

Article

India and Global Discourse on State-sponsored Terrorism

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Abstract

India has had modest success in its efforts to internationally isolate Pakistan as a state-sponsor of terrorism. More effective in this regard has been Pakistan's own duplicity vis-à-vis the West. Indian discourse has not resonated abroad because it relies too heavily on respect for vague global norms rather than adherence to specific national interests, which are more easily comprehended by foreign governments. New Delhi's previous failures to respond militarily to cross border terrorist attacks have been interpreted as weakness by both Pakistan and the wider international community. The Modi government has launched efforts to correct this historical deficiency. However, it needs to be supported by an intellectual assault upon the Pakistani Deep State, launched via academic and journalistic commentators.

Keywords

Terrorism, Pakistan, ISI, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Propaganda

Introduction

This article takes a critical view of New Delhi's efforts to mobilize international support against state-sponsored terrorism. It focuses on cross border terrorism emanating from Pakistan and the role of the Pakistani intelligence community, army and civilian establishment in facilitating this. While acknowledging that American views specifically, and Western perceptions more generally, have become less favourable to Islamabad since 9/11, the article suggests that India can take limited credit for this. More than Indian discourse, the reason for the shift lies in Pakistan's duplicity vis-à-vis American efforts to stabilize Afghanistan. Having Osama Bin Laden discovered in Abbottabad did not help either. The article offers a grim assessment of possibilities for global counterterrorism cooperation.

The time of writing (November 2017) marks nine years since a squad of ten jihadists, with the approval of the Pakistani intelligence and army leadership, sailed

from Karachi to Mumbai and killed 166 people (Kießling 2016, p. 214). The organization that dispatched these jihadists, Lashkar-e-Taiba, has not faced any justice. Rather, it is acquiring a political façade. It wishes to ensure that in the event of more Mumbai-style operations, it can claim public legitimacy through participation in electoral processes. Meanwhile, the international community has failed to hold Pakistan accountable for hosting cross border terrorism. Although 25 of the victims in Mumbai were foreigners, with British and American nationals specifically targeted, the episode has been trivialized in international discourse as an Indo-Pakistani spat.

Even worse, the US and UK governments tried for a while to convince New Delhi that it shared a common objective with Islamabad in defeating terrorism. They urged that, as the larger power, India should be magnanimous and make the first move towards resuming dialogue. Their deceptive wordplay obscured the fact that Pakistan's strategy for combating domestic terrorism has been to deflect it outward to India and Afghanistan. The West also chose to forget that Indo-Pakistani relations were exceptionally positive on the eve of the Mumbai carnage, and thus the attack was doubly traumatic for India. Later, suspicions arose that Pakistani intelligence had taken advantage of this cordiality. Islamabad may have deliberately ensured that visiting Indian security officials were taken on a sight-seeing tour beyond telecommunication coverage just prior to the attack. Thus, as the jihadist onslaught unfolded in Mumbai and the city police struggled to improvise a response, top officials with the mandate to coordinate a national-level effort were being held incommunicado in Pakistan (Zee News 2016).

The Mumbai attack and its unsatisfactory aftermath provide a snapshot of what is wrong with India's efforts to fight terrorism through global governance processes. Reliance on foreign policy activism to rally moral outrage against a rogue state like Pakistan fails when that state has nuclear weapons, a clear propaganda line that terrorism is a byproduct of territorial disputes, and an economic and military patron in China. Not incidentally, the Chinese patron also wields a binding veto in the UN Security Council, ensuring that all India's efforts to sanction Pakistan will come to naught. Taking these points as the building blocks of its argument, the present article will proceed as follows. First, it will outline the nature of terrorism facing India, specifically the issue of state-sponsorship. Then it will explain why Indian efforts to dissuade Pakistan through non-violent means have only yielded very poor results. Finally, the article will conclude with the suggestion that a more militarily offensive posture against Pakistan needs to be adopted, with the job of diplomats and scholars being to create a discursive space that emphasizes the necessity of such an approach. For this, they must painstakingly catalogue the trajectory by which Pakistani terrorism has managed to flourish in South Asia.

The Nature of Terrorism: Non-State versus State-Sponsored

9/11 had a beneficial side-effect in that it forced the West to recognize that mass casualty terrorist movements do not arise from impoverishment and bad governance alone. During the 1990s, a racist undertone pervaded thinking in Washington that if a country persistently experienced terrorism, it was that country's own fault. Such views radiated outwards to encompass much of Western discourse, given the United States' leading role as a discourse shaper. The irony was that the US itself had been a victim of state-sponsored terrorism in the Middle East, notably in Lebanon in the early 1980s. But the incidents that focused its attention on such terrorism were just that – incidents, which could be isolated in time and space and which did not threaten American civilians on the US mainland. So the US took an exceptionalist view, seeing terrorism either as a specifically American problem or no problem at all. A degree of empathy was felt for kindred nations overseas – those with a shared European ancestry, and which loosely belonged to the Western ie., Judeo-Christian civilization. Unfortunately, India 'fell in between the cracks' of this worldview because it was not a prosperous, ethnically white country. There was at the time, no sizeable Indian diaspora with the requisite political heft to lobby on behalf of New Delhi. Furthermore, the exigencies of superpower rivalry with the Soviet Union dictated that alliances be struck with unsavoury regimes. Thus, American officials overlooked Pakistani sponsorship of terrorism in India's Punjab province and did not share information on this subject for fear of implicating Islamabad (Raman 2007, p. 153 and Badhwar 1984). All its talk about democracy promotion did not stop Washington from allowing a 'friendly' military dictatorship to sponsor terrorism against a 'hostile' elected government. Not for nothing have Pakistani officials since remarked at American hypocrisy for criticizing in the 2000s what had been quietly tolerated in the 1980s.

But while the post 2001 international system became more sensitive to the threat from terrorism, it was the specific interpretation of that threat which was problematic for India. Groups such as Al Qaeda were truly stateless entities, but organizations such as Lashkar-e-Taiba were not. They were bureaucratized, hierarchical structures with a territorial headquarters (usually located in Pakistani Punjab), recruitment centres that advertized in urban localities, and weapon training facilities co-located with Pakistani army installations. Such realities did not stop George W. Bush from describing LeT in December 2001 in the following words: 'Lashkar-e-Tayiba is an extremist group based in Kashmir. LAT [sic] is a stateless sponsor of terrorism, and it hopes to destroy relations between Pakistan and India and to undermine Pakistani's President Musharraf. To achieve its purpose, LAT has committed acts of terrorism inside both India and Pakistan' (Outlook.com 2001). Actually, as the American scholar C. Christine Fair later observed, LeT has been favoured and protected by the Pakistani security establishment precisely because it never struck inside Pakistan. The ease with which the US president

distorted facts to morally equate both victim and sponsor of terrorism was hardly surprising. He could be equally misleading with his own citizens. An example was when he told American radio-listeners in February 2003 that Iraqi intelligence had strong operational ties with Al Qaeda (Kumar 2006, p. 56). The US establishment has long been aware of state-sponsored terrorism, but just not when Indian lives are mainly the ones at stake.

This indifference has been a constant factor that limited the effectiveness of Indian counterterrorism. In 1993, the US impeded investigations into the Mumbai (then Bombay) bombings after Indian authorities uncovered evidence linking Pakistani ordnance stores to the explosive material used. The Central Intelligence Agency asked for the evidence to be handed over, ostensibly to allow an independent investigation of Pakistan's role, and then 'accidentally' destroyed it (Raman 2003). Fifteen years later, the CIA allowed one of its sources, David Headley, to reconnoiter targets in Mumbai on behalf of LeT. It hoped that by allowing Headley to gain credibility with Pakistani jihadists, he would uncover clues that might locate Osama Bin Laden. Headley's arrest a full year after the 2008 Mumbai attack was not prompted by a desire to deliver justice for the victims. Rather, it was triggered by knowledge that Indian intelligence agencies had finally identified him as a LeT operative and would ask for his extradition or even worse, arrest him when he travelled again to India (Levy and Scott-Clark 2013, p. 58).¹ To ensure that its own double-dealing remained secret for as long as possible, the CIA had Headley arrested in the US on terrorism charges. Thereafter, Indian investigators' access to him was limited to carefully tutored meetings during which he revealed just enough about Pakistani officialdom's complicity in the attack to make Islamabad uncomfortable. The CIA calculated that, by blackmailing Pakistan with the prospect of even more incriminating disclosures about its role in the Mumbai attack, it could extort cooperation with regard to US efforts to combat the Taliban in Afghanistan. Indian lives were thus bargaining chips for Washington, which only hardened its stance towards Islamabad following the 2011 discovery of Osama Bin Laden a mere stone's throw from the Pakistani military academy.

India has made international cooperation the cornerstone of its efforts to combat Pakistan-sponsored terrorism. This is a cardinal mistake. The history of counterterrorism suggests that all states, regardless of public pronouncements to the contrary, will strike deals with foreign terrorists in order to keep their own citizens safe from attack. Only with regard to domestic terrorism, of which there is hardly any in the West that merits policy or media attention, is the tough rhetoric matched by operational reality. For international terrorism, the rules are different. This can be demonstrated by three historical examples:

¹ The information about Headley being arrested to prevent him falling into Indian hands was provided to the author of this paper by a senior Indian intelligence officer, who is a reliable source as far as the author is concerned.

- Switzerland clandestinely negotiated with the Palestinian Liberation Organization in 1970, providing diplomatic support in exchange for the PLO not attacking Swiss interests. The avowedly neutral Swiss entered into this Faustian bargain just as the Palestinians were focusing their attacks on civil aviation. Perhaps as a direct consequence of these secret talks, an investigation into the bombing of a Swissair flight to Israel, in which 47 people died, suddenly went cold. Nobody was brought to justice despite the perpetrator being identified (Geiser 2016).
- The CIA recruited the mastermind of the 1972 Munich Massacre, Ali Hassan Salameh, as an ‘agent of influence’. In exchange for ensuring that Palestinian terrorists did not hit Americans, Salameh brokered American support for the idea of eventual Palestinian statehood. To the Israeli Mossad, the CIA-PLO deal was an infuriating obstacle to counterterrorism efforts. The US agency made clear that it would regard any public disclosure of the deal as ‘an unfriendly act’. Mossad was left to plan assassination attempts against Salameh in political isolation, knowing that he was protected by Israel’s most valuable ally (Markham 1983 and Bird 2014).
- In 1985 the US got a taste of similar medicine from the French. Upon being informed that Imad Mughniyeh, chief of Hizballah’s special operations, was in Paris, the French moved to detain him. Except, they did not. Instead they discreetly negotiated with Mughniyeh – a terrorist mastermind wanted by both Israeli and US Intelligence – for the protection of French nationals in Lebanon. Then they turned him loose and claimed he escaped from their surveillance. The CIA and Mossad could only fume at such perfidy, especially since Mughniyeh had practically invented the concept of vehicle-borne suicide bombing (Los Angeles Times, 1986).

Similar experiences have bedeviled Indian efforts to forge an international consensus against terrorism. Officials in New Delhi allege that any intelligence shared by Langley and London only becomes specific when it concerns a threat to American or British interests (Nanjappa 2014). For the rest of the time, counterterrorist liaison is a Western exercise in contact-building within the Indian security establishment, with vague assessments being shared. These have little actionable value and often reiterate what was conveyed earlier, building up a deceptively large paper trail which can serve as ‘insurance’ in the event of another massive attack from Pakistan. Perhaps no ‘friendly’ country has been as perfidious as the UK. Three examples illustrate this point. First, after the Mumbai attack, the then British Foreign Secretary publicly drew a link between the atrocity and the status of Kashmir. In so doing, he gave the attack a veneer of retrospective legitimacy (Nelson 2009). Not even the Pakistani government had attempted this, since Islamabad was loath to associate Kashmir’s so-called ‘indigenous freedom

struggle' with a high-profile terrorist incident. From the perspective of the British foreign office, killings by Pakistani jihadists were attributable to Indian domestic policy, rather than to Pakistani foreign policy. Second, in summer 2015 the British foreign intelligence service MI6 brokered an information-sharing pact between the Pakistani Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) and Afghan intelligence. The pact called for mutual non-cooperation with 'hostile foreign agencies' – a phrasing that was widely perceived as applying to India (Bagchi 2015). Considering that relations between Afghan and Pakistani intelligence officials had long been frigid, the abrupt turn-around from Kabul was associated with hidden British pressure. Lastly, in summer 2015, the British Broadcasting Corporation reported that Pakistan's Muttahida Quami Movement, a political party associated with high-intensity crime and urban violence in Karachi, had received Indian funding. This allegation was made at almost the same time as the Afghan-Pakistani intelligence pact, leading some Indian observers to question if the UK was leveraging its dominance of international media services to airbrush Pakistani sponsorship of terrorism and project India as being equally culpable of killing civilians through covert operations (Sareen 2015 and Noor 2015). According to Indian security officials, the British security establishment is desperate to retain ISI goodwill in collecting intelligence on terrorist plots directed against the UK. For this reason, MI6 is prepared to represent Pakistani interests within the British foreign policy establishment, and damage India's.

Cables released by Wikileaks reveal that diplomats from the US, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, acting as a cabal, met during the 2008 Mumbai attacks to craft a common response. They decided to offer sympathy to India in the hope that this would mollify New Delhi and convince it not to respond militarily against Pakistan (Walsh 2010 and Wikileaks 2008). Apparently, they assessed that Indian political elite was so desperate for a charitable gesture that it would forego vengeance for its murdered citizens. They were right. In such a context, it is hardly surprising that India has been unable to unilaterally steer international discourse in a direction that would dissuade Pakistan from cross border terrorism. By depending on the US and the UK to be its interlocutors with the larger Western community of wealthy, democratic and industrialized nations, New Delhi has made itself a permanent hostage to the goodwill of others. The next section of this paper shall explain where this infantile need for parental support comes from, and why it has failed to deliver the results that India hoped for.

2017 is neither 1947 nor 1971

The Indian political and foreign policy establishments (both of which are, not coincidentally, devoid of serving military officials) have an obsession with projecting India as a 'moral' power (Sullivan 2014, pp. 643-645). This is a legacy of the independence struggle against colonialism. Caught up with a narrative that India

harnessed a unique type of 'spiritually' pure energy through non-violent protests against the British Raj, and that these led to the Raj's demise (the crippling effect of World War II being merely a footnote), Indian foreign policy has since 1947 been one of exemplary sufferance calculated to arouse bystanders' sympathy. Just as stoically absorbing *lathi* (baton) blows from policemen in front of the world's press was meant to de-legitimize the colonial regime, so too does India hope that non-violent agitation about Pakistani sponsorship of terrorism will generate transformative results. Not reacting militarily to covert transgressions, whether the 1993 Mumbai blasts or the 2008 raid on the same city, has been part of a larger attempt to project India as a 'mature' power that does not use its superior strength to take revenge on a troublesome neighbour. It is also an attempt to widen civil-military cleavages within Pakistan, by projecting the phenomenon of terrorism as originating from a rogue military and intelligence apparatus, but not civilian leaders or the Pakistani people as a whole.

Restraint has not really delivered results. Since high-impact attacks by Pakistan-based terrorists are rare (outside of Jammu & Kashmir), the international community has little memory of India's forbearance and even less appreciation for it. New Delhi's failure to respond militarily is seen as weakness. According to residues of the Darwinian logic once favoured by Anglo-Saxon apologists for empire, the weak suffer only because they must. Inaction is also perceived as a sign of the relative cheapness of Indian lives, since neither India's government nor society care enough about cross border terrorism to risk a war over it. In this context, why should the international community take a stand against Pakistan?

Meanwhile, no irreparable rifts have appeared between Pakistani civilian and military leaders that may be exploited to India's benefit. Although an argument can be made that at a general level, suspicion between politicians and army leaders leaves Pakistan weakened, this does not have much relevance for the specific problem of cross border terrorism. Indeed, it complicates the problem by allowing Western governments to lobby New Delhi to remain militarily passive, on the spurious grounds that any attack on Pakistan would undermine that country's progress towards 'democracy'.

Thus, whatever statements of support are made by foreign governments following a terrorist incident in India, are fleeting expressions of diplomatic courtesy. Instead of generating soft power through showcasing its magnanimity towards a rogue neighbor, India has exposed a 'soft vulnerability'. As Jacques Hymans points out, 'soft power is the ability to make others do what you want on the basis on how they see you', whereas 'soft vulnerability is the fate of seeing others doing what you *don't* want on the basis of how they see you' [original emphasis] (Hymans 2009, p. 259). Its stoicism in the face of repeated Pakistani attacks has trapped India into a disadvantageous behavioural pattern because it allows the

West to cite past examples of Indian inaction and urge that the same be continued. In effect, Pakistan gets away with murder – literally – due to India's refusal to break out of a self-imposed Stockholm Syndrome. Confused perspectives within Indian society only reinforce this sense of drift. When the December 2014 attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar took place, thousands of Indians held candlelight vigils in solidarity with the victims. Presumably, none cared that Pakistani civil society has never held a comparable show of support for Indian victims of cross border terrorism. Or that even Western societies were essentially unmoved by the spectacle of Pakistani schoolchildren being killed. Basically, Indians showed more compassion for Pakistanis than did that country's own long-standing donors and partners, such as China or the Gulf Arab states. In such a situation, it is hardly surprising that neutral countries see no reason to assume an activist posture on state-sponsored terrorism.

There are other problems as well. India wishes to selectively internationalize its conflict with Pakistan by bringing the issue of state-sponsored terrorism before the United Nations but keeping Kashmir off the agenda. On the face of it, it has grounds for doing so: Pakistan, like all member states of the UN, is bound by Security Council Resolution 1267 to take action against terrorists based on its soil. (It has neither done so nor has any intention to.) India on the other hand, can cite the 1972 Shimla Agreement that the Kashmir issue will be resolved bilaterally. So in legal terms, there is no contradiction in India's effort to emphasize cross border terrorism internationally and talk about Kashmir bilaterally.

Unfortunately for New Delhi, its previous experiences with both the UN system and the individual P5 powers of the Security Council (except Russia) have shown that principle gives way to expediency. India's complaint about Pakistani aggression in Kashmir in 1947-48 was transformed by British skullduggery into a territorial dispute. Aware that it had already risked Arab wrath by permitting the creation of Israel, Whitehall did not want to further jeopardize the UK's energy security by souring relations with the Islamic community of nations over Kashmir (Ankit 2013, pp. 29-30). Thus, it helped legitimize Pakistan's duplicity of covertly pushing irregular fighters into the mountain kingdom. From this precedent, the Pakistani army drew the correct conclusion that in the event of future acts of cross border aggression, it could count on foreign powers to remain strictly neutral while simultaneously urging a synchronized bilateral de-escalation. This pragmatic but blatantly unprincipled combination would work to India's disadvantage, provided Pakistan always struck first.

The only occasion when India comprehensively defeated Pakistan was when it cast the first stone. Victory in Bangladesh happened not because India waited for a crisis to develop before responding. Rather, it patiently steered events in a direction that worked to the strategic disadvantage of Pakistan. For several years

prior to the Pakistani army crackdown of March 1971, Indian intelligence agencies built up contacts with East Bengali separatists. When the military regime in Islamabad annulled the results of its own electoral process in December 1970 and disenfranchised the population of East Pakistan (55% of the total population), it created fertile grounds for a revolt. When it further worsened the situation by launching a genocidal counterinsurgency operation, it violated basic Anglo-Saxon norms about respecting human rights. Coming at a time when memories of the Second World War were still fresh, these two events (annulment of elections and the March 1971 crackdown) gave Indian diplomats an easy time of isolating Pakistan internationally. The Research and Analysis Wing's newly created psychological warfare division performed stellar work in highlighting the human tragedy of the Pakistani civil war, thus preparing the grounds for India's military action to be widely (if somewhat reluctantly) perceived as a necessary humanitarian intervention (Raman 2007, p. 12).

Unfortunately, there has not been another case where India has had a sufficiently decisive leadership as with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, nor an equally well-articulated case for taking military action. Spectacular terrorist incidents like the 1993 blasts and 2008 armed raid simply did not last long enough for international opinion to be mobilized and shaped in a manner that built up a clear picture of Pakistani state culpability and demanded action. Furthermore, neutral governments have been understandably wary of being instrumentalized in an ongoing geopolitical rivalry. The fact that no Western country has experienced cross border terrorism of a state-sponsored nature is a huge disadvantage for India's messaging campaign. Within Europe or North America, there is no rogue state that funds and trains its citizens to attack a neighbouring state. Even the 'hybrid war' in Ukraine is not really a 'Western' affair because it is happening between two countries that are outside NATO and the European Union. Thus it is portrayed in EU/NATO discussions as primarily a bilateral fight between Kyiv and Moscow, much like the 2008 Mumbai attack has been reduced to an Indo-Pakistani tiff.

Western policymakers simply cannot (or will not) make the cognitive connection between their policy concerns with terrorism and those of Indian counterparts. As far as they are concerned, state-sponsored terrorism was a yesteryear phenomenon, a sporadic byproduct of superpower tensions during the Cold War. It did not kill large numbers of people, thus allowing it to be eclipsed by larger ethnonationalist movements such as Palestinian nationhood. Meanwhile, non-state terrorism such as Irish irredentism or Basque separatism could be contained through inter-governmental cooperation. Path dependency has maintained this paradigm. Thus, the default setting of neutral foreign governments has been to unimaginatively advise New Delhi to 'work together' with Pakistan to defeat cross border terrorism.

The unique nature of India's terrorist problem, which is both of a cross border and state-sponsored variety, means that its closest fellow-victim is Israel. Having experienced terrorist attacks (both non-state and state-sponsored) for decades, Israel is a logical partner for counterterrorism cooperation. However, Israel is routinely criticized for excessive use of force against Palestinians and an occupation policy that sometimes is overtly racist. To be compared with Israel, especially in connection with Kashmir, would not do India much good. Thus, New Delhi is left struggling to find an entry point into international discourse on terrorism, which has already calcified along certain predetermined lines based on the (rather limited and tame) experiences of Western powers.

This leads to another problem: the limited penetration of Indian media into the international market, as well as the low academic rankings of Indian universities. Both mean that non-governmental instruments for discourse-shaping cannot be effectively used to highlight the challenges that Pakistani sponsorship of terrorism poses to global governance more generally. The Indian television audience overseas is overwhelmingly limited to lower-middle class members of the diaspora, many of whom struggle to make a decent living in high-wage economies where their immigrant status is an unstated disadvantage. They have little ability to influence the foreign policies of their host countries, with the US being a partial exception due to exceptionally successful profiles of Indian immigrants there. As for native-born foreign audiences, New Delhi has no equivalent of RT (formerly Russia Today) which serves as an effective tool of Kremlin propaganda overseas. Although its credibility has taken a hit with the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian conflict, RT still has an impact on domestic politics in the West. An intelligence study on alleged Russian interference in the 2016 US presidential election focused for about half its length on RT (Rutenberg 2017). If India were likewise able to insert its own perspectives into the international news landscape, it could steer opinions towards greater hostility vis-à-vis Pakistan-sponsored terrorism.

One way to do this would be to leverage India's large English-literate middle class into becoming a niche supplier of inexpensive talent for digital journalism and book publishing. The Kremlin does not only rely on RT to spread its worldview, but also on printing presses such as Evropa Publishers (which brings out academic literature on political science and history, that conforms to the official Russian line on world events – see Belousov 2012, p. 65). Numerous reports have noted the existence of 'troll factories' in Russia, which saturate Western social media networks with disinformation and build up fringe debates to the point where they enter into mainstream narratives (Chen 2015). With its penchant for avoiding totalitarian methods of message control and propaganda, democratic India may be averse to such underhanded methods. But in the absence of necessary techniques to take charge of its own image management, India cedes the initiative

to Western journalists who are hardly its friends.

Western and Indian reporters have noted that the mainstream media in the West, led by the BBC, has a pronounced Indophobic bias (Gautier 2017, Thakur 2016 and Dutta 2015). Part of the reason why reports about Pakistani involvement in terrorism are accompanied by words like ‘alleged’ or ‘India accuses/Pakistan denies’ is because India does not have China’s ruthless censorship policy, wherein those who write unfavourable articles about the country have their visas revoked and are kicked out. For all the antipathy which China arouses among sections of the US defence establishment, Beijing knows how to control international commentary about itself and its blatantly illegal sea-grabs in the South China Sea. India, despite showing superhuman restraint after each terrorist provocation, is merely reduced to being another disputant alongside Pakistan whenever a cross border attack occurs. This can be changed by promoting the Indian broadcast media industry and print journalism to internationally respected standards of sophistication, and by cultural attunement with foreign audiences (through hiring Western journalism graduates for instance, whose jobs would depend on compliance with reporting guidelines set by Indian editors). It can also be changed by raising the academic rankings of Indian universities in the social sciences and inviting foreign scholars for research visits on jihadist terrorism and irregular warfare. India needs to develop a civilian-led tradition of War and Strategic Studies, which is nominally independent of government control but whose scholars openly argue the Indian case against Pakistan. For this, necessary investment in international journal subscriptions, travel budgets for academic conferences and research visits, and closer ties with foreign universities, must happen.

Conclusion

A June 2016 article in the *New York Times* explored the phenomenon of victim-blaming. It cited psychological studies that found that when narratives focus on generating sympathy for a victim, they actually have the opposite effect. Observers who are fed such a narrative assume that certain characteristics unique to that victim made him/her an easy (and quasi-legitimate) target for misfortune. This bias persists even when the misfortune has been deliberately caused by a clearly identified perpetrator. However, when fed a narrative that focuses on the perpetrator, observers tend to judge the latter more harshly (Niemi and Young 2016). Put simply, the studies found that it is easier to manufacture criticism of a perpetrator than to generate sympathy for a victim. With this principle in mind, India must reboot its information warfare strategy as concerns Pakistan.

The thrust of Indian diplomacy, both at the level of government officials interacting with foreign counterparts, and professional groups such as academic and journalistic networks, must be to investigate and expose Pakistan as a rogue state that

sponsors cross border terrorism to externalize its domestic failures. Internationally peer-reviewed articles on Pakistani civil-military relations, drug-trafficking, Islamist politics, Baluch separatism and violent crime in Karachi, must be authored. These must be inserted into academic networks for aggressive dissemination to European and North American scholars researching on South Asia. Likewise, books on Indian strategic affairs must be published with leading Western presses. Western academics must be encouraged to publish with Indian journals, whose standards of review need to be raised to the point where their international credibility is sufficiently alluring for early-career scholars from Anglo-American and European universities. This is would be a lengthy process unfolding over several years.

Most importantly, there needs to be a clear effort to link the territory of Pakistan with the notion of terrorist safe havens. This can happen after more surgical strikes such as those which occurred on 29 September 2016 against terrorist launch pads in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir. Through 'propaganda of the deed', New Delhi can generate media headlines about Pakistan's role in fomenting terrorism. Merely relying on semantics at the UN will not be enough for the purpose. Western news agencies operate on the credo that 'if it bleeds, it leads'. To ensure that Islamabad is shamed beyond redemption for its sponsorship of terrorist attacks, India must be prepared to shed some of its own blood, while ensuring that even more Pakistani blood is shed in the process. And it must do this as soon as a suitable opportunity presents itself. As this paper has argued, the only time when India has totally defeated Pakistan was when it went on the offensive. Indian diplomats, scholars and journalists need to start building up a case for cross border strikes on the Pakistani army and its jihadist proxies, as a matter of priority. Then, when the next Mumbai-type attack occurs, India will be ready to do what is needed.

'To some extent, the government of Narendra Modi has already been moving in this direction. During 2016-17, India chalked up two big successes in its fight against Pakistan-sponsored terrorism, both of which are consistent with its efforts to strengthen global governance. First, at the level of policy discourse, it has focused on the role of the Pakistani 'Deep State' in promoting terrorism (Chaudhury 2017). This is a major innovation, as it emphasizes the role of specific state security institutions in terrorist incidents, without implicating the entire administrative machinery of Pakistan. Thus it maintains the (contrived) narrative that Pakistani civilian leaders want 'peace' while a hawkish military-intelligence establishment wants to play spoiler. It can be viewed as a psychological warfare tool within Modi government's 'offensive defence' doctrine, which aims to protect Indian citizens far more rigorously than previous governments have.

Ever since the 2011 Arab Revolts in the Middle East and North Africa, Western scholarship has become aware of hidden dynamics within autocratic and semi-

democratic political systems, that allow jihadists to receive funding, arms and manpower through covert government sources. By leveraging this discourse, India has demonstrated that it cannot easily be equated with Pakistan, since Indian democracy is widely recognized as being among the most stable in Asia. Highlighting the role of the Pakistani Deep State in sponsoring sectarian terrorism domestically (through Sunni supremacist groups) could strengthen New Delhi's efforts to shape academic and policy debates. The Pakistani media is an excellent source of information on linkages between sectarian terrorists and government officials. For decades, this reservoir of data has not been effectively used to embarrass Islamabad, despite its obvious potential to vindicate Indian claims about the roguish nature of Pakistan's security services.

By funding academic research on Pakistani domestic politics, New Delhi can gradually influence scholarly debates in the West. Indian researchers may be able to showcase their superior understanding of Islamabad's unstated insecurities, by citing Pakistani counterparts to prove their point. This was the strategy used by West Germany to delegitimize the East German regime during the Cold War, and it proved very effective (Bytwerk 1999, p. 407). India has thus far managed to convert the wave of Islamophobia that swept through Western countries following the 2014 rise of the 'Islamic State/Daesh' into a strategic asset *via-a-vis* Pakistan. Much of the hostility that the administration of US President Donald Trump has shown towards Islamabad stems from a nativist, anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant backlash among white Americans. So, Pakistan is being called out for supporting terrorism much as Saudi Arabia's connection with the 9/11 hijackers is being put under belated scrutiny – as a sign of US impatience with duplicitous 'allies'. But if it persists with riding this wave of racist sentiment, New Delhi cannot get very far as the same nativist instinct among Americans can also turn upon Indians. Indeed, it already has to some degree, as US protectionism in the high-skilled labour market has demonstrated. Therefore, New Delhi must rely on classic techniques of information warfare, including the weaponization of academic literature in political science and international relations/area studies.

The second success enjoyed by New Delhi in recent times has been its successful conduct of surgical strikes in PoK. As referred to above, the strikes established a 'cause-and-effect' relationship, showing that New Delhi would not wait anymore for Pakistan to conduct farcical 'investigations' into a cross border terrorist attack, as Islamabad did with Mumbai (2008) and Pathankot (2016). Indian special forces humiliated the Pakistani army and demonstrated that nuclear deterrence will not stave off the consequences of another Mumbai-style attack. More important than Islamabad's denial of the strikes – a reflection of its delusionary mindset – was the fact that foreign governments did not criticize India. This marked a drastic improvement in India's international standing from the 1990s, when it

would be urged to show restraint no matter how vigorously it had been provoked by Pakistan. Even during the 1999 Kargil Crisis, Washington initially attempted to persuade New Delhi to agree to a synchronized de-escalation on an 'as is' basis (Bommakanti 2011, p. 288). The US proposal, if accepted would have left Pakistan in possession of territory on India's side of the Line of Control. New Delhi rightly rejected such a preposterous notion, and seeing Indian determination, Washington thereafter pressured an increasingly desperate Pakistan to restore the status quo ante. A decade later, after the Mumbai attack, the US continued with its even-handed treatment of India and Pakistan, despite American officials admitting to Pakistani sponsorship of terrorist incidents in Afghanistan. Only in recent years, with India having been repeatedly hit with small terrorist attacks not just in Kashmir but also in Punjab, and having borne these with stoicism, has a clear pattern been established that India is indeed a passive victim.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's tumultuous relationship with the US has marred its international reputation. The European Union, as an Atlanticist body, has followed the American lead in softly nudging Pakistan to behave like a civilized state and stop supporting militants in neighbouring countries. This concern has been largely motivated by self-interest amid fears that a destabilized Afghanistan could once again become a refuge for international terrorists including Al Qaeda. But mere fact that the US, EU, and even the BRICS (the latter grouping includes China) are prepared to call Pakistan-based terrorist groups an international security concern represents a minor victory for India. The real battle however, is not diplomatic but military. As the Modi government underscored in September 2016, Indian patience has its limits. The surgical strikes showed that as long as the threat of a nuclear war does not loom large over South Asia, Western powers and even China are prepared to treat Indo-Pakistani border clashes as an unavoidable reality. This has finally created political space for a large Indian response, should the Pakistani Deep State use jihadists to attack an Indian city again.

Bio

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