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## The Construct Of Pakistan And The Policy Options For India

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### Abstract

India and Pakistan have had a complex and tense relationship since their independence in 1947. The “Muhajir groups in Pakistan actively choose the path of confrontation with India”, resulted in wars of 1947, 1965, 1971, the 1999 Kargil conflict, and five decades of Pakistan-sponsored terrorism in various parts of India. The Indus Water Treaty Agreement, Ceasefire Agreement of 2003, several rounds of confidence-building measures (CBMs), and people-to-people contacts by temporarily opening the trade corridors improved relations between the two countries. Pakistan is facing scrutiny by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) for terror financing, political instability, and economic slowdown, and the precarious situation in Pakistan has provided relief to India as it has faced lesser terror-related violence since 2014.

### Social and Political Construct of Pakistan

#### National Identity and Language

Pakistan’s struggle with the question of national identity is driven by a “traumatic legacy with many Pakistanis viewing themselves as victims of historical injustices”. The emphasis on Islam “has been a source of tension with different groups promoting different interpretations of Islam and its role in society” Similarly, the promotion of Urdu as the national language led to the creation of Bangladesh and a strong sense of cultural alienation persists among Baloch, Sindhi, Sairaikei’s and Pashtun’s due to Punjabi domination.

#### Radicalisation

Pakistan, created based on Islamic identity, led to radicals demanding a country run on Sharia law. Liaquat Ali’s acceptance of the Objective Resolution, Bhutto’s acceptance of Quadianis as non-Muslim and Zia’s series of steps made the radicalisation of Pakistan irreparable. Islamists became an influential factor in politics, with the

ability to form the government and create a government fall. The growth of Madarsas at an exponential rate provided the backbone for radicalisation by “indoctrinating children to discriminate against non-muslims, as Kafir (infidels), Mushrakeen (Pagan), and enemy of the State” and ultimate feeders for Islamic terror groups. As per Ittehad-e-Tanzeemat Madaris (ITMD) Pakistan, 3 million, i.e. 1/ 6 of the total enrolled students, study in Madrasas, which have a clear anti-India bias.

### **Anti-India Bias of Pakistan Army**

Pakistan Army dominates the national landscape; it is radicalised and steadfastly remained anti-India since independence. The anti-India stance became aggressive with the ‘one Muslim is equal to 1000 Hindu Kafirs’ stand taken by Ayub Khan and the failure of the 1965 war and defeat in the 1971 war. General Zia-Ul-Haq took institutional measures to islamise the Pakistan society and the Army. He brought hardcore Islam into the political mainstream and Blasphemy laws, Hudood, Zina, Zakat, Ushr and Riba Ordinance, not only islamised the country but also marginalised many sections of society. The Army Chief became the country's most powerful entity, and multiple Prime Ministers were dismissed due to engineered defections. ISI maintains terror organisations as strategic assets and equips these organisations with the supply of arms and ammunition. Inter-Services-Public-Relations (ISPR) was raised to organise information campaigns to project India as a violator of Human Rights and the Pakistan Army as the saviour of the nation; it also degrades the politicians as corrupt and self-serving. The Pakistan Army's budget share remains higher at 3 to 4 % of the total budget , “at the cost of development expenditure,” The “major acquisitions are not shown as defence expenditure and added together the defence spending would be even higher”. The commercial ventures of the Armed forces without a government audit are also under severe criticism.

### **Demographic Dividends**

Pakistan's youth bulge started in 1992 and will end in 2045 without accruing any economic benefits. The country went from the 14th most populated country in 1947 to the 5th in 2017. The lack of employment has led to rural migration, and it is estimated that 53 per cent of the population will live in cities by 2025, making living conditions inhuman and triggering conflict between various ethnicities.

### **Lack of Democratic Values**

The structural weakness of the Muslim League, the domination of the landed aristocracy, and the aversion of Jinnah to democracy in the party are reflections of Pakistan's political and constitutional journey. It adopted three ‘permanent constitutions’ (1956, 1962 and 1973) and two ‘Interim constitutions’ (1947 and 1972), with governance interchanging between parliamentary democracy and the presidential system. Pakistan Army ensured that “the seeds of authoritarian rule were carefully sowed” and the governments were dismissed and re-installed by the executive orders. It “had three Governor General, six Prime Minister and this political instability mostly engineered was one reason for Martial law”.

### **Present Dynamics**

The violent protest after the arrest of Imran Khan shook the Pakistan Army, and the coalition government by the PPP and PML further outraged the public, harming the political credibility of the country. Economically, the country's foreign debt, lack of foreign investment, increasing fiscal deficit, unemployment, and rising prices of daily commodities have generated acute public anger. The financial condition of the country will continue to slide downwards, and the narrative of the Pakistani Diasporas to project Pakistan as a victim of terrorism has no takers. The world is no longer willing to relent Pakistani involvement in terror activities. The diplomatic

reconciliation of the new dispensation and its army with Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Qatar has yielded little results. The US has taken serious note of Pakistan's divisive role in Afghanistan and its stand on the Russia–Ukraine war. China has benefitted the most from the economic mess in the country; however, the loss of lives of Chinese citizens in CPEC projects has become a sore point between the two countries. The new Taliban leadership in Afghanistan is at loggerheads with Pakistan on the issue of the Durand line fencing and the forced deportation of Afghan refugees. Taliban has tremendous influence among the terror organisations led by Tehrik-e- Taliban (TTP) and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), and these organisations, assisted by the Baloch rebels, are using the porous Afghanistan-Pakistan border to create serious situations in Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Taliban, though, “denied its involvement in the violence in Pakistan”

## **Recommended strategic approach for India**

### **Permanently Freezing Relations**

The seven and half decades of experience indicate that India should acknowledge that there is no possibility of normal relations with Pakistan. India must continue diplomatic pause to build diplomatic mechanisms to make Pakistan-sponsored terrorism counter-productive. Pakistan, though, will not accept the freezing of relations and will create an adverse situation that will force India's reaction, or it will send dovish overtures to normalise relations. India should resist such temptations and must attach prohibitive cost factors to every terror attack.

### **Indus Water Treaty**

Despite being beneficial to Pakistan, the treaty has been exploited by Pakistan to exorbitantly increase the cost of legitimate Indian projects since the 1970's. India must rethink the agreement and impose a reciprocal cost factor by objecting to Pakistani projects in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (POK). It should also allocate funds for adequate water management to minimise the loss and discharge of India's share of water to Pakistan and link the treaty with the Indian Stand on Kashmir.

### **Talk Pakistani Jehadi Terrorism Openly and Vigorously**

India must take firm steps to replace the Pakistani Narrative in India that ‘terrorism has no religion’ with a pragmatic and realistic narrative that ‘terrorism in India and across the world has Jehadi Islamism behind it and Pakistan is the single source that exploits and exports the Jehadi virtues of Islam’. Secondly, Pakistan is the largest incubator of Islamic terrorism across the world, and ISI is the primary organisation funding and providing infrastructure for the Jehadi terror. Thirdly, Pakistan should be used as a synonym for terror-sponsoring and the fountainhead of Islamic terrorism as a routine in the media, citing references from analysts and government officials. Fourthly, the narrative that Pakistan is a victim of terrorism needs to be put in the correct perspective that its policy to use terrorism as a strategic tool is the reason for its suffering and Hillary Clinton's 2011 warning that a “snake in your backyard will bite you back” should be used as a shared referral. Fifthly, India should commemorate the significant terrorist attacks every year to remember the innocents and civilians killed due to Pakistan-sponsored violence. Lastly, India must highlight the global threat that Pakistani citizens pose to the US, Europe and Middle-East countries in light of their role in Afghanistan and a large number of its citizens joining Al-Qaeda and ISIS ranks.

### **It is building Capacities**

India should focus on building its economic, security, and diplomatic capacities, engaging with the world to forge economic progress, and using its ‘Youth Bulge’, technical education, entrepreneurial skills, and idea innovation to make the country a world hub for manufacturing and services. It must empower the working class,

especially women, to add value and make export compliant products. India should avoid all multilateral economic platforms with Pakistan as a member and ensure Pakistan's omission in future financial arrangements.

### **Diplomatic and Political Statements**

Pakistan's political and diplomatic charges should be immediately and curtly replied to as a right to rebuttal with facts and figures only by the nominated foreign spokesperson, diplomat, or political entity as per the occasion and requirement. Even in domestic politics, the response to Pakistan should be made by the party spokesperson or by junior ministers. The cabinet and Prime Minister should avoid direct engagement and reserve their statements.

### **Strategic Engagement with US and West block**

NATO used Pakistan as a tool to execute its geo-strategic policies and, in return, aided Pakistan in building its conventional capability. India must engage with the US and Western countries to ensure that enhancing the traditional capability of Pakistan in the name of the war on terror are no longer an option. Similarly, the threat of nuclear war by Pakistan should also be exposed with a clear message and intent, as is expected from a mature and responsible democracy. The prevailing situation in Pakistan, like anti-American and anti-West sentiments and prosecution of Shias, Ahmadi and non-Muslims, should also be highlighted through Human rights groups on all global platforms.

### **Conclusion**

India and Pakistan's bilateral relations are undeniably captive to Pakistan's social and political construct and its anti-India stance. Loss in wars compelled Pakistan to use terror as a strategic tool to overcome conventional disparity. Pakistan is in turmoil due to foreign loans, political instability, the Taliban stand on the Durand Line and the rise of Islamic terror groups. Pakistan-initiated freezing of relations has been a blessing for India; the security and financial situation has improved, and its foreign policy is no longer tethered to Pakistan. Thus, maintaining distance from Pakistan and an independent path to progress is the best policy option for India.

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