Sajjad Jaat, Ahmad also managed the outfit's finances.

19. In a significant development, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) Commander **Uzair Khan** was killed during a seven-day-long operation in Kokernag. Uzair Khan had been involved in the fatal attacks on an army Colonel, a Major, and a Deputy SP during the initial stages of the operation. The 28-year-old electrician from Nagam village had joined LeT last year, becoming one of the less prominent local militants under police surveillance. His demise marks a notable achievement in the ongoing efforts to combat terrorism in the region.

20. **Commander Akram Khan Gazi,** who handled the recruitment cell of LeT from 2018 to 2020 was shot dead by unidentified assailants in Bajaur District of Khyber Pakhtunkwa. He was known for his anti-India hate speeches.

21. LeT terrorist **Hanzla Adnan**, a close aide of LeT chief Hafiz Saeed was shot dead by unidentified assailants on December 3 2023. Adnan was the mastermind of the deadly 2015 Udhampur attack on BSF convoy in Jammu & Kashmir.

22. LeT Commander **Khawaja Shahid** alias Mia Mujahid was kidnapped by unknown men from Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK). He was one of the masterminds behind the Sunjwan terrorist attack on Indian Army camp in Jammu.

23. **Maulana Ziaur Rehman**, a Lashkar operative was shot dead by unknown gunmen in Karachi

LeT as a Crucial Proxy for ISI

The relationship between Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and the Pakistani intelligence agency ISI is complex yet crucial. The ISI seeks plausible deniability, preferring to guide LeT at a broad level rather than micromanaging its actions. Despite being designated as a terrorist organisation in 2002 under international pressure, LeT's leaders remain resilient due to ISI's backing. This support enables LeT to plan attacks and cooperate with other terror groups even during confinement. What makes LeT unique is its unwavering loyalty, a rare trait in the world of terrorism. This allegiance is rooted in shared cultural ties and extensive assistance from the ISI. LeT serves a significant purpose by protecting Pakistan against other extremist groups, as highlighted by expert C. Christine Fair.

Over time, LeT has evolved into a multifaceted entity, engaging in both terrorism and social development. Its self-reliant financial progress, partially derived from charities like Jamaat-ud-Dawa, has led to a gradual shift in its relationship with the ISI. LeT's network now spans resource mobilisation, international outreach, and recruitment. This deep integration into Pakistan's social fabric poses a challenge to targeting the group. While the ISI's influence persists, LeT's growing external funding sources hint at a potential reduction in direct control. Their pursuit of financial independence showcases ambitions for greater operational capabilities.

LeT's transformation is evident as it has moved beyond terrorism, becoming entwined with Pakistan's society. Its potential to conduct significant external attacks, surpassing Pakistan's military and ISI capabilities, is concerning. Despite Western concerns, the Pakistani government hesitates to confront LeT out of fear that the group might retaliate.

An illustration of Pakistan's implicit approval of LeT's actions is its operations in Iraq. The apprehension of LeT operatives in Basra, Iraq, suggests a coordinated effort, possibly sanctioned by the ISI, to establish a new front there. The involvement of a high-ranking LeT member with prior links to the Pakistani military implies a strategic understanding between LeT and the ISI.

In essence, LeT serves as a proxy for the ISI, showcasing a complex relationship characterised by varying levels of control and evolving dynamics. This partnership transcends mere terrorism, intertwining with Pakistan's societal fabric. LeT's increasing autonomy indicates a potential shift in influence away from the ISI. The group's capacity for unprecedented external operations raises concerns. Pakistan's reluctance to confront LeT, despite global pressure, remains an asset for the group, enabling its continued terrorist activities against India and the Western world.

Domestic Politics of LeT: Jamaat-Ud-Dawa

Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD), operating under the facade of charity work, plays a significant role in Pakistan's domestic affairs and politics. It strategically engages in humanitarian efforts, particularly during times of crises like the 2005 earthquake and the 2010 floods. By doing so, JuD aims to build a positive image and gain popular support within Pakistan. It is worth noting that some media reports may have exaggerated its efforts, potentially under the influence of the Pakistani intelligence agency, ISI, which has often been accused of manipulating media narratives.

JuD's extensive involvement in social services, including setting up schools, clinics, and other welfare initiatives, enhances its domestic legitimacy. This expansion is supported by the Pakistani government, as it sees JuD as a valuable tool in countering the influence of Deobandi extremist groups that pose a threat to Pakistan's internal security. This unique role has led the government to provide grants, manage assets, and even employ JuD workers in official capacities.

Moreover, JuD's financial resources come from various sources, including private donors, Wahabi patrons from countries like Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and the ISI. The organisation utilises multiple charity networks to collect funds and support its activities. These funds not only sustain JuD's charitable endeavours but also contribute to its broader goals, which include promoting a radical interpretation of Islam.

JuD's dual identity as a charity organisation and a promoter of radical ideology places it in a complex position within Pakistan's domestic political landscape. While it garners support for its humanitarian initiatives, its radical agenda raises concerns. Its ties to the ISI and its involvement in shaping public opinion through media influence suggest a multifaceted influence over Pakistan's domestic politics. As long as JuD serves to counter Deobandi extremism and provide social services, its role in Pakistan's internal dynamics is likely to endure.

Milli Muslim League

The Milli Muslim League (MML) emerged in early August 2017 as a political entity aiming to shape Pakistan into an Islamic welfare state. Led by Saifullah Khalid, a close associate of Hafiz Saeed, founder of Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), the MML entered the political landscape with ambitions to participate in the 2018 general elections. Despite Saeed initially suggesting that MML would be separate from JuD, he later announced that JuD could participate in elections under MMLs banner, indicating a strong linkage.

The swift formation of MML shortly after Saeed's release from house arrest raised suspicions about the approval and support of Pakistan's military establishment, particularly the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI). Notably, Tabish Qayyum, an MML founding member and information secretary, maintained ties with the deep state. His research at Pakistan's National Defense University, focused on JuD's role against the Islamic State, highlighted the organisation's alignment with security objectives. The MML's agenda encompasses various goals, including promoting Quranic and Sunnah principles, ensuring domestic security, safeguarding Pakistan's cultural values, and transforming the country into a modern Islamic welfare state. It seeks to empower marginalised segments of society and restore Pakistan's international standing, while supporting the struggle in Kashmir and advocating for the interests of the global Muslim community.

While the MML's entry into politics might seem a departure from LeT's historical opposition to electoral engagement, it can be seen as a logical extension of JuD's activities. JuD's track record of providing public services post-disasters helped rebrand LeT as a provider of social welfare. The MML's alignment with JuD's ideology and activities suggests it operates with the implicit support of Pakistan's security establishment.

Major Attacks

The organisation's cadres are trained in the use of small arms and various explosives. The LeT specializes in fidayeen attacks, essentially suicide squads. The fidayeen are highly brainwashed and trained cadres who attack security forces or civilian targets, causing as much damage as possible before being shot dead. The 26/11 attack was the most notable LeT-orchestrated attack of its kind and demonstrated the gruesome effectiveness of this stratagem — a group of ten young men laid siege to Mumbai for almost three days, killing nearly 200 people.

The Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) maintains strong connections with other extremist terrorist organisations in the region. It is a part of the United Jihad Council (UJC), a coalition of different Pakistani and Kashmiri militant groups that share the goal of forcefully separating Jammu and Kashmir from India to merge it with Pakistan. The UJC includes major terror outfits like Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM), with LeT collaborating operationally on various attacks alongside these factions. An example is the UJC's collective claim of responsibility for the 2016 assault on the Pathankot Airbase. Additionally, LeT and JeM jointly participated in the 2001 attack on India's Parliament.

Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) has been responsible for a series of deadly attacks both in India and globally.

Some of the major attacks carried out by LeT include:

1. 2001 Indian Parliament Attack: LeT, along with Jaish-e-Mohammed, was suspected of carrying out an attack on the Indian Parliament in December 2001. The attack led to a significant escalation of tensions between India and Pakistan.

2. 2006 Mumbai Train Bombings: In July 2006, LeT was suspected of orchestrating coordinated bombings on Mumbai's suburban train network, resulting in over 180 deaths and numerous injuries.

3. 2008 Mumbai Attacks: One of the most infamous incidents attributed to LeT is the 2008 Mumbai attacks. LeT militants carried out a series of coordinated shootings and bombings across Mumbai, resulting in the deaths of 164 people and hundreds of injuries.

4. 2010 Pune Bombing: In February 2010, a bomb attributed to LeT exploded at the German Bakery in Pune, Maharashtra, killing 17 people and causing injuries.

5. 2013 Hyderabad Bombings: LeT was suspected of being behind twin bomb blasts that occurred in Hyderabad in February 2013, resulting in 17 fatalities and numerous injuries.

6. 2016 Uri Attack: In September 2016, militants believed to be associated with LeT carried out an attack on an Indian Army base in Uri, Jammu and Kashmir, resulting in the deaths of 19 Indian soldiers.

7. 2019 Pulwama Attack: In February 2019, a suicide bomber associated with LeT-affiliated group Jaish-e-Mohammed targeted a convoy of Indian paramilitary personnel in Pulwama, resulting in the deaths of 40 soldiers.

Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) has demonstrated a global presence that extends beyond India's borders, engaging in various acts of violence and extremist activities. There is some evidence that LeT is involved in attacks that occurred in 2002 in Bali, Indonesia, known as the Bali Bombings, and in 2009 Jakarta Hotel bombings. Also, LeT was implicated in the 2003 Casablanca bombings in Morocco. Furthermore, the group's influence extended to an attack on Kabul's Serena Hotel in 2008, Afghanistan. All of these attacks claimed many lives and property. These attacks highlight LeT's global reach and its role in destabilising regions beyond India's borders. The group's involvement in these incidents underscores the need for international cooperation in countering its activities and preventing further violence.

LeT's Global Terror Network: Strategic Alliances & Global Reach

LeT is the most dangerous indigenous terrorist group operating in South Asia with various aspirations. Despite its current limitations in capacity or focus, LeT has a global vision and international ambitions. It is commonly associated with terrorism in the disputed regions of Jammu and Kashmir and, additionally, with violence directed at the Indian nation more broadly. However, LeT's goals extend beyond India as it aligns with al-Qaeda to reclaim former Muslim territories, leading to its presence in places like Afghanistan, Palestine, Spain, Chechnya, Kosovo, and Eritrea, albeit constrained by current capacity limits.

The ideological obsession of LeT has been fueled by support from Pakistan, especially from its army and ISI.

The increasing collaboration between India and the West has further strengthened LeT-ISI ties. The 2008 Mumbai attacks brought attention to LeT's broader war against the West and democracies, posing a threat to India, the U.S., its allies, the global system, and, often overlooked, even Pakistan. LeT's global aspirations are evident in Hafiz Saeed's explicit statement that LeT aims to "plant the flag of Islam in Washington, Tel Aviv, and New Delhi." These ambitions are not merely grandiose, and even those initially sceptical of LeT's broader intentions now acknowledge that the organisation is not limited to targeting India alone, despite its disproportionate focus thus far, driven by ISI goals and funding.

Beyond al-Qaeda, LeT stands out as a prominent South Asian terrorist group with "global reach." Operating in 21 countries, its goal is to support or participate in a perpetual "jihad against infidels." LeT provides free training for Muslims joining the global jihad, as seen in incidents like the "Virginia paintball jihad network," where extremists trained with LeT for combat against U.S. troops. This incident illustrates LeT's broader ambitions, including collaborating with terror groups in Asia and the Middle East, assisting terror acts globally, fundraising across the Middle East, Europe, Australia, and the U.S., acquiring weapons from arms markets and Pakistani organizations, recruiting suicide mission volunteers in South Asia and the Middle East, and establishing sleeper cells for future attacks in Europe, Australia, and possibly the U.S. LeT's recruitment, fundraising, and operations have extended to Afghanistan, Iraq, Central Asia, Europe, Africa, and Australia, making it a formidable global threat.

Currently, LeT has close ties with al-Qaeda in Pakistan and supports the Afghan Taliban's military operations, despite differences in their interpretations of Islam. It also collaborates closely with Jamiat al-Dawa al-Quran wal-Sunnah, a Wahhabi group based in the Kunar Province of Afghanistan, in operations against American troops in Afghanistan's Korengal Valley. These activities add to a long history of hostile actions, many of which have remained hidden, affecting U.S. citizens, soldiers, and interests.

Similar to al-Qaeda, LeT excels in forming alliances with similar terrorist groups. These coalitions are prominent in South Asia, where LeT collaborates with the Afghan Taliban and others in recruitment, training, financing, and operations. In Pakistan, LeT works with Afghan and Pakistani Taliban, al-Qaeda, and the Haqqani networks. Central Asia sees cooperation with the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and Caucasus rebels. In Europe, LeT supports the Bosnian resistance while building cells and funds in Spain and Germany.

LeT maintains ties with various religious and military groups worldwide, ranging from the Philippines to the Middle East and Chechnya, primarily through the al-Qaeda fraternal network. The group has links with international Islamist terrorist groups like the Ikhwan-ul-Musalmeen of Egypt and other Arab groups. LeT has a unit in Germany and receives help from Al Muhajiraun, a supporter of Sharia Group (Abu Hamza Masari of Mosque Finsbury Park, North London), and its annual convention is regularly attended by fraternal bodies in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Yemen, Bahrain, Oman, Kosovo, Bangladesh, Myanmar, USA, Palestine, Bosnia, Philippines, Jordan, Chechnya, etc. It also has links with the International Sikh Youth Federation (Lakhbir Singh Rode). Allegedly, LeT has set up sleeper cells in the U.S. and Australia, trained terrorists from other countries, and has entered new theatres of Jihad like Iraq. The organisation solicits donations from the Pakistani population in the Persian Gulf and the United Kingdom, Islamic NGOs, Pakistani and Kashmiri businessmen. Funds are also provided by Saudi Arabia through ISI ties.

LeT's Indian Wing

According to SATP, LeT is the only Pakistan-based terrorist group with a support base across India and is reported to have networked with Islamist extremist organisations in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Gujarat. It was presumably in the form of Azam Ghouri (from Andhra Pradesh), Abdul Kareem Tunda (from Uttar Pradesh), and Abu Masood (from West Bengal) that the LeT found its Indian counterpart. Kareem was running a network throughout North India. Meanwhile, Ghauri allegedly travelled to Saudi Arabia and later, a Lashkar-e-Taiba camp in Pakistan. He returned to India and set up a network that enveloped local criminals and Lashkar affiliates.

The Indian wing of LeT came to be Tanzim Islahul Muslimeen or TIM ("Organization for the Improvement of Muslims"). Initially, TIM's activities were limited to reactionary riots in response to discrimination against Muslims in Mumbai. Several Islamist extremist groups inside India have supposedly worked with LeT; for example, the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), which seeks an Islamic state in India.

Taliban Links

Recent reports indicate that there is considerable convergence between LeT and the Pakistani Taliban. One explanation for the Pak-Taliban's growing might is the addition of well-trained militants who had previously

operated only in Kashmir to the Taliban forces battling in Western Pakistan and Afghanistan. According to research by Syed Saleem Shahzad, the 2006–2007 relocation of Kashmiri jihadi organisations to North and South Waziristan, which increased the number and power of militants there, marked a turning point for the jihad movement in Pakistan. According to the research, the Kashmiri separatist groups brought a particular guerrilla strategy with them that changed the Taliban's dynamics.

Europe

LeT has made its presence felt in France. French security authorities have revealed that a British national, Richard Colvin Reid, was indoctrinated by the local group's leader, Ghulam Mustafa Rama, and ordered to blow up an American Airlines Boeing 767 on a flight from Paris to Miami with plastic explosives. In June 2005, three Muslims of Pakistani descent were convicted in Paris of providing logistical support to Reid—two of whom had been trained in LeT camps in Afghanistan.

The LeT network in Germany was led by Aleen Nasir, who began raising funds for jihad in Kashmir and Afghanistan in 1999. Nasir, a Pakistani, was a mechanical engineer who immigrated to Germany in 1987. After the assassination of Amir Cheema, the LeT also threatened a suicide attack against Germany. Cheema, a textile student, was found dead in a cell in Berlin after being arrested on charges of plotting the assassination of the editor-in-chief of the German newspaper Die Welt.

The United Kingdom

It was the Global Jihad Fund (GJF), established by two Saudis in London in the mid-1990s, that facilitated LeT's expansion in the United Kingdom. The GJF had raised substantial resources to provide funds for jihad in Bosnia, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Kosovo, and Chechnya. A case involving a British terrorist with LeT connections came to light after a series of bombings on July 7, 2007, that killed 50 people and injured 700. It should be noted that one of the suspects, Shaheed Tanweer, had visited the LeT headquarters in Muridke for several days.

Other Links

Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) has expanded its reach far beyond different regions. In the Maldives, Salafi groups

facilitated LeT's recruitment, exemplified by Maldivian nationals like Fauzee's arrest in an Al Qaeda safe house. Australia witnessed LeT ties through David Hicks, trained at LeT's camp, and Willie Virgile Brigitte, arrested for LeT affiliation and planning attacks. In Bangladesh, Abdul Karim alias Tunda managed LeT operations, aiding recruits' transit to its camps. LeT established roots in Bangladesh via managers like Maulana Mohammad Mansoor Ali and Mufti Sheikh Abdullah, arrested for involvement. These global links illustrate LeT's widespread presence and collaborations in various regions, underscoring its international impact on terrorism.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the in-depth analysis of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) presents a nuanced understanding of this formidable global terrorist organisation. With a widespread presence in South Asia, West Asia, Central Asia, and Europe, LeT has evolved into a major threat on the global stage. While facing challenges in its operations due to security measures in certain regions, the group's potential strategic advantage stemming from the evolving situation in Afghanistan cannot be underestimated. The complexity of LeT's ties with the Pakistani establishment and its ability to maintain operational capabilities despite leader arrests highlight the challenges of counterterrorism efforts.

The intricate web of partnerships, its autonomy within the Pakistani intelligence structure, and its multifaceted approach to terrorism and societal engagement are notable features. To address LeT's extensive global influence and intricate network, concerted international collaboration is crucial to mitigate its threat to global peace and security, ensuring stability in an increasingly interconnected world.

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Narcotics Trade in Pakistan and its Implications on India

By Rajdeep Prajapati

About the Author

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Abstract

Drug addiction represents a significant global challenge that the world faces today, serving as a root cause of conflicts worldwide. Addressing this crisis necessitates a thorough understanding of the factors contributing to its widespread prevalence. This report sheds light on the issues surrounding the narcotics trade in Pakistan and its profound implications for the population. Additionally, the report explores the various stakeholders involved in Pakistan, encompassing terrorism and external factors. Finally, it analyses the security implications of narcotics in India, highlighting how Pakistan employs them as weapons to disrupt peace in India, owing to India's geographical position between the Golden Crescent and the Golden Triangle.

Introduction

The complex web of narcotics trafficking, terrorism, and organised crime has cast a long shadow over the northern region of Pakistan—a land adorned by the towering Himalayan mountains and blessed with a coastline that stretches along the Arabian Sea. This geographical diversity, coupled with porous borders shared with Afghanistan and Iran, has created an environment ripe for illicit drug trade to flourish. Pakistan's role as a critical transit route for drug trafficking syndicates, particularly those originating in Afghanistan, has been further exacerbated by the presence of homegrown terrorist groups within its borders. Additionally, the vast expanse between Pakistan's tribal areas and Afghanistan's border regions has become a fertile ground for opium production.

Intricately woven into this narrative is a historical backdrop where international players, including the United States and Saudi Arabia, once viewed Pakistan as a strategic chessboard during the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. These geopolitical manoeuvres gave rise to an intricate dance involving weapons, ideology, and insurgency, ultimately paving the way for the intertwining of drug smuggling and terrorism on a grand scale.

This intricate web of narco-terrorism extends its tentacles beyond Pakistan's borders, particularly in India, where Pakistan's intelligence agency, the ISI, collaborates with organised crime groups to facilitate drug trafficking as part of its strategy to destabilise its neighbouring nation.

In this comprehensive exploration, we will delve into the depths of this intricate and interconnected web of narco-terrorism, tracing its roots, understanding its impact, and shedding light on the multifaceted challenges it poses to regional stability, especially in the context of India.

Understanding the Impact

Present problems in Pakistan find their historical roots. For the past forty years, the Afghanistan-Pakistan border has served as a focal point for international terrorism. Due to Pakistan's close proximity to Afghanistan, the regions bordering, especially erstwhile FATA, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan, are highly affected by the drug menace. Furthermore, by 1956, licences were issued for the districts of Peshawar, Mardan, and Abbottabad in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (then NWFP). Inefficient monitoring of licensed opium sales resulted in many merchants bypassing the state and buying opium illicitly produced in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) (Khan, 1982). Furthermore, in 1971, controls on opium production also eased. All these acts lead to uncontrolled opium production in Pakistan, especially in regions sharing a border with Afghanistan.

During the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the USA and its allies gave Pakistan advanced weapons and technology to counter the USSR's influence in the region (Harshe, 2003). Furthermore, Saudi Arabia provided financial aid to Pakistan with the aim of spreading Wahhabi Sunni ideology. As a result, Pakistan became a central hub for recruiting and training Mujahideen groups (Shah, 2019). Additionally, during Zia-ul-Haq's

rule, he endorsed Islam and the concept of Jihad to consolidate his authority in Pakistan. During his time in office, there was a widespread proliferation of madrassas that actively promoted extremist Islamist beliefs. Zia received billions in aid from the United States and Saudi Arabia, which he used to bolster Sunni religious schools (madrassas) and provide financial support to militants fighting against the Soviet Union. Under the leadership of General Zia-ul-Haq, ISI became involved in drug smuggling as a means to generate substantial funds to support various fronts, including the conflict in Afghanistan and the situation in Indian Punjab.
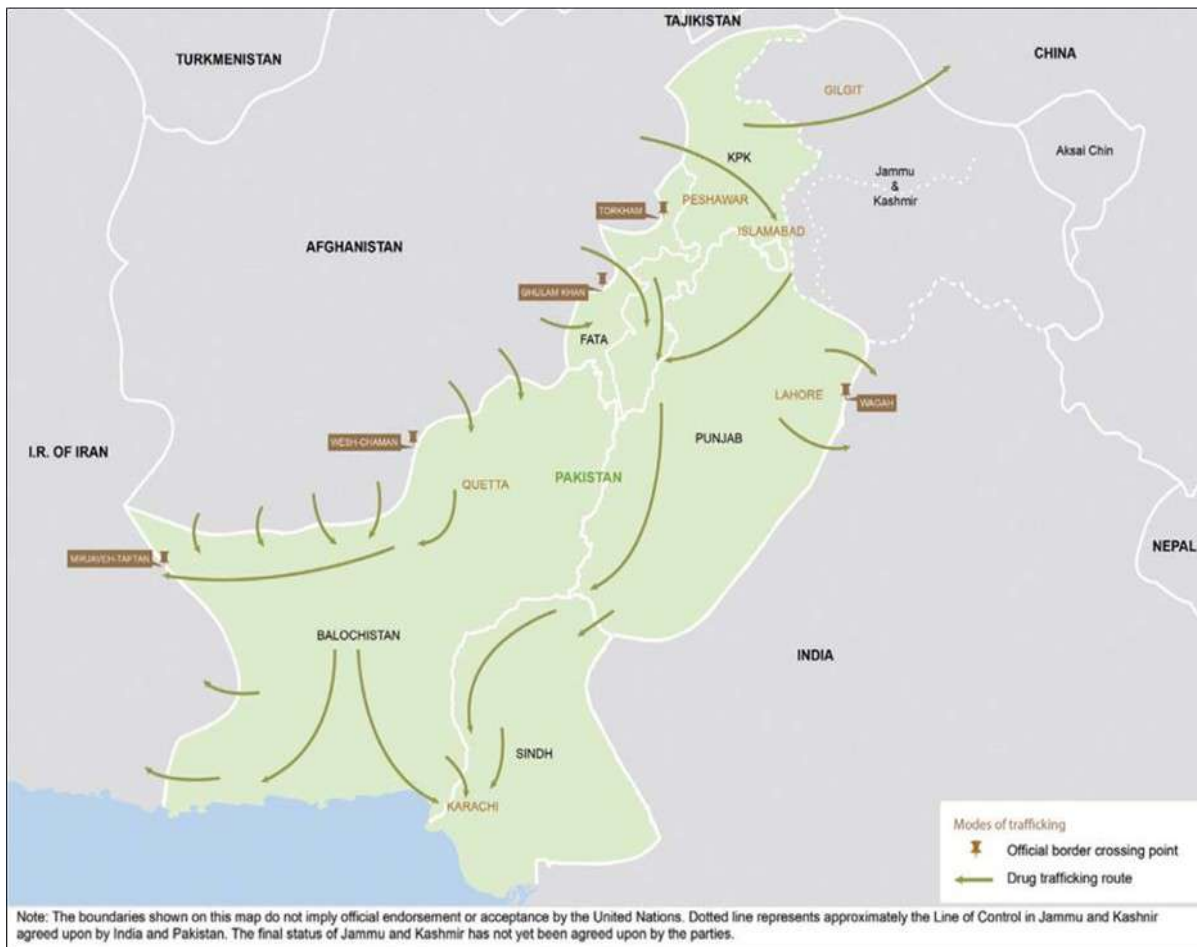
Map 1: Indicative opiate trafficking routes into Pakistan prior to 2011

(Source: The Global Afghan Opium Trade: A Threat Assessment , UNODC, 2011)

Furthermore, ISI, along with US-funded Afghan Mujahideen fighters, resisted the Soviet interventions in Afghanistan. These Mujahideen groups engaged in opium trafficking across the border, selling it to heroin refineries in Pakistan. These refineries operated with the support of General Fazle Haq, who served as the governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at that time (Singh, 2002).

Drug addiction is a serious issue in Pakistan, with a sustained annual increase in drug use; consequently, the number of users who are increasing is mainly youth. According to the United Nations' 2022 report, the total number of drug addicts in Pakistan is 7.6 million, of which 78 percent are male and 22 per cent are female. A range of social, cultural, and economic factors are responsible for drug addiction. The increase in drug addiction in Pakistan is evident from statistics released annually. Furthermore, due to weak drug restrictions, illegal substances can overtake the market and become widely available to people of all ages. The prevalence of drug abuse may increase as a result of this lack of regulation on a wide illicit drug network.

Moreover, severe poverty and lack of employment opportunities in Pakistan incentivize individuals to engage in the drug trade due to the substantial profits it offers. Additionally, due to inadequate education, people lack a comprehensive understanding of the mental and physical repercussions of drug use. Limited access to proper healthcare further compounds the issue.

Organised Crime Groups, The Narcotics Trade, And The Nexus With Terrorism Financing

Many people residing in the adjoining areas of Afghanistan, along with the tribal areas of Pakistan, start migrating due to the Afghan war. Approximately 3 million Afghan refugees have come to Pakistan, and a significant number of them are already familiar with the production and processing of a drug called heroin. Support from governments contributes to the issue of opium production. Furthermore, Karachi, the port city, couldn't protect itself from the surge of migrants either. Ineffective government policies, coupled with a lenient bureaucracy, have created an environment where criminal and terrorist groups, along with political parties, engage in illegal activities (Hussain & Shelley, 2016).
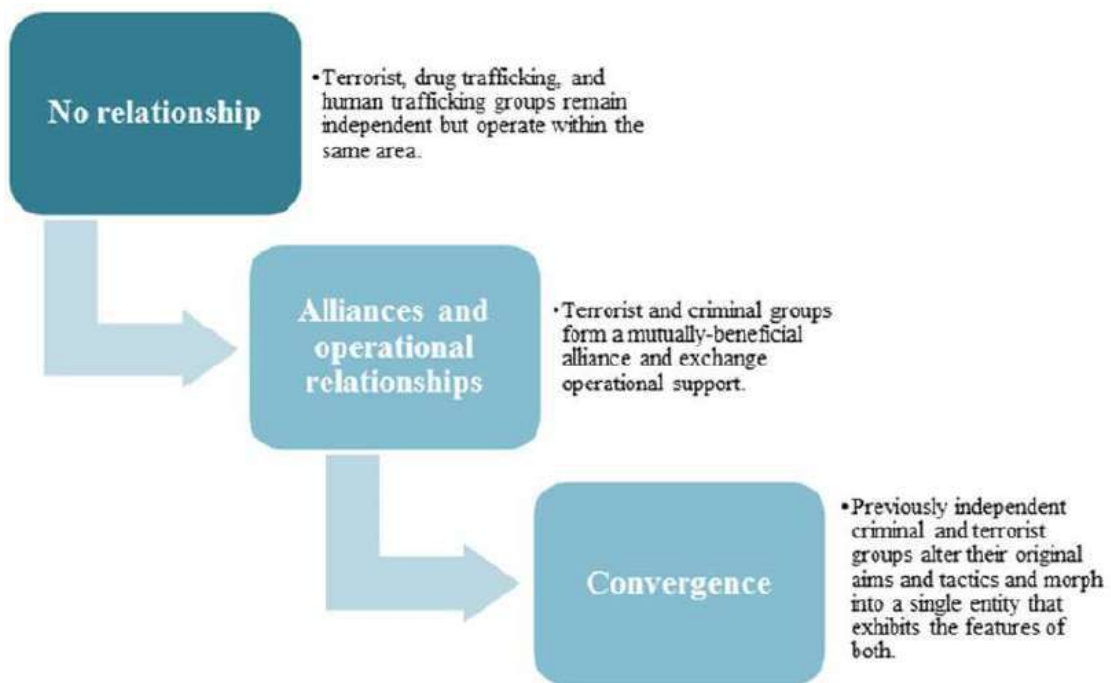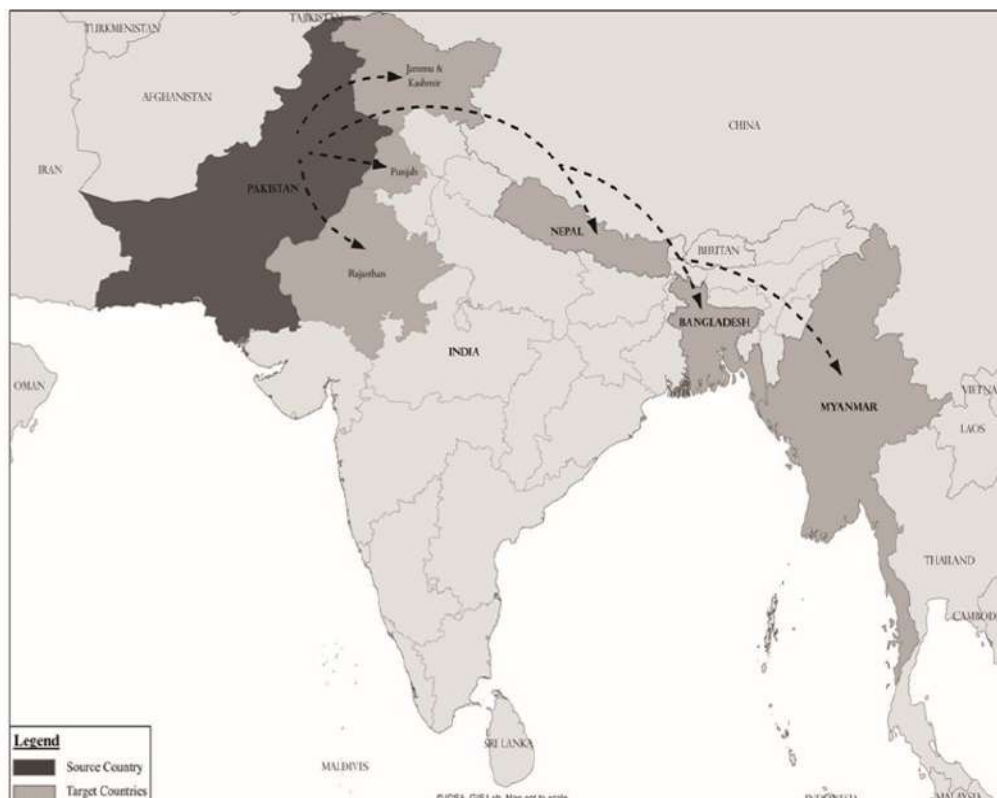
Fig 1: Crime-Terror Nexus

(Source: UNODC, https://www.unodc.org/e4j/zh/organized-crime/module-1/key-issues/similarities-and-differences.html)

Map 2: Drug Trafficking Routes from Pakistan

(Source: Vivek Chadha, Lifeblood of Terrorism- countering Terrorism Finance, Bloomsbury)

Karachi is host to numerous terrorist organisations, including Al-Qaeda, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT), and crime-terror entities like D-Company. Collectively, these groups are responsible for drug trafficking not only in India but also in Pakistan.

The nexus between terrorism and organised crime presents a major challenge for India. For organised criminal groups, profit and control of specific criminal markets are the ultimate objectives. For terrorist organisations, money earned through drug trafficking or any other channels is simply to fund their terrorist acts. Drugs serve as a significant funding source for terrorism. Like counterfeit money, this threat can be assessed in three steps: production, the entry of drugs or their financial gains into the country, and their distribution to terrorist organisations (Chadha, 2015).

In the case of India, Pakistan's army and ISI, along with organised crime groups near the border areas of India, are responsible for drug trafficking. Narco-terrorism requires an abundance of logistical and intelligence support, and its execution is impossible without the collaboration of ISI and the Pakistani Army (Kshitij & Prabha). In Pakistan, not only criminal enterprises but also the active involvement of state-sponsored terrorism contributes to the exploitation of the highly profitable drug trade. This has resulted in criminal syndicates, terrorist organisations, and government intelligence agencies capitalising on border vulnerabilities for the illicit drug trafficking industry. Recent news reports have highlighted specific instances of corruption within anti-narcotics agencies, such as Mazhar Iqbal, the former head of the Anti-Narcotics Investigation Unit of Lahore Police, found involved in cross-border drug smuggling (Chaudhry, 2023).

Drug Trafficking by ISI to Push Its Strategic Interests in India

India, due to its strategic geographical location, finds itself positioned between two notorious regions: the Golden Crescent and the Golden Triangle. Furthermore, its unique geographic setting, being encompassed by the sea on three sides, also exposes it to threats emanating from the Maritime Domain. Recognizing its limited capacity to directly confront India after numerous historical defeats, Pakistan has shifted its approach towards employing proxy warfare as a means to undermine stability in the Indian subcontinent. One significant facet of this strategy is the utilisation of drug trafficking as a tool to achieve its objectives. This shift towards proxy tactics and the use of the drug trade to destabilise the region signifies a complex and evolving security challenge for India.

K2 Desk: ISI's Strategic Manoeuvres in Kashmir and Khalistan

The K-2 desk is a clandestine arm of Pakistan's intelligence agency, the ISI, dedicated to rekindling militancy in India, particularly in the Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and Punjab regions. This covert operation receives substantial logistical and financial backing from the ISI and is also deeply involved in drug trafficking in Punjab and J&K to fund its activities. In the Kashmir Valley, it collaborates with Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), while in Punjab, it aligns with the Khalistan Zindabad Force (KZF) and other organisations supporting the Khalistan movement. Moreover, the K-2 desk has established a new entity known as Lashkar-e-Khalsa, utilising social media to recruit young individuals for carrying out anti-India actions.

Narco-Terrorism: A Persistent Threat in Jammu and Kashmir

Jammu and Kashmir have been at the forefront of Pakistan's focus since independence. In Jammu and Kashmir, there has been a significant increase in narco-terrorism incidents since 2021. The growing consumption of heroin in the region and the rising number of drug abuse cases have raised concerns among security forces, as the smuggling of drugs is proportionally related to terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. Apart from this, due to close proximity, many terror outfits based in Pakistan pump narcotics into J&K, consequently involving the youth in J&K in drug abuse. As it has impacted the socio-economic conditions, terror outfits see that as an opportunity to radicalise the youth, to carry out their terror activities in India.

The finances generated from drugs, such as heroin, fund separatists' activities and spread other centrifugal tendencies. The number of heroin-related drug seizures in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) has increased by a staggering 2000 percent between 2017 and 2022, rising from 3000 to over 10,000 (Majid, 2022). As per the report of the NCRB, the number of cases of drug smuggling registered in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir in the last 5 years is as detailed below:

Year	No. of the cases registered

2017	743
2018	680
2019	918
2020	933
2021	1324

(Source: R.S.US.Q.NO. 704 FOR

08.02.2023,https://www.mha.gov.in/MHA1/Par2017/pdfs/par2023-pdfs/RS08022023/704.pdf)

Khalistan and Narco-Terrorism Nexus: The Challenge in Punjab

Similar to J&K, the proliferation of drugs in Punjab can be seen as part of the ISI's strategy to reactivate Punjab militancy and collect revenue to sustain its terrorist activities in India. Drug smugglers manage to transport contraband into Jammu and Kashmir, and this illicit merchandise also finds its way into Punjab.

Through a carefully planned process, illegal narcotics enter the Punjab region from Pakistan. Drug smugglers are well-versed in the local geography, considering a wide range of factors such as weather conditions, the strategic deployment of border security personnel, and the use of cutting-edge surveillance technology to ensure the smooth passage of drugs (Arora & Kaura, 2017).

It is evident that Jasmeet Singh Hakimzada, alleged to have been involved in drug smuggling and connected to the Khalistan Liberation Force's (KLF) narco-terror module, has been officially designated as a significant narcotics trafficker by the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC). Hakimzada had established links with KLF chief Harmeet Singh and Varinder Singh Chahal to coordinate the collection of illicit drug shipments from Kashmir-based drug smugglers (Pandey, 2023).

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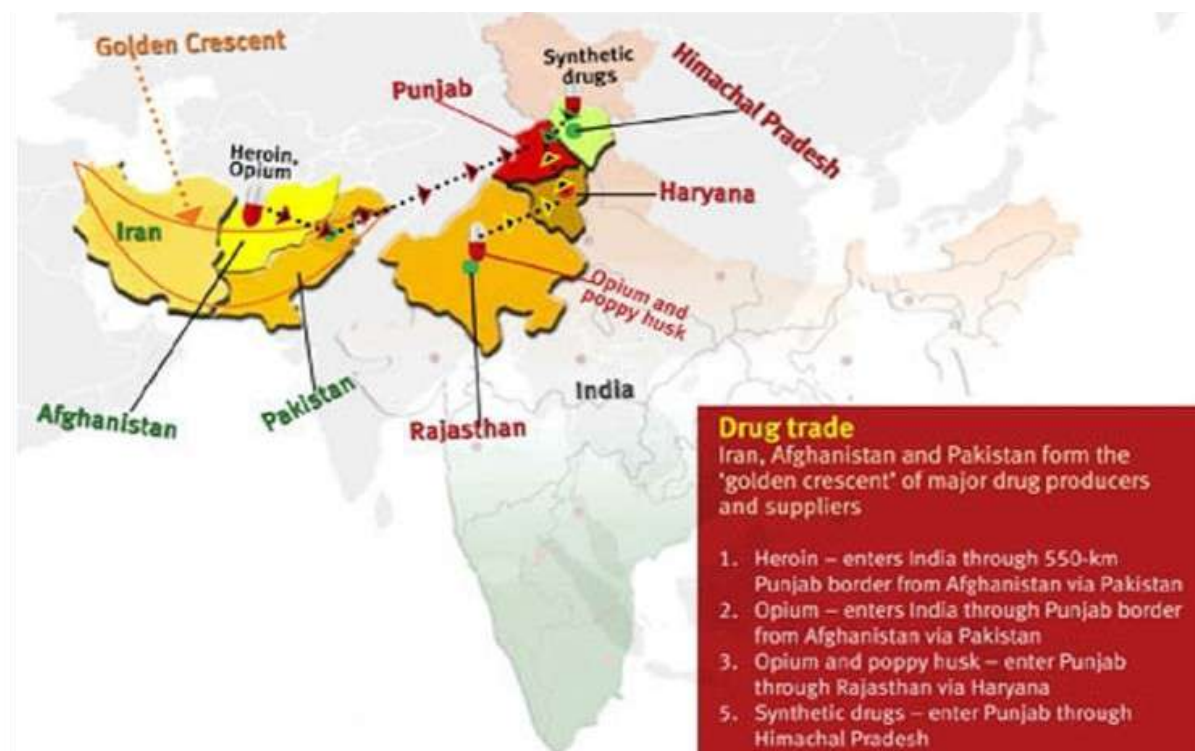
Map 3: Drug Trade

(Source: Yogesh Rajput, "Punjab Drug Problem: The Lost Generation)

In one case, police seized five kilograms of heroin along with a drug smuggler at the International Border (IB) near Hussainiwala in the Ferozepur district of Punjab. The smuggler, identified as Dalbir Singh alias Dallu (SATP, 2021), was found to have connections with a drug smuggler based in Pakistan and maintained contact with cross-border drug dealers via social media.

In another incident, officials from the Border Security Force (BSF) and the rural police in Amritsar confiscated 5.2 kilograms of heroin and weapons near the International Border. According to law enforcement authorities, a drug trafficker from Pakistan was responsible for smuggling these illegal drugs and firearms into Indian territory.

The Case of Haji Salim

According to the 2022 annual report from the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), approximately 70 percent of illicit drugs smuggled into India are trafficked via maritime routes in the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal.

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Haji Salim, a Pakistan-based drug smuggler operating from Karachi, is supported by the ISI to carry out illegal operations. Additionally, he also has links with D-company and sometimes uses the company's illegal network to advance his drug smuggling in India, Sri Lanka, and the Indian Ocean's littoral states. Salim's syndicate is also recognized for running multiple hidden facilities in Balochistan for clandestine production.

Haji Salim uses large vessels known as Mother Boats. As Mother Boats are licensed fishing vessels primarily utilised for fishing activities, operating under the authorization of a permit, this technique saves them from law enforcement agencies. These boats further transfer the contraband to smaller fishing boats and dhows in the middle of the ocean, and then these contrabands shift to various parts of states through illegal networks managed by organised crime groups in India.

In a recent development, the operation was carried out as part of 'Operation Samudragupta'. The Navy, along with the NCB, seized the drug consignment from a vessel, which the agencies call the 'Mother Ship'. The contraband weighed around 2525 tonnes, in which crystal meth was found. Furthermore, the value of the contraband is about 25,000 crore in the market. On further investigation, it was found to be linked with Salim's network (Business Standard, 2023).

Connecting the Dots: Emerging Ties Between D-Company, ISI, and LTTE

There is a symbiotic relationship between D-Company and ISI. Pakistan uses D-Company as a resource for gains against India. Reciprocal assistance between the two organisations enhances their collaboration, as D-Company's networks across India are utilised by ISI to smuggle drugs, including arms, into India. In return, ISI provides safety against security forces. Furthermore, the upcoming nexus between LTTE and ISI is alarming. After many years of turmoil and with the LTTE leader Prabhakaran being killed, the organisation is experiencing a resurgence with the support of ISI. The nexus involves illegal drug smuggling and arms trafficking to conduct their operations. The funds obtained from drug smuggling are used to rekindle Tamil nationalism, as there are still sympathisers in India and outside who support the LTTE cause.

The recent arrest of C. Gunasekaran and Pushparajah of Sri Lankan origin and his associate of Indian origin

in an illegal drugs and arms trade case sheds light on the issue. Furthermore, these accused maintain communication with Pakistan-based Haji Salim, as cited above (PTI, 2023). As this intricate web of connections becomes more apparent, it raises concerns about the relationship between Pakistan's ISI and the LTTE. This partnership not only has the potential to reignite Tamil nationalism but also can act as a conduit for radicalization. This is particularly worrisome in light of the ban on the Popular Front of India (PFI) within India, an organisation that has faced allegations of engaging in radicalization and terrorism.

The Popular Front of India (PFI) has been linked to global terrorist organisations, and some PFI activists have joined the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), participating in terrorist activities in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Some of these PFI members associated with ISIS have been either killed in these conflict zones or arrested by local and national security forces. Furthermore, the PFI has connections with Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), which is a banned terrorist group (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2022). This ban leaves PFI members vulnerable to receiving financial backing and support for the promotion of widespread radicalization, particularly in Kerala, a region that has witnessed numerous instances of individuals joining extremist groups. Additionally, there is the unsettling prospect of the PFI's members collaborating with the Haji Salim drug syndicate network, potentially leading to heightened drug smuggling activities that further complicate the security landscape in the area.

Technique Developed to Smuggle Drugs

Drones or Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) have become very affordable and accessible. Additionally, because of their long-range capability and increased flying hours, drug barons from Pakistan have exploited these to aid their activities. The easy availability of drones has allowed both state and non-state actors to use them, increasing the complexity of challenges faced by security forces (Gen. MM Naravane).

Pakistan effectively employs drones equipped with advanced encryption systems (AES) as a prime illustration. Given its permeable border with India, Pakistan utilizes drones to transport significant quantities of illicit drugs to India's border regions, primarily focusing on Jammu and Kashmir as well as Punjab. Analysts predicted in 2018 that Pakistan-based drug cartels would use drones on the India-Pakistan border in

a manner similar to the US-Mexico border (Arora & Kaura, 2018). According to the BSF, the number of cases of drones carrying drugs, arms, and ammunition has doubled from 2021 to 2022.

Drone sightings, India- Pakistan border (2020-2022)
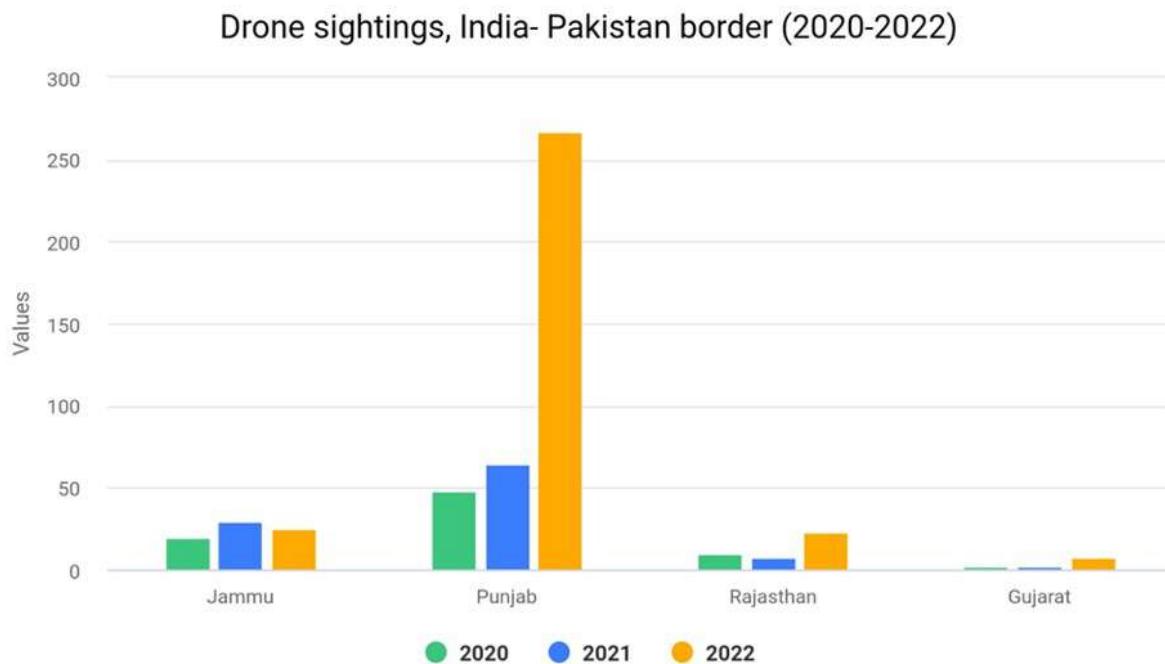
(Source: Yogesh Rajput, "Punjab drug problem: The lost generation,")

Conclusion

The issue of narcotics in Pakistan is deeply rooted in historical, geopolitical, and socioeconomic factors, creating a complex and multifaceted problem. The country's proximity to Afghanistan, its long coastline along the Arabian Sea, and porous borders with Afghanistan and Iran have provided favourable conditions for drug traffickers to thrive. The involvement of various actors, including organised crime groups, terrorist organisations, and government intelligence agencies, has further exacerbated the problem.

The nexus between drug trafficking and terrorism presents a significant challenge not only for Pakistan but also for neighbouring countries like India. The funds generated from drug trafficking serve as a significant source of financing for terrorist activities, making it a pressing security concern. The situation in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab, where the proliferation of drugs is linked to terrorism, underscores the need for a comprehensive and coordinated effort to address both the drug menace and its security implications. The rise

in narco-terrorism incidents in these regions highlights the urgent need for effective law enforcement and border security measures.

Furthermore, the emergence of new techniques, such as the use of drones for drug smuggling, adds another layer of complexity to the problem. This highlights the importance of staying ahead of evolving tactics employed by drug traffickers and terrorists.

In summary, addressing the narcotics issue in India necessitates a comprehensive strategy that tackles its underlying causes, bolsters law enforcement and border security measures, and promotes international collaboration to dismantle the networks supporting drug trafficking and its links to terrorism. This multifaceted challenge calls for a united effort from various stakeholders to safeguard the region's well-being and security.

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Singh, S. K. (2002). DRUG TRAFFICKING AND DRUG BARONS IN PAKISTAN. *India Quarterly, 58*, 119-138. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/45073403

Indus Water Treaty and Pakistan's Water Security Challenges

By Pulastya Singh

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Abstract

The Indus Water Treaty (IWT) was signed in Karachi Pakistan, this treaty has maintained the water-sharing agreement between India and Pakistan successfully for the past six decades irrespective of the problems and tensions between the two nations. This paper aims to explain the future of the IWT and Pakistan's water security challenges, while the IWT gave India absolute control over Ravi, Satluj and Beas and guarantying an unrestricted flow of water from Indus, Jhelum and Chennab into Pakistan. The IWT has a net guarantee that nearly 80% of the Indus River system's water flows into Pakistan. Hence, the Indus water over the years has emerged as Pakistan's lifeline, making it crucial for its food security. Due to the growing concerns of climate change along with other reasons, there have been growing voices in India wanting to renegotiate the IWT as according to reports even if we limit the global warming levels to just 1.5 degrees Celsius even then the glaciers fueling the Indus will lose one-third of their volume which is problematic for both India and Pakistan. However, Pakistan is not very keen on renegotiating the IWT as it sees the topic of the Indus being developed by India as a strategic weapon, especially since 2016 when the Indian Prime minister said blood and water can't flow from the same place. Even after all these challenges it is the need of the hour to rethink and redevelop our strategies towards the Indus water as it can have serious implications on both the countries.

Introduction

The Indus Waters Treaty is a historic and pivotal international agreement that was signed between India and

Pakistan. It is considered to be one of the most significant trans-national water-sharing arrangements in the world, governing the distribution of waters from the Indus River system, which includes the Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab rivers, along with their tributaries.

The IWT was signed between the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and the Pakistani President Ayub Khan on the 6th of September, 1960, with it being brokered by the World Bank. The treaty sought to divide the Indus Water between India and Pakistan based on the "Eastern" And "Western" River basis, with the eastern rivers being - Beas, Ravi, and Sutlej with a mean annual flow of 41 billion m^3 then going to India and the western rivers being - Indus, Chenab and Jhelum with a mean annual flow of 99 billion m^3 then going to Pakistan. India getting nearly 20% of the total water carried by the Indus River system while Pakistan received the lion's share of 80%.

During the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, the landmass was divided based on man-made border lines created by British officers which led to the creation of the "Indus watershed". The position of lines was such that India gained control of the upstream barrages or dams which controlled the flow of water in Pakistan. The border between India and Pakistan divided every Indus tributary in an upstream-downstream arrangement that became a point of conflict between India and Pakistan, especially in the construction of dams in India. This made India the upper riparian state and Pakistan the lower riparian state which gave India the control of flow of water into Pakistan, this led to Pakistan becoming insecure regarding India's intentions of making Indus water a strategic weapon to uphold their national interests and water is one of the most important resources in the world for every single nation as it is necessary for the existence of humans but especially it is crucial for the Indian subcontinent as agriculture plays a key role in every subcontinent nation, as is not only important for the existence and basic uses but for economy and food security as well.

Over the years, the treaty has allowed for India to use the water of the western rivers for irrigation or agricultural practices or to do activities that don't obstruct the flow of water into Pakistan. The treaty has provided for a detailed regime of regulations seeking to restrict the sovereign right of India to build projects such as dams over the western rivers that flow through her territories. Even with the presence of detailed regulations and restrictions on India via the treaty, Pakistan has been worried regarding the prospective

weaponization of the flow of rivers by India, especially during times of war, which might allow India to create floods or droughts in Pakistan by tampering with the flow of western rivers. (malik, 2023).

Irrespective of the poorly thought insecurity that persists and perils the minds of the Pakistani strategic thinkers the treaty over the years, has undergone various tests, including periods of heightened bilateral tensions, but has stood the test of time, demonstrating the resilience of its framework. Despite occasional disputes and disagreements, the Indus Waters Treaty continues to play a crucial role in ensuring a degree of stability and predictability in the allocation of water resources between India and Pakistan.
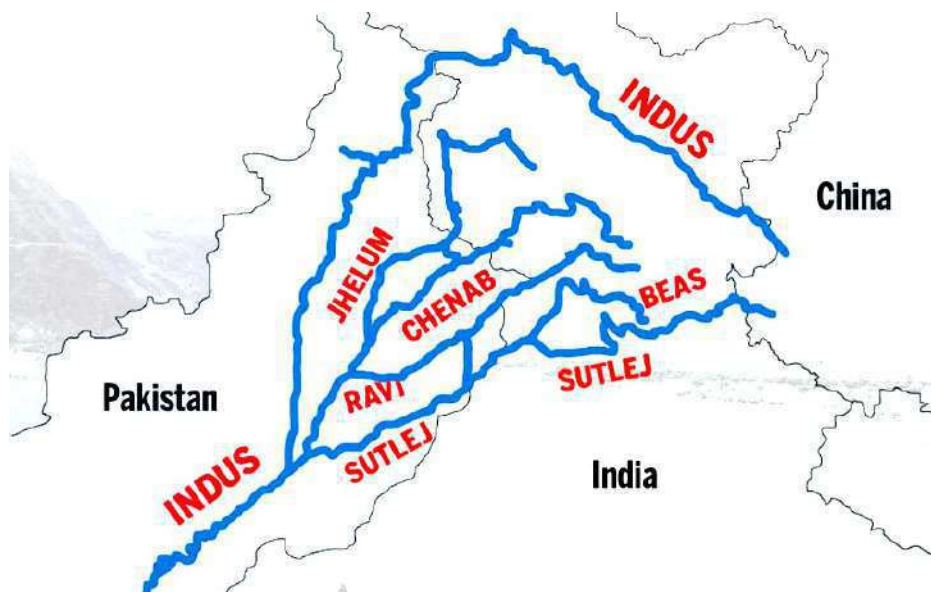

Figure 1 : Indus River System

source: https://iasbaba.com/2023/02/indus-waters-treaty-3/

Provisions of the Indus Water Treaty

The Indus Water Treaty, known as the IWT, comprises of the Preamble, 12 Articles and 8 detailed Annexures (A to H). The operative articles, from articles 1 to 12, of the treaty include definitions, provisions regarding eastern rivers, provisions regarding western rivers, provisions regarding eastern and western rivers, financial provisions, exchange of data, future cooperation, permanent Indus commission, settlement of differences and disputes, emergency provisions, general provisions and final provisions respectively.

According to Article 1 of the IWT, any river that forms a catchment area outside the other five rivers is a part of the Indus River including its delta channels and connecting lakes etc. According to the IWT, India enjoys exclusive right of control and use of the eastern rivers, while Pakistan has exclusive control of the western rivers after the permitted water usage in India.

Article IV (14) of IWT stipulates along with the said nature of the usage of the water resources, in case there is a use of a said quantity of water which is innately developed out of the underutilized quantity of water of another country, the party which is enjoying the unutilized amount of water will be allowed to enjoy the same, unless contrary to the other stipulated provisions, hence creating a condition which encourages a culture which promotes for there be high efficiency in water usage. According to article 5.1 of the IWT, India was obliged to make a fixed contribution of sixty-two million and sixty thousand UK pounds sterling to Pakistan towards the cost of construction of a new canal system for irrigation of western rivers in the Punjab province of Pakistan, India had made 10 equal instalments for this payment despite the challenges such as the India Pakistan war of 1965. This action also further symbolizes the commitment of the Indian side towards this treaty, which seeks to achieve water security for both countries. Further on, Both nations also agreed to share data on the related matters of the Indus Water Treaty CITATION MEA602 \l 1033 (MEA, 1960).

The treaty stipulates that both Parties agree that they will not invoke this Treaty, anything contained therein, or anything arising out of the execution thereof, in support of any of its rights or claims whatsoever or in disputing any of the rights or claims whatsoever of the other Party, other than those rights or claims which are expressly recognized or waived in this Treaty CITATION MEA602 \l 1033 (MEA, 1960). Hence, creating a surrounding that incentivizes both parties to consider that it is not in their best interest to abrogate the Indus water treaty, despite the history of animosity, trust deficit as well and a net inhospitable hydro-political climate, especially given the fact that both the countries are primarily agrarian economies, therefore making sure that both the parties to the treaty, India and Pakistan, remain engaged in the IWT's transboundary Indus Basin water sharing cooperative framework CITATION May19 \l 1033 (Mirchandani, 2019).

However, it is still going to be in the best interest of both India and Pakistan if they reconsider a few provisions in the treaty to better deal with problems such as climate change which are more modern challenges.

The percentage of water distribution between India and Pakistan

"In 1960, the treaty outlined how India and Pakistan would divide water from the Indus River system's six rivers. The three western rivers— the Indus, Chenab and Jhelum—were given to Pakistan for unrestricted use, whereas the three eastern rivers — the Ravi, Beas and Sutlej—were given to India. This means that Pakistan received 80 per cent of the water, whereas India received 20 per cent of the water. Even if we overlook India's rights as the upper riparian country, based on the Indus River basin areas of the two countries, the division should have allocated 65 per cent of water to Pakistan and 35 per cent to India. What appears to have been decided was that Pakistan would take the water of the three western rivers, while India would take those of the three eastern rivers."((Retd),2023).

There are concerns in India regarding the water distribution between India and Pakistan, many Indian scholars think that the Indian Government that signed the IWT achieved what was during then seemed to be in the best interest of our nation even though today in hindsight seems to have given Pakistan an undue advantage regarding the use of the Indus water.

According to the Indus Water Treaty, the formation of the Permanent Indus Commission or PIC was done to follow a set procedure for adjudicating any future differences and disputes arising over the implementation, interpretation or breach of the treaty. One commissioner to the PIC is appointed by each country and the commission is required to meet at least once every year to discuss the matters related to the Indus Water Treaty. Further, the said commissioners are supposed to give an annual report to the respective governments about the work and developments that relate to the field of Indus water distribution, though it is to be noted that these reports are never made public not even by Pakistan which has time and again accused India of violating the treaty CITATION MEA602 \l 1033 (MEA, 1960).

1. If they do not resolve the question(s) by agreement, then it would be dealt with under the dispute settlement mechanism prescribed in Article XI of the IWT which is as follows:

(a) Any difference which, in the opinion of either Commissioner, falls within the provisions of Part 1 of Annexure F 1 shall, at the request of either Commissioner, be dealt with by a Neutral Expert, in accordance with the provisions of Part 2 of Annexure F;

(b) If the difference does not come within the provisions of Paragraph (2) (a), or if a Neutral Expert, in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 7 of Annexure F, has informed the Commission that, in his opinion, the difference, or a part thereof, should be treated as a dispute, then a dispute will be deemed to have arisen which shall be settled in accordance with the provisions of Paragraphs (3), (4) and (5) CITATION MEA602 \l 1033 (MEA, 1960).

Further, the treaty obligates Both nations to inform each other about the developments in engineering projects that might affect the flow of water and to keep sharing the related data, and the data sharing has continued irrespective of the problems and tensions faced by the subcontinent.

The matter in question

The issue in contention when it comes to this treaty doesn't primarily arise out of the percentage of water distribution, though this issue is also of important significance, the issue which is in contention is that even though through the provisions of the said treaty India has been in a disadvantaged position in terms of the percentage of water distribution, hence creating for Pakistan no such incentive to question or change the percentage of water distributed. Pakistan's objections to this treaty have been based on the idea of trying to stall water development projects in Kashmir.

Kashmir is the biggest talking point when we look at Pakistani politics and stopping Kashmir from integrating with mainstream India is the biggest reward in Pakistani politics and water development projects will fail Pakistan's idea of doing so. Hence, Pakistan has always been extremely critical of Indian projects on the western rivers, in particular on the Jhelum and the Chenab, they always conform to the technical stipulations.

The treaty empowers Pakistan to raise queries and at times even demand for the stalling of certain Riverine constructions, especially Dams, this power over the years by successive Pakistani governments has been weaponized by them seeking to create issues where there exists none with the primary objective of stalling any development activity which is taking place in Kashmir or the Indian controlled rivers in general.

Details of a few projects are mentioned as follows

1. The Salal Hydroelectric Project (on the river Chenab in the Udhampur district of Jammu and Kashmir)

The construction of the project started in 1970. The design conceived of a two-stage powerhouse, with a total installed capacity of 690 MW (345 MW each). Pakistan has raised concerns about the Salal hydropower project, arguing that the projects could potentially give India the ability to control the flow of water into Pakistan, particularly during times of conflict causing man-made floods.

"This immediately raised concerns in Pakistan, and it pitched its diplomacy to ensure that the project was crippled. While India, in accordance with the Treaty, provided information on the project in 1974, Pakistan raised objections in 1976, and both countries entered into a series of talks. Pakistan feared that the storage capacity of the Salal Project could flood parts of Punjab in Pakistan, or stop water from reaching the Punjab plains. India tried to convince Pakistan, as it has always done and does so even today, that it would be impossible to cause flooding in Pakistan without causing damage to the territory within India's control. Eventually, India conceded and, in 1978, agreed to reduce the height of the dam" CITATION Utt21 \l 1033 (Sinha, January-March 2021).

2. Tulbul Navigation Project (on Jhelum river)

Pakistan opposes the Tulbul Navigation Project, also known as the Wullar Barrage Project, primarily due to concerns over water rights and the potential violation of bilateral agreements. Situated in the disputed region of Jammu and Kashmir, the project aims to facilitate navigation on the Jhelum River. Pakistan asserts that the project could grant India control over the flow of water into Pakistan, potentially impacting its crucial agricultural sector.

"Pakistan objected under Article I (11) of the IWT relating to "man-made obstruction", as well as under Article III of "storing any water of, or construct any storage works on, the Western Rivers". The work on the Tulbul Project was stopped in late 1987, and the discussions dragged on. In 1991, India agreed to adjust the design of the project keeping in mind Pakistan's concerns - for example, to keep about 6.2 mt of the project ungated. Initially, India suspended work on the Project temporarily for a few months as a goodwill gesture to

resolve the differences. However, despite numerous government-level meetings between the two countries, the difference remained unresolved. The Tulbul Navigational Project is now part of the Composite Dialogue Process, providing Pakistan further flexibility to delay the meaningful resolution of issues, or possibly link it with other issues if a situation arises" CITATION Utt21 \l 1033 (Sinha, January-March 2021).

3. Kishenganga (330MV) and Ratle (850MV) hydroelectric power plants (based on Jhelum and Chenab respectively)

The opposition to these projects has been raised by Islamabad on technical grounds rather than the construction of the dam in principle, despite India's full compliance with the technicalities stipulated under the IWT. Notably, Islamabad sought World Bank intervention seeking specifically appointment of COA. These actions of Islamabad, are driven by the intent to disrupt the development of water resources on the Indian side rather than any genuine apprehension.

The construction of dams and hydrological projects are high-priority developments for both India and Pakistan, as both nations have young populations and would seek to industrialize and generate employment. The fact is that Islamabad's concerns are overlaid by its changing demographics, increased urbanization and rising demands on the agricultural and industrial sectors while it has failed to develop and manage the water resources available to it.

Over the years, Pakistan has quickly emerged as one of the most water-stressed countries in the world due to its failure in capacity building, despite IWT guaranteeing it sufficient water. Islamabad lacks resources for maintenance and development of its water resources to ensure adequate supply for catering to increased demand and ensure environment and people-friendly flow. On the other hand, India has sought to develop projects that seek to utilize the allotted water resources sustainably with a people-centric approach, with Pakistan trying to stall or delay these projects and seeking to blame India for its failures to do the same. Pakistan authorities will have to stop seeking conspiracies and start developing stable relations with India (Giuliani, 2022). Sure Storage on rivers indeed creates anxiety for lower riparian states; but India, as an upper riparian, has considered the water supply concerns of Pakistan and made policies and infrastructure constructions while keeping them in mind and adhering to the Indus Water Treaty. It must be noted that there is not a single storage dam that India has built on the western rivers - even though the IWT allows storage

entitlement of up to 3.6 maf " CITATION Utt21 \l 1033 (Sinha, January-March 2021).

Figure 2 : Dams on the Indus Water Treaty

source: https://images.app.goo.gl/MLhmK21VBkzNn8uX6

Pakistan's water scarcity problem

The problems faced by the Indus Water treaty are important for both nations but because of the location and importance of the Indus water system in Pakistan, harm caused to the Indus water system can be devastating for Pakistan. Pakistan grapples with water scarcity primarily due to technical factors. Outdated and inefficient irrigation systems contribute to significant losses in the transportation of water from canals to fields, accounting for approximately 30% of wastage. Furthermore, over-extraction of groundwater is rampant, particularly in areas where surface water resources are insufficient. This over-pumping leads to falling water tables, which in turn affects both agricultural and domestic water supply. Moreover, Pakistan's limited storage capacity for water, exemplified by the lack of adequate reservoirs and dams, means that a substantial amount of water flows into the sea during monsoon seasons, leaving the country ill-prepared to manage water shortages during drier periods. These technical challenges are compounded by broader issues of population growth, urbanization, and climate change, underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive water resource management in Pakistan.

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To understand the importance of the Indus in the functioning of Pakistan we first need to know how many sources of water resources Pakistan has. Pakistan majorly has three major water sources:

(I) The Indus water system

(II) western rivers from Kabul

(III) the melting of seasonal glaciers in Karakoram.

The other sources of freshwater in Pakistan other than the Indus water system are seasonal and thus unreliable. This ends up creating a structural overdependence on the Indus water system for Pakistan's functioning CITATION DrM223 \l 1033 (Rahman, 2022)

The Indus water system has, as previously stressed, grown over the years to become the lifeline of Pakistan because Pakistan's economy is highly dependent on the agricultural outcome produced by the nation. 70% of Pakistan's manual labour is engaged in agricultural practices and agriculture in Pakistan contributes 20% to the net valuation of their Gross domestic product (GDP), hence, Indus is the most important water source in Pakistan to support its agriculture on which their entire economy is contingent.

The third structural reason is contingent upon the previously aforementioned reasons, due to the Indus water system being the only reliable source of water in Pakistan which guarantees the year-long supply of consumable water and Pakistan's economic dependence on their agricultural output we can understand two more dimensions of Pakistan's dependence on the Indus water system

(I) The Indus water system is crucial for the food security of Pakistan as we see that in the status quo, common people of Pakistan are struggling to meet their basic nutritional needs and, in this situation, if there is an abnormality in the flow of Indus can harm the agricultural produce of Pakistan

(II)Exports: the lack of industrialization and almost no presence of the service sector in Pakistan's economy makes exports of natural produce one of the most important commodities to sell and maintain a functioning FDI. Thus, the importance of water in cultivating natural produce makes the Indus water system even more important.

The last dimension of water security challenges faced by Pakistan is its water management system, the absence of tools and mechanisms to have a sustainable and efficient utilization of the allocated water resources for agriculture usage has led to water management challenges as excess rainwater in Pakistan ends up ruining the agricultural produce and causing floods hence they need to develop mechanisms to better utilize the amount of rainwater received CITATION DrM223 \l 1033 (Rahman, 2022).

Reliance of India and Pakistan on the Indus water treaty

India can use the western river waters for irrigation use and non-consumptive use such as power generation, navigation, fish culture, etc. According to the treaty, India enjoys absolute control over the eastern rivers hence India is very reliant on the Indus water treaty as power generation is one of its key features. India in the 21st century is developing rapidly hence it is extensively power hungry and the Indian government is keen to generate power from all possible sources as it is crucial for industrialization which can have multiple benefits such as generating employment, boosting the economy etc. CITATION Joh211 \l 1033 (Vater, 2021).

Pakistan's reliance on the Indus water treaty is more significant than India's because Pakistan's economy is highly dependent upon its agricultural outcome and because the Indus is the only reliable water source in all of Pakistan hence the Indus water treaty is not just important for power generation but for economy, food security and employment.

The impact of the status quo on their water security

The current economic and political conditions of Pakistan would have led to the Pakistani leadership thinking about the loss of bargaining power in the attempts to revamp the IWT because Pakistan heavily relies on the waters of the Indus River and its tributaries for agriculture, industry, and domestic use. Any changes to the treaty could potentially impact its water security, affecting the livelihoods of millions of people CITATION Ahm231 \l 1033 (Soofi, 2023).

India and Pakistan have a long history of political tensions, and water resources can easily become a contentious issue. Renegotiating the treaty might open up diplomatic complexities, as both countries would

need to agree on any changes. And Pakistan has always been doubtful of India's intentions towards IWT since 2016 when the current Indian Prime Minister in one of his famous speeches said, blood and water can't flow from the same place concerning Pakistan sponsoring terrorism in India CITATION Ahm231 \l 1033 (Soofi, 2023).

In Pakistan, the Indus River holds cultural and historical significance. Any changes to the treaty could potentially spark a public backlash, making the government wary of pursuing revamping efforts. And in the current political and economic situation it is highly unlikely that any political party will step up for the task.

Issues impacting the Indus River system and affecting the future of the Indus Water Treaty

1.Salination of the Indus River at its mouth in the Arabian Sea:

Increasingly due to the Arabian Sea, the Indus is dying a slow death. The channels of this mighty and historic river are running dry, while salt water is destroying the lush tamarisk forests that once lined the river, the estuarine timmar, mangrove swamps, and the red rice paddies CITATION Ari92 \l 1033 (Hasan, 1992). Reduced freshwater flow in the lower reaches of the Indus River plays a pivotal role. This can be attributed to various reasons such as upstream dam construction, diversion of water for irrigation, and changing precipitation patterns due to climate change. These factors collectively diminish the volume of freshwater reaching the delta region, allowing seawater to intrude further upstream. Rising sea levels due to global warming exacerbate the problem. As sea levels increase, the saline water from the Arabian Sea can more easily infiltrate inland, especially during low-flow periods in the river. This can contaminate the soil and groundwater, making it unsuitable for traditional agriculture.

The consequences of this salinization are far-reaching. It negatively impacts agriculture, as most crops are not well-suited to high salinity levels. It also affects the livelihoods of local communities dependent on agriculture, potentially leading to economic distress. Moreover, the intrusion of saltwater into freshwater sources poses a significant threat to drinking water supplies and can harm local ecosystems, including aquatic and bird species that rely on the delta for their habitats.

2. Effects of Climate Change on the Indus Water Treaty

Climate change refers to long-term shifts in global weather patterns largely caused by human activities, such as burning fossil fuels and deforestation. This leads to rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and environmental disruptions, impacting ecosystems, sea levels, and human societies worldwide.

This is arguably one of the most problematic things for the Indus water treaty as climate change affects the Indus water system very deeply and through a lot of dimensions climate change has caused changes in the precipitation pattern and altered the cycle, the intensity of rainfall and snow melt which has impacted the amount of water available in the Indus water basin this has led to fluctuations in the water use pattern for things like agriculture, hydropower and domestic use. The biggest source of water in the Indus River system is through the melting of glaciers because the Indus originates from Mount Kailash in western Tibet which is mostly fed by glaciers, due to climate change the glaciers are melting at a faster rate

leading to increased water runoff initially, this will eventually cause reduced water availability as glaciers shrink in the long run, leading to water scarcity during critical periods.

Climate change has also been linked to an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as floods and droughts. These events negatively influence the water balance in the Indus basin, leading to soil erosion, damage to infrastructure and loss of crops and livelihoods. The Indus Water Treaty also covers the western rivers of the Indus Basin, which flow through Pakistan. Rising sea levels due to climate change can impact water quality and availability in these areas, affecting the usability of the allocated water.

According to a publication of the Inter-University Consortium on Cryosphere & Climate Change (IUCCCC), the indicators of climate change are clear in the Indo-Himalayan region such as recession in snow and rapid melting of glaciers, change in precipitation patterns and a general rise in temperature along with other harms brought by climate change are evident in the Indo-Himalayan region(Romshoo et al., 2020), with this being finding being further substantiated by the reports from the International Centre for integrated mountain development (ICIMOD) If global warming is limited to just 1.5degrees Celsius even then the glaciers that feed Indus will lose one-third of the volume very soon CITATION DrM223 \l 1033 (Rahman, 2022).

Basin Characteristics	Nos. of sub-basins	Total area (km²)	Total no. of glaciers	Total glaciated area (km²)	Annual precipitation (mm)	Glacial melt contribution
Indus	18	1,005,786	16,097	32,246.43	423	~50%
Ganges	7	990,316	6237	18,392.9	1035	~9–10% (~30% at Rishikesh**)
Brahmaputra	27	525,797	10,106	20,542.75	1071	~12%
Total	52	2,521,899	32,440	71,182.08		

Sources: Eriksson et al., 2009; Immerzeel et al., 2010; **: Maurya et al., 2011.

From the table given above we can see that the amount of clean and safe to consume glacier and glacier water available is very limited due to which losing one-third of the net volume of glaciers is very problematic which should be an immediate concern.

Climate change can significantly strain hydro-diplomatic ties between nations. As global temperatures rise, shifts in precipitation patterns and the melting of glaciers alter the availability and distribution of water resources. This can lead to increased competition and conflicts over access to dwindling water supplies. Additionally, more frequent and severe extreme weather events like droughts and floods can disrupt water infrastructure and reduce water quality, exacerbating tensions.

Furthermore, rising sea levels can lead to saltwater intrusion in coastal aquifers, affecting both the quantity and quality of available freshwater resources. To mitigate these challenges, nations must engage in collaborative efforts to adapt to changing water conditions, implement sustainable water management practices, and establish effective mechanisms for resolving water-related disputes, reinforcing the importance of hydro-diplomacy in the face of a changing climate. But we cannot underscore the propensity of co-riparian states to solve their conflicts by working together to build a safe and reliable water supply which now is imperative for India and Pakistan as they need to consider updating and amending the Indus Water Treaty to incorporate climate change considerations. This might involve revising water allocation mechanisms, enhancing data sharing and transparency, and developing strategies to manage the changing hydrological conditions in the Indus Basin. Such efforts would require sustained diplomatic efforts and a commitment to cooperation in the face of shared challenges.

3. Effect of climate change on Indian monsoon trend

There is evidence of extreme rainfall over the Indian subcontinent in the warming climate. Rainfall events can be classified as short, long, dry or prolonged dry based on duration and low, moderate or heavy in terms of intensity CITATION Ris23 \l 1033 (Sahastrabuddhe, Ghausi, Joseph, & Ghosh, 2023). This unpredictability poses a substantial challenge for farmers who rely heavily on timely and adequate monsoon rains for their crops. Additionally, climate change has the potential to disrupt the traditional timing of the monsoon. An early or late onset can disturb agricultural planning, potentially resulting in crop failures or reduced yields. This, in turn, can have ripple effects throughout the economy, affecting food prices and the livelihoods of those dependent on agriculture. Furthermore, the spatial distribution of rainfall is also changing. Some regions may experience a surplus of rainfall, while others face deficits, leading to disparities in water availability and agricultural productivity. Overall, the influence of climate change on the Indian monsoon is complex and multifaceted, with far-reaching implications for food security, water resources, and economic stability in the region.

4. Growing threats of Hydro-Terrorism

It is important to understand that water security can be a contentious issue in many regions, including Pakistan. Disputes over water resources can contribute to tensions between neighbouring countries or within regions of a country. Pakistan and India have had historical disputes over the sharing of water resources, particularly related to the Indus River system. These disputes can act as a catalyst to terrorism. "hydroterrorism" generally refers to the use of water-related infrastructure or resources as a target or weapon in acts of terrorism. Acts of hydroterrorism can result in the loss of human lives and cause significant damage to infrastructure, including dams, water treatment facilities, and other water-related infrastructure. This can lead to extensive economic costs and disruptions in the affected areas. hydro terrorism can erode trust between nations or within communities. Such actions can lead to increased tensions and conflicts, potentially escalating into larger-scale conflicts. It can lead to increased security measures and expenses to protect water infrastructure, diverting resources that could be used for other important purposes.

An unfortunate trend can be observed in the Middle East and indeed in some other parts of the world. States, societies and illegitimate groups have demonstrated a growing tendency to use water as a force of destruction

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rather than as a source of nourishing human society and environment. While some treat water infrastructure as a target in violent conflict, others use water as an instrument of violence. Sometimes, it is difficult to decipher whether water is a target or an instrument of violence, as the two aspects of the destructive perception of water are interchangeable CITATION Str14 \l 1033 (Strategic Foresight Group, 2014).

The Middle East has witnessed state-sponsored hydro-terrorism conducted by non-state actors, as well as mutually assured hydro-destruction during civil wars. The latter affects all warring parties within a conflict zone, as in the case of Yemen and Syria, where waterborne diseases such as cholera have emerged. These events, whether in the Middle East, collectively represent a disturbing military tactic - the weaponisation of water - polluting it with floods of oil or releasing it to cause deliberate flooding, tragic episodes in a larger environmental history of warfare CITATION Ibr23 \l 1033 (Al-Marashi, 2023).

Considering that the Indus water treaty is seen as a highly politicized topic in Pakistan and considering that Pakistan has always opted into spreading terrorism to achieve its agendas it is not an unlikely scenario where Pakistan will opt into "hydroterrorism" given that they do not agree to revisit the Indus water treaty. Hydro-terrorism would be detrimental to the Indus water treaty as if Pakistan opts into committing Hydroterrorism then even India won't have any incentive to respect the treaty and keep the water Indus water flowing.

4. Growing threat of prospective Water Wars

With the growing threat of climate change and increasing population causing strain on the limited resources, these factors together are posing to our planet a growing threat of conflict, especially conflicts that might be fought for getting enough clean water. In addition to negatively impacting people's capacity to support them, the lack of water poses a danger to regional and global stability.

"Water wars" are conflicts resulting from rivalry for access to water resources. Water disputes have traditionally been limited, but as water supplies become increasingly scarce, there is a growing chance that these conflicts could turn into larger, more serious conflicts. Further on, with the growing unsustainable usage patterns of water and the increasing threat of climate change, along with other factors, that are currently limiting access to clean drinking water in certain portions of the world, this threat and crisis of availability of

water in future may escalate to conflicts fought to gain access to the said resources. When we think about international water distribution we have various theories that prove what's acceptable and what's not acceptable when nations are dealing with such a crucial resource as water, at one end of the continuum was the doctrine of "absolute territorial sovereignty," according to which a state could do virtually as it pleased with the portion of an international watercourse within its territory-at least short of changing its course so it entered the downstream state at a different location-irrespective of the harmful consequences in the downstream state. At the other extreme was the doctrine of "absolute territorial integrity," which held that the upstream state could do nothing to interfere with the natural flow of the river into the downstream state CITATION STE96 \l 1033 (MCCAFFREY, 1996).

The doctrine of "absolute territorial sovereignty" is most often identified with an opinion prepared in 1895 by an Attorney General of the United States Judson Harmon issued a hundred years ago, the doctrine holds that a country enjoys absolute sovereign rights over the portion of an international watercourse within its borders. Thus, that country would be free to divert all of the water from an international watercourse, leaving none for downstream states CITATION STE96 \l 1033 (MCCAFFREY, 1996). The doctrine claims the absolute freedom of a riparian state, often the uppermost riparian, to utilize the waters flowing through its territory regardless of the effect of its actions on other riparian states.

India in this regard has always worked in full cooperation with its lower riparian partner even when the intention of the lower riparian state was simply to stall the developmental projects to push its political agenda. Quoting The historic Lake Lanoux arbitration case between France and Spain, the whole point of the arbitration of Lake Lanoux was to prove that the need for equitable and reasonable utilization of transboundary water resources is key for international cooperation. The arbitral tribunal ruled in favour of France with some conditions. It granted France the right to build a dam in the upper basin of the Carol River, which would lead to the creation of Lake Lanoux. However, certain conditions were imposed to address Spain's concerns about potential negative impacts on downstream water flow. France was required to ensure a minimum flow of water to Spain and to implement measures to regulate and control the water released from the dam. Hence, with this arbitration case, a precedent was set regarding the utilization of the trans-national

water bodies for developmental measures, establishing that the upper riparian states are also obligated to ensure water security to the lower riparian states. This arbitration case has led to the birth of the principle of limited territorial sovereignty and community theory for the usage and development of trans-national water bodies, these have also been the foundational principles on which India seeks to approach the issue of trans-national water bodies, not only limited to Pakistan but also with Myanmar and other neighbouring countries.

Over the years, through verbatim and praxis India has always conducted itself as a responsible upper riparian state that has managed to diplomatically handle any and every curve ball thrown its way by its lower riparian counterpart, this certainly brings down the chances of a potential water war especially between India and Pakistan simply because India is always ready to engage in dialogue regarding any concerns that are raised.

Pakistan's unwillingness to revamp the Indus Water Treaty

Despite the challenges mentioned above Pakistan has shown an unwillingness to revamp the IWT renegotiating the treaty could potentially reopen complex issues and lead to uncertainties for Pakistan regarding water allocation. Additionally, the sensitive political context of Indo-Pakistani relations, especially regarding the status of Jammu and Kashmir, makes discussions about the treaty a highly delicate matter. Any attempts to alter the agreement would require careful diplomatic negotiations and could potentially open up broader political disputes though they realize that climate change is affecting the Indus water system and hence they need to bring some changes in the IWT to secure the future of the Indus water system and the treaty and considering that political relations are evolving in nature they are chances they might consider discussion regarding the Indus water treaty

Way Ahead

Over the past 20 years, India has been debating whether to replace IWT with a better version of it or to get rid of it altogether. People who want to get rid of the treaty argue that it's outdated and doesn't take into account new facts and reasons for working together, like studying the basins better, looking into the interests of Kashmiri people, and using new technologies to make dams, reduce pollution, and so on. Those who want to abrogate the treaty say that it's given Pakistan more water than it deserves, hasn't been friendly, and has

been used to stop and delay power and navigation projects in Jammu and Kashmir, which has hurt the people of Kashmir. Over the years, those who have been in favour of India not abrogating the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) have argued as follows :

Firstly, the IWT is a longstanding international agreement that has provided a framework for managing shared water resources between India and Pakistan for over six decades. Abrogating it unilaterally could damage India's reputation on the global stage and undermine its credibility in future diplomatic negotiations especially when India is emerging as a credible voice in terms of geo-political relations, diplomacy and hydro-diplomacy.

Secondly, the treaty serves India's strategic interests by allowing the utilization of the eastern rivers for irrigation and hydropower projects. Disrupting this arrangement could have adverse economic and strategic consequences. Moreover, abrogating the treaty could lead to increased tensions with Pakistan, potentially escalating into conflicts that would be detrimental to regional stability and security.

Improving dispute management in the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) involves addressing the challenges that have arisen over time and finding ways to enhance cooperation among the parties involved. Establish a dedicated communication channel or platform for the regular exchange of hydrological data, river flow information, and weather forecasts. Timely sharing of information can help prevent misunderstandings and build trust. The established joint technical committees comprising of experts from both countries will seek to monitor water usage, share data, and assess the impact of new infrastructure projects on river flows. Hence, Strengthening the existing dispute resolution mechanisms provided for in the treaty. Encourage the utilization of negotiation, mediation, and arbitration before resorting to more adversarial methods.

Conclusion

Looking and analysing from an Indian perspective, there must be a policy devised by the authorities to have complete usage of the allotted river water which is going unused to the Pakistanis, at the same time it must respect international law and uphold the sanctity of IWT until a greater consensus isn't achieved regarding its

revamp or exiting the said treaty. Further on, given the harsh reality of the diminishing water flows in the Indus basin due to climatic changes, revision or review of IWT will have to be given priority. The geopolitical conditions will need to be ripe and realization dawned in Pakistani establishment as regards the common destiny of neighbours living in such proximity. Perhaps, it will take India to lead from the front to bring a review of the 1960 IWT, especially in the light of climate change, to the negotiation table at the right time. For now, let us celebrate that IWT has stood the test of time over the past six decades. It will require a common understanding and wisdom among the riparian states of the Indus Basin for the future improvement of the common hydrologic resources in the interest of their millions of citizens. Only time will tell how long it will take for this idea to become a reality.

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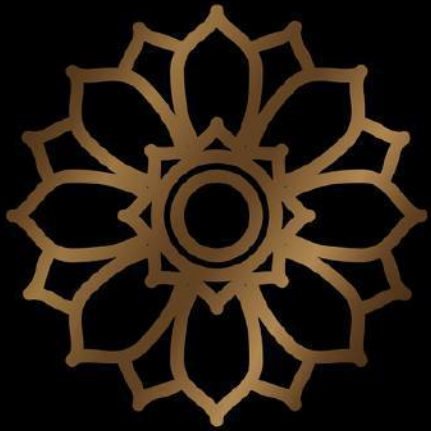
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