

Countering Pakistan's Asymmetric Warfare

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The Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), New Delhi, is an autonomous think tank dealing with national security and conceptual aspects of land warfare, including conventional and sub-conventional conflicts and terrorism. CLAWS conducts research that is futuristic in outlook and policy-oriented in approach.

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Countering Pakistan's Asymmetric Warfare

Introduction

India faces numerous, complex and unique security challenges, which range from unresolved border disputes with China and Pakistan, to insurgencies in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) and the Northeastern states, the growing menace of Left Wing Extremism (LWE) and terror attacks across the length and breadth of the country. China, despite its recent belligerence at the tactical level, is still considered a threat in the long term. As far as current threat levels are concerned, most of them are directly or indirectly linked to Pakistan and its strategy of asymmetric warfare executed through a well-calibrated design, to exploit the fault lines in India's socio-politico-economic structure. This design can be best described by the following contradictions and paradoxes about Pakistan:

- *Pakistan was carved out of India as a homeland for Muslims, but India is home to more Muslims than Pakistan.*
- *Pakistan is a country which is simultaneously the epicentre of international terrorism, as also a partner in the Global War on Terror (GWOT).*
- *It is a country that is adept at fomenting insurgencies and terrorism in the region, but finds itself inept at handling insurgencies and terrorism within its own frontiers.*
- *It foments the insurgency in Southern Afghanistan while countering the insurgency in Northern Pakistan; 'with' and 'against' peoples of the same mores – the Pashtuns.*

India has been a victim of Pakistan-abetted insurgency, terrorism, destabilisation and other forms of asymmetric warfare for over six decades now. In fact, asymmetric warfare has been an integral part of Pakistan's state policy since its independence in 1947. Pakistan employed asymmetric warfare in J&K in 1947 and 1965 and was able to further fine-tune this capability as a frontline ally of the US during its fight against Communism and the Soviet

presence in Afghanistan. This improved ability was employed by Pakistan to foment insurgencies and terrorism in Punjab and J&K in the 1980s and 1990s. Three of the four wars that Pakistan has fought with India, began as asymmetric wars for the control of J&K and later escalated into conventional conflict. The acquisition of nuclear weapons by Pakistan and its enunciation of a low threshold policy and the 'doctrine of irrationality' in employing them have further emboldened Pakistan. Incidents like the attack on the Indian Parliament on 13 December 2001 and the attack on Mumbai on 26 November 2008 are symptoms of a larger, strategic problem that has been plaguing India's security policy for many years now. These incidents have highlighted the fundamental flaw in the Indian approach of dealing with Pakistan as well as the glaring weaknesses in the internal security apparatus and response mechanisms to handle such manifestations of asymmetric warfare.

This paper seeks to carry out an appraisal of India's current approach to Pakistan and its asymmetric warfare strategy and to recommend an approach that is 'proactive' and befits a nation that is aspiring to stake its claim as a global power. It is not a prescription for internal security management, nor an overhaul of India's internal security apparatus. Reference has only been made to some of the macro issues related to internal security that are considered vital. Therefore, issues such as the need to address the root causes of the insurgencies – good governance, development, socio-economic matters – have not been included. Similarly, considering the target readership and as also the security classification, specifics of military options have not been given.

Asymmetric Warfare: Meaning, Connotation and Theory

The concept of asymmetric warfare is not new. A reference to a concept similar to it was made by Kautilya in *Arthashastra*, his treatise on statecraft, economic policy and military strategy in the 4th century BC. Kautilya's philosophy of 'concealed war' and 'silent war', involving the use of assassins, informers, and prostitutes, and contrived conflicts aimed at winning battles against an adversarial king, could be compared to the various (current) forms of asymmetric warfare. Similarly, Sun Tzu's assertion that an Army should avoid confronting the strength of the enemy and should instead attempt to disrupt the latter's command functions, logistics and other

weaknesses, bears similarity to the tenets of what is known today as asymmetric warfare.

The use of the term 'asymmetric warfare' dates back to January 1975 when Andrew JR Mack published an article titled *Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars* in which 'asymmetry' was referred to as a significant disparity in 'power' between two opposing actors in a conflict. For Mack, 'power' implied material power, such as a large army, sophisticated weapons, an advanced economy, and so on. However, Mack's analysis was largely ignored till the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the consequent end of the Cold War, which sparked renewed interest in the concept among academicians. A series of attacks carried out by Islamic terrorists groups on the US (the attack on US Navy destroyer the USS *Cole* on 12 October 2000, the 11 September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, etc) attracted the attention of the media, public at large and the rest of the world to the concept. Subsequently, TV Paul in *Asymmetric Conflicts: War Initiation by Weaker Powers* defined it as a "conflict involving two states with unequal overall military and economic power resources."² Post 9/11, the connotation of the term 'weaker adversary' has been broadened to include non-state actors such as Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups.

The definition of the term was further elaborated by Kenneth McKenzie, in the US Department of Defence's *Quadrennial Defense Review 2001*, as:

leveraging inferior tactical or operational strength against the vulnerabilities of a superior opponent to achieve disproportionate effect with the aim of undermining the opponent's will in order to achieve the asymmetric actor's strategic objectives.³

The Indian Army's Doctrine on Sub-Conventional Operations, promulgated in December 2006, is more inclusive and defines asymmetric warfare as a term to describe:

a military situation in which two belligerents of unequal power or capacity of action, interact and take advantage of the strength and weaknesses of themselves and their enemies (respectively). This interaction often involves strategies and tactics outside the bounds of conventional warfare.

It may include use of cyber and informational warfare, and/or chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear related technologies.⁴

Today, the usage of the term has assumed a new and broader dimension, especially in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 9/11, and is closely associated with various forms of Fourth Generation Warfare, such as guerrilla warfare, covert operations, proxy war, insurgency, terrorism, counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism. There is also a wider acceptability, particularly amongst military analysts, to use the term 'asymmetric' to refer to the indirect nature of strategies that many weak nations and non-state actors adopt, or even to the nature of the adversary itself. However, the popular misconception that asymmetric warfare is solely the tool of the weak has been dispelled by Rod Thornton, an authority on security issues at King's College, London, in *Asymmetric Warfare: Threat and Response in the 21st Century*.⁵

Besides bringing the world together and rendering inter-state boundaries irrelevant, globalisation has also resulted in non-state actors being able to access high technology weapons and means of communication to cause catastrophic damage. Resultantly, it has made asymmetric warfare the strategy of choice for many states and non-state actors, who are conventionally outmatched by their adversaries. The face of the new warriors of asymmetric wars differs from guerrillas, insurgents or terrorists of the past, who used to operate at the lower end of the technology spectrum. The asymmetric warriors of yesteryear conducted small-scale propaganda attacks against the symbols of the state, such as its security forces, in which, even if some innocent bystanders were killed, it was largely unintentional. However, the modern-day asymmetric warrior is a technocrat, who is educated, technologically savvy, can live and merge in the urban milieu, and move across continents with ease.⁶ Further, according to Thornton,⁷ today's asymmetric warriors, including the terrorists espousing a radical Islamist bent, have modified Sun Tzu's edict of "kill one person, frighten a thousand" to "kill a thousand, frighten a million." Thornton also believes that they have discarded the distinction between the state and its citizenry, thereby including all of society within the 'enemy'. This has certainly contributed to an increased awareness about terrorism and insurgency among the public. Therefore, the characteristics that define the new breed of asymmetric warriors are:

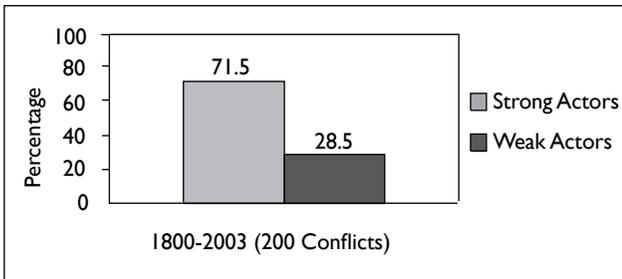
- Increased degree of fervour.
- Increased ability to implement attacks.
- Increased ability to cause mass casualties.

The Theory of Asymmetric Warfare

Explaining Asymmetric Conflict Outcomes

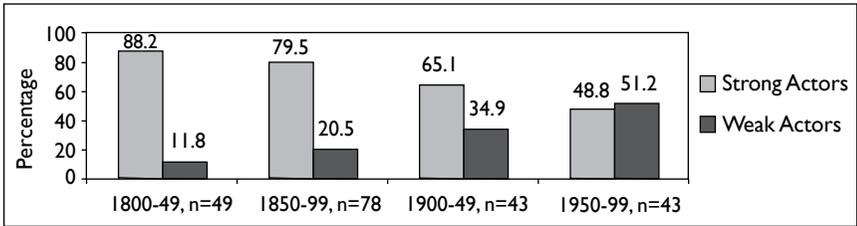
When two adversaries, who are not evenly matched, in terms of ‘power’, are engaged in a conflict (asymmetric), theoretically, it should not be feasible for a weaker adversary to defeat a more powerful state possessing superior military and economic resources. However, history has shown that even weak states do win over the stronger states. An analysis by Ivan Arreguin-Toft of approximately 200 asymmetric wars fought since 1800 suggests that the weaker states have emerged victorious in 28.5 percent of the conflicts.⁸

Fig 1: Percentage of Asymmetric Conflict Victories During 1800-2003



Source: Ivan Arreguin-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 3.

Further, if the outcomes of the conflicts are divided into 50-year periods, a striking trend emerges, in which stronger states have lost more and more asymmetric conflicts over time. The percentage of their victories has been falling from 88.2 percent in the period 1800-49, to 79.5 percent, 65.1 percent and 48.8 percent in the subsequent 50-year periods.⁹ In fact, in the last 50-year period (1950-99), the weaker actors have secured more victories than their stronger adversaries.

Fig 2: Percentage of Conflict Victories by Type of Actor Over Time

Source: Ivan Arreguin-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 4.

To enable a deeper understanding of the tenets of asymmetric warfare, it is imperative to delve into the various explanations and theses that determine the outcome of asymmetric conflicts. A number of scholars in the field of international relations have attempted to explain the reasons for the victory of the weaker actors over their stronger adversaries. Perhaps the most comprehensive effort has been made by Ivan Arreguin-Toft in the article, "How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict,"¹⁰ which was later published as a book with the same title in 2005. Arreguin-Toft argues that the best predictor of asymmetric conflict outcomes is the interaction of the strategies of competing actors (strategic interaction thesis). He also presented some competing explanations regarding the outcomes of asymmetric conflicts. These include Andrew JR Mack's 'interest asymmetry' thesis and explanations based on 'nature of actor' and 'arms diffusion':¹¹

- *Interest Asymmetry:* Mack's explanation for weak states emerging victorious in asymmetric conflicts is based on the argument that strong actors have a lower interest in winning because their survival is not at stake. Weak actors, on the other hand, have a high interest in winning because only victory ensures their survival. Mack also brings in the aspect of political vulnerability to describe the pressures that the public or competing elites, depending upon the form of regime – democratic or authoritarian – exert to terminate the war before its objectives are achieved. A strong actor's low interest results in high political vulnerability and a weak actor's high interest manifests in low political vulnerability. This political vulnerability is a result of delays and reverses on the warfront that will eventually encourage war-weary publics or greedy elites to force the strong actor's

leaders to abandon the fight. Mack's argument, therefore, essentially reduces to power asymmetry, giving rise to interest asymmetry (high power equals low interest), which varies inversely with political vulnerability (low interest equals high vulnerability), which, in turn, varies inversely with outcomes (high vulnerability equals low probability of victory). The greater the gap in relative power, the less resolute and, hence, more politically vulnerable strong actors are, and the more resolute and less politically vulnerable weak actors are. Big nations, therefore, lose asymmetric conflicts because frustrated publics or countervailing elites force a withdrawal short of military victory. In support of his explanation, Mack argues that the US lost the war in Vietnam because it had less at stake as compared to the North Vietnamese and in course of time, the angry and frustrated American public forced the withdrawal before its political objectives were achieved.

- *'Nature of Actor'*: The 'nature of actor' explanation is based on the argument that perhaps strong actors with democratic regimes lose to a weaker adversary because they were weak-willed, too sensitive to human casualties or too vulnerable to domestic criticism. Authoritarian strong actors, on the other hand, are insulated from domestic criticism and therefore, can escalate the level of violence and brutality they deem necessary, to achieve victory.
- *'Arms Diffusion'*: During the Second World War, in their efforts to defeat each other in the developing world (Asia and Africa), the Allied Powers and Axis Powers inducted sophisticated arms and ammunition into their militaries in significant numbers. After the war, these remained in the developing world, along with a considerable number of indigenous soldiers, who were experts in their effective use. When the colonial powers (stronger actor) returned to the former colonies (weaker actor), the latter were able to impose a greater cost of conquest and occupation to their erstwhile masters. The essence of this explanation suggests that stronger actors lost to the weaker actors because they failed to anticipate the increased power in the hands of the latter, which had been brought about due to arms diffusion and better weapons technology. The increasing trend of strong actors losing asymmetric conflicts particularly after the Second World War supports the logic of this argument.

*Strategic Interaction Thesis*¹²

Arreguin-Toft's argument states that in addition to the knowledge of each actor's available resources, explaining outcomes of asymmetric conflicts demands an estimate of the consequences of the interaction of each actor's strategies. It is based on the logic that every strategy has an ideal counter-strategy and therefore, actors who are able to predict their adversary's strategies can dramatically improve their chances of success by choosing and implementing the ideal counter-strategy. Further, all the potential strategies and counter-strategies can be reduced to two distinct strategic approaches:

- *Direct*: Direct strategic approaches target the adversary's armed forces, with an aim of destroying or capturing that adversary's physical capacity to fight, thus making his will (or lack thereof) irrelevant. The approach features soldier-on-soldier contests along with codified rules of conduct and a shared conception of victory and defeat. Conventional attack and defence are examples of direct strategic approach.
- *Indirect*: Indirect strategic approaches most often aim to destroy an adversary's will to resist, thus, making physical capacity irrelevant. Barbarism, winning of hearts and minds (WHAM), conciliation strategy, economic sanctions, guerrilla warfare strategy (GWS), non-violent resistance and terrorism are some of the examples of the indirect strategic approach. While barbarism targets the adversary's will by murdering, torturing or incarcerating non-combatants, GWS does so by targeting enemy soldiers, though non-combatants may be targeted as well.

Strategic Interaction and Conflict Outcomes: Considering the two strategic approaches described above, the opposing strategies of the actors engaged in an asymmetric conflict can interact in two patterns, i.e. 'same-approach' interaction (direct-direct and indirect-indirect) and 'opposite-approach' interaction (direct-indirect and indirect-direct). Arreguin-Toft's thesis states that the pattern of strategic interaction will determine whether the strong actor or the weak actor will be victorious. (The expected relationship of strategic approach interaction to asymmetric conflicts has been summarised in Fig 3.)

Fig 3: Expected Effects of Strategic Interaction on Conflict Outcomes (Expected Winners in Shaded Cells)

| | | Weak Actor Strategic Approach | |
|--|----------|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| | | Direct | Indirect |
| | | Strong Actor Strategic Approach | Direct |
| | Direct | STRONG ACTOR | WEAK ACTOR |
| | Indirect | WEAK ACTOR | STRONG ACTOR |

Source: Ivan Arreguin-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 39.

In a 'same-approach' interaction, the strong actor emerges victor because there is nothing to deflect or mediate the strong actor's material preponderance. However, in an 'opposite-approach' interaction, the strong actor's resources are deflected (by avoiding a direct confrontation with the strong actor's armed forces) or directed at values which don't necessarily affect the capacity of the weak adversary to continue to impose costs on the strong actor (e.g. capture of cities and towns). Such interactions, therefore, tend to be protracted and long-drawn, which ultimately results in victory for the weak actor. From the possible combinations of strategic approaches and interactions mentioned above, Toft has derived certain hypotheses:

- *Hypothesis 1: Direct Offence vs. Direct Defence* – When strong actors attack using a direct strategic approach, weak actors defend using a direct strategic approach, all other things being equal, strong actors should win quickly and decisively.
- *Hypothesis 2: Direct Offence vs. Indirect Defence* – When strong actors attack with a direct strategic approach and weak actors defend using an indirect approach, all other things being equal, weak actors should win.
- *Hypothesis 3: Indirect Offence vs. Direct Defence* – When a strong actor attacks with an indirect strategic approach against a weak actor defending with a direct approach, all other things being equal, the strong actor should lose.

- *Hypothesis 4: Indirect Offence vs. Indirect Defence* – When strong actors employ barbarism to attack weak actors defending with a GWS, all other things being equal, strong actors should win.
- *Hypothesis 5: Each of the above four hypotheses describes an interaction of either ‘same-approach’ or of ‘opposite-approach’ strategic interaction and can, therefore, be combined into a single hypothesis. Strong actors are more likely to win ‘same-approach’ interactions and lose ‘opposite-approach’ interactions.*

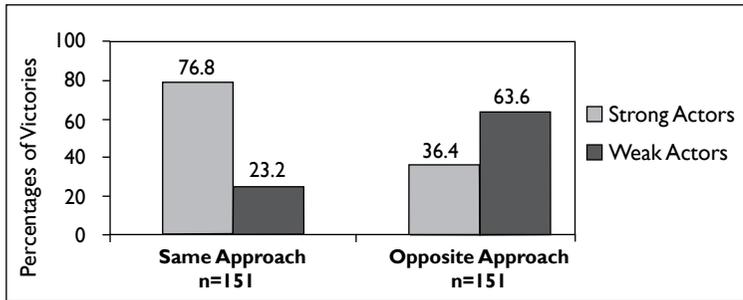
Alternative Hypotheses: On the basis of alternative explanations to the failure of strong actors in asymmetric conflicts, Toft has put forward the following alternative hypotheses:

- *Hypothesis 6:* The hypothesis is derived from the ‘arms diffusion’ explanation. The better armed a weak actor is, the more likely it is that a strong actor will lose an asymmetric conflict.
- *Hypotheses 7(a) and (b):* The two related hypotheses are the outcomes of the ‘nature of actor’ explanation. Authoritarian strong actors win asymmetric wars more often than democratic strong actors. In addition, authoritarian strong actors win asymmetric wars in which the weak actor uses an indirect strategy more often than democratic strong actors.
- *Hypotheses 8 and 9:* The two hypotheses have been drawn from the ‘interest symmetry’ thesis explained previously. Relative material power explains relative interests in the outcome of an asymmetric conflict. In addition, authoritarian and democratic strong actors share roughly equal political vulnerability in a prolonged asymmetric conflict.

Quantitative Test of the Strategic Interaction Thesis

To test the findings of his ‘strategic interaction’ thesis, Toft carried out a quantitative analysis of 202 asymmetric conflicts fought between 1816 and 2003, based on the data obtained from *Correlates of War*.¹³ In his analysis, a conflict has been deemed as asymmetric only if the halved product of one actor’s armed forces and population exceeded the simple product of its adversary’s armed forces and population by 5:1. The results of the analysis supported the thesis (as depicted in Fig 4):

Fig 4: Strategic Interaction and Asymmetric Conflict Outcomes – 1800-2003



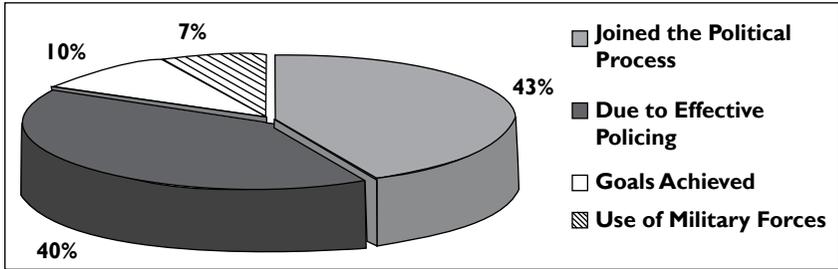
Source: Ivan Arreguin-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 45.

Toft has also carried out a systematic analysis of five historical case studies (the Murid War 1830-59, the South African War 1899-1902, the Italo-Ethiopian War 1935-40, the US in Vietnam 1965-73 and the Afghan Civil War 1979-89) to establish the impact of each actor’s interests, regime type, weapon technology and strategy on the outcome of the conflicts. The hypotheses derived from alternative explanations have either been refuted or inadequately supported by the analysis.

How Terrorist Groups End

The ‘ending’ of most terrorist groups requires a range of policy instruments, such as careful police and intelligence work, military force, political negotiations, and economic sanctions. Hence, with limited resources, policy makers need to understand where to prioritise their efforts. An examination of 648 terrorist groups that existed between 1968 and 2006 was carried out by Seth G Jones and Martin C Libicki for the RAND Corporation¹⁴ and their findings with regard to how terrorist groups end were as given in Fig 5:

Fig 5: How Terrorist Groups End



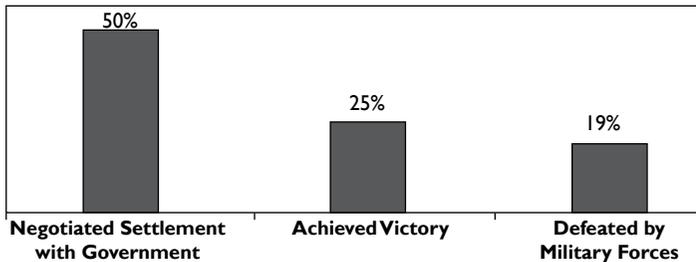
Source: Seth G Jones, Martin C Libicki, *How Terrorist Groups End: Lessons for Countering Al Qa'ida* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2008), p. 19.

It is evident that the transition to the political process was the most common way in which terrorist groups end and after those who join the political process, policing was found to be the most effective means to keep them in check. The analysis emphasised the ability of the police and intelligence organisations to penetrate and disrupt terrorist organisations. The analysis also indicated that the employment of military force was found to be most effective when used against terrorist groups who were engaged in an insurgency, i.e. groups that were large, well-armed and well-organised. When employed against other terrorist groups, the military force was found to be too blunt an instrument. Some of the other findings of the analysis were:

- Religious terrorist groups take longer to eliminate than other groups. Approximately 62 percent of all terrorist groups have been terminated since 1968, but only 32 percent of religious terrorist groups.
- Religious groups rarely achieve their objectives. No religious group has ever achieved 'victory', in any sense of the term, since 1968.
- Size is a significant determinant of a group's fate. Large groups of more than 10,000 members have been victorious more than 25 percent of the time, while victory is rare when groups comprise less than 1,000 members.
- There is no statistical correlation between the duration of the existence of a terrorist group and ideological motivation, economic conditions, regime type, or the breadth of terrorist goals. But there appears to be some correlation between the size of a terrorist group and its duration of existence: larger groups tend to last longer than smaller groups.

- Terrorist groups involved in Insurgency: When a terrorist group becomes involved in an insurgency, it does not end easily. The percentages of how they end have been shown in Fig 6.

Fig 6: How Terrorist Groups Involved in Insurgency End



Source: Diagram formulated on the basis of statistics from Seth G Jones, Martin C Libicki, *How Terrorist Groups End: Lessons for Countering Al Qa'ida* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2008).

- Terrorist groups from upper-income countries are much more likely to be left-wing or nationalist and much less likely to be motivated by religion.

Pakistan's Asymmetric Warfare Strategy against India: Rationale and Current Manifestations

To understand the rationale behind Pakistan's adoption of the asymmetric warfare approach in its strategic construct against India, it is imperative to delve into the birth of Pakistan as a nation, the political developments resulting into the politicisation of the Pakistan Army and its emergence as a predominant power centre. In addition, some of the geo-strategic and ground realities too have to be seen in their true perspective to fathom the depth of Pakistan's paranoia with India.

The British plan for the partition of the Indian subcontinent was announced on 03 June 1947, after a prolonged debate between the British, the Indian nationalists and the advocates for a separate homeland for the Muslims. Subsequently, Pakistan came into being on 14 August 1947, intended as a separate state for the Muslims of British India. Its founder, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, had envisioned Pakistan as a country in which a civilian government held sway over its military, allowed Muslims to practice their faith and allowed all other religions equal opportunity to practice theirs. However, that was not to be, as the contradictions and fault lines within Pakistan soon came to the fore.

The Pakistan Army and its Emergence into Prominence in Pakistan's Polity

At the time of independence, no civilian-political institution, other than the imperial bureaucracy and military, existed in Pakistan. Being a country shaken at its birth by the bloody riots marking partition, Pakistan's early years were taken up in efforts to build everything from scratch. With resources in short supply, expectations raised by heady rhetoric and a largely inexperienced political elite, Pakistan soon became dependent on its two best organised institutions, i.e. the civilian bureaucracy and the military (specifically, the Pakistan Army). The political elite's standing eroded soon after the death of Pakistan's founder and Muslim League leader, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, in 1948, and the assassination of his successor, Liaquat Ali, shortly afterwards, in an abortive coup. This resulted in the Pakistan Army stepping in and taking over the reins of the country. The Army, in concert with the Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), wields immense authority and dictates policies related to security, India (especially J&K), Afghanistan and nuclear issues in Pakistan; both while in power as well as in the intervening periods. Due to its long stints in power, it has not only systematically weakened the civilian institutions, but has also acquired the ability to subvert these institutions.

Stephen Cohen, in *The Idea of Pakistan*,¹⁵ listed four reasons for the Pakistan Army's intervention into civilian affairs, as claimed by Army officers. One, the Army's "sheer professional competence" compared with the incompetence and corrupt nature of the civilian sector; two, the officers stake a special claim to power because of their "undeniable patriotism and their commitment to the people of Pakistan;" three, they understand "national interest" better than civilians; And finally, the fourth reason for claiming the role of a watchdog is the poor quality of the political leadership, who are often seen in a negative light.

Geo-strategic and Economic Importance of J&K, and the Strategy of Asymmetric Warfare

Jinnah had described J&K as Pakistan's *shah-e-rag*, i.e. the jugular vein, and its importance to Pakistan emanates from geo-strategic and economic reasons:¹⁶

- The fear that if India exercised control over J&K, it could threaten critical lines of communication in Punjab. Further, the proximity of J&K to Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa with its large Pashtun population, presented an additional challenge to Pakistan.

- The waters of the Indus and its tributaries, which flow from J&K to Pakistan, are critical to Pakistan's economy and could be manipulated by India.

Considering the importance of J&K, Pakistan had considered launching a military operation to cut off the Jammu-Kathua road, which was the sole road link from India to Kashmir Valley in 1947. But the plan was shelved by the British commanders of the Pakistan Army, since they feared having to fight their counterparts in the Indian Army. Pakistan's leadership, hence, opted for covert operations as part of its asymmetric warfare strategy to capture J&K in September 1947, which involved using ex-servicemen, demobilised Muslim soldiers and local tribesmen, along with the regular troops. On its part, Pakistan denied any involvement and termed the war as an indigenous uprising and freedom struggle, to which it claimed to have merely provided political and moral support.

Pakistan continued to indulge in covert warfare in the 1950s, with little support from the people of J&K. However, from the early 1960s onwards, it used 'religion' as the driving force of its covert war, a strategy which proved effective. Some of the other factors which contributed to Pakistan's increased confidence in pursuing covert war strategy are:

- *Alliance with US:* Pakistan's entry into a Cold War alliance with the US, resulting into the large-scale flow of arms and aid into Pakistan.
- *Support from China:* Since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1951, China has been Pakistan's 'all-weather' ally and both countries have enjoyed a close and mutually beneficial relationship. Pakistan was one of the first countries to recognise the People's Republic of China in 1950 and remained a steadfast ally during Beijing's period of international isolation in the 1960s and early 1970s. China has long provided Pakistan with major military, technical, and economic assistance, including the transfer of sensitive nuclear technology and equipment.
- *Islamisation of Pakistan:* After the 1971 defeat of Pakistan, religious ideology proved to be a uniting factor against further segmentation of Pakistan.

- *Islamic Bomb*: The development of a nuclear weapon by Pakistan, aimed at neutralising India's conventional military superiority, further enhanced Pakistan's ability to continue its covert war against India.
- *The Quranic Concept of War*: President Zia-ul-Haq endeavoured to build an Islamic Army by drawing inspiration from the teachings of the Quran, to develop Pakistan's 'doctrine' and 'strategy' of war. This Islamisation was not restricted to the imposition of strict rules regarding adherence to Islamic practices, but extended to transforming the thinking in the Army. The latter revolved around the accomplishment of the 'grand strategy' of *jihad* through the use of different modes, including 'covert warfare', to cause 'terror' in the minds of the enemy.
- *Insurgency in Punjab*: During the mid-1980s, Pakistan exploited the Sikh fundamentalism in Punjab to destabilise India, with the ultimate aim of annexing J&K. However, by the early 1990s, the movement died down, by which time, Pakistan's focus had shifted to fomenting an insurgency in J&K.
- *Proxy War in Kashmir*: In the late 1980s, Pakistan's covert war in J&K, in concert with its religious focus, began to concretise in the form of an insurgency in the Kashmir Valley. In the course of time, this insurgency heightened and grew in sophistication, with Pakistan's nuclear capability providing it a safeguard against any kind of conventional military retaliation by India. Further, to prevent the covert war from escalating into an all out overt war, Pakistan has always calibrated the insurgency in J&K to keep it below India's threshold (the 13 December 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament being an exception).
- *Targeting of India's Economy*: The recent manifestations of Pakistan's asymmetric warfare indicate deliberate attempts by Pakistan to target India's burgeoning economy and steer India away from the trajectory of its economic growth. Towards this end, Pakistan has been inducting huge amounts of counterfeit currency into the Indian market. As per official releases, during the period 2006-09, counterfeit currency worth Rs 7.34 lakh of Rs 100 denomination, Rs 5.76 lakh of Rs 500 denomination and 1.09 lakh of Rs 1000 denomination have been seized. The seizure can be considered as the 'tip of the iceberg' when compared to the estimated Rs 1,69,000 crore of counterfeit money reported to be in circulation

in India.¹⁷ In addition, the recent terrorist attacks in Mumbai and Pune have specifically targeted foreign nationals, possibly with the intention of hurting foreign investments in India.

Pakistan: Ground Realities

Some of the ground realities about Pakistan, which would have a bearing on any future approach to counter Pakistan's asymmetric warfare capabilities, are:

- *The Army's Place in Society:* The Pakistan Army is largely respected in the country for its professional ethos and nationalism, and is regarded as the protector against any threat from India. In the period preceding the ouster of General (then, President) Musharraf, following a number of reverses in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), the Pakistan Army faced one of its worst credibility crises, which many consider as being graver than the ignominious surrender in 1971. After taking over as the Chief of the Army Staff in November 2007, Gen Ashfaq Parvez Kayani made a perceptible effort to steer the Pakistan Army away from domestic politics and restore its image. To a large extent, he has succeeded. In a public opinion survey carried out by the International Republican Institute (IRI) during the period 16 July-07 August 2009, the Pakistan Army received an 89 percent rating in its favour.¹⁸
- *Pakistan's Defence Expenditure:* The Pakistan Army considers India a regional hegemonic power and an existential threat. This rhetoric has been used to maintain its predominant position in Pakistan society as well as to apportion a significantly large part of Pakistan's national budget towards 'defence'. Accordingly, 'defence' has always been afforded the highest consideration in Pakistan and has been given precedence in the national budget allocation. For 11 years after 1961, approximately 50-60 percent of the government expenditure was allocated to the 'defence' sector. Overall, an average 'defence' allocation at 25 percent of the total expenditure in Pakistan is one of the highest amongst developing countries. In terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the average allocation of 5.5 percent of GDP, excluding expenditure in major weapons acquisition, is considered phenomenally high. The defence

budget is normally passed by the parliament as a one-line item on the agenda, without indicating any details regarding further distribution of funds under various heads.

- *The Military's Economic Empire*: Apart from politics, power sharing and management of the state for over 32 years out of Pakistan's 63 years of independence, the Pakistan Army's involvement in business and commercial activities appears to have taken its toll on the leadership, in terms of effects on its commitment to the organisational cause. The extent of involvement of the Pakistan Army's hierarchy in business and commercial activities has been brought out vividly by Ayesha Siddiqa in *Military Inc: Inside Pakistan's Military Economy*.¹⁹ The book makes an elaborate study of the military business, a concept defined as the "military capital that is used for the personal benefit of the military fraternity but is neither recorded nor part of the defence budget" – an economy based on the Pakistani military's booming commercial enterprises. Further, serving and retired officers of the Pakistan Army, along with those of the other two Services, virtually control all important civilian departments and agencies, resulting in further proliferation of their business and commercial interests in Pakistan. The military's economy is estimated to be about 4 percent of GDP and its share of assets is about 7-10 percent of private sector assets, which translates to about Rs 200 billion. It is estimated that if the value of the real estate is added, it totals up to an economy in excess of one trillion (Pakistani rupees). The military's economic empire operates at three distinct levels:
 - Major public sector organisations directly under the control of the Army such as Frontier Works Organisation (FWO), Special Communication Organisation (SCO) and National Logistics Cell (NLC).
 - About 100 independent projects including heavy manufacturing industries such as cement, fertiliser and cereal production run by four subsidiaries i.e. *Fauji Foundation* (declared assets worth \$169 million), *Army Welfare Trust*, *Shaheen Foundation* (Pakistan Air Force) and *Bahria Foundation* (Pakistan Navy).
 - Serving and retired senior military officers also utilise their clout in building their private business empires, which has added to the military's economic empire.

- *Neglect of Social Sector:* A direct fallout of Pakistan's consistent high defence spending has been the neglect of the social sector, resulting in an increased percentage of people falling below the poverty line (33 percent in 1999-2000), rising unemployment and reduced allocation in education (1.8-2.4 percent of GDP) and health (0.5 percent of GDP).
- *An Aid-dependent Economy:* Because of its structural infirmities, Pakistan's economy is largely dependent on external (mainly US) aid and assistance. The Taliban, Al Qaeda and other terrorist outfits are considered by the Army as the proverbial golden geese to extract aid and assistance from the US.
- *Strategic Overreach:* The Taliban, Lashkar-e-Taiyyeba (LeT), Jaish-e-Muhammed (JeM) and other terrorist outfits have been created and nurtured by Pakistan as strategic assets and continue to be so. However, today, Pakistan's strategic overreach has greatly destabilised its internal polity.
- *US Dependency on Pakistan:* The US is dependent on Pakistan's cooperation for the success of its ongoing war on terror in Afghanistan. A large percentage of the material for the US/International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) troops in Afghanistan is transited through Pakistan and the ISI is the primary source of intelligence regarding the Al Qaeda and its affiliates in Pakistan.

India's Approach to Counter Pakistan's Asymmetric Warfare Offensive: An Appraisal

Current Approach

India's approach to Pakistan's continued asymmetric warfare offensive has been characterised by the absence of a National Security Policy and a half-hearted response that can at best be termed as 'reactive'. Despite a conventional (warfare) edge over Pakistan, and economic prowess and growing recognition as an emerging global power, India is pursuing a policy of 'deterrence by denial' instead of 'punitive deterrence'.²⁰ To make matters worse, in 1997, India suspended its option of covert operations and retaliation against Pakistan, consequent to the issue of a directive by Prime Minister IK Gujral to the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW). India

has not exhibited the resolve and 'will' thereafter to revive this capability, despite numerous provocations as also the failure on the part of Pakistan to reciprocate. The Indian approach can be summed up in a quote from the editorial of *India Today* in the aftermath of the terrorist strike on Akshardham Temple in September 2002, which stated that, "As a nation of forgetting and forgiving, ever ready to bleed and wail, India is unique."²¹

The hallmark of this approach has been self-imposed 'restraint' and a sustained diplomatic offensive, with a view to coerce Pakistan through the US and other Western countries, to denounce terrorism, concurrent with the refurbishment of the internal security apparatus, as was evidenced after the 26/11 attacks. This recourse to restraint and the diplomatic offensive adopted by India has met with only limited success so far. Hafiz Saeed and the other perpetrators of 26/11 continue to remain at large in Pakistan, and to add insult to injury, during a meeting with Dr Manmohan Singh at the sidelines of the Nuclear Disarmament Summit in April 2010, Pakistani Prime Minister Gilani agreed to take action against them only if India was able to provide more evidence. India has a strategic partnership with the US, yet it took months of diplomatic efforts for India to get access to and interrogate David Coleman Headley (the man who is said to hold the key to many unknown facets of the 26/11 attack).

One should not be misled by the relative lull marked by the absence of any major terrorist attack outside J&K in the period between 26/11 and the bomb blast in the German bakery in Pune in February 2010. This is mainly due to Pakistan's preoccupation with the internal security challenges that it is facing from various terrorist groups and the pressure exerted by the US and the international community, rather than Pakistan's abjuring the use of terrorist violence for the furtherance of its interest vis-a-vis India. Many prefer to term the lull as a period of 'tactical freeze' on the part of Pakistan, with a proviso to revert to the old ways once the situation in FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (NWFP) is stabilised. As per the Ministry of Home Affairs, at least 13 terrorist attacks have been averted by intelligence and enforcement agencies during the year after 26/11.²²

Major Drawbacks

As already stated, since 26/11, there has been a major overhaul of the internal security edifice by the Home Minister, P Chidambaram. The positive

impact of the same has been widely acknowledged. However, whether the refurbishment has reduced the level of Pakistan-sponsored terrorist threats remains questionable. Similarly, as to whether India is any safer today, the response must be, by and large, in the negative. The major drawbacks of the current approach are:

- *Lack of Capacity Building*: The current focus of the Ministry of Home Affairs appears to be on improving the responses to terrorist strikes by better coordination and optimisation of existing capabilities. As far as capacity building is concerned, very little has changed.
- *Need for an Approach Based on 'Prevention'*: India's current approach is predominantly 'reactive', with an overemphasis on 'response' to terrorist strikes rather than on formulating strategies and developing capabilities that are aimed at the 'prevention' of asymmetric warfare manifestations originated by Pakistan.

Fallouts of India's Current Approach

Failure of India's Deterrence

Perhaps one of the most noticeable outcomes of the current approach is the failure of deterrence, despite India's conventional (warfare) superiority over Pakistan and the enunciation of a proactive war fighting doctrine. Incidents like the attack on the Indian Parliament and 26/11 are symptomatic of a larger strategic problem that is plaguing India's security policy. The efficacy of any deterrence is determined by its credibility, which, in turn, flows from demonstrated capability and the potential adversary's perception of India's resolve. It is quite obvious that the cost that Pakistan is incurring in engaging India in an asymmetric conflict is far lesser than the expected benefits. Further, the possibility of any conflagration escalating into a nuclear conflict renders India's conventional superiority less credible. Many analysts also believe that no firm deterrence can be effective against terrorists who are prepared to lay down their lives while executing their mission(s).

'Soft State' Tag

While the 'restrained' and 'mature' response on India's part is appreciated (as it also suits the US/NATO), it has also led India to be tagged as a 'soft state',

lacking political resolve and being incapable of a military response with strategic effect. Much of Pakistan's ability to wage an asymmetric war against India with impunity is an outcome of India's own failings and insincerity in pledging to defeat such threats. In his testimony to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, US Senate, in January 2009, Ashley J Tellis stated:

India has unfortunately become the 'sponge' that protects us all. India's very proximity to Pakistan, which has developed into the epicenter of global terrorism during the last thirty years, has resulted in New Delhi absorbing most of the blows unleashed by those terrorist groups that treat it as a common enemy along with Israel, the United States, and the West more generally....India has also turned out to be a terribly soft state neither able to prevent many of the terrorist acts that have confronted it over the years nor capable of retaliating effectively against either its terrorist adversaries or their state sponsors in Pakistan.²³

Pakistan's Continued Diversion of US Military Aid for Strengthening its Conventional Warfare Capability against India

Ever since Pakistan joined the US as its partner in the Global War on Terror, it has been consistently diverting US military aid and funds intended for augmenting its counter-terrorism capability to bridge the conventional warfare asymmetry with India and as per Pentagon reports, approximately US \$10 billion of military funds had been siphoned off for the purpose during Musharraf's presidency itself. Musharraf himself is reported to have admitted this fact in 2009.²⁴ Pakistan's alleged modification of US-manufactured Harpoon missiles and P-3C are examples of the business of deceit that Pakistan has been engaged in for several decades. India's repeated calls for greater accountability of military aid to Islamabad have not been heeded and the US Administration continues to ignore Pakistan's transgressions.

While India and the US have moved closer over the years in forging a strategic partnership and signing a civil nuclear deal, India cannot be overly dependent on the US on issues related to terrorism originating from Pakistan. There is a limit beyond which the US cannot go while trying to pressurise Pakistan and the ISI. Pakistan is too valuable a strategic ally to the West and cannot be dumped to meet the strategic interests of India.

The manner in which India's interest in Afghanistan was marginalised during the London Conference on Afghanistan in January 2010 is a clear indication of the limitations on the part of the US.

Expansion of the Spatial Dimension of Pakistan-sponsored Terrorism

India's failure to respond appropriately has resulted in the spatial dimension of Pakistan-abetted terrorism expanding from J&K to the rest of the Indian hinterland. From a high point in 2008, there was a perceptible lull after multiple attacks in Mumbai on 26 November 2008, till the German Bakery bomb blast in Pune on 13 February 2010. The number, location and circumstances of terrorist attacks outside J&K and the Northeastern states since 2000 are portrayed diagrammatically as follows:

Fig 7: Number of Major Islamic Terrorist Strikes Outside J&K and Northeast since 2000

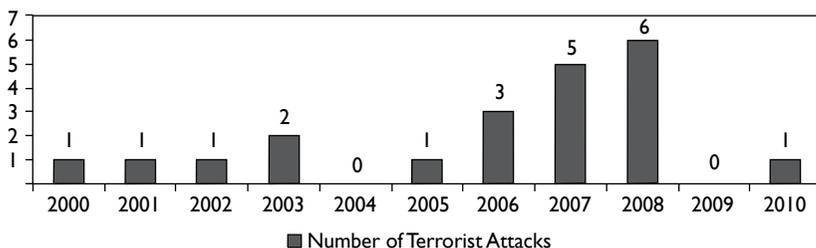


Table 1 : Major Islamist Terrorist Attacks outside J&K and Northeast since 2000

| Date | Place | Nature of Attack | Fatalities and Injuries | Perpetrators |
|-------------------|---------------------|--|-------------------------|--------------|
| 14 August 2000 | Rauzabad (UP) | Explosion on Sabarmati Express | 09 killed & 60 injured | SIMI, LeT |
| 13 December 2001 | New Delhi | Attack on Parliament House | 16 killed & 30 injured | JeM |
| 24 September 2002 | Gandhinagar, Gujrat | Two terrorists attack Akshardham temple | 35 killed & 74 injured | LeT |
| 13 March 2003 | Mulund, Mumbai | Bomb explosion onboard a local train | 12 killed & 70 injured | JeM/SIMI |
| 25 August 2003 | Mumbai | Twin bomb blasts near the Gateway of India and Zaveri Bazaar | 52 killed & 160 injured | SIMI/LeT |

| | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| 29 October 2005 | New Delhi | Three serial blasts | 62 killed & 155 injured | No conclusive identification |
| 07 March 2006 | Varanasi | Three bomb blasts | 21 killed & 62 injured | No conclusive identification |
| 11 July 2006 | Mumbai | Seven explosions in local trains | 201 killed & 714 injured | LeT/ SIMI |
| 08 September 2006 | Malegaon (Maharashtra) | Three explosions | 40 killed & 312 injured | LeT/ SIMI |
| 19 February 2007 | Panipat (Haryana) | Bomb blast in <i>Samjhauta</i> Express | 68 killed & 12 injured | No conclusive identification |
| 11 May 2007 | Hyderabad | Bomb blast | 11 killed & 64 injured | Unidentified |
| 25 August 2007 | Hyderabad | Twin blast | 40 killed & 89 injured | Unidentified |
| 11 October 2007 | Ajmer (Rajasthan) | Bomb blast | 03 killed & 17 injured | Unidentified |
| 23 November 2007 | Varanasi, Faizabad and Lucknow | Simultaneous blasts | 15 killed & 80 injured | Unidentified |
| 01 January 2008 | Rampur (UP) | Attack on CRPF Group Centre | 8 killed & 5 injured | LeT |
| 13 May 2008 | Jaipur | Eight serial blasts | 80 killed & 150 injured | SIMI/IM |
| 25 July 2008 | Bangalore | Eight low intensity blasts | 1 killed & 7 injured | SIMI/IM |
| 26 July 2008 | Ahmedabad | Seventeen blasts in ten different areas | 53 killed & 145 injured | SIMI/IM |
| 13 September 2008 | New Delhi | Five blasts in three different areas | 24 killed & 151 injured | SIMI/IM |
| 26-29 November 2008 | Mumbai | Multiple terrorist attacks in ten locations | 175 killed & 304 injured | LeT |
| 13 February 2010 | Pune | Bomb blast in German Bakery | 17 killed & 60 injured | IM, LeT |

Likely Forms of Pakistan's Asymmetric Warfare Offensive in the Future

It is evident that despite Pakistan being threatened by the scourge of terrorism, its offensive against them is selective, aimed to appease the US and extract maximum assistance in the form of aid and military hardware. However, in reality, it still considers the *jihadi* outfits such as the Taliban, LeT, JeM and Hizbul Mujahideen (HuM) as strategic assets to be employed

for the furtherance of its strategic interests in India and Afghanistan. Pakistan continues to support and abet these terrorist organisations in plotting and planning India's destabilisation. It would, therefore, be prudent to do some crystal gazing and visualise the forms and dimensions Pakistan's asymmetric warfare offensive against India would take in the future. This would help in formulating quicker and more efficient responses.

Choking of Major Commercial Ports

In its effort to destabilise the Indian economy, Pakistan, through its proxies such as the LeT, in connivance with sea pirates and the crime syndicate of Dawood Ibrahim, could attempt to take over a large ship (possibly carrying liquefied natural gas) and crash it in the choke point of one of the major commercial ports. Such an outrageous act could adversely impact India's trade and hurt its buoyant economy. The seizure of the ship *Dewey Madrid* in the Malacca Straits, by pirates in March 2003 and the keen interest shown by the pirates on the steering of the ship, rather than its cargo and crew, (making off with the ship's manuals and technical literature) are portents of such a scenario turning into reality.

Use of CBRN and other Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)/ Nuclear Terrorism

With the current political instability and security environment prevailing in Pakistan, there is the likelihood of terrorists gaining access to nuclear hardware and launching a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) attack in India. The attack could either take the form of use of chemical and biological agents such as mustard gas, VX nerve gas and anthrax or triggering of an industrial accident similar to Union Carbide Methyl Isocyanate (MIC) leakage in Bhopal in 1984. The recent radiation injuries caused by Cobalt 60 found in the scrap yard of Mayapuri, New Delhi, throws up the possibility of such radioactive substances or dirty bombs being smuggled in as scrap to attack the people of India.

William Cohen, former US Secretary of Defence, has warned that "a paradox of the new strategic environment is that American military superiority actually increases the threat of nuclear, biological, and chemical attack against us by creating incentives for adversaries to challenge us asymmetrically."²⁵ A

similar paradox exists in the India-Pakistan context. Therefore, it is possible that dirty bombs and other means of CBRN attacks are covertly passed on to terrorist groups such as LeT, JeM, etc, by rogue elements within the ISI, so as to stir hysteria in India and the rest of the world. Such an option would afford the advantage of plausible deniability to the Pakistan Army-ISI nexus, and the civilian government.

Shift in Modus Operandi, from 'Violence' to 'Intifada' and Other Means in J&K

India's enduring resolve over the last twenty years to stay the course in J&K has negated Pakistan's efforts to change the status of the state through proxy war and other forms of asymmetric warfare, after its earlier endeavor through conventional wars failed. There has been a resultant shift from the emphasis on 'violence' to *intifada*-type mass protests and other means to include the use of the media, infiltration into bar associations to put the security forces on the defensive and coercing the political parties to carry forward their agenda. This is likely to intensify in the future.

Increasing Shift from J&K-centric Rural Insurgency to Pan-Indian Urban Terrorism

The pattern of terrorist attacks in India in the last few years (as shown in Table 1) clearly indicates the likely shift of focus of the various *jihadi* groups from J&K-centric rural insurgency to a pan-Indian urban terrorism. 26/11 has demonstrated the type of international attention and media glare any attack by the terrorists in a metropolitan city would generate. Clearly, the focus of terrorist attacks in the future is going to be urban centres.

Increased Involvement of Indian Muslims to afford Deniability and Credence to 'Home-grown Terrorism'

Due to stepped up pressure from the international community, Pakistan would be increasingly looking to use the local *tanzeems* such as Indian Mujahideen (IM) and Students' Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) with localised narratives to carry out terrorist strikes in India. Instances of enlisting professionals from

the Indian Muslim community and mafia dons are likely to intensify in the future. There are reports of such local terrorists being trained in the jungles located in India and locally available explosive materials like ammonium nitrate, hydrogen peroxide and slurry being used.²⁶ The emphasis would be on deniability and generating credence to the theory of 'home grown terrorism' being propagated by Pakistan.

Nexus Between Left Wing Extremism (LWE)/Naxalism and Jihadi Terrorists

The Naxal violence spread across 223 districts in 20 states, out of a total of 636 districts in 28 states and 7 union territories, constitutes the most serious internal security challenge to India. The recent massacre of 76 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel by the Maoists in an ambush in Dantewada (Chhattisgarh) is an indication of the proportion this menace is assuming. Considering the geographic spread and the potential it holds of destabilising India, Pakistan could conceivably extend support to the Naxals through *jihadi* outfits. This remains a potential future threat.

Simultaneity of Attacks

Multiple attacks in different cities such as Kolkata, Varanasi, Jaipur, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Chandigarh, Guwahati etc (across the entire length and breadth of the country) being launched simultaneously can put India's internal security apparatus and response mechanism into severe strain. Modern means of communication do enable such a high degree of synchronisation, minor instances of which have already been witnessed during the multiple blasts in Mumbai's local trains on 11 July 2006 and simultaneous bomb blasts in Varanasi, Faizabad and Lucknow on 23 November 2007.

Attack through Nepal's Open Border

The open border between India and Nepal enables free movement of people from both sides. This has been the ingress route of many Islamic terrorists into India, consequent to the erection of a fence along the entire stretch of the Indo-Pak border, including the Line of Control (LoC). Given the effective surveillance that is in place along the coastline, it is visualised that the logistics for the next major terrorist attack in India would be routed through the Indo-Nepal border.

Cyber Terrorism

Given the fact that the 21st century asymmetric warrior is an educated and technologically savvy technocrat with access to modern means of communication, the possibility of terrorists launching a cyber attack on financial, military and other critical networks in the near future is very real.

Recommendations

Despite the world focus on Pakistan as the perpetrator of terrorism and the Af-Pak region having earned the dubious distinction of the “epicentre of terrorism”, there is no indication of Pakistan changing its tack. In fact, it has long proved to be adept at diplomatically leveraging any adverse situation into strength. It can be assessed that Pakistan is unlikely to change its adversarial stance towards India, verbal commitments and cosmetic changes notwithstanding. Therefore, India has to be prepared to undertake steps on its own to safeguard its security interests and address the source of the scourge, rather than the symptom. This would entail adopting a proactive approach of dealing with Pakistan and also working out a set of response options employing all the means available, i.e. diplomatic, informational, economic, social and military. The gamut of response options would also have to be augmented by hard-hitting covert operations at appropriate pre-identified targets. The larger aim would be to ensure that India does not remain a ‘sponge’ state that absorbs terror attacks so that other states are spared. The approaches are being discussed as follows:

- Measures aimed at stimulating a paradigm shift in India’s approach in dealing with Pakistan and its asymmetric warfare manifestations from a ‘reactive’ to a ‘proactive’ mode.
- The matrix of response options to be put into effect if the next major terrorist strike is traced to Pakistan.

Recommended Measures to effect a Paradigm Shift from a ‘Reactive’ to ‘Pro-Active’ Approach

Need for a National Security Policy

The fundamental necessity for countering Pakistan’s asymmetric warfare capability entails evolving a national security policy which should serve as a

basis for the various agencies of the state, including the armed forces. The focus of the National Security Policy should be on 'prevention', rather than being 'reactive' to various forms of asymmetric warfare initiated by Pakistan.

Necessity of a National Sub-conventional Operations Guide/Doctrine

In addition to the National Security Policy, there is an urgent need for a 'National Sub-conventional Operations Guide/Doctrine' to be issued by the government, which, besides synergising the efforts of the various agencies involved in political, security, economic and information activities, would also enable an integrated approach to assessment and planning. After all, counter-insurgency is 80 percent political and 20 percent military. Therefore, it requires a blend of comprehensive civilian and military efforts designed to simultaneously contain the insurgency and address its root causes. A major advantage of such a model would be the obligation on the part of various agencies and departments of the government to comply with and implement such guidelines. In the absence of such a guideline, the formulation and promulgation of a 'sub-conventional' doctrine by the Indian Army may not deliver the desired result. It is pertinent to mention that the US too confronted a similar situation, with the US Army publishing the *Counter-insurgency Field Manual (FM-3-24)* in 2006. Subsequently, the need for political clarity and an understanding of the basic principles of counter-insurgency by the civilian political leadership resulted in the State Department publishing a condensed *US Government Counterinsurgency Guide* in 2009. Representatives from various government agencies, including the Departments of Defense, Agriculture, Treasury, Justice, and Homeland Security, US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the intelligence community were involved in writing it, thereby highlighting the requirement for non-military, multiple-agency expertise in a successful counter-insurgency campaign.²⁷

Exercising Strategic Autonomy on Issues Involving India's Strategic and Security Interests

The outcome of the London Conference in January 2010 and the undermining of India's interests and role in Afghanistan is yet another example of successful leveraging of its interest by Pakistan, despite all the contradictions and paradoxes that prevail there. Any setback to India's interests in Afghanistan

also has an impact on India's extended strategic neighbourhood in the Central Asian Republics and Caucasus regions. Therefore, India should consider asserting her strategic autonomy on issues having a direct bearing on her strategic and security interests and not be seen as being overly cautious to the sensitivities of the US. In doing so, India must strengthen her ties with Iran so as to maintain her influence in the region. Just as the US continues to have its relationship with Pakistan, which is separate from India's own relationship with it, India's relationship with Iran should not come in the way of India's continuing good relations with the US. The recent statement of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh regarding opposition to further rounds of sanctions against Iran and India's participation in the nuclear conference hosted by Iran could be viewed as a step in the right direction.

Revival of Covert Operations Capability

Covert operations are undertaken to influence political, military or economic conditions or situations in a target country, where it is intended that the role of the government conducting it should not be apparent. It encompasses propaganda activities, support to political or military factions within a particular country, technical and logistical assistance to other governments to deal with problems within their countries, or actions undertaken to disrupt activities that threaten Indian interests. In the Indian context of cross border terrorism and proxy war being waged by Pakistan, covert operations offer a viable and potent option (that is beyond the realm of diplomacy but short of the military option) to the 'response' repertoire of the government. However, despite its inherent deniability, covert operations, when mishandled, can cause embarrassing situations. Hence, the authority to sanction them should lie with the country's highest elected executive. India's suspension of covert operations against Pakistan in 1997 may have been a political necessity, which the latter does not seem to have reciprocated. The current security environment necessitates its revival and the development of a requisite capability to execute the envisaged missions with finesse. The possible missions could include – tasks in pursuance of 'punitive' deterrence and exploitation of schisms within Pakistan, i.e. the Shia-Sunni divide, Punjabi-Sindhi rift, clamour for separate identity by Seraikis of southern Punjab, exploitation of resources of Baluchistan, etc.

B Raman, former Additional Secretary in the Cabinet Secretariat, has cited 1971 as the successful culmination of a covert operation initiated 20 years earlier, and facilitating the defeat of the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2001, as examples of successful covert operations undertaken by India.²⁸ Though botched up, the elimination of Mahmoud al-Mabhouh, the Damascus-based leader of Hamas in Dubai by the Israeli Mossad in January 2010 is one of the more recent instances of successful covert operations against terrorism.

Enhancing the Credibility of India's Deterrence

The ineffectiveness and lack of credibility of India's deterrence is a direct outcome of the inability to communicate and demonstrate the 'will' and 'resolve' by the Indian government and its various organs/departments/instruments. The necessity of conveying the message to Pakistan that its asymmetric warfare attack against India is no longer a 'low cost option' has to be recognised by the decision-makers. This can be achieved by:

- Enunciating a 'declaratory policy' on the intent of using all available means including conventional military capability, in case India's sovereignty is threatened by Pakistan and Pakistan-based elements, through her strategy of asymmetric warfare. Ruling out the employment of the conventional military option from the response options by the political leadership as an exhibition of sagacity, maturity and restraint, is counter-productive. Such a declaration only negates India's deterrence capability.
- Graduating from 'deterrence by denial' to 'punitive deterrence' by demonstrating the ability to strike at the perpetrators of acts of terror in Pakistan, through a range of options viz. covert operations, surgical and precision strikes etc, once Pakistan's complicity is unambiguously established. Such strikes would be a reminder that the continued pursuit of the asymmetric warfare strategy would be prohibitively costly for Pakistan.

Fielding Dominant War-Fighting Capabilities

The other means of enhancing India's deterrence is by fielding dominant war-fighting capabilities that generate a clear asymmetric edge over Pakistan in conventional military terms, so as to exert psychological pressure that could dissuade Pakistan from persisting with or escalating its proxy war.²⁹

Detering the Terrorist – Targeting of Leadership

Contrary to the belief of many experts that terrorists indulging in suicide attacks cannot be deterred, one of the reasons for India's success in bringing down the level of violence in J&K has been the successful targeting of the terrorist leaders during the last few years. During 2009 alone, the security forces killed 53 self-styled 'commanders' from different terrorist outfits in J&K, including 22 of the LeT, 23 of the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HM), five from JeM, one from Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HuJI) and one of Al Badr.³⁰ As part of the shift in India's approach, India should consider targeting terrorist leaders in Pakistan itself.

Review of India's Nuclear Deterrence and Self Imposed Moratorium on Tests³¹

While India's self-imposed moratorium of further tests has been commended by the international community, considering the failure of its nuclear deterrence and doubts raised by the likes of Dr K Santhanam regarding the thermo-nuclear tests conducted in 1998, perhaps India should consider carrying out further tests so as to ensure that its nuclear deterrence is credible. It is pertinent to mention that all the major nuclear powers of the world have carried out a large number of tests: the US has conducted more than 1000 tests while the Soviet Union (now Russia) has conducted approximately 800 tests. Similarly, France and UK have conducted more than 200 and 50 tests respectively. As far as China is concerned, it has carried out more than 45 tests within a period of 32 years since its first test in 1964. India, on the other hand, has conducted only two tests over a span of 24 years (1974-1998). The existence of tests by simulation techniques in the 21st century are often put forth as a counter-argument. However, whether such simulation techniques can render the requirement of actual tests redundant is questionable.

Marginalisation of Pakistan Army by Pakistan's Civil Society

The Pakistan Army is the key arbitrator in all the important policy formulations in Pakistan. Its obsession for avenging the defeat of 1971, along with its deep-rooted desire to remain a predominant power centre in Pakistan has dictated its current policy of using terrorism to destabilise India. It is unlikely to abdicate this policy unless there is a major social

upheaval in Pakistan to bring about a marginalisation of the Pakistan Army. The plausible means to bring about this step is the resurgent civil society of Pakistan, which had demonstrated this potential earlier by leading a public uprising against the removal of Pakistan's Chief Justice in March 2007 – a move which eventually brought about the reinstatement of the Chief Justice and the ouster of Gen Musharraf. India should endeavour to whip up anti-Army passion amongst the opinion makers, intelligentsia, journalists, members of strategic fraternity, media and other members of civil society in Pakistan through unobtrusive means. Such a campaign should highlight issues such as the excessive allocation of meagre resources towards defence, inadequate allocation towards the social sector (education and health), misuse of authority by the military hierarchy to consolidate their business empires and structural infirmities in the economy etc, aimed at catalysing a public uproar against the Army. The bogey of India being an existential threat, the fallacy of using terrorism as a state policy and the disclaiming of dead soldiers by Pakistan's military leadership during the 1999 Kargil conflict should also be exposed. Such a campaign should be executed unobtrusively, as any footprint of Indian involvement can be counter-productive.

Military Diplomacy

In view of the primacy of the Pakistan Army in all key policy matters (when in power or otherwise), India could also consider the alternate option of initiating military-to-military cooperation with Pakistan. The envisaged cooperation could begin with the exchange of military delegations mandated to discuss issues related to security concerns, and be progressively graduated to military sports, joint adventure expeditions and sharing of terrorism-related intelligence. The essence of such an option lies in the argument that militaries understand each other better than any body else, thus, leading to knowing each other's perceptions better, dispelling deep-rooted mistrust and eventually moving ahead on long-standing unresolved bilateral issues to facilitate subsequent settlements. This option, despite its potential, may not find favour with the Ministry of External Affairs, who are likely to view such an initiative as a transgression into their turf.

Countering Pakistan's Deceit

- *Inability to Exercise Control over Non-State Actors:* Pakistan has often expressed its inability to exercise control over the non-state actors operating from its soil as a ruse to justify its failure to take punitive actions against perpetrators of terrorism in India. An ingenious counter-move from India should be to use this argument to justify its 'proactive' approach against terrorists, viz. surgical and precision strikes etc, as part of India exercising its sovereign right to protect its citizens from the attacks by non-state actors over whom Pakistan has no control. The precedence of the US and Israel exercising such a right to strike at known terrorist locations in the past already exists.
- *Threat to Lift Troops Deployed on Durand Line:* After every terrorist attack that has been traced to Pakistan, apart from the condemnation of such acts of terror and denials of its involvement, Pakistan has been proactive in leveraging the pull out of its troops deployed along the Durand Line to meet the potential conventional military retaliation from India. Such a pull out is in Pakistan's interest, as it implies switching over to a conventional role which it is more accustomed to. In addition, it has an adverse impact on the US/ISAF operations in Afghanistan. Resultantly, India is subject to pressure from the US and other Western countries to exercise restraint in its reaction. A new dimension that has been added is an argument that terrorist attacks against India are orchestrated by the non-state actors in Pakistan to derail Indo-Pakistan talks and to thin out the troop deployment along the Durand line. Therefore, proponents of this argument suggest that India should not fall into the trap by any over-reaction/response. India should see its larger security interest and should counter-leverage its conventional military response with the US to coerce Pakistan to abdicate the use of terrorism as a state policy.
- *Withdrawal from Indus Waters Treaty 1960:* The Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 was an act of sagacity on the part of India towards a smaller neighbour. In the current context, India's location as the upper riparian state is an effective leverage against Pakistan. India should consider a reduction in the release of water from the western rivers of J&K in an escalatory continuum, which could culminate with the withdrawal from

the treaty. Considering the adverse impact of such a move on the agro-based economy of Pakistan, particularly Punjab, even an enunciation of intent will send a clear message to Pakistan.

- *Capability Development*: Considering the type of threats envisaged from Pakistan-sponsored terrorists in the future and the proposed 'proactive' approach, it is logical that various agencies, including the armed forces and other instruments of the state, foresee the capabilities required to be developed to meet such threats and execute the given tasks. These would include the capability to launch cyber attacks, monitoring of CBRN devices, protective gears against low-yield CBRN attacks, space-based technologies for 24x7 surveillance, crowd-control equipment and devices, amongst others. Such capability developments, as far as possible, should be technology-driven.

Matrix of Response Options to Pakistan-abetted Terrorist Attacks

India's responses to any future terrorist attack would include a range of measures to include diplomatic, informational, economic/social and military.

Triggers for Responses

Ingenuity, surprise and adaptability in the selection of the target, place and *modus operandi* will always be the hallmark of any terrorist attack. In addition to the futuristic forms of terrorist attacks mentioned previously, some of the triggers for response could be:

- Bomb blast/terrorist attack of similar magnitude as 26/11 in other metropolitan cities like Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore, Ahmedabad, Jaipur etc.
- Hijacking of an Indian carrier aeroplane from India/abroad.
- Attack on Indian missions abroad.
- Heightened insurgency in J&K – increased infiltration of terrorists, *fidayeen* attacks, subversion and sabotage, Improvised Explosive Device (IED) attacks, assassination bids etc.
- Any other terrorist attack eliciting public outrage and meriting a response.

Diplomatic Responses

In the event of Pakistan orchestrating another terrorist attack on India, the measures forming part of the diplomatic responses should include the following responses:

- Suspension of confidence-building measures (CBMs), bus services, *Samjhauta* Express, sporting activities, cultural exchanges and Track II channels, i.e. people-to-people contact etc.
- Reiteration that Pakistan is the fountainhead of terrorism and any obfuscation by it to act decisively against terrorist groups including the Al Qaeda, Taliban, JeM and HuJI will result in Pakistan getting engulfed by terrorism. The looming threat of *jihadis* gaining access to nuclear weapons should be emphasised. Such a situation, besides adversely affecting the operations in Afghanistan, would have regional and global security implications.
- Military aid/economic assistance/loans being rendered to Pakistan by the US/IMF (International Monetary Fund) and other international institutions should be contingent on its clampdown/decisive action against terrorist groups.
- Diversion of military assistance/funds to augment its conventional capability against India and the need for appropriate 'benchmarks' for accountability, as well as urgency of utilising the fund for building the counter-insurgency capability of the Pakistan Army, should be highlighted.
- Discrediting and reining in the Pakistan Army – ISI combine to strengthen the civil democratic government, including freezing of foreign bank accounts of the military hierarchy.
- Step up the campaign that unless stern measures are adopted by the international community, Pakistan would join the ranks of 'failed' states.
- For its continued defiance to comply with UN Security Council Resolution 1373 of 2001 related to terrorism, India should appeal to the international community to:
 - Suspend Pakistan's share of troop contribution and military observers/ staff officers in UN missions. Being the largest troop contributor to UN peacekeeping operations, any cutback would hurt Pakistan immensely.
 - Declare Pakistan as a state-sponsoring terrorism, or a 'terrorist' state.

- Clamp down on Pakistan for repeated violation of the “Arms Control Export Act”.
- Pruning down of the staff of the Indian High Commission in Pakistan.
- Snapping all diplomatic ties.

Economic/Social Responses

Considering the inherent infirmities in the structure of Pakistan’s economy and its dependence on external aid/assistance, the following economic/social initiatives are proposed:

- Suspension of Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status to Pakistan.
- Suspension of trade.
- Reforming Pakistan’s Economy: Exert pressure through the UN, the US and other states, to compel Pakistan to reduce its defence budget allocation with a corresponding increase in the social sector, particularly education and health.
- Economic isolation of Pakistan and the imposition of sanctions through the UN for violation of UN Security Council Resolutions and the proliferation of nuclear weapons.
- Destabilising of Pakistan’s Economy: In the long term, the destabilisation of Pakistan’s economy could be affected through the following steps:
 - Capture of Pakistan’s export market.
 - Create an environment of economic insecurity to trigger an out-flow of funds, thereby dissuading any foreign direct investment.
 - Engaging Pakistan in an arms race.
- Withdrawal from the Indus Waters Treaty (as mentioned previously).

Informational Responses

Despite the limitations of the ‘soft power’ approach in the Indo-Pak context, it is likely to have the desired effect when employed in concert with hard military options as well as diplomatic and economic measures. The message that could be sent to the people of Pakistan should include the following:

- India is not an existential threat to Pakistan as propagated by the Pakistan Army. As per a Gallup survey, only 18 percent of the Pakistani public consider India as the greatest threat and a Pew survey indicates that

2/3rd of participants favour an improvement of relations with India.³² The results of such surveys as well as a submission by President Zardari on 14 February 2009 that Pakistan faces an existential threat from the Taliban reaffirms India's stance.

- India desires a stable and progressive Pakistan.
- The current instability in Pakistan is a result of the continued neglect of the social sector by the Pakistan Army.
- Highlight the soaring trade deficit, falling foreign exchange reserve and inability to repay the loans from international institutions/IMF etc.

Military Responses

The military responses would range from covert operations, abrogation of the existing ceasefire along the LoC, surgical/precision strikes on the terrorists at one end of the escalatory ladder, to a limited/all-out war against a nuclear backdrop on the other. Given the possibility of escalation, the necessity of being operationally prepared at all times is critical.

Escalation Control

Any form of response from India to Pakistan for its abettment of terrorist attack, particularly a military response, is likely to elicit a reaction from Pakistan. Such a reaction could take the form of pulling out of Pakistan Army troops deployed along the Durand Line (to which the international community is highly sensitive, as mentioned previously), raising the ante in the escalatory ladder and nuclear saber-rattling. Therefore, a range of escalation control measures would have to be built into the response mechanism.

Conclusion

The proposed approach and responses are fraught with the risk of escalation. However, for far too long, India has been hampered by its 'guarded and no-risk' approach, due to which, despite India's conventional superiority, Pakistan has continued to pursue its strategy of 'bleeding India through a thousand cuts' with impunity. For too long, India has been tagged as a 'soft' state and a 'sponge' state. It is time India recognises that hard decisions are unavoidable. A 'cost-free' option may not be possible. Clearly, the options

are between a 'proactive approach' or 'confrontation by design', with the risk of military escalation and loss of life on one hand and 'reactive approach' or 'inaction' with the further loss of life through terrorist attacks by default on the other. Pakistan must be made to realise that its asymmetric warfare strategy to seek parity with India will no longer be the 'low cost' option. The cost of asymmetric warfare option has to be raised to such a level that it is no more considered a viable option.

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