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How must India respond to Geopolitical Challenges?

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The people of Kashmir Valley refuse to accept responsibility for their plight but blame the Central Government for their woes. They will not accept that Valley Muslims dominate and rule the State, hold maximum number of government jobs, are responsible for widespread corruption, terrorism drives away tourists and employment generating industry, contribute negligible revenue to State by way of taxes, be sensitive to the needs of people of Ladakh and Jammu regions. An apology for killing of Pandits and driving them out of their ancestral homes is out of question!

In Pakistani eyes India cannot be seen as succeeding because it would mean question the reason for Pakistan's birth as a nation. This means as long as Pakistan exists, India has to be opposed.

Kashmir on the boil again. According to a July 8 report, "The Jammu and Kashmir police have initiated the process of withdrawing cases against 634 stone-throwers, out of the several thousand who have been charged with the crime during the past eight years, following the state's government amnesty order. The state government had earlier this week approved amnesty to 634 persons facing charges of stone-throwing following the Home Department's approval to withdraw 104 cases dating from 2008 to 2009.[\[1\]](#)" Look what happened thereafter!

Every time there is violence in the Valley commonly heard phrases are – situation returning to the 1990's, youth unemployed, human right violations by security forces, dialogue is the only way to resolve the Kashmir dispute, separatists leaders reiterate their importance, outpour of sympathy for the innocent injured or dead. This is followed by high level meetings held in Delhi/Srinagar. With time the situation appears peaceful on the surface, so tourists visit the Valley, only to erupt again.

The sequence is familiar. Kashmir has become a pawn in the chessboard involving China, India and Pakistan.

This article first identifies realities, with respect to J&K and our neighbours, which India must accept and then outlines a way to deal with geo-political challenges.

- If the last sixty odd years is a yardstick, the people of Kashmir Valley refuse to accept responsibility for their plight but blame the Central Government for their woes. They will not accept that Valley Muslims dominate and rule the State, hold maximum number of government jobs, are responsible for widespread corruption, terrorism drives away tourists and employment generating industry, contribute negligible revenue to State by way of taxes, be sensitive to the needs of people of Ladakh and Jammu regions. An apology for killing of Pandits and driving them out of their ancestral homes is out of question!

The responsibility for over 43,000 deaths, since 1989, due to terrorism in J&K cannot be placed at the door of Pakistan alone!

Pakistan has become a nursery of terror because of unstinted support from China and to an extent the U.S.

- Kashmir dispute is a tool that Pakistan will always use against India to keep her unstable, pre-occupied and on the defensive. Even if the Valley became part of Pakistan, its attitude towards India will not change.
- Every time India is on the path to progress and become stronger Kashmir might erupt to set the clock

back.

- In Pakistani eyes India cannot be seen as succeeding because it would mean question the reason for Pakistan's birth as a nation. This means as long as Pakistan exists, India has to be opposed.
- Pakistan wants parity with India be it NSG membership or exploding a nuclear bomb. Muslim Pakistan vs. Hindu India. China fully supports this Pakistan endeavour.

India's leadership recently supported this theory by saying it would not oppose Pakistan's NSG membership. By doing so it equated the countries i.e. like comparing a mango with rotten cheese.

- Terrorism in the Valley started in 1989-90 only after Pakistan acquired nuclear capability in 1987. Former high commissioner to Pakistan G Parthasarathy wrote, "Director of the Wisconsin Project of Arms Control Gary Milhollin has commented: "If you subtract China's help from the Pakistani nuclear programme, there is no Pakistani nuclear programme. China's assistance to Pakistan continued even after Beijing acceded to the NPT."[\[2\]](#)

Make Export of Arms and Soft Power instruments of State Policy. Follow the Bajaj Auto model – produce for domestic and export markets.

- Pakistan has become a nursery of terror because of unstinted support from China and to an extent the U.S.
- China wants to "remain the only nation in Asia with unrivalled international influence and membership of elite groupings like the United Nations Security Council and NSG" so uses Pakistan to contain India.
- Keep India (read as Followers of Dharma) under pressure by changing demographics in J&K[\[3\]](#), border districts with Bangladesh and encourage Hindu Muslim riots (for e.g. Godhra).
- Use terror attacks to weaken Indian (read as Hindu) resolve.
- From Saudi Arabia to Singapore India is the only country of consequence i.e. not Muslim. The aim is as Sri Aurobindo said in 1940, "The Mahomedans, they want to rule India." This endeavour has the support of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia amongst others.

What should India do?

India's approach is as much about changing mindsets as it is about specifics.

On mindsets India should -

- Be in perpetual fighting mode, friendly with gun dry.

Not be defensive about relations with the Middle East because millions of Indians work there and remit billions.

Recall what Sri Aurobindo said in 1907, "We should be absolutely unsparing in our attack on whatever obstructs the growth of the nation, and never be afraid to call a spade a spade. Excessive good nature, chakshu lajja [the desire to be always pleasant and polite], will never do in serious politics."

- Not let failure deter us, our diplomatic aggression must continue.
- Pursue national interests with singular clarity.
- Make Export of Arms and Soft Power instruments of State Policy. Follow the Bajaj Auto model –

produce for domestic and export markets.

- Not be taken in by flattery but continuously reflect for an honest realization of our achievements.
- Learn to keep opponents under pressure by exploiting their fault lines for eg Baluchistan, Xinjiang, Tibet.
- Increase the cost for countries who work against India's interest.
- From time to time, selectively remind friends of their strategic vulnerability.
- When India commits to build infrastructure projects on a Government to Government basis, say Afghan Parliament, timely Execution is key.

Indians gives Pakistan respect by making it enemy number one.

- Not be defensive about relations with the Middle East because millions of Indians work there and remit billions. Indians are good employees so hired. If Indians leave we might but the Gulf countries will have bigger problems.
- Not subscribe to news channels and papers that give Pakistan too much of mind space. Indians gives Pakistan respect by making it enemy number one.
- Brigadier Gurmeet Kanwal (retd) wrote, "Developing a pro-active strategic culture by exposing all students in schools and colleges to understanding basic threats and challenges to national security and the measures necessary to overcome these. (All government training institutions must also educate their trainees about national security issues by devoting a portion of the syllabus to the subject.)"

Most importantly Indians must realize that China and Pakistan can at best, reduce India's GDP by a % point, but cannot ignore us if we become an economic and military powerhouse.

On specifics starting with J&K -

For each of the state's three regions, let the country know amount spent by Central and State governments in Jammu and Kashmir during the last twenty years and split of State government employees region wise.

- It is for the State Government to improve quality of governance, reduce corruption, ensure fair equitable of expenditure across the three regions and make people of the Valley realize that jobs will happen when there is peace and corporates can own land.
- Create two, say ten pager, FAQs, on all aspects of Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan sponsored Terror. It creates awareness and empowers the average Indian to respond to baseless allegations.
- For each of the state's three regions, let the country know amount spent by Central and State governments in Jammu and Kashmir during the last twenty years and split of State government employees region wise.
- Withdraw all state sponsored facilities and benefits of Separatist leaders. Appeasement does not work.
- Kashmir Valley occupies only 15.73% of the state area of 1,01,387 sq kms. People of Jammu and Ladakh regions have feelings and aspirations that need to be addressed.
- Be compassionate and firm. Central and State Governments need to work in tandem.
- India must single mindedly purse economic growth whilst simultaneously pursuing geo-political

objectives and create an environment i.e. conducive to manufacture of hi-technology products.

Strategic relations with the U.S. must continue but not at the cost of relations with Russia.

- Strategic relations with the U.S. must continue but not at the cost of relations with Russia.
- India must identify areas and facilitate the working together of Russia, U.S. and India for the betterment of humanity and global peace.
- Prakash Katoch, a former Lt Gen, Special Forces Indian Army wrote, “India must make Military Diplomacy as a part of its foreign policy and create the capacities, structures and processes necessary to put it into action. Special Forces must be integrated in military diplomacy and deployed strategically for shaping the environment in India’s favour”.
- India’s look East policy is because we are the Land of Buddha. We are only following the footsteps of our ancestors and not seeking containment of any country.[\[4\]](#)
- Early completion of the India Myanmar Thailand Highway. Indian tourists should be able to quickly and safely drive from Imphal-Yangon-Bangkok. Similarly devotees from Myanmar and Bangkok should have easy access to a cheaper option of reaching Bodh Gaya.
- The Indian strategic affairs community should produce a White Paper on China-Pak Nuclear Proliferation.
- The mantra with China should be co-operate and compete.

India should be prepared to fight a two front war i.e. with China and Pakistan.

- Identify industries where China has built extra capacity and levy anti-dumping duties as appropriate. Read India’s protectionist bent and weak state cast doubt over steel-building ambitions.[\[5\]](#)
- Promote and reward transparency in the corporate and government worlds. This will make India the envy of non-democratic regimes in Asia.
- Be prepared to deal with unconventional attacks by China. It could be cyber warfare, “swift taking over of Indian monasteries by Lamas from outside and Tibetization of the Himalayan states.”[\[6\]](#)
- India should be prepared to fight a two front war i.e. with China and Pakistan.
- Continue to support Afghanistan’s nation rebuilding effort and focus on closer economic ties with Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Bangladesh without feeling insecure of China’s ties with them.
- Pay special attention to the development of hilly border states i.e. Himachal, Uttaranchal, Sikkim, Arunachal and Ladakh. Avoid making dams where it is opposed by locals and damages the ecology of the region. In order to ensure that border areas are adequately habited create meaningful employment opportunities or just introduce NREGA.

Brig Gurmeet Kanwal: “India’s national security objectives must be carefully drawn up if the national security strategy is to be achievable.”

- ”Construct a National Level Memorial where the names of more than 15,000 soldiers who gave their lives in defending our freedom, can be engraved.” The Armed Forces keep the nation secure.
- Indians celebrate prematurely like some did recently when Pakistan was denied F-16s or recent upturn

in Indo-Afghan relations. Raise the bar! Aabhi Dilli Door Hai.

It would not be out of place to mention what Brigadier Gurmeet Kanwal (retd) wrote, “India’s national security objectives must be carefully drawn up if the national security strategy is to be achievable.”

The Government needs to get more Indians involved in foreign policy by explaining its contours and how they can assist. Once that happens empowered citizens might contribute significantly to India’s geo-political goals.

[1] <http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/jammu-kashmir/police-begin-process-to-take-back-cases-against-stone-throwers/263128.html>

[2] <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2014/20140619/edit.htm#5>

[3] <http://swarajyamag.com/commentary/making-sense-of-jammu-kashmir-census-2011-numbers>

[4] <http://www.speakingtree.in/article/when-china-loved-india>

[5] <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/992952.shtml>

[6] <http://www.idsa.in/issuebrief/emerging-flashpoints-in-the-himalayas>

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