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## CONTENTS

Editorial	3
First-ever UN human rights report on Kashmir	
<i>Office of the UN High Commissioner of Human Rights</i>	8
Significance of Imran Khan's Victory	
<i>Perwez Shafi</i>	19
Hybrid Warfare Challenges for Pakistan	
Ikram Sehgal	26
Sabarimala: Brahmanism's Last Ditch Battle in Kerala	
Bin Mathew	30
Bleak times for freedom of expression, whether emergency or not	
<i>Sidharth Bhatia</i>	33
Book Review-Bruce Hoffman: Inside Terrorism	
<i>Elias Davidsson</i>	37
Bangladeshi Regional Migration Could Plunge South Asia into War	
<i>Andrew Korybko</i>	45
Mob Lynching in India — The Menace is Growing	
<i>Syed Ubaidur Rahman</i>	50
How the West writes about Pakistan	
<i>Adam Noah</i>	53
From Reason to Racism	
<i>Kevin Barrett</i>	56
Why Dalits want to hold on to Dalit, not Harijan, not SC	
<i>Adrija Roychowdhury</i>	60
Election Results Could be Good for Pakistan, Bad for US	
<i>Graham E. Fuller</i>	64
Indo-Bangla relations and the "termite" problem	
<i>Afsan Chowdhury</i>	68
Nepal Is Teaching India a Lesson by Keeping BIMSTEC in Check	
<i>Andrew Korybko</i>	71
Coercive Diplomacy	

## LISA

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## EDITORIAL

### **Kashmir and UN Human Rights**

For the first time ever UN published a scathing human rights report on Kashmir. This was highly appreciated and many expect that it may restrain India committing brutalities and most inhuman atrocities on the hapless Kashmiris. A few were optimistic that at least it may auger well to restore some semblance of peace and quiet. It was considered a huge success but then came a complete volte face by the UN itself.

What a shame for the United Nations, the standard bearer and champion of human Rights that despite publication of its own report and the Amnesty International on grave human rights violations brashly elects India as a member of The Human Rights Council with highest number of votes. Nothing could be more preposterous and regrettable. One may remind the UN that it is considered protector of human rights and one would expect it to stand by its enunciated principles that discourage nations to be its member who have track record of gravest violation of human rights.

### **Imran Khan and Pakistan**

People have spoken out loud and quite logically, Imran Khan is the elected candidate to lead a futuristic system of political governance in Pakistan. The people of Pakistan have finally spoken and rejected criminal political rulers at the ballot box. This surely augers well for Pakistan and they may have a ray of hope for a better future. This nation has been at the mercy of a gang of crooks and criminals who put democracy to shame. Hopefully it is time of change!

Had this happened decades ago Pakistan could have been an enviable model of democracy, social and economic cohesion and political stability. Instead, the so called Pakistan's democratically elected politicians were masters of corruptions, lies and deceit: inept and greedy. These unscrupulous politicians robbed the people of the country rendering their country poor, weak and unstable. The irony of the matter is that they did all this portraying as champions of democracy and fooled the naive and illiterate people of Pakistan. *This weakness of the ruling elite encouraged the foreign powers (masters) to use them as puppets to further their own interests.*

Their collective dishonesty underlying the failure of politics was clear and obvious. Institutionalized corruption is a favourite occupation for the so called elected rulers who have unashamedly attracted simple naive people's support through slogans of change and accountability. *Most indicted criminals that include erstwhile prime ministers and presidents – all wanted to serve the noble ideals of political fairness, honesty, socio-economic stability, human rights and law and justice. The problem was none of them had such qualities in their own lives and characters. They were self serving and corrupt to the core.* How could they have given to others what was not part of their own life and possessions? It will be indispensable to put all those self seeking rulers of the past out of business. It is herculean task demanding steadfastness, courage, resilience and of course integrity. Can Imran Khan do it?

### **India's juvenile volte face**

It was the “political survival instinct” of the rapidly weakening BJP which made the Indian government suddenly calls off the foreign ministers-level talks with Pakistan which were to be held on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session in New York next week. India's foreign minister Sushma Swaraj and her Pakistani counterpart S M Qureshi were to meet and thrash out a range of issues bedevilling bilateral ties.

PK Balachandran writes, “The reasons for not wanting talks with Pakistan were not what was cited on Friday by Ministry of External Affairs spokesman Raveesh Kumar. Kumar had cited as the offending acts: the killing of three Indian security forces personnel and the release of a postage stamp glorifying the dead Hizbul Mujahideen militant Burhan Wani.

But the real reason for opting out was the political cost which the BJP would have to bear for talking with Pakistan eight months before the next parliamentary elections in a communally charged environment in which rising Hindu nationalism, whipped up by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has reached a peak in parts of the country where the BJP has electoral presence.

In this scenario, talks with ‘trouble-maker’ Pakistan could dent the BJP's image as a strong, nationalistic, anti-militant and anti-Pakistan and anti-Muslim party in contrast to the opposition Congress which is portrayed as a soft, pro-Muslim and pro-Pakistan party.

The Modi regime's initial warm response to Pakistan PM Imran Khan's overtures and the agreement to begin a dialogue at the foreign ministers' level

was part of the BJP and RSS' campaign to mend fences with the Muslims ahead of the May 2019 parliamentary elections.

Repeated reverses in provincial elections since 2014 showed the BJP that it could not rely entirely on the Hindu vote. The support of the Hindus was dwindling in the last four years because of the Modi regime's comprehensive failure on the economic front.

To woo the Muslims to make up for erosion of Hindu support, Modi recently graced a major Bohra Muslim function at Indore in Madhya Pradesh. More recently, the RSS held a conclave in New Delhi in which Mohan Bhagwat, the topmost RSS leader, tried to convince the vast audience that "Hindutva" is not a communal ideology and that the RSS and the BJP are not anti-Muslim.

To win over the Nehruite secularist Hindus, Bhagwat said that the Congress had played a great role in the struggle against British rule and that it had also produced great leaders.

But all this was abandoned when it dawned on some influential elements at the top of the BJP that the bid to make up with the Muslims may not carry conviction with that community, and that a pro-Muslim stance might actually alienate the hardliner Hindus who are the party's core constituency."

That being so, it made no sense to go for talks with Pakistan at this juncture. The BJP regime abruptly abandoned the idea of talks. And to press home its point, the government expressed its dislike for Pakistan and its new leader Imran Khan in harsh terms, even discarding cultural and diplomatic niceties

### **Mindless Rhetoric against Bangladesh**

Subir Bhaumik in his article titled 'BJP's mindless rhetoric' states, "there seems to be some kind of in-house competition within the BJP to rubbish neighbours to gain domestic mileage. This could have disastrous impact on the conduct of foreign policy and India's long-term interests will suffer. For which the BJP will have to take all the blame.

No one expected the Saffronites to turn friendly with Pakistan in the run-up to the 2019 polls and the violence on the Line of Control (LoC) came as a godsend to play it up to intensify the politics of communal polarisation without which they cannot win the next parliamentary elections.

But the senseless verbal tirade unleashed against a friendly Bangladesh defies all imagination. It can dangerously impact on bilateral relations at a time when the upswing was visible and delivering on all key concerns of security and connectivity for India without much of a payback for Bangladesh.

Initially, the Narendra Modi government appeared reasonable, trying to assuage Dhaka over the National Register of Citizens (NRC) exercise in Assam, describing it as an internal exercise with no adverse fallout for Bangladesh.

But then out of the blue, BJP president Amit Shah went ballistic, describing Bangladeshi illegal immigrants as “termites”. He also threatened to throw them out of India in much the same way Modi had warned them before the 2014 Parliament polls with his ‘pack-your-bags’ remark.

But that would do little to calm frayed tempers in Bangladesh, a very proud nation which has been so friendly to India in the last one decade.

In fact, Shah’s termite slur has upset Indian Bengalis, Hindus and Muslims alike, because millions of them now face exclusion in Assam. The BJP’s repeated promise to defend Bengali Hindus appears to be mere rhetoric because almost half of those excluded from the draft NRC in Assam are Hindus. Shah welcomed the NRC exercise as the first step to eliminate the “termites” – meaning both Hindus and Muslims.”

### **Afghanistan-Pakistan’s advantage**

Pakistan’s geographic location and historic links gives Islamabad gives some advantage over others in dealing with Afghanistan. Trump’s assertion that Pakistan “should do more” in fact recognizes this capacity but stretches it a bit too far. The religious factor is yet another positive for Pakistan. The people of Afghanistan with 99 per cent Muslim population would feel more comfortable in dealing with Pakistan. Trump’s strategy of giving more space to India in Afghan matters is likely to backfire, if USA truly wants peace in Kabul and the region.

Rather than a pro-Indian government in Kabul which the US has promoted so far, a Pakistan-friendly regime would have provided the US with a stronger grip in Afghanistan. India’s use of Afghan territory to instigate violence on the Pak border has added fuel to fire. For obvious reasons Pakistan won’t tolerate any incitements in its backyard. For its own security Pakistan needs to maintain ‘strategic-links’ with the Talibans for the purposes of a final peaceful settlement

of Afghanistan. Pakistan enjoys the confidence and support of China, Russia and Iran. China has a greater stake in Afghanistan for furthering its economic outreach and the Belt Road Initiative (BRI).

President Donald Trump “comprehensive review” of U.S. strategic options in Afghanistan and South Asia and – as many have already noted – they are uninspiring. Seventeen years of war leads to bouts of soul-searching, but it seems the US has not turned up any new vision in dealing with Afghanistan situation

Christopher Clary an expert on South Asia in the United States says, “Any Afghanistan policy review is necessarily a Pakistan policy review. This is simply because, as many experts and even President Trump has realized, Afghanistan is not “solvable” absent some dramatic change in Pakistani behaviour. Jeff Smith, for example, concludes that unless this current review “starts and ends with a decisive change in our Pakistan policy, it will produce the same outcome as every Afghan strategy before it.”Pakistan is also critical for the U.S. mission in land-locked Afghanistan. The troubled state of U.S.-Russia relations following the latter’s invasion of Ukraine resulted in Russia shutting down the so-called Northern Distribution Network that re-supplied Afghanistan through the Central Asian republics. U.S.-Iran relations have become only more troubled since the beginning of Trump’s presidency, and appear likely to worsen further still. The United States has begun using Turkmenistan for “humanitarian cargo,” a euphemism that in this case likely means “nonlethal” supplies to the U.S. mission in Afghanistan. Thus, the United States presence in Afghanistan depends — and will depend for the foreseeable future — on Pakistan, which permits U.S. ground and air lines of communication. Absent unexpected, major improvements in U.S.-Russia or U.S.-Iran relations, or a U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, this dependence on Pakistan cannot be alleviated. “No matter how great President Donald Trump makes America, he cannot win the war on geography,” observes Afghan expert and former U.S. official Barnett Rubin.”

# **First-ever UN human rights report on Kashmir**

By

Office of the UN High Commissioner of Human Rights.

*(For those who sleep on Kashmir this is a wakeup call)*

*It calls for international inquiry into multiple violations. It is titled Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Kashmir: Developments in the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir from June 2016 to April 2018, and General Human Rights Concerns in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan*

GENEVA (14 June 2018) – There is an urgent need to address past and ongoing human rights violations and abuses and deliver justice for all people in Kashmir, who for seven decades have suffered a conflict that has claimed or ruined numerous lives, a report by the UN Human Rights Office published on Thursday says.

The 49-page report – the first ever issued by the UN on the human rights situation in Indian-Administered and Pakistan-Administered Kashmir – details human rights violations and abuses on both sides of the Line of Control, and highlights a situation of chronic impunity for violations committed by security forces.

“The political dimensions of the dispute between India and Pakistan have long been centre-stage, but this is not a conflict frozen in time. It is a conflict that has robbed millions of their basic human rights, and continues to this day to inflict untold suffering,” said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein.

“This is why any resolution of the political situation in Kashmir must entail a commitment to end the cycles of violence and ensure accountability for past and current violations and abuses by all parties, and provide redress for victims,” he said.

“It is also why I will be urging the UN Human Rights Council to consider establishing a commission of inquiry to conduct a comprehensive independent international investigation into allegations of human rights violations in Kashmir,” said Zeid.

Noting the continuing serious tensions in recent weeks, including those stemming from a series of incidents in Srinagar, he called on Indian security forces to exercise maximum restraint, and strictly abide by international standards governing the use of force when dealing with future protests, including ones that could well occur this coming weekend.

“It is essential the Indian authorities take immediate and effective steps to avoid a repetition of the numerous examples of excessive use of force by security forces in Kashmir,” Zeid said.

The UN Human Rights Office – which, despite repeated requests to both India and Pakistan over the past two years, has not been given unconditional access to either side of the Line of Control – undertook remote monitoring to produce the report, which covers both Indian-Administered Kashmir and Pakistan-Administered Kashmir.

The main focus of the report is the human rights situation in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir from July 2016 - when large and unprecedented demonstrations erupted after Indian security forces killed the leader of an armed group - to April 2018.

Indian security forces used excessive force that led to unlawful killings and a very high number of injuries, the report says, citing civil society estimates that up to 145 civilians were killed by the security forces between mid-July 2016 and the end of March 2018, with up to 20 other civilians killed by armed groups in the same period.

One of the most dangerous weapons used against protesters in 2016 – and which is still being employed by security forces – was the pellet-firing shotgun. According to official figures, 17 people were killed by shotgun pellets between July 2016 and August 2017, and 6,221 people were injured by the metal pellets between 2016 and March 2017. Civil society organizations believe that many of them have been partially or completely blinded.

“Impunity for human rights violations and lack of access to justice are key human rights challenges in the state of Jammu and Kashmir,” the report says,

noting that the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act 1990 (AFSPA) and the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act 1978 (PSA) have “created structures that obstruct the normal course of law, impede accountability and jeopardize the right to remedy for victims of human rights violations.”

The AFSPA prohibits prosecution of security forces personnel unless the Indian Government grants prior permission to prosecute. “This gives security forces virtual immunity against prosecution for any human rights violation. In the nearly 28 years that the law has been in force in Jammu and Kashmir there has not been a single prosecution of armed forces personnel granted by the central government,” the report says.

There is also almost total impunity for enforced or involuntary disappearances, with little movement towards credibly investigating complaints, including into alleged sites of mass graves in the Kashmir Valley and Jammu region.

Chronic impunity for sexual violence also remains a key concern in Kashmir. An emblematic case is the Kunan-Poshpora mass rape 27 years ago when, according to survivors, soldiers gang-raped 23 women. “Attempts to seek justice have been denied and blocked over the years at different levels,” the report says.

*The report also examines a range of human rights violations in Pakistan-Administered Kashmir which, according to the report, are of a different calibre or magnitude and of a more structural nature.* In addition, the report says, restrictions on freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and in Gilgit-Baltistan have limited the ability to obtain information about the situation.

Among the issues highlighted in the report is the constitutional relationship of these two “distinct territories” with Pakistan. AJK has effectively been controlled by Pakistan throughout its entire history. Pakistan’s federal authorities also have full control over all government operations in Gilgit-Baltistan, and federal intelligence agencies are reportedly deployed across both regions.

The impact of Pakistani counter-terrorism operations on human rights is detailed in the report, which notes the concerns of the UN Human Rights Committee at the “very broad definition of terrorism laid down in the Anti-Terrorism Act.” The report quotes a respected national NGO that found

hundreds of people had been imprisoned under the Act in Gilgit-Baltistan, and that it was being used to target locals who were raising issues related to people's human rights.

Among its recommendations, the report calls on India and Pakistan to fully respect their international human rights law obligations in Indian-Administered and Pakistan-Administered Kashmir respectively.

India should urgently repeal the AFSPA; establish independent, impartial and credible investigations to probe all civilian killings since July 2016 and all abuses committed by armed groups; and provide reparations and rehabilitation to all injured individuals and to the families of those killed in the context of security operations. Similarly, the PSA should be amended to ensure its compliance with international human rights law, and all those held under administrative detention should either be charged or immediately released.

ENDS

*London Institute of South Asia is pleased to publish an Executive Summary, Introduction and Methodology as given in the official full report on the OHCHR website*

### **Executive Summary**

1. On 8 July 2016, Burhan Wani, the 22 year old leader of the Hizbul Mujahidin, an armed group, was killed by Indian security forces during an armed clash in Bumdoora village in Kokernagarea in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. This triggered protests against his killing on a very large and unprecedented scale throughout the Kashmir Valley and in districts of Jammu. Indian security forces responded to protests with force, which led to casualties and a wide range of alleged related human rights violations throughout the summer of 2016 and into 2018. While Indian Administered Kashmir has experienced waves of protests in the past in the late 1980s to early 1990s, 2008 and 2010 this current round of protests appears to involve more people than the past, and the profile of protesters has also shifted to include more young, middle-class Kashmiris, including females who do not appear to have been participating in the past. Some of the root causes of the discontent fuelling protesters are addressed in this report.

2. Shortly after the outbreak of violence, the High Commissioner for Human Rights met with the representatives of the Governments of Pakistan and India who had differing narratives about the ongoing events and the general situation in Kashmir. From July 2016, the High Commissioner for Human Rights has on numerous occasions requested the Governments of India and Pakistan that his Office be given unconditional access to Kashmir to assess the human rights situation. India rejected this request; while Pakistan offered access should the Office obtain access to Indian Administered Kashmir. Without unconditional access to Kashmir on either side of the Line of Control, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has undertaken remote monitoring of the human rights situation. This first report on the situation of human rights in both Indian Administered Kashmir and Pakistan Administered Kashmir is based on such monitoring

3. This report covers both the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir (consisting of the Kashmir Valley, the Jammu and Ladakh regions) and Pakistan Administered Kashmir (Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan). The focus of the report is on the situation of human rights in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir from July 2016 to April 2018 over which period allegations of widespread and serious human rights violations were received. Notably excessive use of force by Indian security forces that led to numerous civilian casualties.

4. In responding to demonstrations that started in July 2016, Indian security forces used excessive force that led to unlawful killings and a very high number of injuries. Civil society estimates are that 130 to 145 civilians were killed by security forces between mid July 2016 and end of March 2018, and 16 to 20 civilians were killed by armed groups in the same period. One of most dangerous weapons used against protesters during the unrest in 2016 was the pellet firing shotgun, which is a 12 gauge pump action shotgun that fires metal Pellets.

5. In the same context, since the late 1980s, a variety of armed groups has been actively operating in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, and there has been documented evidence of these groups committing a wide range of human rights abuses, including kidnappings and killings of civilians and sexual violence. The landscape of armed intervention by groups operating in Indian Administered Kashmir has shifted over the years. In the 1990s, around a dozen significant armed groups were operating in the region; currently, less than half that number remains active. Despite the Government of Pakistan's assertions of denial of any support to these groups, experts believe that Pakistan's military continues

to support their operations across the Line of Control in Indian Administered Kashmir

6. Between January 2016 and April 2018, civil society organizations have accused members of armed groups of numerous attacks against civilians, off duty police personnel and army personnel on leave, including the killing of 16 to 20 civilians.

7. Impunity for human rights violations and lack of access to justice are key human rights challenges in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. Special laws in force in the state, such as the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act, 1990 (AFSPA) and the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act, 1978 (PSA), have created structures that obstruct the normal course of law, impede accountability and jeopardize the right to remedy for victims of human rights violations.

8. Over 1000 people were detained under the PSA between March 2016 and August 2017. Human rights groups had warned Jammu and Kashmir authorities that minors were being arrested under the PSA in 2016 and 2017.

9. During the 2016 unrest, there were numerous reports of attacks on, and obstruction of, basic medical services that had a severe impact on the injured and general civilian population in Kashmir. Human rights groups claimed that day's long curfews and communications blockades also had a major impact on people and their access to medical care in Kashmir.

10. The Kashmir region experienced frequent communications blockades during the 2016 unrest as the state Government suspended mobile and internet services on multiple occasions. In 2016, the authorities in Jammu and Kashmir imposed restrictions on freedom of expression, targeting media and journalists.

11. Widespread protests, long periods of curfew and frequent strikes in 2016 and 2017 had a cumulative impact on students and their right to education.

12. Impunity for enforced or involuntary disappearances in Kashmir continues as there has been little movement towards credibly investigating complaints including into alleged sites of mass graves in the Kashmir Valley and Jammu region.

13. Authorities have failed to independently investigate and prosecute allegations of sexual violence by security forces personnel.

14. While the main focus of the report is on the situation of human rights in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir from July 2016 to April 2018, the report examines the situation in Pakistan Administered Kashmir within that timeframe. However, the human rights violations in this area are of a different calibre or magnitude and of a more structural nature.

15. Pakistan's prime minister, the federal minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan and the federal civil service have full control overall government operations in both Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit - Baltistan (GB). According to an international NGO, federal intelligence agencies are deployed across the two regions and have "considerable powers over local elected representatives and officials". Given such a constitutional relationship with Pakistan, residents of AJK and GB do not enjoy all the rights and protections available to those under the Pakistan Constitution.

16. The interim constitution of AJK has placed several restrictions on anyone criticizing AJK's accession to Pakistan, in contravention to international standards on the rights to freedoms of expression and opinion, assembly and association.

17. A national NGO found that "hundreds of individuals" had been imprisoned under the Pakistan's Anti Terrorism Act, 1997 in GB, and it was being used to target locals who have been raising issues related to the "rights of the people". A national NGO was informed that GB authorities had forcibly evicted locals in Maqpoon Das area, while the Chief Secretary of GB had allocated the same land to state authorities for the China Pakistan Economic Corridor. The displaced claimed they had not received compensation or relocation from the authorities. OHCHR has received information that indigenous people in GB have complained of not being properly informed or consulted on decisions affecting them and their livelihoods.

19. Similar to the Constitution of Pakistan, AJK's Interim Constitution also defines who may be considered to be a Muslim. This definition is used to declare members of the Ahmadiyya community as non Muslims and is the basis of institutional discrimination against them. Pakistan's blasphemy provisions are also reportedly in force in AJK and GB.<sup>6</sup>

20. According to figures provided by the Governments of India and Pakistan, ceasefire violations have been increasing between 2016 and April 2018. Increasing civilian casualties and injuries and a large number of people being displaced appear to be the consequence.

21. OHCHR recognizes the complexity of the historical background and political issues that has led to the current situation in Kashmir, which has been divided between India and Pakistan. People on both sides of the Line of Control have been detrimentally impacted and suffer from limitations or denial of a range of human rights.

22. There remains an urgent need to address past and ongoing human rights violations and to deliver justice for all people in Kashmir who have been suffering seven decades of conflict. Any resolution to the political situation in Kashmir should entail a commitment to ending the cycles of violence and accountability for past and current human rights violations and abuses committed by all parties and redress for victims. Such a resolution can only be brought about by meaningful dialogue that includes the people of Kashmir.

### **Introduction**

23. On 8 July 2016, Burhan Wani, the 22 year old leader of the Hizbul Mujahidin, an armed group, was killed by Indian security forces during an armed clash in Bumdoora village in Kokernag area in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. This triggered protests against his killing on a very large and unprecedented scale throughout the Kashmir Valley and in districts of Jammu. Indian security forces responded to protests with force, which led to casualties and a wide range of alleged related human rights violations throughout the summer of 2016 and into 2018. While Indian Administered Kashmir has experienced waves of protests in the past in the late 1980s to early 1990s, 2008 and 2010 this current round of protests appears to involve more people than the past, and the profile of protesters has also shifted to include more young, middle class Kashmiris, including females who do not appear to have been participating in the past. Some of the root causes of the discontent fuelling protesters are addressed in this report.

24. Shortly after the outbreak of violence, the High Commissioner for Human Rights met with the representatives of the Governments of Pakistan and India who had differing narratives about the ongoing events and the general situation in Kashmir. From July 2016, the High Commissioner has on numerous occasions requested the Governments of India and Pakistan that his Office be given unconditional access to Kashmir to assess the human rights situation. India rejected this request; while Pakistan offered access should the Office obtain access to Indian Administered Kashmir. Without unconditional access to Kashmir on either side of the Line of Control, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has undertaken remote monitoring of the human rights situation. This first report on the situation of

human rights in both Indian Administered Kashmir and Pakistan Administered Kashmir is based on such monitoring.

25. This report covers the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir (consisting of the Kashmir Valley, the Jammu and Ladakh regions) and Pakistan Administered Kashmir (Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan). The focus is the human rights situation in the Indian state. The Jammu and Kashmir region refers to the entire territory of the former princely state before 1947; in shorthand, this region is referred to as Kashmir in the report. There is no specific decision of a UN intergovernmental organ that clarifies which terminology should be used to describe the region of Kashmir. The Secretary General's reports and letters have used the following terms: Kashmir, Jammu and Kashmir, State of Jammu and Kashmir, Indian administered side of the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir, and Pakistan Administered Kashmir. In a statement of 17 August 2016, the Secretary General referred to Indian administered Jammu and Kashmir. OHCHR refers in the report to the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. Where useful for clarity or brevity, OHCHR also uses Pakistan Administered Kashmir and Indian Administered Kashmir of Jammu and Kashmir from July 2016 to April 2018, due to allegations of widespread and serious human rights violations, notably excessive use of force that led to numerous civilian casualties. Civil society estimates are that 130 to 145 civilians were killed by security forces between mid July 2016 and end of March 2018, and 16 to 20 civilians killed by armed groups. The Government of Jammu and Kashmir in 2017 initially said 78 people including police officers were killed in the 2016 unrest but in 2017 revised the figure down to 51 people killed and 9,042 injured between 8 July 2016 and 27 February 2017.

26. While the report examines the situation in Pakistan Administered Kashmir within that timeframe, the human rights violations in this area are of a different calibre or magnitude and of a more structural nature.

### **Methodology**

27. Without access to Kashmir on either side of the Line of Control, OHCHR has undertaken remote monitoring of the human rights situation. This report is the result of such monitoring, based on the mandate of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, as provided by United Nations General Assembly resolution 48/141. The mandate of the High Commissioner includes the full range of activities aimed at the promotion and protection of human rights, including monitoring and reporting.

28. The report largely draws on information that is mostly available in the public domain, some of which was obtained by various parties in India through the Right to Information Act, and also reflects the findings of research and monitoring carried out by local, national and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and human rights defenders. Wherever possible, OHCHR has used official documents and statements, such as Parliamentary questions, court orders, and police reports. OHCHR considers the Press Trust of India-India's largest news agency and managed by an autonomous trust as a reliable source to quote Indian authorities and official statements. OHCHR conducted a small number of interviews to corroborate information; due to access issues and security concerns of witnesses, it was not possible for OHCHR within the timeframe available for producing this report to use direct witness testimony.

29. As OHCHR was denied access to Kashmir, it was not possible to directly verify allegations. OHCHR bases its findings on its methodology, using a "reasonable grounds" standard of proof. This implies that there are reasonable grounds establishing that an incident or pattern of conduct have occurred whenever OHCHR has obtained a reliable body of information, consistent with other material, based on which a reasonable and ordinarily prudent person would have reason to believe that such an incident or pattern of conduct had occurred.

30. The quantity and quality of information available on Indian Administered Kashmir contrasts significantly to Pakistan-Administered Kashmir. Despite challenges, NGOs, human rights defenders and journalists are able to operate in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, generating documentation on the ongoing human rights violations there. Restrictions on the freedoms of expression, opinion, peaceful assembly and association in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan have limited the ability of observers, including OHCHR, to assess the human rights situation there. Nevertheless, OHCHR used the information that is available to address the human rights violations occurring in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. In assessing the situation of human rights in Kashmir, OHCHR relied chiefly on the binding legal obligations that both India and Pakistan voluntarily assumed as State Parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and

the Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance, as well as customary international law.

31. In assessing the situation of human rights in Kashmir, OHCHR relied chiefly on the binding legal obligations that both India and Pakistan voluntarily assumed as State Parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and the Convention for the Protection of all persons from Enforced Disappearance, as well as customary International Law.

*The above report is published by LISA Journal and reproduced as given in the official full report on the OHCHR document. The full report is available on the India and Pakistan pages on the OHCHR website.*

# Significance of Imran Khan's Victory

Perwez Shafi

*For the first time in Pakistan's history, he has awakened the middle class and women. Thus, against the backdrop of corruption, and the feudal political system, Khan's call was like a breath of fresh air. Anti-corruption and social welfare become the core issues for Pakistan*

The victory of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI or Pakistan Movement for Justice) in the July 25 general elections has led to euphoria and aroused great hopes among the people. Led by the cricket-star-turned-politician Imran Khan, the PTI emerged as the largest party with 116 out of 270 contested seats when the official results were released on July 28 (total contested seats in the National Assembly are 272 but one candidate was killed and another constituency's election was postponed).

The losing parties and their leaders immediately cried foul and demanded re-election. Indian and Western governments, think tanks, and media outlets deeply disappointed at the outcome as usual blamed military interference for tilting toward the winner.

The magnitude of change brought about by the people can be appreciated from the historical context that Pakistan has lived through for the last five decades. The corrupt, feudal two-party duo took turns to plunder state resources. They had a stranglehold on the political system interspersed by military dictatorships. *Under the two parties, Pakistan gained notoriety as one of the most corrupt countries in the world.*

It was a historic win for Imran Khan and his party. The PTI ended dominance of the center-right Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) headed by Nawaz Sharif since the early-1980s, and center-left Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) formed in the late-1960s and now headed by Asif Zardari and his son Bilawal Zardari.

Nawaz Sharif and the Zardaris lead feudalistic, dynastic, and corrupt parties. Their sons and daughters become head of parties, then prime minister or president. They have always preferred personal interest over that of the country's. In fact, politics is big business for them. They spend money to acquire political power and then abuse it to entrench themselves and to make more money. Thus the cycle continues endlessly.

They looted the national treasury and stashed away billions of dollars in foreign accounts and bought prime real estate in Dubai and London. They have traditionally opposed such basic services as education, health care, and clean water for the people. Being feudal, they think that people will escape their control if these services are provided, hence undermining their “right to rule.” With their immense wealth, they not only bought voters but also judges, corporate heads, and heads of governmental organizations. They would mobilize their cronies and government machinery to steal elections.

Their massive theft and corruption drove the economy into the ground. The acquisition of foreign loans to meet routine government expenses had led to an economic meltdown. Such loans are difficult to repay now.

They have openly supported Indian and Western agendas at the expense of Pakistan’s vital interests. On numerous occasions, their cronies were caught red-handed with such anti-state activities but went scot-free for “lack of evidence” in court. Since the military is the only organized institution and has a relatively loose check on politicians, these “civilian” rulers (Sharif/Zardari) escaped this oversight on their activities by cooperating with India and Western regimes. Hence they served as proxies for Pakistan’s enemies. The masses found no respite from them as they openly spent money to buy votes and loyalties in elections. Due to their opulent lifestyle — looting of the country’s wealth and building vast palatial homes and buying properties inside and outside the country — they remained totally indifferent to the masses’ suffering. Over the last 50 years people became cynical and despondent and lost all hope for change in government affairs.

In the first weeks of 2018, then PTI Chairman Imran Khan predicted that if the first-ever civilian transition of power in Pakistan is allowed to happen, then PTI will win a majority in the general election later in the year and that, if elected prime minister, he will hold money launderers who looted the country of its assets accountable for their crimes. After winning the election, as he envisioned he would, his most immediate priority appears to be balance of payments solvency, a crisis that largely emerged over time due to the corrupt practices of career politicians who were burnishing their overseas bank accounts with kickbacks from foreign loans as well as “service fees” from the US War of Terror.

Imran Khan’s win must be viewed against the above nightmarish background and the stranglehold of the two corrupt parties to thwart any change. Khan is charismatic, honest, goal-oriented, self-confident and free from an inferiority complex vis-à-vis the West — a disease that afflicts almost all other Pakistani

politicians. He has seen how governments can be run efficiently and honestly for the benefit of the people.

He realized Pakistan's potential early on but knew it was held back by corruption. So from day one of his political career in 1996, when he formed the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, he concentrated on two issues: ending corruption and providing social justice. He advocated a system based on meritocracy. For the first time in Pakistan's history, he has awakened the middle class and women. Thus, against the backdrop of corruption, and the feudal political system, Khan's call was like a breath of fresh air.

He already enjoyed face-recognition because of his days as captain of the Pakistan cricket team, which won the World Cup in 1992. Soon afterwards his mother died of cancer; it shook him immensely. So he decided to build a world-class cancer hospital asking for no government funding. He visited almost every city and village asking for donations from ordinary people. They reposed their trust in him and donated generously. Building the hospital also raised his reputation as an honest and clean person.

Gradually and painstakingly, he gathered a good and educated team around him. The PTI nearly won the 2013 election but he had to wait for another five years. This turned out to be a blessing in disguise as Nawaz Sharif's name surfaced in the infamous Panama Papers in early-2017. They revealed he owned expensive real estate in London through offshore companies owned by his sons. For years Sharif and his family kept denying they had any property outside Pakistan.

Khan petitioned the Supreme Court. After three months' hearings where the Sharif family admitted the properties belonged to them, the apex court disqualified Sharif. He failed to divulge where he got the money from to purchase properties in the most expensive part of London or how the money was sent there. Sharif was accused under section 9(a) (iv) of the National Accountability Ordinance 1999 that relates to corrupt practices while section 9(a) (v) is about owning assets disproportionate to known sources of income.

The court declared that the prosecution had shifted the burden of proof onto the accused. Similar legislation has been promulgated in a number of other countries.

Instead of providing evidence of the money trail, they kept politicizing the hearings by attacking Imran Khan's persona, the higher judiciary, and military

for their predicament. If they had provided evidence of the money trail, they would have been convicted of looting national assets and money laundering. So they adopted a strategy to cry foul and claim “political victimization” by the judiciary and military to gain people’s sympathy.

They used other disruptive tactics: deliberately delaying the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) court proceedings. The hope was that they would be elected again in 2018. Soon the army chief and chief justice would also have completed their tenures and they would replace them with new and more pliant individuals. Further, new legislation would be enacted to overturn the judicial disqualification. They thought the crisis would be over and soon the luxurious lifestyle and absolute power would resume.

However, unlike the Shah of Iran or Marcos of the Philippines, the Supreme Court judgement was an official stamp of certification of their corruption. Two weeks before the election, on July 7, Sharif, his daughter Maryam and son-in-law Safdar were convicted and sentenced to jail terms of 10 years, seven, and one year respectively. They are now lodged in the notorious Rawalpindi Adiala jail. The judge also ordered forfeiture of their property in the Avenfield Apartments, Park Lane, London and imposed £8 million fine on Nawaz Sharif and £2 million on daughter Maryam.

In his first address to the nation, 8-19-2018, PM Imran Khan spent some moments describing the luxuries enjoyed by the prime minister at the people’s expense. Of the 80 vehicles at the behest of the previous prime minister, Imran Khan indicated that he will auction off all but two and put the proceeds into the national exchequer. In addition, he pledged to convert the Prime Minister House in Islamabad into a world-class university.

Khan’s announcement at rallies to hold the rich and powerful political rulers accountable bore fruit even before he came to power. Thus, the whole political discourse was changed from traditional (business as usual) to one of “rise up and clean house” by throwing the corrupt rulers out. The masses’ consciousness and awareness was raised to a new level where they were looking for an honest and clean leader, who sacrificed personal interest for the country and who would provide basic amenities and better opportunities for people.

PTI won the election and has formed a coalition government. People have high hopes of positive change primarily because PTI leaders have set a high bar for performance. The immediate crisis for Khan’s new government is resuscitation of the economy because it needs an immediate injection of \$12–20 billion.

Some critical decisions have to be made: whether go to the IMF or find alternate sources of funds through creative financing including motivating overseas Pakistanis?

The first issue is the balance-of-payments crisis, which threatens stability of the currency and the government's ability to repay debts or pay for imports. The budget deficit has grown steadily over the past five years, from 4% to 10% of GDP due to skyrocketing imports, especially rising oil prices. As a result, foreign currency reserves have declined to under \$10 billion, barely enough for two months' imports while export earnings dropped from \$25 billion in 2013 to \$22 billion in 2017, according to the State Bank of Pakistan. Meanwhile Pakistan's currency, the rupee has devalued four times since December depreciating from Rs.105 to Rs.125 to the US dollar in August.

One of the main reasons the US is objecting to Pakistan's application for an IMF loan is that it is opposed to Pakistan paying Chinese creditors first who have loaned \$62 billion for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) infra-structure projects of highways, railways, bridges, and power plants across the country. The just-ousted PML-N government's secrecy surrounding the CPEC agreement has raised eyebrows in international markets as well as in Pakistan. Though Khan supported CPEC, he has insisted that agreements will be made public when he assumes office. That would also show the loan amount, interest rates, and the magnitude of annual debt-servicing burden on Pakistan.

Total debt-servicing projections including CPEC projects stand at \$31.3 billion until 2022–2023, which far exceed export earnings. These will increase when other sources of income or loans are taken to service earlier loans. Chinese loans and debt servicing have saddled Pakistan with unsustainable growth. If CPEC is in Pakistan's interest why does Islamabad need to incur additional loans when it serves China's empire-building projects? This is because Pakistan's location saves considerable cost compared to the long and vulnerable sea routes. In addition, the previous PML-N government obtained total foreign loans of Rs1.2 trillion, exceeding its original target of Rs810 billion for the outgoing fiscal year by around 48% to finance its kickbacks and corruption. As a result, foreign loans have exploded in the last 10 years and with it the ability to service debt has also reached critical proportions.

After reviving the economy, Imran Khan said he will hold all those responsible for corruption and white collar crimes, looting and plundering the country, accountable. After exposing Nawaz Sharif, he needs to go after Asif Zardari and his PPP cronies who openly indulged in money laundering schemes,

siphoning away hundreds of billions if not trillions of dollars. This was Imran's main slogan over the last 20 years and people voted for this very reason.

Another problem is severe shortage of water: for drinking, agriculture and industrial usage. While India kept building large dams on rivers in Kashmir that flow into Pakistan thus diverting water away, Pakistan did not complain to the World Bank. This is in violation of the Indus Water Treaty brokered by the World Bank in 1960. Further, Pakistan did not build its own dams; the last big one was constructed in the 1960s.

This is dereliction of duty. People expect that Musharraf, Sharif and Zardari, who ruled for the last 18 years, should not only be held accountable but also prosecuted for criminal negligence. Building dams, however, requires huge sums of money that will put further strain on the economy.

Another important issue is to restore mutual trust between civil-military relations. There is no doubt that the military is the most organized and powerful institution, which dominates all other institutions of state and society. As the veteran politician Sheikh Rashid said, all politicians have been reared in the nursery run by the military. The problem arises when these politicians grow up and gain some self-confidence and they begin to think they can either dictate or pursue their own interests without regard to military interests.

Sometimes the military has to clean up its own mess decades later. During General Zia ul-Haq's time (1979–1988), the military created the Muhajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) led by Altaf Hussain. After gaining some experience, the MQM created its armed terrorist gangs that held Karachi hostage for almost four decades. The MQM had government support during General Musharraf's rule. Finally in 2013, after changes in the military and because of changed circumstances, cleanup operations began breaking up MQM's armed and terrorist wings altogether.

Similarly, alarmed by the growth of goodwill for the Islamic Revolution in Iran, at the behest of the US, General Zia created Lashkar-e-Jhangvi whose sole mission was to brand the Shi'as as kafirs and legitimate targets for killing. They were given support and an environment was created in which Shi'as could be harassed and killed openly with no questions asked. Now the military has started cleanup operations and the fight continues to this day. The LJ terrorists first fled to the tribal areas of Waziristan but under continued pressure, they shifted to Afghanistan. From there they occasionally attack military and soft

civilian targets including non-Muslim minorities that result in Pakistan's name being tarnished.

In the recent elections, the military again appeared to be supporting right-wing extremists, the Tehrik-e Labbayk Pakistan (TLP), but they were unable to win despite garnering appreciable number of votes. It would serve Pakistan well if the military were to cease experiments in social engineering. Such activity only creates more divisions in society. Let the natural process evolve whereby morally upright, self-confident, and patriotic politicians would be able to grow.

At the same time, instead of focusing on the army's power, authority, and funds, politicians should build their own stature intellectually, morally, and ethically such that they are able to analyze social and political problems, conceive solutions, and convince the masses of their efficacy. This will help build their own independent base of support among the people. After all in 2016 when Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan was confronted by a Western-backed military coup, it was the masses that stood against the military to defend freedom and civilian rule.

So politicians have to be realistic. When politicians and the military gradually reach a meeting of minds, the latter may then cede some of its powers and authority — anathema now — to other institutions of state. All countries that have adopted this natural process have reaped the benefits of unity and social cohesion and become stronger. Turkey and China are good examples.

Imran Khan is making all the right moves and has the support of the people. His ascent to power is similar to the rise in the early-1950s of Mohammad Mossadeq in Iran through elections. Both came to power despite the depressing political background and circumstances. Mossadeq nationalized British Petroleum and took steps to uplift the population from poverty and illiteracy. Time will tell whether like Mossadeq, Imran Khan and his team would be able to take bold steps to resuscitate the economy, hold corrupt politicians accountable, build dams, and then turn attention to the equally urgent task of human development and education.

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# Hybrid Warfare Challenges for Pakistan

Ikram Sehgal

During their meeting at Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt in 2009, then PM Yousuf Raza Gilani handed over a dossier of RAW's involvement in terrorist activities to his counterpart, PM Manmohan Singh. The dossier highlighted just how India's security and intelligence agencies had been using Afghanistan's soil to train and fund terrorist activities in FATA and other parts of Pakistan. Far more than any other country on its periphery Pakistan is a prime hybrid warfare target for India, this offensive is led by Indian intelligence agency RAW.

Using the Hindi phrase 'kante se kanta nikalna', Indian Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar recently inadvertently blurted out what has been a home truth for nearly five decades, India's penchant for employing/outsourcing of terrorists to catch/kill terrorists for covert action against neighbours, "We should do it. Why does my soldier have to do it?" India's National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Duval attempted damage control by playing down Parrikar's comment as quote "it could mean having skills, equipment, tactics, it can have many meanings," unquote. This is pure and simple arrogance, the present architect of India's "hybrid warfare" "seeking to inflict pain" (in his own words) on Pakistan, Ajit Duval well knows that Parrikar's statement was a true reflection of how India perpetuates hegemony (or tries to) on the States on its periphery.

Pakistan's breakup in 1971 was the successful execution of this type of warfare by India since the 1965 Indo-Pak War. On Jan 30, 1971 we fell for an India-staged hijacking of an Indian Airlines Fokker-27 named "Ganga" to Lahore, supposedly carried out by Kashmiri separatists, one of them was actually a RAW operative. Taken out of service by Indian Airlines a year before the "false flag operation", the Fokker was brought back into operation solely for this flight, was it a coincidence that all the passengers were RAW, BSP, police, etc personnel and their families. Its blowing up at the Lahore Airport tarmac was then used a pretext to stop all over flights between East and West Pakistan just when our developing internal political crisis badly needed physical (and psychological) communications for a direct route to remain and signify unity.

The Pakistan Naval Station Mehran was attacked in May 2011 by heavily armed gunmen targeting the P-3C Orion aircraft hangars, two aircrafts were destroyed while another was damaged. Has anyone ever really questioned why the terrorists walked past dozens of far more modern and expensive warplanes

on the tarmac to focus on the P3C-Orions more than 1000 meters away? What earthly motive would the terrorists have for destroying Pakistan's naval eyes and ears capacity? Who other than India was the sole beneficiary in making our Navy temporarily blind and deaf? Outsourcing of terrorists for deadly purpose has become quite common.

The Chief of Afghan NDSI Nabil, incidentally educated in Pakistan as a refugee during the Soviet occupation, candidly justified in a New York Times interview using Tehrik-e-Taliban-e-Pakistan (TTP) against Pakistan in line with Chanakya's tenet, "an enemy of an enemy is a friend". Training and administering NDSI personnel, RAW has been running almost all their operations mostly against Pakistan. Consider the arrest of five NDSI operatives by the Afghans themselves on information provided by the ISI about their involvement in the Peshawar Army Public School (APS) atrocity. How and why was the chief perpetrator Mullah Fazlullah who also ordered the hit against Malala, allowed to operate for several years from Kunar Province till the US targeted and killed him.

Baluchistan has been the primary target of Indian 'Hybrid Warfare' for decades. RAW agent Lt Comd Kulbhushan Yadav, a serving Indian Navy officer, entered Chahbahar with a visa stamped on a fake passport and was arrested inside Baluchistan in Mashkel near the border region of Chaman on 3 March 2016 during a counterintelligence raid conducted by security forces. Operating from Iran since 2013 in his mission to destabilize Baluchistan and Pakistan. Yadav was financially supporting Baloch separatists and militants, fuelling sectarian violence in the province and the country. He also admitted his deep involvement in Karachi's unrest. On his pointation many spy and terrorist cells were eliminated.

The virulent anti-CPEC campaign unleashed by hostile elements, particularly India, aims to deprive Pakistan of its benefits by sowing doubts and creating controversies and mistrust, particularly among the local residents of Baluchistan. Propaganda alleges that Chinese military bases are planned in the coastal belt and Gwadar Port, and that Pakistan will become a Chinese colony being financially dependent because of heavy loans. The real danger is some of these myth scan be passed off as the truth, allowing the panic creation by motivated circles to succeed. Another "hybrid warfare" initiative was the stopping of the flow of information by stopping the hawkers from delivering the newspapers throughout Baluchistan province. The RAW-assisted move made the owners of the print media platforms understandably anxious while all sorts of rumours were floated in the information vacuum; this persisted till the delivery was restored after a couple of days.

Israel in close collaboration with India has been pursuing over the years a media and psychological war through internet-based disinformation about the vulnerability of nuclear assets of Pakistan falling into the hands of terrorists create a dichotomy among the general public. Israel's extreme discomfort is understandable, they would not like our nuclear assets to be pressed to states inimical to its existence. On its part Pakistan has leaned over backwards to ensure that this does not happen. Israel must understand and accept our self-imposed restraint, and that patience has its limits. Our nuclear assets are in safe hands and exist as a positive deterrent to India's, nothing else!

Of great concern to us should be the subversion of the print and electronic media by RAW. The power of money (and probably blackmailing, in one known case through a male "honey trap" is quite visible given some of them pursuing not anti-govt but anti-State agenda. This is an existential danger to the State and must be dealt with ruthlessly; we cannot apply "Marquess of Queensbury" rules here. Media houses and other journalists/columnists on the payroll of enemy interests becomes an extremely dangerous proposition. When you add TV anchors spreading calumny against the institutions of the State on a regular basis, their motivated agenda becomes a national security issue. Given how incidents can be falsely interpreted, particularly "false flag incidents" of attempted kidnapping or murder, one has to be careful here.

Last year, Indian hackers made an attempt to hack the Karachi International Airport as well as the Multan, Islamabad and Peshawar airports' websites. They also infected government systems and locked the computer data making it inaccessible to recover. Indian cyber-attacks have aimed to dismantle high profile websites, disrupt indispensable services, steal confidential data from government websites and cripple the financial systems of the state. In this age of digitalisation of financial transactions TELCOS are a potent medium for conducting hybrid warfare, if they are not properly regulated and monitored. They are unfortunately all are foreign-owned and mostly seem to give only perfunctory lip-service to regulation to the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA). The power of advertising revenues keeps the rhetoric and print media in line. This has been further compounded by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) allowing TELCOS to have banks of their own. The grey area of regulation between SBP and PTA is thoroughly exploited to Pakistan's detriment. *Money-laundering and injecting/withdrawing US dollars playing with the value of the Pakistan rupee is a known hybrid warfare technique to spread financial disquiet among the population.* Can some of the TELCOS confirm they have not been indicted in other countries for money laundering? In effect TELCOS are the new version of the "East India Company" complete with compliant local executives on their payroll getting unheard of salaries and

benefits paid. The nature and demands of their jobs makes some of them not intentionally unpatriotic but inadvertently so.

Pakistan is rife with historical, ethnic, religious, socio-economic, and geographic differences which could be manipulated in order to engineer violence and set a Hybrid War scenario in motion. The public awareness of how certain threads of national fabric can be used against Pakistan.

In a globalized world, nationalism with the idea of fixed borders and the understanding that my own nation is better than that of people and nations beyond one's borders is outdated. Russian scholar Dmitry Likhachev says, "Nationalism is hatred of other peoples, while patriotism is love for your motherland." In the Pakistani context, Pakistani nationalism could dangerously veer off or be hijacked. The other form of nationalism ends up provoking identity conflict, separatism, and even terrorism at its most extreme manifestations, and both are equally dangerous to Pakistan's national security and fundamentally contradict its core geostrategic interests. That is why there is a need to substitute the nationalist idea with patriotism in our education and media.

When the nature of the game changes in fast and aggressive manner, what has to be done is to adapt to the new rules to avoid isolation, demoralization and eventual loss. Just as our military leadership has acknowledged the presence and impact of hybrid warfare on the country, it is important for not only for political and civilian leadership to step up to the challenge collectively but for both greater institutional and public awareness. Reliance on kinetic measures to intercept non-linear threats is no longer an option, modern statecraft requires alternate tools to tackle the emerging complex and unpredictable internal and external security landscape. Strong leadership and institutional harmony valid for substantially enhanced civil-military cooperation is needed today more than ever before (Extracts from a talk delivered at the National Defence University (NDU) recently by the defence and security analyst).

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# Sabarimala: Brahmanism's Last Ditch Battle In Kerala

Bin Mathew

*After the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) got strengthened, as it is a Brahmin headed organization, they started imposing Brahmin priests by displacing the Shudra priests in many Shudra temples. The Ayyappa temple is a classic example, how Brahmins took over this temple and women were denied of the right to enter with a theory that menstruation blood is pollution. They do not consider male sexual discharges as pollution. This is mainly Brahmin theory. This was never a Shudra theory.*

*The Nairs though are considered to be Savarna in the Kerala society but they do not have any spiritual rights within the temple system. They are the forth Varna called Shudra, who were slaves for long time in history, from the days of Rigveda. They cannot become priests and they cannot interpret the Hindu scriptures called Vedas and Bhagvad Gita. There are no Hindu theological schools, colleges that allow Nairs to study theology, leave alone the lower Shudras (who consider themselves as Avarnas in the Kerala contest). Yet Nairs —particularly Nair men after establishing the Nair Service Societyn (NSS) – remain so backward that they almost live at the feet of Brahmins as spiritual slaves. Such tendency of the Shudras has done great damage to the Shudra social and spiritual culture of equality.*

*This spiritual slavery of the NSS has come out very clearly on the event of Ayyappa temple entry for women. **Prof. Kancha Ilaiah Shepherd***

The only code of law for Hindus is Manu Smriti. IX.3 of Manu Smriti says “Na stree svaatantryam arhati” (a woman does not deserve freedom). Manu Smriti is the code of the four fold Varna system, namely Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vysya and Shudra. Hinduism is in fact is rooted in this pyramidal Varna system, Brahmins being at the top. Manu Smriti is at the root of the Hindu code of law. It governs all aspects of Hindu life from birth to death. According to Manu Smriti the lower castes are not even the right to knowledge, not speak of the right of women.

Brahmanism masquerading as Hinduism has kept millions in darkness for thousands of years. One of the worst practices of Brahmanism was Sati, women committing suicide in the funeral pyre of her husband. When it was banned in

1829 owing to the efforts of the reformers, there was widespread protest from the traditionalist Brahmanical forces.

In Kerala lower caste women were not allowed to cover their breasts. When reformers encouraged women to cover their breasts, caste Hindus tore off their dress. Kerala, one of the most casteist societies in the 19th century went through much protest and turmoil to gain respect for lower caste Hindus and women including temple entry and education. Every reformation was met with vehement violence from upper caste Hindus. It is through pitched battle with upper caste Hindus that Kerala gained its progressive status that it is enjoying right now.

Sabarimala temple entry for women of menstruating age is the last chapter in the fight against these casteist forces. On September 28, 2018, the Supreme Court of India struck down a rule that disallowed girls and women in the 10-50 age groups from entering the Sabarimala temple in Kerala. Chief Justice Dipak Misra-headed Constitution bench in a 4-1 verdict said the temple rule violated their right to equality and right to worship.

What followed was the coming together of casteist forces against this historic and progressive verdict. Showing total disrespect to the top court of India, casteist forces led by RSS, Sangh Parivar organizations came forward to oppose the temple entry of young women. Pathetically, the congress party in Kerala too joined the casteist forces in disallowing entry to young women.

Brahmin population in Kerala, the Kerala Namboothiris, are miniscule in population numbers. It is the Shudra Nairs who are significant in numbers in Kerala, but fast losing its influence in Kerala society, socially and economically and in numbers, that is at the forefront of this agitation with the support of fascist forces like RSS and Sangh Parivar organizations. All the lower caste organizations have dissociated from the agitation. It is only the Shudra Nairs now standing against a historic reformation in Kerala society.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has categorically stated that the government of Kerala will do everything in its capacity to enforce the Supreme Court verdict.

When the Sabarimala temple was opened for the monthly Pooja yesterday, the protesters took to the street and unleashed violence. They prevented women devotees from entering the temple.

They even attacked police who were protecting the devotees. Today, they prevented the New York Times reporter Suhasini Raj from entering the temple.

Today, the protesters have called for an all Kerala strike. As I type this they are unleashing violence across Kerala. This is a last ditch battle by the casteist forces supported by the fascist Sangh Parivar organizations to subvert the much celebrated Kerala renaissance.

This is not about tradition at all. Until 1991 young women used to visit Sabarimala, when High Court of Kerala banned the entry of women.

Until 1903 the temple was governed by the Malayayaras, an Adivasis community. They were the priests of this temple. British anthropologist Samuel Mateer has written about it in his book Native life in Travancore (1883).

It was only after Brahmins took control of the Temple, restrictions on temple entry was created. Still as I said earlier until the HC order, young women used to enter the temple.

What is happening now is Sangh Parivar elements trying to create communal tension in Kerala, their last hurdle in their project of Akhand Bharat.

The importance of Sabarimala is the battle to defeat Brahmanism and the equality of women. It has nothing to do with tradition.

Kerala government must not succumb to this archaic, revisionist, fascist forces. If the Kerala government has the courage it should appoint a lower caste priest at Sabarimala. That will break the back of casteist forces forever.

Kerala is standing upon a turning point, if the government succumbs to the fascist forces, the casteist forces will reassert itself in Kerala. If the government acts decisively, Kerala will take a step forward in annihilating caste, which Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar dreamt of so dearly.

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## **Bleak times for freedom of expression, whether emergency or not**

Sidharth Bhatia,

It's time to stop the nitpicking. All that hair-splitting about whether what we are witnessing in India today is classical fascism or not – stop it. The argument that this is not like the Emergency of 1975 – completely irrelevant. Those bookish notions belong to seminar rooms and academic discussions, where high-minded scholars, obsessed with theory rather than ground reality, can discuss the minutiae of definitions are pointless at a time when we are witnessing the steady gagging of dissent.

Indeed, it is not just dissent that is being stifled – even facts are verboten, which essentially implies that only sweet sounding lies will be allowed.

As media practitioners, my colleagues and I have felt the cold and clammy hand of threats to stop publishing the truth; but don't take my word for it. Read Punya Prasun Bajpai's firsthand experience of being told by his TV channel's proprietor not to mention Prime Minister Narendra Modi's name on his show.

Bajpai, along with his colleague Milind Khandekar found himself out of a job when their stories, which were critical of the government – with facts and on the ground reporting – 'got too much'. That wasn't enough – Bajpai's show Masterstroke, which raised the channel's profile and viewership, was blanked out on cable and satellite channels for several days.

Nor is this only about the media – in recent days, comedian Kunal Kamra found out that his show had been cancelled at MS University, Vadodara, after former students complained that he was 'anti-national'. They claimed his show was "an ideological conspiracy to pollute the minds of Barodian youth ahead of the 2019 elections. "The coordinator of the auditorium said that they were told that the content of his show was "anti-national and controversial." It sounds surreal and farcical, like something out of an old, satirical play (when satirical plays were being written), but it is very much real and sinister.

Or consider the event titled "Dialogue on Freedom of Expression", that was cancelled by Delhi University because members of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad protested. For the ABVP, which is part of the larger Sangh Parivar, the title itself is incendiary – firstly, it is about the freedom of

expression, something that is anathema to them. Secondly, it is a dialogue, a completely alien concept to members of an organisation where holding views different from the 'official' line is simply not allowed. To shut down an event on freedom of expression is an irony they will not understand, because neither the ABVP nor their masters do irony.

What further evidence does our liberal and left intelligentsia need about this being a difficult time for any kind of free speech and dissent? Yes, things were difficult during the Emergency – journalists were in jail and newspapers were cagey about publishing matters that angered the government – but there was a law in place. Now, newspaper proprietors have asked their editors to shut up or be kicked out, editors lose jobs halfway through their contracts, media companies have been raided and their channels taken off air and journalists are being shot dead. Is it really that different? There is no point comparing then and now – the hard fact is that with every law upholding freedom of expression still in place, newspapers and television channels have chosen to meekly fall in line and take orders emanating from the top.

The signs of what was to come were all there. In his time in Gujarat, Narendra Modi had kept the media at bay and on the few occasions when he had met journalists from outside the state, he had refused to answer any questions he considered awkward or hostile. That an elected official can and should be questioned is something he does not seem to understand or appreciate. He wants control over the situation and if and when that control slips – as it did when he was being interviewed by Karan Thapar – he cannot handle it and shuts down the conversation. This is a government led by a prime minister obsessed with image management—all those ads, the photo-ops, the invocation of his name by his ministers, they are about presenting him as the neon-god who must be praised at all times.

He hardly held press conferences in Gujarat and he has held none in his term of four-and-a-half years as prime minister. The few interviews he has given have been done by fawning anchors that have all but grovelled at his feet. The well-oiled performance on the stage in London where a poet sang his praises was cringe worthy. Even Donald Trump, who has a bitter relationship with the media, talks to them individually and collectively and exposes himself to questions. He ridicules them, calls them names, but he appears in front of them. Narendra Modi has contempt for the media but he will not take the risk of standing before them and calling them names – a wrong question would throw him off-track.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that he has stayed away from the media. But his prickliness has reached new heights. The media is closely monitored and directives are routinely given to media houses. Bajpai speaks of a 200 strong team whose job is to monitor coverage and prepare reports on who is saying what. The newspaper owners soon get to know if their journalists are getting out of line and are expected to bring them back to the straight and narrow. There is no dearth of anecdotal evidence about journalists feeling frustrated that their hands are tied.

More than the owner's diktats, what sends out a more chilling message is the consequence of what happens to those who dissent. Losing a job can be hard enough and often, it becomes almost impossible to get another job. No other proprietor wants to touch a journalist who has incurred the wrath of the political establishment. There are several examples of journalists finding that even firm offers have been rescinded. A jobless journalist loses more than a livelihood – he or she also loses a platform and a voice. This fear can even make well-established journalists – stars – keep their heads as low as possible and get on with the job within the given constraints.

After what has happened to Bajpai, one can be sure that there won't be any upsurge of professional unity and a show of individual or collective defiance against the government; at best a mealy mouthed statement will be issued, but the journalists, small and big, especially big, will get back to declaiming about national and world affairs. When Donald Trump ridiculed the CNN reporter at a press conference, his colleague from Fox News stood up for him and voiced his objection to the president; that is not likely to happen here. Media associations have been traditionally weak in India, now they are practically a joke.

Thus, the issue here is not to analyse the present situation and give it an accurate name; that is for future historians to decide. At this moment, the objective should be to stand up and be counted and make it clear that this suppression of free speech will not be tolerated because it is un-Indian and unconstitutional. There are fine examples of professional and brave journalists doing their job in the most difficult and trying of circumstances. Even young reporters have not completely given up on the profession and do their best. I constantly come across newly minted professionals who are angry at what they are seeing around them. For them the Emergency is something they have only vaguely heard about and fascism is an unknown concept. They don't care about the past or about accurate, theoretical definitions. Neither should we, who have been around for longer.

As Humpty Dumpty said to Alice when she wondered if a word could be made to mean many things: “the question is, who is to be the master that is all.” Those who are trying to control the message want to be the master; it is up to those who believe in democracy, to resist, not cave in.

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# Book Review-Bruce Hoffman: Inside Terrorism

Elias Davidsson

*“This book is presumptuous and devoid of scholarly value”*

The author was for a long time a director at RAND Corporation in Washington, which he designates in his book as an “independent, objective, nonpartisan research institution” (p. xi).

As an external observer, researcher and author, I have followed with keen interest for many years the debate surrounding the phenomenon of terrorism: Its definition, rationale, execution, effects and legal aspects.

I came initially across Hoffman’s book when I examined the activities of Germany’s Federal Center for Political Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, or BpB), which is not, as its name might suggest, a university institute or a department in the Ministry of Education, but a propaganda institution that belongs to the Ministry of the Interior). The BpB promotes Hoffman’s book (in its German translation) to German schools and universities as a textbook on terrorism. After reading that book, I spent long hours writing a detailed critical review of it in German, which is posted on the internet. I thought I had fulfilled thereby my civic duty.

Then I discovered that Bruce Hoffman was not only an author of junk science, but is periodically invited to comment on CNN, the Washington Post, the New York Times and other leading media, as an “expert” on terrorism. This discovery compelled me to share my exposure of Hoffman as a fraud with a larger audience, and particularly with unsuspecting potential buyers of his book. I do not intend, however, to provide a review of all the author’s scholarly sins, as this would require a volume exceeding in size the very book in review. I will limit myself to point to a few elements that demonstrate (a) the deceptive nature of the book; and (b) its utter lack of scholarly value.

## **(1) The deceptive appearance of erudition**

Hoffman’s book (revised and expanded edition) consists of 432 pages. The author devotes no less than 45 pages to a bibliography on terrorism, a whopping

72 pages to footnotes and 18 pages for an index. This extraordinary accumulation of sources creates the outward appearance of erudition and comprehensiveness. Indeed, at first glance, one is led to believe that the author is extremely well informed and that his text is grounded on a comprehensive study of the literature. Yet, one discovers soon that this impression is deceptive, for the bibliography omits major critical works on terrorism.

Thus, the author omits from his bibliography critical works on the events of 9/11, such as those by Prof. David Ray Griffin and Dr. Nafeez Mosaddeq Ahmed. Prof. Griffin's first book on 9/11 "The New Pearl Harbor: Disturbing Questions about the Bush Administration and 9/11," remains a landmark and a must for any student of these events. Dr. Ahmed, a scholar living in Ireland, deals at depth with the covert relationship between Western intelligence agencies and al-Qaeda. The same omission applies to critical studies regarding the London Underground Bombings of July 7, 2005, or to those of the Mumbai 2008 attacks. Any serious student of terrorism cannot avoid coming sooner or later across serious critical works which examine the forensics of various terrorist acts and governmental efforts to cover-up the events. I include below a short select bibliography of such works.

## **(2) Junk science**

### **(a) Treatment of facts.**

Good scientists are immediately recognized by the way they handle facts: They go to great pains to establish the empirical ground on which they base their theories. Before a theory is proposed, the underlying facts are tested for reliability on the base of credible sources and when doubt about a fact exists, an honest scholar will share that doubt with readers and steer clear from sweeping assertions.

True scholars are also known to treat with circumspection statements by third parties, particularly when these parties do not report their own observations but merely what they have been told or had read. True scholars do not rely on unidentified and unverifiable sources.

There would be no purpose in harping on such commonplace rules of good scholarship, were it not for Mr. Hoffman's systematic violations of these basic rules. I have stopped counting the unsubstantiated allegations made by him in his book and the number of cases where he relies on obviously dubious sources, such as on statements pronounced by a figure resembling Osama bin Laden on a video recording of dubious provenance.

## **(b) Disregarding the two most potent types of terrorism**

The author is presented by mainstream media as an expert on terrorism, a designation that he does not dispute. Yet, from the three types of terrorism, he ignores completely the two main and most potent types: Overt state terrorism and false-flag terrorism.

*Overt state terrorism refers to the overt use or threatened use of force or violence by state governments against people or property with the intention of intimidating or coercing societies or governments. Overt state terrorism includes, inter alia, carpet bombing cities, comprehensive economic sanctions, the institutionalization of arbitrary rule and mass surveillance. Actually, the very term terrorism was initially used only for state violence.*

*False-flag terrorism refers to what is also designated as “false-flag” or “synthetic” terrorism. False-flag operations are carried out secretly by military or police forces with the purpose to incite a population against a particular “villain.” False-flag operations are staged to appear as if they had been carried out by the “villain.” Due to the need to conceal the links between the perpetrators and state agencies, such operations require a high degree of secrecy and compartmentalization and are thus very complex. Substantial efforts are typically invested in the subsequent cover-up of such operations. A classic case of false-flag terrorism was the burning of the Reichstag in Berlin in 1933, which was immediately seized by the new Nazi authorities to arrest communist and socialist leaders and establish a police state. Other well-publicized cases of false-flag terrorism include Operation Northwoods (U.S.), the Lavon Affair (Israel) and the Gladio network (West Europe). False-flag operations are thus a distinct type of terrorism that calls for a completely different analytical approach than traditional or genuine terrorism.*

*The author not only ignores the very existence of false-flag terrorism but attributes all probable cases of such false-flag operations to al Qaeda and to an alleged corruption of Islam. The author, thereby, not only confuses and misleads his readers, but engages in slander and contributes in his modest way to shield the true criminals of these operations.*

## **(c) No assessment of terror investigations**

As terrorism is essentially a violent form of political expression, it follows that states possess vital interests in either elucidating or concealing facts surrounding specific cases of terrorism. Due to the political nature of terrorism,

States are never neutral observers of such crimes. For that reason, a serious scholar will meticulously scrutinize the direction, manner and zeal of governments to investigate the crime.

*States are actually duty-bound under human rights law to investigate cases of killings that occur within their jurisdictions. Such investigations must be carried out in good faith.* State investigations into killings can be objectively assessed, using criteria of adequacy developed by the European Court of Human Rights, such as promptness, thoroughness, impartiality, the independence of the investigators and transparency. States who fail to fulfil these criteria of adequacy can be presumed to act in bad faith. They call on themselves suspicion. Such presumption arises, for example, with regard to 9/11, the investigation of which has been grossly inadequate, as demonstrated magisterially by Prof. David Ray Griffin in a book entirely devoted to the 9/11 Commission (“The 9/11 Commission Report: Omissions and Distortions”)

The author’s discussion of terrorism relies almost entirely on either dubious terrorist sources or on allegations made by governments. He does not bother to scrutinize the investigations conducted by governments after terrorist attacks, suggesting that we may trust these investigations. The author does not even hint that some of these investigations may have been rigged, a charge made even by the chairman and vice-chairman of the 9/11 Commission after the Commission was disbanded.

#### **(d) Hoffman and the story of Mohamed Atta’s suitcases**

The story of Mohamed Atta's two suitcases found at the Boston Airport on September 11, 2001, because they were not loaded onto the doomed aircraft, is well known. The story has been reported world-wide and used unsparingly to establish the official legend on 9/11.

Hoffman builds upon this legend to press his point that the 9/11 “hijackers” were motivated by religion. He thus wrote: "It only remains briefly to clarify the role religion played in the motivation of the hijackers. This can be seen very clearly in the 'spiritual guide' written for his accomplices by Mohammed Atta, the leader of the operation, and one of four pilots. The guide was found seven (sic) days after the attacks at the Boston Logan Airport because one (sic) of Atta's suitcases was mistakenly not transferred from the Portland, Maine, flight to American Airlines Flight 11."

Let us forgive the author for his harmless inaccuracies, such as the claim that the guide was found seven days after the attacks. Less forgivable is the author’s

lack of intellectual curiosity. For one of the persistent questions regarding this episode is: What prompted Atta to drive to Portland on September 10, 2001 and fly from there back to Boston on an early-morning flight? For had his connecting flight from Portland to Boston been delayed, he wouldn't be able to carry out the first attack on the World Trade Center, meaning that no TV channels would be on the spot to film in real-time the impact of the second plane's impact. His "life mission" would be a fiasco and would have betrayed the trust Osama bin Laden allegedly placed on him. The puzzling detour to Portland was noted by the 9/11 Commission, which was unable to provide a compelling explanation. But there exists an explanation, one that is ignored by author Hoffman.

Let us briefly describe what was found in Atta's suitcases: When the police opened these suitcases, it found in them all the constituent elements for building the 9/11 legend: a portable electronic flight computer, a manual for aircraft simulators, a flight computer, a handwritten text in Arabic, a folding knife, pepper spray, three English grammar books, an Arabic- English dictionary, a bottle of perfume, three photographs, letters from the University of Cairo to Mohamed Atta, a picture of a visa, Alomari's passport and much more. This finding was hailed as incredible luck, or as *The Guardian* wrote on October 1, 2001, "The finds are certainly very fortunate, though some might think them a little too fortunate."

Were all these items packed into the suitcase in order being found by investigators? Perhaps. But in that case, the packers could not have been the "terrorists" because they could not have expected their suitcases to be forgotten in Logan "by mistake." Did the "terrorists", then, pack these items in order that they are destroyed in the aircraft crash? Perhaps. But in that case, why did they pack a folding knife and pepper spray into the suitcases, instead of taking these tools along on their bodies for use in the hijackings? Neither explanation makes sense.

Bruce Hoffman does not consider the possibility that Atta's suitcases and their contents might have been planted there to be found. This possibility occurred, however, to many who observed with bewilderment the sheer quantity of incriminating items found almost immediately in the suitcases and in other locations. Hoffman can, however, be forgiven for ignoring what Philip A. DePasquale, a baggage expeditor at Logan Airport in Boston, told the staff of the 9/11 Commission staff on February 10, 2004, regarding these suitcases (source: FBI document 302-46163, quoted in MFR04016228 of the 9/11 Commission). DePasquale told the staffers that the suitcases carried a "covert tag from US Airways [in Portland] to warn that Atta and his luggage were a

security issue.” That means that someone at US Airways was told of Atta’s alleged “security threat” before the attacks had started. In other words: Someone knew who Atta was, monitored his movements, and ensured that baggage handlers at Logan will retain Atta’s bags.

Readers may reflect upon DePasquale’s testimony and its implications regarding the events of 9/11.

### **(e) Terrorist “manuals”**

On page 251 the author cites “manuals” for the wannabe terrorist, that were allegedly found by unidentified persons on undisclosed dates in unspecified Qaeda’s training camps in Afghanistan. These “manuals” are cited by the author as a result of al Qaeda absorbing “lessons” from previous experience “in order to help its operatives blend in Western environments and avoid attracting attention. “ These manuals include advice such as:

- “Don’t wear short pants that show socks when you’re standing up. The pants should cover the socks, because intelligence authorities know that fundamentalists don’t wear long pants...
- Underwear should be the normal type that people wear, not anything that shows you’re a fundamentalist.
- Not long before travelling - especially from Khartoum – the person should always wear socks and shoes to [get] rid of cracks [in the feet that come from extended barefoot walking], which take about a week to cure...
- You should differentiate between men and women’s perfume. If you use women’s perfume, you are in trouble.”

Leaving aside these highly bizarre admonitions, it is interesting that the authors of these “manuals” used the term “fundamentalist” to describe their own movement. Is this how jihadists refer to themselves or were the authors perhaps half-baked orientalists working for RAND Corporation?

If the purpose of the “manuals” had been to help al Qaeda operatives “to avoid attracting attention” in Western environments, as argued by author Hoffman, there is no indication that these “manuals” warned wannabe terrorists to avoid the police in “enemy territory”. For the alleged 9/11 terrorists were repeatedly arrested in the United States for too fast driving and one of them even complained to the local police about being mugged. Mohamed Atta once attracted unusual attention to himself by leaving a small aircraft in the middle of the runway of Miami airport, because he did not know how to restart the engine. This would normally cause him to lose his flight license or trigger an inquiry. But not in his case. He apparently had some protectors at higher places.

Author Hoffman blithely ignores all these widely reported facts, which would have seriously dented the theories he promotes.

## Conclusions

My findings above confirm what German intellectual Reinhard Jellen once wrote, namely that "ignorance and pretension [are today ] not obstacles, but on the contrary prerequisites for professional success." This can be observed in the case of Bruce Hoffman and others in the same league. That such a book was published by Columbia University Press taints seriously the credibility of that publisher.

While utterly useless as a textbook on terrorism, Bruce Hoffman's book can be profitably used by aspiring academic prostitutes.

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# Bangladeshi Regional Migration Could Plunge South Asia into War

Andrew Korybko

*Whether part of a pre-planned strategy or not, large-scale migration flows often destabilize the destination country, and India and Myanmar are bracing for the geopolitical consequences of the Bangladeshis within their borders acquiring a firmer sense of identity separateness from their hosts.*

Ivy League researcher Kelly M. Greenhill's revolutionary concept about "Weapons of Mass Migration" claims that immigration processes can be abused as a Machiavellian ploy to influence state actors, whether the source country, transit ones, or the destination state, and none of this necessarily has to occur with all parties' complicity or even knowledge. In most of the cases that she studied in her research, Greenhill noted that the migrants themselves usually have no idea that they're being used as pawns in a larger power game, and it's from this perspective that one should approach the issue of Bangladeshi migrants in India and Myanmar.

## Background Briefing

To start off, the issue is incredibly complicated, as many arguments have been made about the indigenusness of the Bangladeshis in these two countries, with the most common simplified version being that they've had a presence in North-eastern India and Myanmar's Rakhine State even before the arrival of the British. Of note, the UK obtained these regions as a result of the 1826 Treaty of Yandabo that ended the First Anglo-Burmese War, and it was from this point onwards that the Myanmarese (and especially the Buddhist Bamar ethno-majority and their Buddhist Arakan minority in Rakhine State) say that the British-assisted influx of Muslim Bangladeshis occurred. As for North-eastern India, the millions of Bangladeshis that live in this already restive region arrived during and after the 1971 war.

For the purpose of clarification, ethnic Bengalis in the Indian state of West Bengal are not referred to as Bangladeshis in this analysis, as they had been living in their home region for generations and did not migrate there from the

territory of modern-day Bangladesh, and are therefore considered as a separately classified demographic in the context of this piece.

Moving along, the topic of Bangladeshis (or suspected/alleged Bangladeshis, as is the case of the Rohingya) in India and Myanmar has become increasingly politicized and even violent. The Rohingya Crisis is the most well-known indication of that, though what comparatively fewer people are aware of is that something much larger is on the verge of happening in Northeastern India as well. The government of Assam has vowed to “detect-delete-deport” upwards of 20 million Bangladeshis suspected of illegally living in the region, and given New Delhi’s unsupportive attitude towards the infinitely much smaller 40,000 Rohingya in the country, it’s doubtful that the Hindutva supremacist national authorities will do anything to stand in their way.

### **Irredentist Precedents**

If anything, they’ll probably facilitate this process on national security grounds, as there’s been considerable fear in the region that these “Weapons of Mass Migration” are irreversibly changing local demographics. Again, it must be emphasized that this isn’t a condemnation of every Bangladeshi living in Northeastern India, nor any oblique hint that they’re “complicit in a conspiracy” to Islamize the region in the run-up to “justifying” irredentist claims by Dhaka, but just that this is nevertheless the geopolitical consequence regardless of intentions and could be manipulated in this direction, ergo the relevance of Greenhill’s “Weapons of Mass Migration” concept. Such suspicions aren’t without precedent either, as the earlier cases of the Albanians, Kurds, and possibly in the future, even the Mexicans, demonstrate.

As for the Mexicans, irredentist ultra-nationalists believe that they should instrumentalize their tens of millions of diasporas compatriots in the US in order to “re-conquer” the chunk of the modern-day Western USA that they lost to Washington after the 1848 Mexican-American War.

### **Trouble Brewing**

In all three aforementioned examples, major conflicts have already erupted (Albanians) or are latently developing (Kurds, and to a lesser extent, Mexicans), proving that the instance of contiguous cross-border diasporas could serve as a trigger for regional destabilization if not properly handled by all sides. The Bangladeshi diasporas in South Asia is a case in point, as it’s already contributed to violence in Myanmar and holds the very real potential to do so in

North-eastern India if New Delhi tries to expel the roughly 20 million Bangladeshis that are living there. As can be observed from the Rohingya case in Rakhine State, international media is very sympathetic to the plight of expelled Muslim Bangladeshis (or those presumed to be closely related to them like the Rohingyas), so it's likely that they'll hold the same stance regarding India's proposed deportation of their compatriots in the Northeast too.

Just like with the Rohingya, however, there's a chance that some of the Bangladeshi cross-border diasporas might resort to militancy in advancing their cause, which is especially concerning when it comes to North-eastern India because of the much larger border that the country shares with what is increasingly turning into Bangladesh. An analogous counterpart to the so-called "Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army" (ARSA, which is classified as a terrorist organization by Myanmar) could realistically sprout up in North-eastern India, too, though the sheer difference in population sizes and scale could lead to much more devastating humanitarian consequences than in Rakhine State. Accordingly, it can be expected that the global Muslim community (Ummah) would support the cause of the Indian-based Muslim Bangladeshis just as they do the Myanmar's-based ones, therefore spiking the risk that the conflict could quickly become internationalized through the participation of non-state actors ("volunteers").

### **Prospective Options**

The problem is that there is no "simple" way to deal with this ever-likely scenario, as India has its own subjectively defined national-social security interests which contradict the humanitarian ones of the Bangladeshi migrants in its North-eastern region. New Delhi can't realistically expel approximately 20 million people without experiencing major soft power blowback and potentially engendering a militant resistance campaign, one which could predictably be hijacked by terrorist groups. On the other hand, passively allowing the present migration and migrant birth-rate trends to continue will inevitably result in changing the demographics of the frontier states, thereby inadvertently contributing to more Hobbesian conflict in the already restive Northeast. It could also drive future irredentist claims by ultra-radical Bangladeshi nationalists inspired by the "Kosovo precedent". Taking all of this into account, a few suggestions can be offered for how all sides should navigate the coming imbroglio.

The first thing is that India will probably not succeed in deporting even a fraction of the 20 million migrants that it's expecting to expel, at least not peacefully. Rapid and large-scale population transfers of the kind being

proposed by Assam have only happened in wartime conditions of “ethnic cleansing”, meaning that this is the only “solution” that India can pursue if it’s serious about removing the Bangladeshis. That doesn’t mean that it should do this, but just that there is no other way to accomplish its stated goal aside from this measure. On the other hand, the Bangladeshi government is already under heavy pressure because of the half a million Rohingya that have flooded into its borders as a result of the Tatmadaw’s anti-terrorist “clearance” operations in Rakhine State, so it’s unlikely that the state would be able to deal with almost forty times as many “repatriated” migrants, both in the logistical-humanitarian sense and also in terms of withstanding opposition pressure for the ruling party to stand down due to any perceived mishandling of the forthcoming crisis.

Unfortunately, the larger dynamics point to a complex interstate conflict transpiring, but that doesn’t mean that cooperation should be automatically ruled out. Instead of serving as a barrier between the two nations, the Bangladeshi migrant diasporas in North-eastern India could function as a bridge connecting them together and intertwining their geopolitical fates. Bangladesh has been treated as India’s neighbourhood underlining since Modi’s historic 2015 visit to the country and the subsequent agreements that were signed at the time, but it could attempt to equalize the relationship by tacitly implying that New Delhi has much more to lose than to gain by trying to expel them. If this realization can be conveyed, then the migrant community could become the “glue” that sticks the two countries together and promotes deeper cross-sectoral integration, similar in a sense to how the Mexican one in the US furthers the globalist objective of one day creating a “North American Union”.

## **Concluding Thoughts**

Bangladeshi regional migration is an important factor affecting the stability of South Asia, having already been blamed – whether rightly or wrongly – for causing unrest in Myanmar’s Rakhine State and on the brink of doing so in North-eastern India if Assam goes through with its promise to deport what could amount to nearly 20 million people back to Bangladesh. The point of this analysis wasn’t to discuss the merits of why the Bangladeshis (or presumably closely related people, as in the case of the Rohingyas) are in Myanmar and North-eastern India in the first place, but to rather approach this emotive hot-button issue from a cold analytical distance in order to better understand the overall dynamics at play and their most likely trajectories. Considering that, the situation with Bangladeshi migrants is worrisome because of the very high conflict potential that it creates, especially in regards to the vast numbers involved when it comes to North-eastern India.

There's no delicate way to say this, but the issue of Bangladeshi regional migration is shaping out to be a ticking time bomb that's slated to explode in the coming future, provided of course that the issue isn't properly dealt with by all sides first.

It's indisputable that there's a "national awakening" of sorts taking place concerning Bangladesh and its contiguous cross-border diasporas in Myanmar and India, the latter of which could also one day even come to involve Bengalis in West Bengal if their different religious identities can be overcome and replaced by a feeling of ethno-cultural solidarity with one another. The concept of a "Big/Greater Bangladesh" driven by the "export" of "Weapons of Mass Migration" hangs heavy over Indian decision-makers' heads after the Albanian and Kurdish precedents, which is why it's such a sensitive issue for them and might contribute to the ruling Hindu supremacist authorities overreacting in an inappropriately violent manner and inadvertently advancing the same scenario that they so desperately want to avoid.

The worst fear, however, is that the situation will be exploited by extra-regional actors such as the US in order to spread "creative chaos" to South Asia as a means of offsetting the emerging Multipolar World Order and/or punishing India for any future reservations that it might have in remaining committed to the declining US-led Unipolar World Order. This is a very dangerous scenario which is extremely difficult to safeguard against because of the disproportionate impact that non-state actors (terrorists, etc.) could have in worsening the situation and driving all sides closer to a multisided conflict. It's precisely this scenario that all responsible regional stakeholders want to avoid, though it's possible that some irresponsible non-state ones such as fundamentalist religious groups and ultra-nationalist extremists might actually welcome it because they think that it could advance their own interests. For these pressing reasons, India and Bangladesh need to urgently discuss this issue sooner than later in order to pre-empt what looks to be a future Hybrid War crisis in the making.

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# **Mob Lynching in India — the Menace is Growing**

Syed Ubaidur Rahman

AT LEAST two people, both Muslims, have been lynched this past week alone in the Hindi heartland of UP and Jharkhand. Shahzad Ahmad, a 22-year old youth, an expatriate who worked in Dubai, and had just returned to celebrate Eid with his family in the outskirts of Bareilly, UP, was lynched by a huge mob, destroying his dreams of a great future, and snatching away the lone bread winner of his family.

Incidents of mob lynching across the country are on the rise. Dozens of people have lost their lives in the mindless cases of mob lynching over the last four years. Despite promises and some instances of judicial rebukes, nothing has been done on the ground to alter the situation till now.

## **First they came for Muslims**

Initially only Muslims were targets of the mob lynching. They were the main target of the organized gangs of so called cow vigilantes or gau rakshaks, who were given a free hand in much of the North India.

The menace of the gau rakshaks grew so much that they started targeting the cattle traders and even innocent Muslim men in the NCR region, thrashing them and then killing them on the spot.

That there was a law of land and punishment for criminal acts against innocent people has been completely lost on their minds due to the covert state support they have been getting. This covert and overt support has emboldened the lynch mob to such an extent that they have started believing that the police will support them in undertaking the task.

What is surprising the most is that the incidents of mob lynching are taking place without any signs of slowing down in states where the Bharatiya Janata Party rules. From Rajasthan to Jharkhan, Uttar Pradesh, and the newly conquered saffron trophy in Tripura, the incidents of mob lynching have spiralled. Tripura, where there was no case of mob lynching during the long

Left rule, the arrival of the BJP government has heralded a new era of lynch mobs going berserk.

To rub salt on the wounds of the victims, in most cases of mob lynching, FIRs are lodged against the victims and the perpetrators let off. There is no denying that a conscious effort has been made to embolden gau rakshaks. Merely a few weeks ago, a Union minister grabbed headlines for getting photographs clicked with eight men, who were convicted for killing a Muslim meat trader in Jharkhand, and welcoming them at his house.

### **Then Dalits**

When the menace of mob lynching began, only Muslims were on the radar of the lynch mobs. But as the freedom to perpetrate the criminal acts were felt by hoodlums and the rule of law looked weaker than ever before, others too started facing the music of the gau rakshaks and the lynch mobs. Dalits are the second most common targets of the lynch mobs and the cow vigilantes.

A number of Dalits have been subjected to mob lynching over the last four years. Rama Singrahiya, 42, was beaten to death using clubs and axes when he was sowing castor seeds on a plot in the village, located 30 km away from Porbandar. He died a day later. The mob was allegedly led by village sarpanch Harbham Karavadra, who is on the run, police said. According to the police, the Mer community members claim the plot where Rama was farming is gauchar (pastoral) land, meant for cattle grazing. As per the FIR, two men hired by Rama to help him sow the seeds were also beaten up. A number of Dalits have faced the lynch mob fury over the past few years, and the cases are only on the rise.

### **And then everyone was a target**

The lynching is no longer confined against Muslims. It is becoming endemic in nature as the fear of law recedes in the minds of the lynch mobs. The rising incidents of mob lynching on mere suspicion of child lifting show that the malaise is becoming deep rooted with complete disregard for the law of land. An IndiaSpend report says this year alone at least 24 people have been killed in such mob attacks. The report goes on to add that this is more than 4.5 times rise in attacks and 1.6 times rise in deaths of this kind over 2017, when nine persons were killed in eight separate attacks.

An IndiaSpend report says, “Between January 1, 2017, and July 5, 2018, 33 persons have been killed and at least 99 injured in 69 reported cases. In the first six days of July alone, there have been nine cases of mob violence over child lifting rumours and five deaths, which amounts to more than one attack recorded every day...In all cases, the victims were assaulted on mere suspicion and no evidence of child lifting was found later. So far, police across states have arrested at least 181 persons in connection with 21 cases, according to information from the news reports”.

### **Government a mute spectator**

Instead of taking action against the perpetrators to stop the menace, the covert support is helping them become all the more aggressive across the Gangetic plains and beyond. There is no denying that the state machinery like police and investigation departments have been outright biased in providing justice to the victims of lynching and hate crimes.

Earlier this year a group of 67 prominent retired officials belonging to the country’s elite civil service cadres wrote an open letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi asking him to take tough measure against the increasing instances of mob lynching. “We seek now and without delay a clear response from the Honourable Prime Minister and his government on these issues”, they said. The retired officials demanded “immediate and firm action against the perpetrators of such hate crimes against minorities in this country...These recent incidents undermine our Constitutional values and weaken the rule of law”.

In July this year a Supreme Court bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra called the incidents of mob-lynching in the country as “horrendous acts of mobocracy” and asked the Parliament to draft new law to control the incidents of mob lynching across the country. The apex court bench headed by the Chief Justice also ordered the police to register FIRs under Section 153A of the IPC against those who are found guilty in such cases.

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## How the West writes about Pakistan

Adam Noah

*It is unfair to burden any single Pakistani with the task of speaking for a nation of 200 million people, which is made up of at least seven major ethnic groups, a variety of sects, three major political parties, and dozens of provincial ones*

The condescension, lack of depth, and click bait headlines found in the US coverage of Pakistan's elections begs US publications to reflect on the way they write about this country and acknowledge the power they hold as referees of Pakistani opinions on the world stage.

The *Washington Post* Editorial Board's opinion was entitled *Pakistan's likely next leader is a Taliban sympathizer*. Its assessment of Imran Khan claimed, "He has endorsed the Taliban cause in Afghanistan." What was their hyperlinked source? A *Guardian* article. The article's source? The existence of the pejorative "Taliban Khan" and Khan's continued funding for Darul Uloom Haqqania. Rather than assess the validity of a policy that placates extremism, the Editorial Board opted for the quick thrill of sensationalism. They could have even cited Khan's refusal to condemn the Taliban's attack on Malala, but why bother when labels will do.

The *New York Times*' couldn't resist click bait journalism when it asked, "Is Imran Khan, a legendary cricket player and international sex symbol, about to become the leader of Pakistan, an Islamic republic with nuclear weapons?" The juxtaposition of 'Islamic Republic' with nuclear weapons to get clicks through casual Islamophobia and a tabloidesque headline about a playboy-turned-extremist was too tempting to resist.

This follows an easily visible pattern in US coverage of Pakistan. Consider the 2011 *Atlantic* article *The Ally from Hell*. The authors claim that "Pakistan would be an obvious place for a jihadist organization to seek a nuclear weapon or fissile material: it is the only Muslim-majority state, out of the 50 or so in the world, to have successfully developed nuclear weapons..." Unable to distinguish between conservative Muslims, pro-state Islamists, and anti-state extremists, the articles draw a shallow caricature of Pakistan's military. As I write this op-ed, I adventitiously came across a 2002 book about Pakistan titled *Pakistan: in the Shadow of Jihad and Afghanistan*. The cover features a man

prostrated in prayer before a Pakistani flag, with a Kalashnikov behind him for effect.

We could assume such sensationalism is a product of the existential battle for clicks that modern newspapers face, but it extends beyond popular journalism and current times. Consider an interview of Royal Bisbee who served as a US Public Affairs Officer in Lahore from 1958 to 1961. When later asked about corruption and the Bhutto family, he responded, “in Pakistan there is always corruption because it is tribal.” An American diplomat who spent years in Pakistan could not differentiate tribalism from the corruption of landed families in Sindh. The same erroneous rhetoric persists today for anyone who is listening.

Some articles did present nuance, and reputable Pakistani analysts, journalists and academics were interviewed. Censorship through intimidation is not an imagined phenomenon in Pakistan and Western publications provide an outlet for unpopular reporting and opinions. But this has also produced a feeling that the best way to get published in a major US publication is to write a scathing indictment of Pakistan’s military and intelligence apparatus. The similarity of the views selected for publication is curious for a country as politically divided as Pakistan. By shining the spotlight on only a select few Pakistani voices and opinions, US outlets have produced a skewed snapshot of the country. It isn’t enough to include Pakistani voices if those voices don’t reflect Pakistan’s diversity.

Censorship through intimidation is not an imagined phenomenon in Pakistan and Western publications provide an outlet for unpopular reporting and opinions. But this has also produced a feeling that the best way to get published in a major US publication is to write a scathing indictment of Pakistan’s military and intelligence apparatus this should not be understood as a criticism of the quality of Pakistani voices in the US media. It is only a call to increase the diversity of those who are featured and a reminder that it is unfair to burden any single Pakistani with the task of speaking for a nation of 200 million people, which is made up of at least seven major ethnic groups, a variety of sects, three major political parties, and dozens of provincial ones. Pakistanis hold biases too and those should be presented with transparency. It simply looks silly when a US newspaper features a known partisan’s opinion on a rival party as objective without identifying affiliation or longstanding party loyalty. Missing from the Washington Post Editorial Board’s analysis was the endorsement for PML-N by the militant sectarian organisation, Ahle Sunnat

Wal Jamaat. It then unquestioningly dismissed the seriousness of Nawaz Sharif's corruption to adopt the position that he was singled-out for prosecution.

There is hope for better journalism. Some Washington-based analysts offer balanced insights and there are numerous Pakistanis who offer analysis no outsider can replicate while also acknowledging their influences. What the Washington Post's Editorial Board lacked in nuance the same newspaper's Monkey Cage blog makes up for with articles written by academics who study Pakistan. These are the kinds of pieces that should be promoted and emulated.

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# From Reason to Racism

Kevin Barrett

*Decline and fall of France's secular republic.*

*Book Review: Republic of Islamophobia by James Wolfreys; Pub: Oxford University Press, Oxford, United Kingdom, 2018, 208 pages.*

“Liberty - Equality - Fraternity.” That idealistic slogan hyping freedom and inclusiveness is the official motto of two modern nations, France and Haiti (the latter, ironically, was born in a slave revolt against the former).

Despite the persistence of their national motto, French people today are growing increasingly unfree, unequal, and ungiven to brotherly love. According to Jim Wolfreys, a Senior Lecturer on European Politics at Kings College London, the French drift away from freedom and equality has produced a sick society infected by an ever more widespread, ever more normalized, ever more delusional racist scapegoating of Muslims.

In Republic of Islamophobia, Wolfreys traces the French anti-Islam insanity epidemic from its colonial past to the endless “war on terror” that has reshaped history since September 11, 2001. Wolfreys correctly points out that the French war on terror “predates 9/11. Its origins go back to the Republic’s colonial mission, whose tropes and reflexes were revived in the early-1990s as the Algerian civil war spilled over into France, leading to an intensification of state security provisions and, as Paul Silverstein notes, ‘the interpellation... of Franco-Maghrebis as ‘Muslims,’ a hailing that has been abetted by the larger public drama around the hijab”.

One of the limitations of Wolfreys’ book, like so many others from professors and “respectable” publishers, is its willingness to heap scorn on some lies while seemingly protecting others from scrutiny. First let’s consider the Islamophobic myths that Wolfreys is willing to expose:

- The pretext that France's 2004 law prohibiting religious attire in public is religiously neutral, when in fact it is nothing more than a symptom and weapon of Islamophobia.
- The claim, repeated in high school textbooks, that France's vaunted tradition of *laïcité* (secularism) has always been about preventing religious expression in public, when in fact the opposite is true, "the 1905 law, so frequently cited today in support of the new secularism, meant more, not less, freedom of expression" (p. 92). As Wolfreys explains, the whole purpose of the 1905 secularism law was to nullify the French government's residual *de facto* recognition of Catholicism as France's official religion, thereby allowing Protestants, Muslims, Jews, non-religious people, and other minorities the right of full and complete expression of their religious views, affiliations, and identities in the public square. That right granted in 1905 and respected until the anti-hijab law of 2004, is now a dead letter.
- The claim by Islamophobes that Muslims spilling over into the street during Friday prayers is equivalent to the Nazi invasion and occupation of France, even though such spillovers happen in only a very few of the 2,300 masjids in France due to French government's hindrance of much-needed construction of new masjids (by comparison, France has 36,000 Catholic churches, maintained at government expense despite being largely devoid of worshippers).
- The pretence that French Islamophobia is not racist because it provides a legitimate critique of religion, when in reality it is used indiscriminately against people from North and Sub-Saharan Africa regardless of their degree of religiosity (in racist newspeak "Muslim" often translates as "brown-skinned immigrant").
- The myth that the new wave of "populist" racism is a spontaneous phenomenon emerging naturally from white working communities, when in fact it is the strange fruit of an orchestrated public relations campaign led by elites, who inflict racist brainwashing on workers to conceal neoliberalism's destruction of the working class and to legitimize Zionism's crimes.
- The false assertion that white workers become racists because they are in close contact with immigrants, when in fact studies show that this is not the case. The truth is that voters for the Islamophobic National Front tend to be not white workers who live and work with immigrants, but rather those who are unemployed, homeless, or otherwise economically stressed.

Wolfreys is to be commended for exposing the fact that the tidal wave of Islamophobic racism washing over France is the product of a toxic neoliberal-Zionist publicity campaign. But he fails to confront the most sordid details of that campaign — details that would, if exposed, because the whole campaign to implode.

I am referring, of course, to Islamophobia-inciting false flag operations, notably those of September 11, 2001, and the French follow-up operations of January 7 and November 13, 2015. No student of Islamophobia can fail to be aware of the magisterial work of 9/11 scholar David Ray Griffin, whose series of 13 books on the subject definitively exposes the neoconservative coup d'état that unleashed the Islamophobic demon. Likewise, no serious student of Islamophobia in France should be ignorant of the facts discussed in my two edited books *We Are NOT Charlie Hebdo* and *ANOTHER French False Flag* — facts which taken together show that the French government and mainstream media are lying outrageously about the terror events of 2015, which appear to have been 9/11-style false flags à la française.

Wolfreys, a gainfully-employed university lecturer, apparently knows that looking at such facts with honesty and accuracy would likely destroy his career; so he begins his book with the following sentences, “Something was out of kilter. Fifty world leaders had gathered on 11 January 2015 to commemorate the journalists killed in the Charlie Hebdo offices on 7 January and the police officer and shoppers murdered at a kosher supermarket over the following two days.”

Something was, of course, out of kilter; but so is Wolfreys' opening. First, he mistakenly tells us that the police officer killed during this period died at the kosher supermarket, where he and shoppers were murdered “over the following two days.” In fact the kosher supermarket hostage-taking and shooting incident did not transpire “over two days.” It happened on a single day, January 9. And no police officer was killed there. Yes, one police officer was allegedly killed by kosher supermarket shooter Coulibalay on the previous day, January 8. But this is not the “policeman shooting” that everyone remembers.

Wolfreys completely erases from history the celebrated “policeman shooting” that proves the official story of the Charlie Hebdo event is fraudulent: the alleged shooting of Ahmed Merabet, captured on video — apparently by a pre-positioned Israeli surveillance team — as alleged Charlie Hebdo shooters Saïd and Chérif Kouachi fled the magazine offices after the massacre.

Wikipedia, whose accounts of sensitive topics are controlled by professional propagandists, describe this “shooting” as follows, “An authenticated video surfaced on the internet that shows two gunmen and a police officer, Ahmed Merabet, who is wounded and lying on a sidewalk after an exchange of gunfire. This took place near the corner of Boulevard Richard-Lenoir and Rue Moufle, 180 metres (590 ft) east of the main crime scene. One of the gunmen ran towards the policeman and shouted, ‘Did you want to kill us?’ The policeman answered, ‘No, its fine, boss’, and raised his hand toward the gunman, who then gave the policeman a fatal shot to the head at close range.”

The actual video may be viewed here. It clearly shows that no such “fatal shot to the head at close range” was fired. Instead, the “gunman” fires a blank round, consisting of paper or cotton, those impacts on the sidewalk approximately one meter from the head of the “victim.” Had the victim actually been shot with an AK47 from close range, his head would have exploded into pink mist. Yet the “fatal shot” has no impact whatsoever on the victim’s head! Instead, it can be seen raising a small cloud of dust on the sidewalk a meter away from the head — not the massive and hazardous cratering of concrete shrapnel a real bullet would have triggered — showing that it was merely a blank round.

Clearly this “escape scene” was play-acted and filmed for propaganda purposes. French investigative journalist Hicham Hamza has traced the provenance of the leaked video — like the leaked “blood heart” photo of the victims of the 13/11/15 Bataclan nightclub shooting, and the 14/7/16 “truck attack” footage from Nice — to Israel, whose bloody fingerprints are all over these and dozens of other “Islamic terror” public relations stunts.

Why won’t Wolfreys and other mainstream academicians and journalists report these and so many other similarly damning facts? The sad answer was given a century ago by Upton Sinclair, “It is difficult to get a man to understand something, when his salary depends on his not understanding it.”

By succumbing to Sinclair’s dilemma, Wolfreys limits the accuracy, comprehensiveness, and relevance of his otherwise solid analysis of French Islamophobia.

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*political opinions. Since 2007 Dr. Barrett has been informally blacklisted from teaching in American colleges and universities.*

## **Why Dalits want to hold on to Dalit, not Harijan, not SC**

Adrija Roychowdhury

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting earlier this week asked the media to refrain from using the word ‘Dalit’ and instead use the constitutional term ‘Scheduled caste’. The order comes a month after the Bombay High Court, in its response to a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by Pankaj Mesharam seeking the removal of the word ‘Dalit’ from all government documents and communication, asked the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to consider issuing an order to the media to stop usage of the word.

The order has been criticised by Dalit rights activist groups, who assert that the term holds political and cultural significance. “It marks the shift from brokenness to strength and power. We see this as part of the larger scheme of what the government is doing to the community, the anti-reservation discourse, the attempt to erase our identity little by little. We will file a PIL against the move in the Supreme Court if need be,” says Dalit activist Asha Kotwal in an interview to The Indian Express.

The word ‘Dalit’, which in classical Sanskrit means ‘broken’, has for years been used to identify those who fall outside the four-fold caste system in the Brahmanical social order, and have been subjected to untouchability. In the past few decades, however, the term has acquired a political connotation, being associated with the radical movement of the depressed classes. The distinction between the two terms — ‘Scheduled caste’ and ‘Dalit’ — is rooted in the larger narrative of the evolution of caste movements in India, and the various strings of the movement that sought redress for the depressed castes in separate ways.

### **The Gandhi vs. Ambedkar debate**

By the late 19th century, Indian society had undergone a rapid transition. The 1857 revolt and the decennial Census that began in 1871 brought the colonial rulers face to face with certain social and religious realities of the country that

had to be taken stock of in order to govern effectively, the most important among these being the caste system. This is not to suggest that caste was turned into a reality in the hands of the British. Caste was indeed part and parcel of Indian social life for centuries before the British stepped in. However, by calling people to name their caste in the process of recording the census, by ranking them in a certain order, as determined by those in the higher castes and by attaching social characteristics to each of the groups, the census in many ways enlivened the caste spirit in the country that was hitherto a dormant feature.

By the turn of the century, when the nationalist movement was just beginning to gain currency, caste had acquired a whole other social recognition. "From the 1880s, the hundreds of organisations which called themselves caste associations or caste conferences acquired sizeable memberships, and were accorded much attention in official reportage as well as in the Indian-owned vernacular and English press," writes anthropologist Susan Bayly in her book, 'Caste, society and politics in India from the Eighteenth century to the modern age'.

By the 1920s, the term 'untouchability' gained widespread usage in association with the caste system, to refer to those who were considered 'unclean' and left outside the ambit of the caste order. The Gandhian movement, which had taken off by now, was particularly mindful of the social conditions of the untouchables and the need for their uplift. In his writings, Gandhi repeatedly referred to how the doctrine of untouchability was a 'horrible and terrible' stain on the Hindu faith. "Surely judgement will be pronounced against Hinduism, if we as a body do not rise as one man against this social and religious atrocity," he wrote in January 1926.

Gandhi's solutions to the problem of untouchability, however, were of a religious nature as well. He adopted the neologism 'Harijan' (child of God) as a replacement of backward or suppressed classes. "Hari is a popular Vaishnavite title for the supreme God, and this association with Bhakti devotional themes was intended to counter the stereotype of the 'untouchable' as licentious carrion-eater and blood spiller," writes Bayly. Gandhi founded the Harijan Sevak Sangh (Servants of untouchable's society) in 1932 as a means of making the nationalist movement committed to the cause of uplifting India's socially oppressed castes. Gandhi's solution formula to the distress of the 'Harijans' was simple: Hinduism needs to be reformed from within, and Harijans be made part of the Hindu social order.

Gandhi's formula of the uplift of untouchability, however, was severely criticised by those who differed with him on the idea that Harijans were people

who had to be uplifted in accordance with the ideals of Hinduism. Foremost among those who opposed Gandhi was B R Ambedkar, one of the first from the lower castes to be Western-educated and professionally qualified. In his works like the 'Annihilation of caste' he bitterly denounced Gandhi for suggesting the uplift of the untouchables within the Hindu social order, and suggested that it was indeed the social system of Hinduism itself with the caste system being an essential part of it that was the root cause behind the distress faced by the suppressed classes. Accordingly, he also differed with Gandhi in the usage of the term 'Harijan' on account of its religious associations and preferred to use the term 'Dalit' or 'suppressed classes' instead.

The debate between Gandhi and Ambedkar reached its conclusion in the 1932 Poona pact when there was consensus on the reservation of electoral seats for the suppressed classes, much against the wishes of Gandhi. The decision to implement separate electorates was carried out in the Government of India Act of 1935 that granted full provincial autonomy to elected Indian constituencies. Bayly writes that "it was at this point that colonial authorities set up intricate machinery for listing or 'scheduling' for the new special caste-based constituencies". The gigantic exercise was undertaken in 1936 to identify each and every depressed community in the country and finally some 400 such groups were listed who were described as the 'scheduled populations of British India'.

After Independence, the Constituent Assembly continued with the prevailing definitions of 'Scheduled castes and tribes' through articles 341 and 342 and the complete list of castes was given out in the 'The Constitution (scheduled castes) order of 1950'.

### **The political activism of 'Dalit'**

After the death of Ambedkar in 1956, his followers formed the 'Republican party of India' as a means of representing the interests of the Scheduled castes and other depressed communities in the country. However, lack of an organisational structure and an efficient leadership resulted in the Dalit youth, to reject its methods and adopt more militant strategies. "These Dalits, especially educated Dalits in Maharashtra, came forward and took up the task of bringing all the Scheduled Castes into one platform and mobilising them in their struggle for their rights and justice," writes sociologist S M Michael in his book 'Dalits in modern India : Vision and values'.

These groups gave a new found meaning to the term 'Dalit'. The term which meant 'downtrodden' or 'broken', was now used in a way to incorporate a spirit of pride and militancy among the depressed classes. The term gained its political currency when the 'Dalit Panthers', a group of activists and writers in Bombay, came out to protest against injustice. There were others like the Dalit Liberation Army, the Dalit Sangharsha Samiti, the Dalit Sena and the Dalit Sahitya Movement and several others that struggled in cities and villages for social justice and also sought to develop a consciousness of pride in Dalit art, literature, culture and the like. With time, and through their methods, they also gained importance in the national politics of India.

The Dalit movement of the 1970s, therefore, instilled a whole new meaning to the term. As Michael writes, "the term Dalit is not merely a rejection of the very idea of pollution or impurity or 'Untouchability', it reveals a sense of unified class, of a movement towards equality. It speaks of a new stage in the movement of India's Untouchables which is now a century old."

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# **Election Results Could be Good for Pakistan, Bad for US**

Graham E. Fuller

A bold new political face has come to power in the recent Pakistani elections, possibly offering the US a new opportunity in that country. Sadly the opportunity will likely be squandered—again. There’s something about Pakistani and US interests that seem doomed to collision course—mainly because Pakistan’s national interests are rarely what the US thinks they should be.

Pakistanis themselves can be pleased the country has just experienced for only the second time in its history a democratic electoral transition from one political party to another. Over long decades democratically-elected governments have been routinely dethroned by the all-powerful Pakistani military-dominated intelligence service ISI.

A key problem is that American interests in Pakistan have had little to do with Pakistan itself, but have been the function of other American interests—China, fighting the Soviet Union, al-Qaeda, and trying to win an ongoing—and losing—17-year US war in Afghanistan. Once about eliminating al-Qaeda, Washington today hopes the war in Afghanistan will eliminate the often violent fundamentalist Pashtun movement (Taliban) and enable the US to impose its strategic agenda upon Afghanistan. And over decades the US has alternately cajoled, but mostly threatened Pakistan to do US bidding in Afghanistan. (A former Deputy Secretary of the Pentagon, in the months after 9/11, threatened to “bomb Pakistan back to the Stone Age” if it didn’t fully get on board and support the new US invasion of Afghanistan.)

In an earlier decade, after the USSR invaded Afghanistan in 1979 to prop up a failing Afghan communist regime, the US had recruited the Pakistani government to take the lead in organizing a new anti-Soviet “jihad” through supporting new mujahedin groups in Afghanistan. It was a fateful moment: this anti-Soviet jihad represented the first time that Islamist warriors, recruited from around the world in a joint US-Saudi-Pakistani strategy, became a powerful battle-hardened jihadi force that would later go on to fight new wars in the

Middle East—and against US interests. As one of the mujahedeen told me at the time, they had “defeated a superpower”—the USSR—and driven Soviet troops out of Afghanistan. What would be the implications for the future?

Then, after 9/11, the US invaded Afghanistan in order to overthrow the ruling Taliban—who had taken over the country and restored order after a devastating, nine-year Afghan civil war following the Soviet withdrawal. The Taliban actually represent a home-grown movement—they had no interest in international terrorism. But they made one disastrous mistake: they allowed Osama Bin Laden to stay on in Afghanistan after he had played a small role in supporting the Taliban in achieving power in 1996. The US invasion ensued.

### **Pashtun Taliban**

The thing to be remembered is that the Taliban are primarily a Pashtun movement; Pashtuns constitute the single largest ethnic group in multi-ethnic Afghanistan and have traditionally dominated national Afghan politics over several hundred years. While unquestionably following a kind of Wahhabi-style Islamic rule, they also represent a powerful Pashtun ethnic impulse. Many Afghan Pashtuns dislike the Taliban but they generally also wish to see Pashtuns maintain power in Afghanistan. This same ethnic issue matters a lot when it comes to Pakistan.

The stated US agenda in Afghanistan now is to prevent the Taliban, who are conducting a fairly successful insurgency against the US-backed government in Kabul, from coming to power. Yet there is no way the Taliban can be decisively defeated, while the US may yet opt to move into its third decade of war there in trying to keep them out of power. While Taliban theology and policies are fairly Wahhabi in character, is it worth the longest war in American history to struggle on to keep them out? (There are a few encouraging signs that the US may be actually trying to reach some negotiated back-door deal with the Taliban for future power-sharing, but the Taliban may just decide to wait the US out.) What Washington doesn't talk about is its long, strategic ambition to maintain military bases in Afghanistan, right in the heart of Central Asia in close proximity to Russia and China—very much out of the US Cold War playbook. But is it worth this costly and losing game?

Here's where Pakistan comes in. In the Pak-Afghan border region there are twice as many Pashtuns living in Pakistan as there are in Afghanistan. They represent a powerful force in Pakistani politics—and that's where Imran Khan, Pakistan's new president from the heart of Pashtun territory, also comes in.

Bottom line: the US has consistently attempted to enlist Pakistan into rescuing America's losing war in Afghanistan; a key US demand has been for the Pakistanis to sever ties between Pakistani and Afghan Taliban movements and crush all radical Islamist groups in the border region. There is no doubt Pakistan has indeed helped the Afghan Taliban (Pashtuns) to fight on in Afghanistan. Pakistan has a deep interest, domestic and foreign, in keeping close ties with all Pashtuns, Taliban or not. (The Pakistani Taliban movement is more violent than the Afghan one but cannot be easily crushed —perhaps only tamed—even by the Pakistani government.)

And the power base of Pakistan's new president lies precisely in this Pashtun region of the country. Khan will not likely agree to any policy pressures from the US to crush Taliban cross-border ties; he favours a strong Pashtun/Taliban presence in any Afghan government. Khan, a former cricket star, has also been outspokenly critical of the US role in Pakistan and he will guard Pakistani sovereignty more jealously than his predecessors.

### **And Then There's India**

And then there is geopolitics with India. Already hugely outweighed and outgunned by a huge and powerful Indian state on Pakistan's eastern border, Pakistan's geopolitics dictate that it can never allow its geographically narrow state to be simultaneously threatened by a pro-Indian government on Pakistan's western border in Afghanistan. Yet India has hugely invested—financially, politically and in an intelligence presence in Afghanistan with US blessing, which is perceived in Islamabad as a deadly geopolitical threat. Pakistan will do all it can to ensure that Afghanistan does not fall under Indian political domination. That also means deep involvement in Afghan Pashtun politics (that include the Taliban).

The US has consistently run roughshod over Pakistani sovereignty throughout its war in Afghanistan, thereby generating strong anti-US feelings in Pakistan. (My first novel: "Breaking Faith: An American's Crisis of Conscience in Pakistan," deals heavily with these issues, including the CIA and American military presence in Pakistan, as well as the complicated range of Pakistani Islamist movements at the human level of a Pakistani family.)

And finally there is the ever-growing China factor. Pakistan has long been China's closest ally and considers Beijing to be an "all-weather friend"—in pointed distinction to perceived US opportunism in Pakistan. Both Pakistan and Afghanistan are now integral elements in China's sweeping new economic and

infrastructural Eurasian development plan “One Bridge, One Road.” (Iran too, incidentally, is linked into the same Chinese vision.) There is no way Pakistan will ever choose close ties with Washington over ties with China, for a dozen good reasons, including shared mutual distrust of India.

In short, Imran Khan may well bring some fresh air into Pakistani politics, including a declared willingness to clamp down on the country’s rampant corruption. The powerful Pakistan military also supports him. It is hard to imagine how the US will not continue to lose ever more traction in the Pakistan-Afghan morass short of undertaking a major US shift away from its military-driven foreign policy. That US policy and style seems to tally ever less with the interests of most states of the region.

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# **Indo-Bangla relations and the “termite” problem**

Afsan Chowdhury

Indian’s ruling party BJP leader Amit Shah has called ‘illegal Bangladeshis’ as “termites” which will be cleaned out from the woodwork of Assam in particular. It’s not just the unseemly language coming from a major political leader of the most powerful state around that is disturbing. It is also an indicator of the heightened tension in the region.

Politicians are sending out signals that different types of ethnic cleansing will now be part of the future in the region. The fact that Rohingyas are already in Bangladesh here is an example that shows more are coming.

It also reinforces the complex international political equations, both internal and external. The time for less peace and lesser tolerance will now be part of the regional dynamics. It’s the bigger powers which shall call the shots only and the smaller countries will have less space and participation.

## **Indo-China**

There are several brews simmering in the region which was once exclusively dominated by India and now challenged by China with both strategic and commercial objectives. That rivalry which was once limited to border skirmishes between China and India now affects every state in the region.

Today, South Asian countries are part of this complex rivalry that is both internal and cross border. China has been pushing in into one SA country after another diluting India’s exclusive domination. Nepal and Sri Lanka are considered to be closer to China while Pakistan is of course its ally against India.

Three countries were considered a mixed bag. They were Bangladesh, Bhutan and Maldives. However, in Maldives the situation has changed dramatically with Beijing’s ally routed by the pro-Indian party by a popular vote. This

example has altered the equation a bit showing power based external rivalry needs balancing with internal political dynamics.

Bhutan the quiet country is actually a smart player which has managed to retain a semblance of autonomy given its historic connections with India and proximity to China. But the reality of Doklam nearby at which point, India and China stare angrily at each other and occasionally skirmish is a reminder of the fragility of regional peace.

### **Which leaves good old Bangladesh ...**

Bangladesh has been with India for long. It was friend number 1 in 1971 but relations cooled rapidly and after 1975 it almost froze. During the BNP era, Bangladesh helped out the North East militants as a counter ploy to Indian pressure and hyped anti-Indian sentiments to gain leverage. India was however much weaker two-three decades back and not the current regional behemoth it is now.

India is Bangladesh's biggest fact of life in every possible way and a love-hate-need relationship exists. Awami League has managed to convince India of its usefulness by denying sanctuary and support to NE rebels and granting transit rights. In other words, Bangladesh too is part of India's security and strategic calculations.

Meanwhile, China has entered the scene with a loud display of its dollar power. It was once an enemy in 1971, became friendly after 1975 and continues as its economic clout grows. Its investments have allowed China to become muscular and that was also welcomed as a counter balance to Indian muscle in Bangladesh.

However, its backing of Myanmar who drove out the Rohingyas has weakened its strategic influence, making it a more economic than a political presence. Its popularity has dipped which again shows the fragility of any permanent status in regional politics.

Suddenly, all this maths is threatening to become complex with the Assam termite issue.

### **The Assam termite factor**

If India does undertake termite control measures, Bangladeshis will fall into even deeper waters. Already reeling from the Rohingya pressure, it may force Sheikh Hasina to consider more options beyond India which means greater reliance on China. Public pressure in Bangladesh will be high to stop holding Indian hands as often as it's done now.

If public resentment turns into active hostility, the potential for instability may rise equally. Call to use the North East card will begin and may translate into a political demand, however farfetched the strategy is. The pressure of being seen as less India friendly may become politically advantageous. How AL handles that will have to be seen.

Given India's economic preponderance including the very large number of its citizens working in Bangladesh, there is stake for India too. These expat workers are already resented and how they will be welcomed in post termite cleansing operations even though they provide skills and services will be interesting to see.

At this point, no one can say what will happen but if India is serious the bad news for Bangladesh can be even worse news for the incumbent government having to face two massive refugee influxes and a possible rise in internal reaction, much of it unpredictable.

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# Nepal Is Teaching India a Lesson by Keeping BIMSTEC inCheck

By Andrew Korybko

*In a modern-day geopolitical example of David versus Goliath, tiny Nepal is tacitly teaching the world's second-most-populous country a lesson by refraining from this week's BIMSTEC (The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) multilateral military drills in India, which sends the Great Power the important message that it shouldn't exploit regional integrational organizations as hegemonic platforms like it earlier did with SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation).*

The Indian press is furious that Nepal, a decades-long de-facto vassal state of the South Asian giant until just recently, declined to participate in this week's BIMSTEC multilateral military drills in Pune, with New Delhi even officially chiming in by saying that Kathmandu's excuse that internal political pressure is the reason for this move is "not convincing". This could be interpreted as India hinting that it thinks that the new Chinese-friendly communist government's partners in Beijing are the real reason why Nepal refused to join in these exercises. Speculatively speaking, Nepal likely included its fast-growing and full-spectrum strategic partnership with China in its calculations when making this decision, but it's unlikely that Beijing ordered Kathmandu to pull out of the event like how New Delhi is implying.

## **The Long Shadow of SAARC & the Blockade That Backfired**

It might seem like a long time ago given all that's transpired since then, but it's been almost exactly two years since India split up SAARC and brought the New Cold War to South Asia by basically destroying the bloc in a half-baked attempt to somehow "isolate" rival Pakistan, a gambit that disastrously backfired after seeing how successful Islamabad's rapprochement with Moscow has been in the period afterwards. Nevertheless, New Delhi's destabilizing actions shook South Asia to its core because it showed the region that India was no longer shy about being the neighbourhood bully, possibly influenced to behave in this manner by its new American ally. This wasn't the first time in recent years that India tried and failed to flex its hegemonic muscles because it was just about a year prior to that in September 2015 that the country enacted an unofficial and ultimately unsuccessful blockade of Nepal.

India's attempt to indirectly strong-arm Nepal into capitulating to its demands that it revise its new constitution in order to allow the Indian-friendly southern Madhesi borderland population to de-facto become the country's permanent kingmakers backfired miserably by providing China with the perfect opportunity to swoop to the rescue of the beleaguered landlocked state and open up strategic channels of dialogue that eventually led to Beijing's current successes in Nepal. To explain, China agreed to build a railway into the country, open up its land ports to trade with it (thus allowing Nepal to break the commercial monopoly that India previously had over it), and hold military drills later this month. It's no wonder then that India suspects that a Chinese conspiracy is behind Nepal's decision to sit out on this week's BIMSTEC exercises.

### **Nepal's Chinese-Influenced Win-Win Vision**

That's actually not the case, however, but convincing itself that it is will only lead to India overreacting just like it did three years ago and possibly undertaking Hybrid War measures against Nepal that are bound to only backfire by accelerating its target's strategic relations with China. It's been widely framed in the Indian press that Nepal is "pivoting away" from China, but it's actually just rebalancing its relations with India per the latter's famous policy of "multi-alignment", but the "zero-sum" perspective through which this is understood in India leads to New Delhi misjudging Kathmandu's intentions. All of this is related to Nepal's refusal to participate in the BIMSTEC drills because it doesn't want India to take the bloc for granted like it did with SAARC and start using it as a platform for its regional hegemonic aspirations.

Ideally, Nepal would like to function as the bridge connecting China and India together and serving as the physical embodiment of a game-changing Great Power rapprochement between them that would solidly strengthen the emerging Multipolar World Order, though the reality of the situation is that this will probably not happen so long as the BJP continues to rule in India because of their American-influenced "zero-sum" interpretation of the latest events. Instead of getting the message that its neighbour is sending it and taking the time to reflect upon the lessons that it should have learned from the SAARC debacle two years ago, India is seeing the evolving situation as a strategic threat orchestrated by its Chinese rival and designed to hamstring its leadership ambitions. This understanding might in turn drive India to undertake more counterproductive actions against its neighbour.

## **India's American-Backed "Zero-Sum" Game**

There's a very real risk that India might once again overreact to what's happening, encouraged as it is by its new American ally, and either order another informal blockade or even go as far as unexpectedly scrapping the 1950 Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship that created the free trade area between these two countries and has become the basis of the landlocked state's comprehensive stability. Like it was written earlier, any move in this direction is bound to backfire against India, but New Delhi might rationalize the anticipated blowback as acceptable "collateral damage" in order to "safeguard its interests" by removing an institutional loophole that could hypothetically allow China to quietly export potentially unlimited goods into the country after taking advantage of the terms of this agreement just like it's suspected of doing to the US vis-à-vis NAFTA.

Apart from its very loud opposition to CPEC on the grounds that this megaproject crosses through territory that New Delhi claims as its own per its maximalist approach to the Kashmir Conflict, India is firmly against China's One Belt One Road (OBOR) global vision of New Silk Road connectivity on the basis that it could flood its domestic marketplace with Chinese goods and therefore undermine its domestic producers. Bearing this in mind, it's predicted that India won't tolerate China entering its market through the Nepali "backdoor", and while this issue could potentially be addressed per a future revamp of the 1950 treaty, there's no guarantee that progress will be made in this respect and India won't instead decide to just scrap the agreement completely in a malicious attempt to teach Nepal its own "lesson" for refusing to submit to its hegemony.

## **Concluding Thoughts**

The Indian press has waged info wars against Nepal before, and especially its once-again Prime Minister Oli, but this time everything feels a bit different because of just how slighted India is after Nepal refused to participate in what was supposed to have otherwise been very highly publicized BIMSTEC multilateral military drills. Instead of the Bollywood-like celebratory event of grandeur that these exercises were originally planned to be for marking yet another milestone in what the global audience has been conditioned to believe is India's "global rise", they've instead turned into a functionally irrelevant event that isn't even really being covered much by anyone apart from Indian media after David stood up to Goliath and exposed the hegemonic scheme that New Delhi plotted to turn everything into. Far from something to be proud of,

these drills have now turned into an unprecedented embarrassment that India is desperate to blame on China.

It didn't have to be this way, though, because India could have responsibly learned its lesson from SAARC two years ago and not tried to turn yet another regional integrational platform into a Hybrid War weapon against a rival Great Power, this time China, or it could have at least listened to the message that Nepal was sending it and reconsidered its hegemonic ambitions in South Asia. Pressed on by the US and influenced by the strategic delusions that can only come from strictly enforced groupthink at the highest levels of its leadership, India instead saw a serious threat where none existed and promptly began hinting at a Chinese conspiracy, one which could be manipulated by the Indian media as an excuse for why their country "lost Nepal". Given this dynamic, it appears inevitable that the 1950 Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship will be radically renegotiated or outright scrapped.

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# Coercive Diplomacy

A.G. Noorani

“LET us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate,” president John F. Kennedy famously said in his inaugural address in January 1961. In those wise words, Kennedy summed up the essence of the diplomatic process. It is at work today in German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s moves to hold a summit on Syria and other issues with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Turkish President Recep Erdogan, whom she invited to a state visit to put past incidents behind them.

In his recent book, *India and Pakistan: Neighbours at Odds*, Avtar Singh Bhasin mentions a relevant episode. A summit of the two countries’ prime ministers took place in New Delhi in May 1955. While Kashmir was uppermost on Mohammad Ali’s mind, as the first item, Nehru wanted to discuss an incident that allegedly occurred in Nekowal on May 7, a week before the talks, in which five Indian army personnel and six Indian civilians were killed. It led to a very long correspondence between the prime ministers, spread over a year. But the diplomatic process was not disrupted.

Khrushchev planted deadly missiles on Cuban soil posing an existential threat to the United States. Kennedy made two moves. First, he publicly declared that an attack on the United States by the missiles based in Cuba would be treated as an attack by the Soviet Union itself. Secondly, he initiated talks with the Soviet Union through more than one channel; diplomatic as well as informal through newsmen. The result was a historic accord. The Soviet Union withdrew its missiles from Cuba and the United States withdrew its Jupiter missiles from Turkey. But the Soviet Union secretly agreed not to publicise this concession.

Since their independence in 1947, India and Pakistan have been holding talks and conducting negotiations in all manner of situations, directly or through mediators, particularly the United States (1962-1963), 1999 and 2003-2004. But, of late, the United States has adopted a rather distant posture.

India under the Modi regime sensed that and adopted a new line. It is coercive diplomacy. In the past, it was used vis-à-vis Sri Lanka on the Tamil issue and more recently vis-à-vis Nepal with a cruel blockade. Many saw Nehru’s grievances on Nekowal as justified. But he did not let the incident disrupt the talks. Modi and his National Security Adviser Ajit Doval have different notions.

Calling off the foreign ministers' talks in New York on Sept 21, a day after they were announced was accompanied with gaucheries that could have been avoided. The spuriousness of excuses is one (the alleged killing of policemen across the Line of Control and Pakistan Post stamps issued in July that depicted Burhan Wani), the other is use of language that stops short of expectations (including personal attacks on Prime Minister Imran Khan).

This is not the first time that Pakistan's head of government has been called names. It also happened after the July 2001 Agra summit when prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and foreign minister Jaswant Singh took turns to call president Pervez Musharraf names in parliament. Jaswant Singh made derisory remarks on the English used by Pakistan's foreign minister Abdul Sattar, a distinguished diplomat who had spent a lifetime drafting diplomatic documents. Jaswant Singh was a Johnny-come-lately whose English drew ridicule from all.

There is a parallel between the two collapses. At Agra, a joint declaration was drafted. Internal dissents killed it; Lal Kishan Advani had agreed to a summit only to size up Musharraf. At his very first meeting, he took up the issue of Dawood Ibrahim with the guest, with utter impropriety and lack of sense. When he learnt that a declaration was being drawn up, he hit the ceiling. An Indian Foreign Service officer had worked on him. Both Vajpayee, publicly in parliament, and Singh, to the officials present, complained of intrusions into their respective rooms while they were either talking or drafting. Advani was seen pacing up and down the corridor as if in panic. He wrecked the summit.

In 2018, it is internal pressures that wrecked the foreign ministers' meeting. Hence the spurious excuses and cheap language on both occasions. Clearly the BJP's political culture has scant respect for the niceties of the diplomatic process except with more powerful countries.

This is a reality all have to live with. Grievances and concerns must be addressed. India is sadly mistaken if it believes that coercive diplomacy will improve the situation. Pakistan cannot be driven to a corner. It is not a pushover. There is no substitute for classic diplomacy, which has served the cause of peace for centuries even amidst confrontation. The United States and China held talks at Warsaw at the worst of times. They yielded an accord on Quemoy and Matsu islands in 1962 and averted war.

Confrontation and talks are good companions.

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