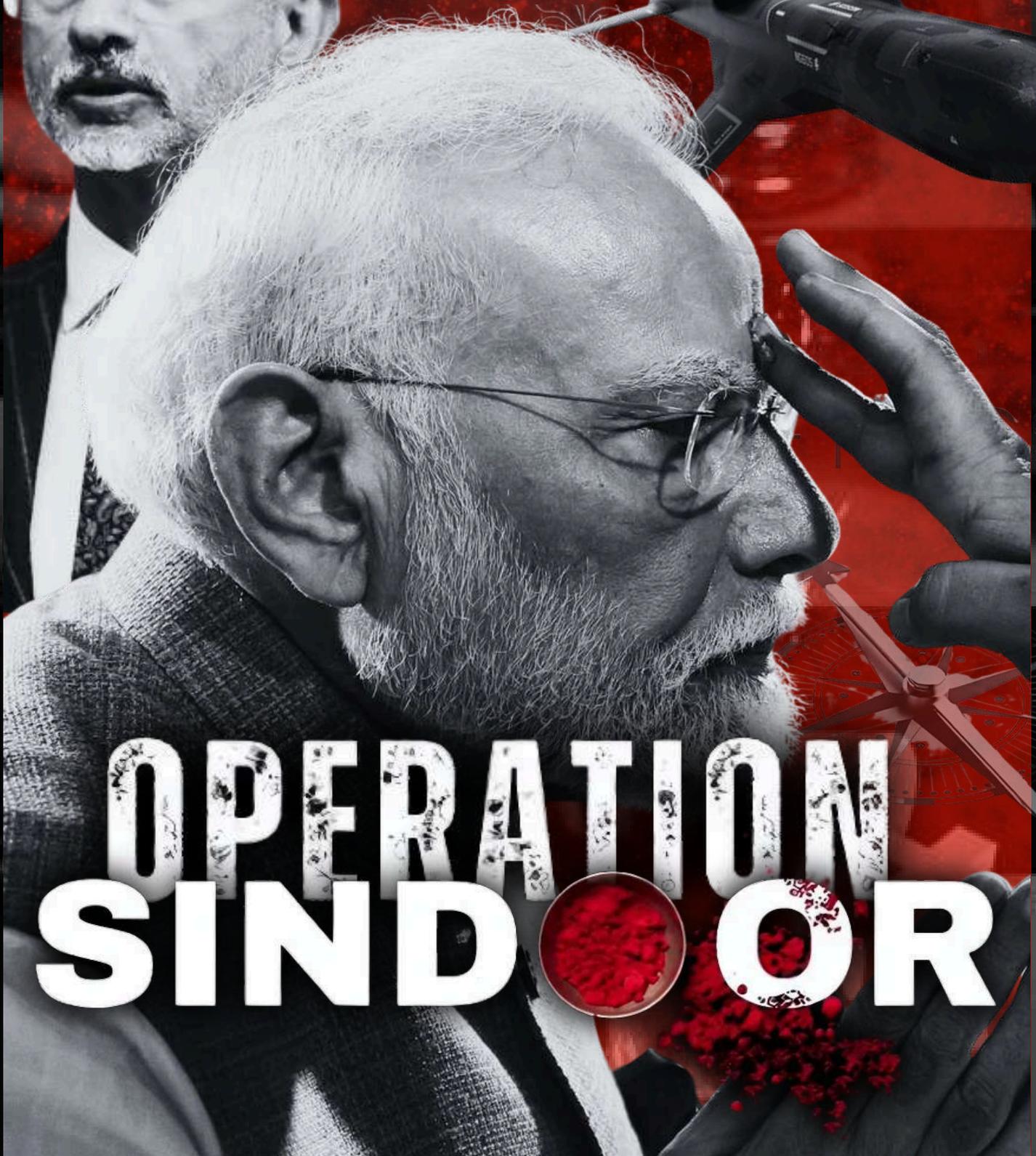




GEO JURISTODAY
BOLSTERING THE INDIA WAY



OPERATION SINDHOO



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CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	i
ABSTRACT	1
INTRODUCTION	2
PHASES OF MILITARY ENGAGEMENT	5
o Phase 1: The Indian Reprisal against Terrorism	7
<i>Terrorist Camps selected in POJK</i>	8
<i>Terrorist Camps selected in Pakistan</i>	8
o Phase 2: Pakistan's Escalatory Measures	10
o Phase 3: Doom of Songar drones	12
o Phase 4: Multi-Domain Operations and Narrative Invasion	14
o Phase 5: Ceasefire Decision and Strategic Considerations	16
<i>Noor Khan Attack: A Hidden American Agenda</i>	17
<i>Sargodha Strike: Concerns Regarding Nuclear Safety</i>	18



Casualties in Operation Sindoor	21
DEFENCE AND MILITARY ASPECTS	25
○ Weapons used by India	26
○ Weapons used by Pakistan	28
○ The Rise of Drone-Based Warfare in Operation Sindoor	29
<i>Rationale for Drone Deployment</i>	30
<i>The Global Trend: Drone Warfare as the New Norm</i>	32
<i>India's Counter-Drone Capabilities</i>	33
○ The Role of HAROP Drone in Operation Sindoor and Strategic Insights from Spiderweb	35
<i>HAROP as a Precision Loitering Munition</i>	36
ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS	38
○ Impact on Indian Economy	39
<i>Immediate Economic Costs</i>	39
<i>Indian Stock Market</i>	40
<i>Sector-wise Impact: Who Gained, Who Paused?</i>	41
○ Impact on Pakistan's Economy	42
<i>Immediate Economic Costs</i>	42
<i>Pakistan Stock Market</i>	43
○ Pakistan's 25 th IMF Bailout since 1950 - A sign of failed reforms	44



○ How Operation Sindoor could reshape global financial dynamics for India and Pakistan	45
○ Assessment: Rafale vs. Chengdu	46
INTERNATIONAL REACTION AND STRATEGIC ALIGNMENTS	47
○ States Supporting India's Position	48
○ Mediation Efforts by Third Party States	48
○ <i>State's Supporting Pakistan's Position</i>	49
○ <i>Sino-Pak Nexus and Proxy War</i>	50
○ Turkey's Covert Hand; Weapons, Drones, Propaganda	52
○ The Dichotomous Stance of the United States	53
○ <i>India's Foreign Policy of Strategic Balance</i>	55
<i>India-Israel Relations and Foreign Policy Approach</i>	55
<i>India as a Net Security Provider in Indo-Pacific</i>	56
<i>Atmanirbhar Bharat and Indigenous Defense Exports</i>	57
<i>Multi-Alignment and Foreign Policy Independence</i>	58
Reforms in Defence Procurement and FDI	58
<i>Operation Sindoor: A Symbol of Digital and Military Excellence</i>	59
<i>Shifting Dependency and Strengthening Defence Industry</i>	59
<i>Export-Import Reforms and Emerging Defence Sectors</i>	60
LEGAL DIMENSIONS	61



○ Jus ad Bellum: The Right to Use Force under International law	62
○ Jus in Bello: Legality of Conduct During Armed Conflict	65
○ Military Necessity and Legitimate Targets	66
○ Law, Legitimacy, and the Grey Zones of Sovereignty	66
ETHICAL AND MORAL DIMENSIONS	67
○ Between Just War Theory and Dharmayudh	68
○ Just War Theory: Criteria of Moral Legitimacy	69
○ Dharma-Yudha: Indian Ethical Traditions on Just War	71
FUTURE OF INDIA-PAKISTAN BILATERALISM	73
BEYOND WEAPONS: PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE	76
○ Western Media's Dubious Narratives	77
○ Pakistan's Victimhood Campaign	78
○ India's Narrative Deficit: A Missed opportunity?	78
<i>Lessons from History</i>	<i>79</i>
<i>All-Party Delegation: Towards Multilateral Engagement</i>	<i>80</i>
CRITIQUE	82
CONCLUSION	84
BIBLIOGRAPHY	85

ABSTRACT

India has been a victim of cross-border and state-sponsored terrorism for decades. From the 2001 Parliament attack to the Delhi blasts and the 26/11 Mumbai attacks ”- Pakistan has repeatedly used non-state actors and proxy organizations to exploit sectarian fault lines and provoke internal destabilization in the region. The Pahalgam incident of April 2025 was yet another attempt by Pakistan to scar India’s national integrity, security, and conscience. Consequently, Operation Sindoor was India’s retaliatory response, marked by a transformative shift in its counterterrorism strategy while asserting national sovereignty and a calibrated strategic approach. While this move was hailed as a necessary answer in the face of rising terrorism and deliberate communal targeting, concerns have emerged regarding the future of bilateral conflict resolution frameworks, as well as market volatility and trade disruptions both domestically and internationally. Therefore, this report synthesizes empirical observations to assess the aftermath of the Pahalgam incident, which has reshaped the regional security architecture and exposed Pakistan’s persistent harboring of terror organizations alongside the duplicity of international narratives. It offers a comprehensive, multidimensional analysis of the event and its aftermath, conceptualized within the trajectory of India-Pakistan bilateralism and conflict, with attention to the social, political, economic, environmental, and diplomatic implications.





Krishna says, “If peace is thy wish, O Duryodhana, listen to the words I say. Let five villages be given to the Pandavas — Avishtala, Vrikasthala, Makandi, Varanavata, and any other as the fifth... On these terms, peace may be had. Give them these, O thou of mighty arms, and make peace with the Pandavas.” Duryodhana responds with pride: “Not even as much land as can cover the point of a needle will I give to the Pandavas.” Krishna, witnessing the obstinate pride of Duryodhana, declares in frustration, “You have chosen pride over peace—now face the ruin that follows...” He continues turning towards the court and exclaims “I came here seeking peace, and yet you bind your destiny with unrighteousness. You have sown the wind—prepare now to reap the storm.”- Vyasa. The Mahabharata of Krishna-Dwaipayana Vyasa. Translated by M.N. Dutt. Vol. 3

INTRODUCTION —

Historical accounts of mankind are plagued with instances where nations have stood at the crossroads between strategic compulsion and moral restraint. While peace remains the most acclaimed noble pursuit, both practice and theory reveal that, it is war that often becomes a prerequisite for “lasting peace.” On a broader canvas, this implies that when injustice is institutionalized by the oppressor, the tussle between idealism and realism tends to inevitably shift in favor of the latter.

However, it would be rather misleading to claim that India has only recently found the balance between ‘restraint’ and ‘realism’, normative endeavors and strategic acumen. On the contrary, this balance is deeply entrenched in her civilizational ethos, tracing back thousands of years. Thus, the recent chain of events has unapologetically brought to the forefront, one of the most “vivid distillations of Indian thought and statecraft”— the epic saga of the Mahabharata.

On 22nd April 2025, 26 innocent lives were brutally massacred in the picturesque meadows of Baisaran Valley in Pahalgam, Kashmir. Women and children were left at the mercy of that devastating hour — to sing the chronicles of violence and terror to rest of the nation that reverberated through our collective conscience and jarred the international community. In the following days, The Resistant Front (TRF), widely identified as a proxy of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), claimed responsibility for this orchestrated communal murder episode in Pahalgam, reaffirming the peril of state-sponsored terrorism emanating from Pakistan. TRF has been active in Kashmir since 2019 post the abrogation of Article 370 and often uses encrypted social media channels to disseminate propaganda to destabilize the region.

Echoing one of the darkest chapters of sectarian violence in the region, the Pahalgam incident highlights one of the most pivotal challenges in Indo-Pak conflict, i.e. the illegitimate use of cross-border terrorism as an instrument of asymmetric warfare. Pakistan has actively patronized terrorist outfits and proxy groups while being a haven for several UN proscribed terrorists including the Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammad, as well as their leaders, Masood Azhar and Hafiz Muhammad Saeed amongst others. This poses a direct threat to India’s sovereignty and while avoiding a direct military confrontation. Thus, decades of back-channel diplomacy, peace talks, negotiations and the tenacious ‘hope’ for a peaceful co-existence with our belligerent neighbor were replaced by a strategic resolute.

Since the creation of Pakistan post the partition in 1947, India has been at the receiving end of religious fundamentalism and cross-border, state-sponsored terrorism as a persistent policy over conventional bilateral dispute resolution mechanism. However, the Pahalgam incident stands out as perhaps the most searing memory since the 26/11 attacks. This was not a standalone act of terrorism — it was a deliberate act of political signaling. The terrorists did not shoot indiscriminately; instead, one’s religious identity became the litmus test of life and death. Several constructivist theories observe how this episode furthers identity politics and religious symbolism while weaponizing them, thus, transforming collective identities into instruments of violence and political mobilization.

The most haunting image that wrenched the national consciousness was that of sindoor-clad women and orphaned children sitting beside the lifeless bodies of their husbands, brothers, and fathers. It was in this agonizing moment that both popular and strategic imperatives in New Delhi converged. Operation Sindoor was a resolute response to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure and hold accountable its perpetrators in the face of the international community, thereby quilling a new chapter that will reverberate through the annals of India–Pakistan relations, reminding the world that terrorism is not merely a geopolitical challenge, but an existential threat to the moral and spiritual order of society.

Consequently, on May 7, 2025, under cover of night, the Indian Armed Forces launched series of precise and strategically calibrated strikes with the aim of neutralizing terror infrastructure responsible for Pahalgam massacre and other such instances in the past.

At 2:12 A.M IST, Indian Rafale fighter jets lifted off from Ambala Airbase, armed with SCALP and HAMMER strike nine terrorist camps (four in Pakistan and five in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir). Satellite imagery and intercepted communications confirmed the destruction of key terror infrastructure, including ammunition dumps, training facilities, and communications nodes. Further on, Indian intelligence estimated 60–80 militants and trainers were killed, including several mediocre LeT commanders. Further on, all aircraft returned safely, and no Indian personnel were lost in the operation.

What strikes most about this strategic operation is not merely its military significance, but its civilizational resonance — rooted in time-immemorial ethos and as sacred and symbolic as the holy waters of the Ganges: ‘Sindoor.’

The operation’s nomenclature finds meaning in the enduring narratives of the Ramayana, where Maa Sita adorns sindoor as an expression of her devotion to Lord Rama. In naming this mission after Sindoor, the message extended beyond a retaliation — it was an assertion that when the sacred feminine is violated, it does not awaken a victim, but a goddess of wrath.

From the haunting image of Himanshi Narwhal with vermilion precisely parted across her forehead, to the official press release that underscored the leadership of Wing Commander Vyomika Singh and Colonel Sofiya Qureshi — the operation embodied a powerful statement that resonated radiance both nationally and internationally. Thus, this unfolds an unmistakable parallel with the Mahabharata’s Udyoga Parva — Duryodhana’s arrogant dismissal of Krishna’s peace proposal, much like Pakistan’s persistent refusal to rein in terrorist proxies. It was a moment where diplomacy failed, and the use of force became not only necessary but morally and strategically justified.



***Peace is
sacred, but
not at the cost
of justice.***



EVERY **RED** HAS A PRICE TO PAY

PHASES OF
MILITARY
ENGAGEMENT

New Delhi has always maintained a firm stance on matters of national security: ***"Terrorism will not be tolerated"***.

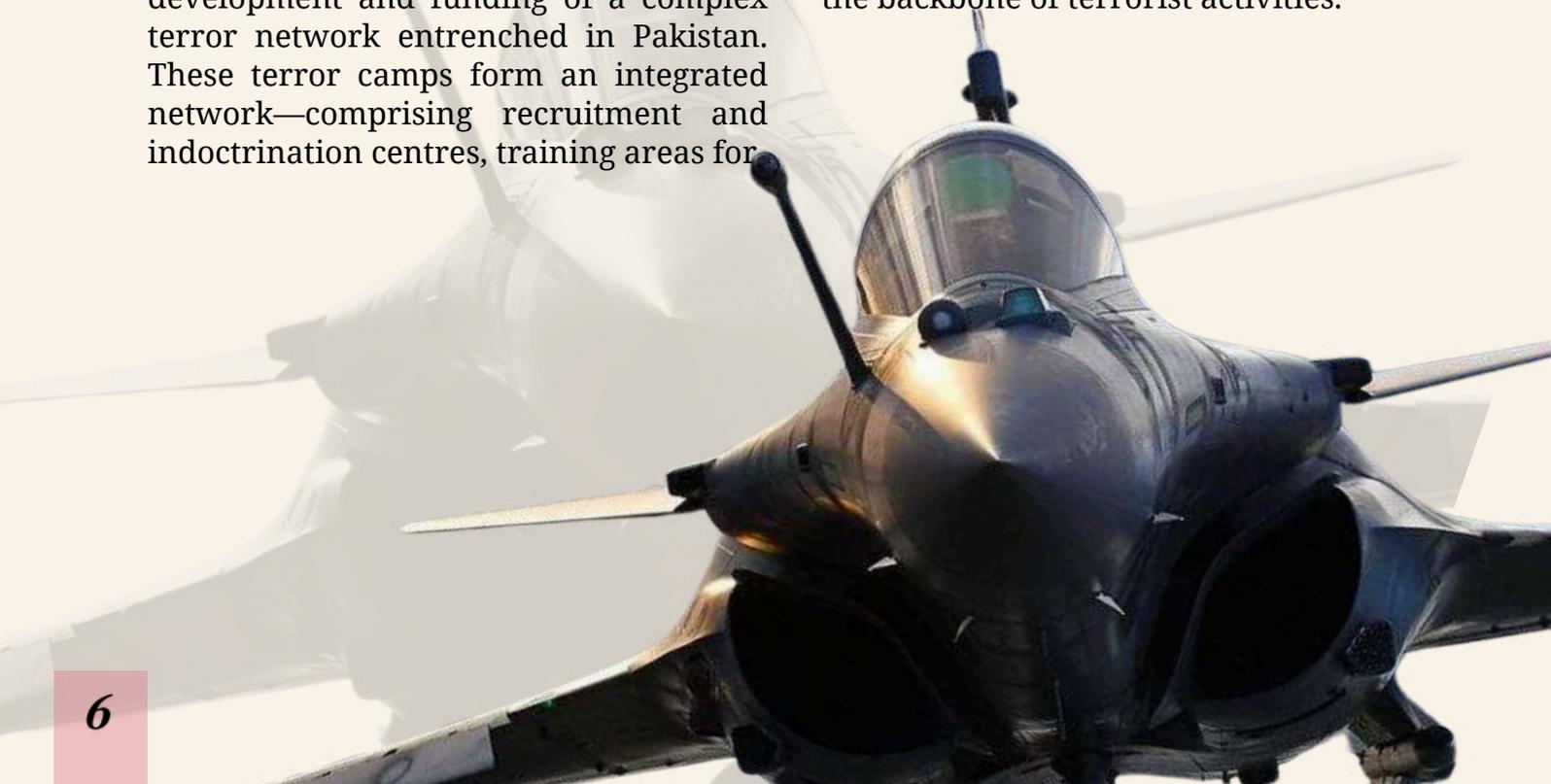
The tragic Pahalgam attack serves as a stark reminder that any attempt to threaten India's sovereignty will be met with unwavering resolve and the power to fight back. Standing firm in the face of adversity, India's response through Operation Sindoor prioritized both national security and civilian protection. Executed with precision to minimize collateral damage, the operation demonstrated India's readiness to respond decisively while adhering to international norms. This balance underscores India's commitment to responsible conduct alongside its assertion of military capability.

Over the past three decades, India's vigilant agencies and armed forces have compiled tactical intelligence on the development and funding of a complex terror network entrenched in Pakistan. These terror camps form an integrated network—comprising recruitment and indoctrination centres, training areas for

both initial and refresher courses, and launchpads for handlers.

According to available intelligence, there are a total of 21 such camps located in both Pakistan-occupied Jammu & Kashmir (POJK) and Pakistan, distributed from Sawai Nala in the north to Bahawalpur in the south. Many of these camps were vacated following the Pahalgam incident, fearing India's retaliation.

India's punitive response, Operation Sindoor, began in the early hours of May 7th, between 1:05 and 1:30 AM. The Indian Air Force conducted strategic, precise, and pinpoint strikes on terror camps located in both POJK and Pakistan, completely destroying nine terror bases and neutralizing several terrorists. These targets were selected based on credible intelligence, with the aim of dismantling the backbone of terrorist activities.





OPERATION SINDOOR



PHASE 1

*The Indian Reprisal against
Terrorism*

TERRORIST CAMPS SELECTED IN POK

Sawai Nala Camp, Muzaffarabad

- 30 km away from LOC in POK
- Lashkar-e-Taiba training centre for attacks
- 20 October 2024 Sonamarg
- 24 October 2024 Gulmarg
- 22 April 2025 Pahalgam

Syedna Bilal Camp, Muzaffarabad

- Jaish-e-Mohammed Staging Area
- It was also a centre for weapons, explosives, and jungle survival training.

Barnala Camp, Bhimber

- 9 km away from LOC
- Training centre for weapon handling, ID blast, and jungle survival tactics

Gulpur Camp, Kotli

- 30 km away from LOC
- Lashkar-e-Taiba Base
- Active in Rajouri and Poonch districts
- 20 April 2023, Poonch attack
- 9 June 2024, Pilgrimage Bus Attack

Abbas, Kotli

- 13 km away from LOC
- Lashkar-e-Taiba Fidayeen used to prepare here before attacks.
- Capacity—training of 15 terrorists

TERRORIST CAMPS SELECTED IN PAKISTAN

Markaz Taiba, Muridke

- 18 to 25 km away from IB
- Terrorists of the 2008 Mumbai attack were also trained here.
- Ajmal Kasab and David Headley also trained here.

Sarjal Camp, Sialkot

- 6 km away from IB
- Terrorist attack on March 2025 on J&K police personnel

Mehmoona Joya, Sialkot

- 18 to 12 km away from IB.

Markaz Subhan Allah,

Bahawalpur

- 100 km away from the international boundary
- Jaish-e-Mohammed Headquarters
- Centre for recruitment, training, and indoctrination
- Top brass of terrorists often met her.

Hizbul Mujahideen camp

- Control centre for spreading terror in the Jammu Region.
- The Pathankot Air Base Attack was planned and directed from this camp.

It is crucial to note that the Indian Armed Forces did not target any of Pakistan's military installations or assets, ensuring no civilian casualties and no damage to civic infrastructure. Operation Sindoor was a controlled and non-escalatory retaliation against terrorism.

On the night of 7th–8th May, Pakistan attempted to strike multiple military targets in northern and western India using drones and missiles, without closing its civil airspace—using civilian air corridors as a shield against India's counter-response.

The targeted locations included Avantipura, Srinagar, Jammu, Pathankot, Amritsar, Kapurthala, Nal, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Adampur, Bathinda, Chandigarh, Phalodi, Uttarlai, and Bhuj. These threats were effectively neutralized by India's Integrated Counter-Unmanned Aerial System (CUAS) and other aerial defence mechanisms. Debris recovered from multiple locations confirmed Pakistan's offensive intent.

As a measured counter, on the morning of 8th May, the Indian Armed Forces targeted air defence radars and systems at several locations within Pakistan. India's response matched the intensity of Pakistan's actions. It has been reliably reported that an air defence system in Lahore was neutralized. Meanwhile, Pakistan has intensified unprovoked firing along the Line of Control, using mortars and heavy-caliber artillery in Kupwara, Baramulla, Poonch, Mendhar, and Rajouri sectors of Jammu & Kashmir.

Tragically, sixteen innocent civilians, including three women and five children, lost their lives due to this firing. India was once again compelled to respond, with the primary objective of silencing Pakistani mortar and artillery fire. The Indian Armed Forces reiterate their commitment to non-escalation, provided that this principle is mutually respected by the Pakistani military.





PHASE 2

*Pakistan's Escalatory
Measures*

KEY EVENTS

8-9 MAY 2025

The Pakistani military carried out multiple violations of Indian airspace along the western border, intending to target Indian military infrastructure. Additionally, the Pakistani military resorted to the use of heavy-calibre weapons along both the International Border (IB) and the Line of Control (LoC).

A swarm of drone intrusions was observed at 36 locations, from Leh to Sir Creek, involving approximately 300 to 400 drones. The Indian Armed Forces successfully intercepted and brought down several of these drones using the Integrated Air Defence (IAD) system. The objective of these large-scale intrusions was to test India's air defence systems and gather tactical intelligence. Preliminary reports identify these drones as Asisguard Songar drones of Turkish origin.

Later that night, an armed UAV from Pakistan attempted to target the Bathinda military station, but it was detected and neutralized before it could inflict any damage.

In retaliation, India launched armed drones targeting four air defence sites in Pakistan. One of these drones successfully destroyed an air defence radar, dealing a significant blow to Pakistan's surveillance capability.

Pakistan also carried out artillery shelling across the LoC, employing heavy-calibre artillery guns and armed drones in the areas of Kandhar, Puri, Poonch, Mendhar, Rajouri, Akhnoor, and Udhampur in Jammu and Kashmir. These attacks resulted in casualties and injuries among Indian Army personnel. However, the Pakistani Army also suffered major losses due to India's retaliatory firing.



PHASE 3

*Doom of Songar
Drones*

CROSS BORDER CLASHES

9TH & 10TH MAY

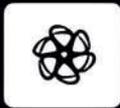
The Pakistani military continued its provocations, conducting aggressive actions employing multidimensional threats. Pakistan used UKAP drones, long-range weapons, loitering munitions, and fighter aircraft to target civilian areas and military infrastructure. It also resorted to air intrusions using drones and fired heavy-calibre weapons along the Line of Control (LOC) and International Border (IB). Multiple air intrusions and attacks were attempted at more than 26 locations, ranging from Srinagar to Nalia. The Indian armed forces successfully neutralized most of these threats and vectors; however, the air bases at Udhampur, Pathankot, Adampur, and Bhuj sustained damage to equipment and personnel.

Subsequently, several high-speed missile attacks were observed after 1:40 AM at various air bases in Punjab. In a deplorable and cowardly act, Pakistan targeted civilian infrastructure, attacking the Medicare centre and school premises at the air bases in Srinagar, Avantipura, and Udhampur. In response, India targeted technical infrastructure, command and control centres, radar sites, and weapon storage areas. Pakistani military targets at Rafiqui, Murid, Chaklala, Rahim Yar Khan, Sukur, and Chunian bases were engaged using air-launched precision weapons from Indian fighter aircraft. Radar sites at Pasrur and Sialkot aviation base were also targeted with precision ammunition.

Throughout these responses, India ensured minimum collateral damage.

Pakistan has also attempted to execute a sustained misinformation and narrative campaign, making false claims about the destruction of the Indian S-400 system at Adampur, the airfields at Suratgarh and Sirsa, the BrahMos base at Nagrota, the RT gun position at Dhangir, and the Chandigarh forward ammunition depot, while propagating reports of heavy damage to other military stations on social media.

Along the Line of Control, Pakistan has made multiple air intrusion attempts using drones and conducted shelling with heavy-calibre artillery, targeting civilian infrastructure and causing civilian casualties. Heavy exchanges of artillery, mortars, and small arms fire have continued in the Kupwara, Baramulla, Poonch, Rajouri, and Akhnoor sectors. The Indian Army has responded effectively and proportionately, inflicting extensive damage on the Pakistani Army. Pakistani troop movements into forward areas indicate an offensive intent to further escalate the situation. The Indian armed forces remain in a high state of operational readiness, having effectively countered and responded to all hostile actions. The Indian armed forces reiterate their commitment to non-escalation, provided this is reciprocated by the Pakistani military.



PHASE **4**

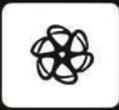
*Multi-Domain Operations and
Narrative Invasion*

On 10th May at 12:37 PM, the Ministry of External Affairs received a call from the Pakistani High Commission regarding a proposed contact between the Directors General of Military Operations (DGMOs) of both nations. However, this was initially not possible due to unavailability on the Indian side. Later, at 3:35 PM, contact was established between India's DGMO, Lt. Gen. Rajiv Ghai, and Pakistan's DGMO, Maj. Gen. Kashif Abdullah. During this conversation, both sides agreed to halt all firing and military actions on land, in the air, and at sea, effective from 1700 hours Indian Standard Time.

Despite this agreement, Pakistan soon violated the ceasefire, with reports of cross-border gunfire at several points along the International Border in Jammu, and multiple explosions in Srinagar. At a late-night press briefing on 10th May, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri disclosed that Pakistan had repeatedly violated the understanding, prompting the Indian armed forces to receive clear directives to "respond with strength" to the situation.

The ceasefire agreement was reaffirmed on May 12, 2025, during a DGMO-level meeting, where both sides committed to no cross-border firing and to reducing troop levels along the Line of Control. After this, the situation was brought under control.





On the early morning of 10 May 2025, India launched coordinated airstrikes against several Pakistani military installations, including the Noor Khan Airbase located in Chaklala and Mushaf Base at Sargodha.

PHASE 5

Ceasefire Decision and Strategic Considerations

Noor Khan Attack

A Hidden American Agenda?

This attack on Noor Khan Base not only damaged strategic infrastructure but also triggered an unexpected rush for a ceasefire from both Pakistan and the United States. The events surrounding the strike on Noor Khan have since raised questions about Pakistan's sovereignty, U.S. covert military operations, and the broader geopolitical implications of the conflict. Noor Khan Airbase, situated near Islamabad in Chaklala, is one of Pakistan's most critical airbases functioning as a logistical and operational hub for the Pakistan Air Force. Historically, this base has also facilitated U.S. military operations, serving as a site for intelligence gathering, logistical support, and the movement of personnel and equipment within the region. Reports suggest that U.S. military aircraft routinely landed at Noor Khan, often restricting access to Pakistani officers.

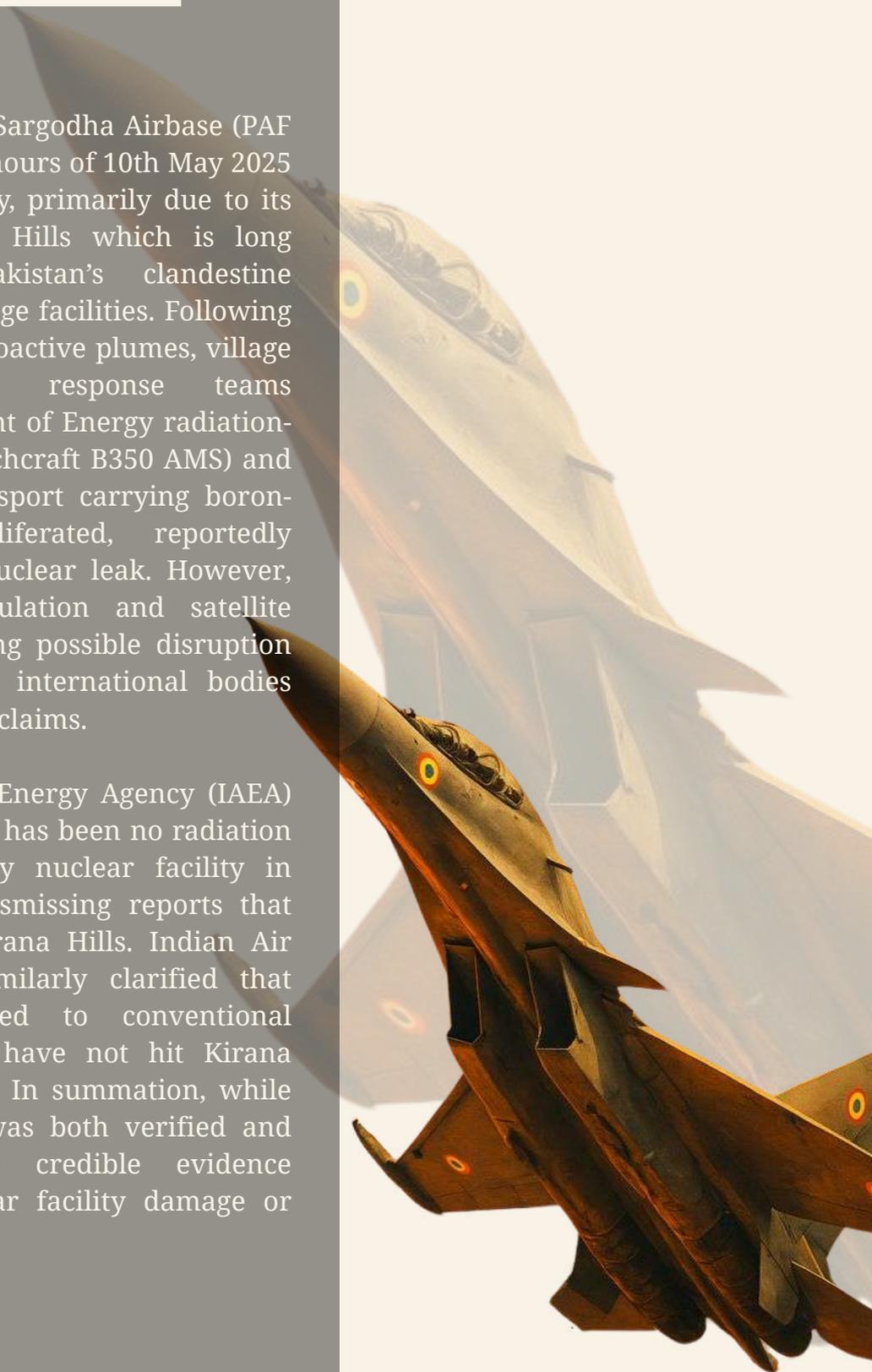
The immediate push for a ceasefire following the attack on Noor Khan Airbase was striking in its urgency. Both Pakistan and the United States engaged in diplomatic efforts to halt the conflict, raising suspicions about underlying motivations. The presence of U.S. military personnel at the base could explain the sudden diplomatic scramble. While Pakistan publicly acknowledged damage to the base, it remained conspicuously silent on the question of casualties. The events surrounding Noor Khan Airbase underscore critical issues of sovereignty and international law.



Sargodha Strike Concerns Regarding Nuclear Safety?

India's precision strike on Sargodha Airbase (PAF Base Mushaf) in the early hours of 10th May 2025 has drawn intense scrutiny, primarily due to its proximity to the Kirana Hills which is long believed to house Pakistan's clandestine underground nuclear storage facilities. Following the strike, rumours of radioactive plumes, village evacuations, emergency response teams including a U.S. Department of Energy radiation-monitoring aircraft (a Beechcraft B350 AMS) and an Egyptian military transport carrying boron-based absorbents, proliferated, reportedly dispatched to control a nuclear leak. However, despite widespread speculation and satellite imagery analysis suggesting possible disruption to nuclear infrastructure, international bodies have sharply refuted these claims.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) officially stated that "there has been no radiation leak or release from any nuclear facility in Pakistan," categorically dismissing reports that Indian missiles struck Kirana Hills. Indian Air Marshal A. K. Bharti similarly clarified that operations were confined to conventional military assets and "we have not hit Kirana Hills... whatever is there." In summation, while the attack on Sargodha was both verified and symbolically potent, no credible evidence supports claims of nuclear facility damage or radiation leakage.



Later on, at 12:37 PM, the Ministry of External Affairs received a message from the Pakistani High Commission proposing a direct communication between the Directors General of Military Operations (DGMOs) of both nations. This could not be immediately facilitated due to unavailability on the Indian side. But subsequently, at 3:35 PM, contact was established between India's DGMO, Lt. Gen. Rajiv Ghai, and Pakistan's DGMO, Maj. Gen. Kashif Abdullah. During this conversation, both sides reached an agreement to halt all firing and military actions — on land, in the air, and at sea, effective from 1700 hours Indian Standard Time.

Soon after the ceasefire agreement was reached, Pakistan resorted to violations, with reports emerging of cross-border gunfire at several points along the International Border in Jammu, while multiple explosions were reported in Srinagar. During a late-night press briefing on 10th May, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri disclosed that Pakistan had repeatedly violated the understanding, which prompted the Indian armed forces to receive clear directives to “respond with strength” to the evolving situation.



CONTRASTING WAR ETHICS

INDIA V/S PAKISTAN

A defining contrast emerged in the way India and Pakistan conducted their military operations during the crisis. Pakistan's strategy included deliberate attacks on civilian areas like schools, medical centres, and homes, leaving behind a trail of devastation that claimed innocent lives, including women and children. Such heart-wrenching acts struck at the very core of humanity, underscoring a chilling willingness to blur the lines between combatant and civilian. Meanwhile, India exercised utmost restraint and respect for human life, ensuring that its operations targeted only legitimate military threats like radars and weapon depots. This approach was guided by a steadfast commitment to the laws of armed conflict and a deep moral responsibility to protect civilians amidst the chaos of war.

Equally telling was the way each nation managed its airspace during the conflict. India took the responsible step of closing its civil airspace, fully aware of the risks to civilian aviation and determined to safeguard innocent travellers from harm. In stark contrast, Pakistan chose to keep its civil airspace open, effectively using it as a human shield against Indian counterstrikes. By mixing civilian and military traffic, Pakistan put its own people at risk. While India acted with caution and humanity, Pakistan's choices revealed a troubling disregard for the safety of its own citizens.

The story of Operation Sindoor is not just about missiles and military might; it is about the moral choices a nation makes in times of crisis. India's resolve to stand up to terror while respecting human life and international norms reflects its character as a responsible nation. Pakistan's actions—from targeting civilians to violating ceasefires and using its own people as shields—expose a strategy that values expedience over humanity. In the face of repeated provocations and broken promises, India's commitment to proportionality and humanity remains unwavering, proving that even in the darkest moments, the light of compassion and responsibility can shine through.

CASUALTIES IN OPERATION SINDOOR

In a joint press briefing conducted by the Indian military on 11th May, Director General of Military Operations, Lt. General Rajiv Ghai, confirmed the names of high-value targets eliminated in the Operation Sindoor strikes. He stated, “Nine terror targets were identified after careful deliberation under Operation Sindoor, targeting Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, and Hizbul Mujahideen facilities. More than 100 terrorists were killed in nine terror targets during the early May 7 operation.” The counterstrike, codenamed Operation Sindoor, left more than 60 terrorists injured across the nine target locations — Muzaffarabad, Kotli, Bahawalpur, Rawalakot, Chakswari, Bhimber, Neelum Valley, Jhelum, and Chakwal. These locations were identified as hubs of terrorist activity.

Lt. General Ghai added that several high-value targets were killed in the strikes. These five terrorists were identified as Mudassar Khadian Khas, Hafiz Muhammed Jameel, Mohammad Yusuf Azhar, Khalid alias Abu Akasha, and Mohammad Hassan Khan. These individuals held significant roles in the Pakistan-based terror groups Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba and were killed in the initial phase of Operation Sindoor, when Indian forces struck terror camps deep inside Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (POK).



ELIMINATED TERRORISTS

<i>Name</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Significance</i>
Mudassar Khadian Khas (alias Abu Jundal)	Lashkar-e-Taiba	Head of operations at Markaz Taiba (Muridke)	Orchestrated major infiltration attempts in Jammu and Kashmir; facilitated arms trafficking via Punjab.
Hafiz Muhammad Jameel	Jaish-e-Mohammed	Brother-in-law of Masood Azhar, Strategic commander at Markaz Subhan Allah (Bahawalpur)	Managed recruitment and radicalization across Pakistan and PoK.
Mohammad Yusuf Azhar (alias Ustad Ji, Ghosi Sahab)	Jaish-e-Mohammed	Chief weapons trainer	Involved in the 1999 IC-814 hijacking and multiple IED training operations.
Khalid (alias Abu Akasha)	Lashkar-e-Taiba	Arms smuggler and logistics head	Key figure in arms procurement from 14 Afghanistan and training of suicide squads.
Mohammad Hassan Khan	Jaish-e-Mohammed	POK operations coordinator	Led terror cells in Poonch-Rajouri belt; son of Mufti Asghar Khan Kashmiri.



MUDASSAR KHADIAN KHAS

Mudassar Khadian Khas, also known as Abu Jundal, was affiliated with Lashkar-e-Taiba. He was in charge of Markaz Taiba, a terror camp based in Muridke, Pakistan, located about 25 km from the Indian border. This camp served as the headquarters of LeT. Ajmal Kasab, the only terrorist captured alive during the 2008 Mumbai attacks, confessed that he received his training at this camp. David Headley, yet another terrorist involved in 26/11, was also reportedly trained here.

HAFIZ MUHAMMED JAMEEL

Hafiz Muhammed Jameel was associated with Jaish-e-Mohammed and was the brother-in-law of Masood Azhar, the founder of JeM. He was in charge of Markaz Subhan Allah in Bahawalpur, about 100 km inside Pakistan. He served as an advisor to JeM Chief Maulana Masood Azhar and had visited Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir in the past to motivate youth to join his movement against India and raise funds for JeM. He actively indoctrinated potential recruits for the group. The Bahawalpur camp was used for recruitment, training, and indoctrination and was frequently visited by Azhar. The strike on the terror camp on May 7 killed at least ten family members of Azhar and his four aides.

MOHAMMAD YUSUF AZHAR

Mohammad Yusuf Azhar, also known as Ustad Ji and Mohd Salim, belonged to Jaish-e-Mohammed. He was also the brother-in-law of Masood Azhar and handled weapons training for JeM. He was involved in multiple terror attacks across Jammu and Kashmir and played a role in the hijacking of the IC-814 plane in 1999, known as the Kandahar hijacking, which led to the release of Masood Azhar by India in exchange for the hostages.



ABU AKASHA

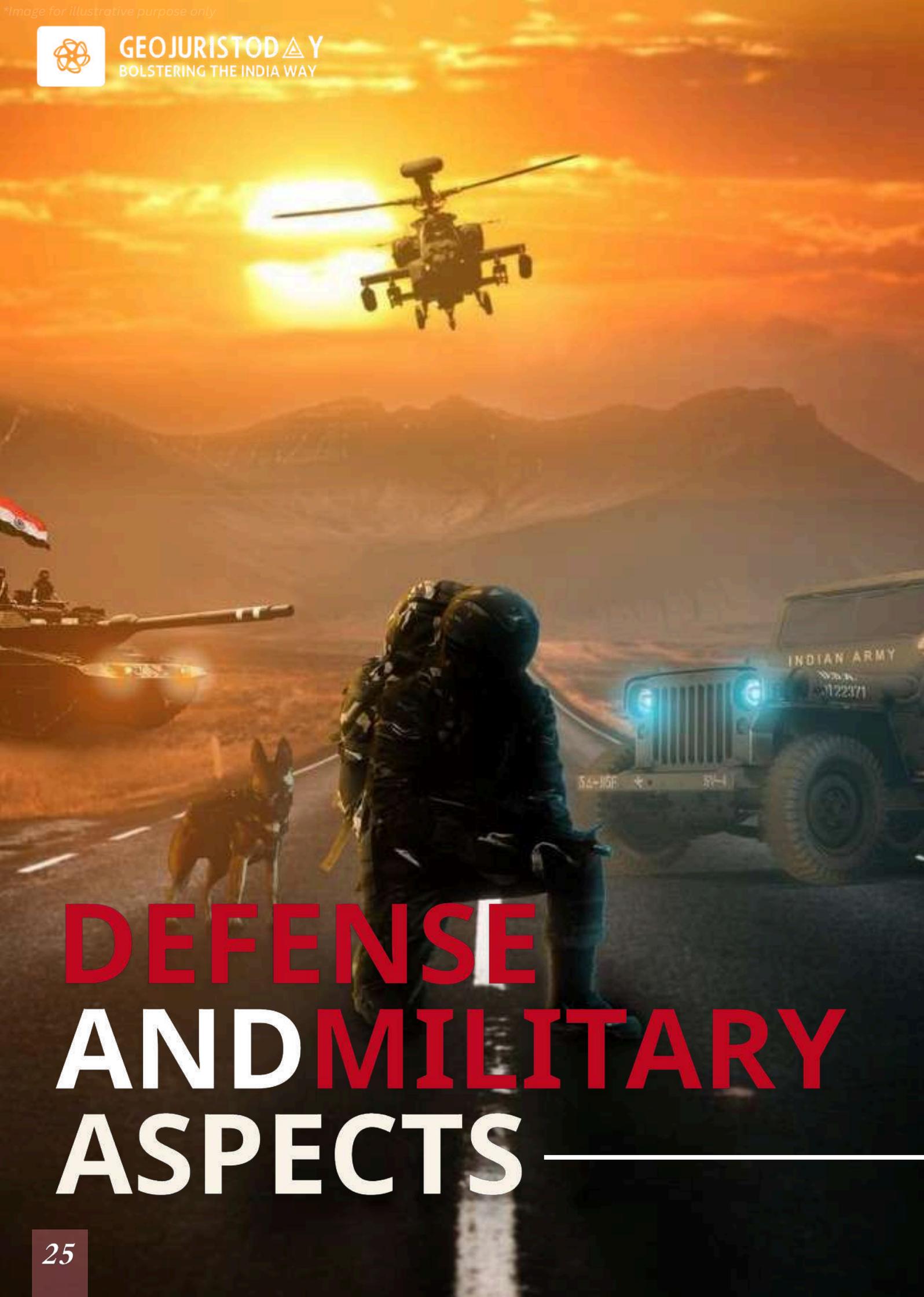
Abu Akasha, also known as Khalid, was a Lashkar terrorist involved in multiple attacks in Jammu and Kashmir. He played a key role in smuggling weapons from Afghanistan for the LeT headquarters in Muridke and was part of the Central Committee. His funeral in Faisalabad was attended by senior officials of the Pakistan Army and the Deputy Commissioner of Faisalabad.

MOHAMMAD HASSAN KHAN

Mohammad Hassan Khan, who belonged to the banned Jaish group, was among the terrorists killed in the May 7 strikes. He was the son of Mufti Asghar Khan Kashmiri, the operational head of JeM in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, and played a key role in coordinating attacks in Jammu and Kashmir. In the past, he operated from the Syedna Bilal terrorist camp and was involved in the Pulwama attack. He also worked with Shakargarh-based JeM operative Mohammad Adnan Ali (Doctor Mussadiq), Ali Kashif Jaan (Usman Haider), and Mohammad Yasir.



“Vinaash kaale viparit buddhi”—“When destruction approaches, minds become deluded.” The terrorists and their sponsors failed to heed the warnings, and their hubris met the sword of justice. Operation Sindoor has marked a turning point in India's counter-terror doctrine. The operation has established a new normal: zero tolerance, high precision, and cross-border reach. By eliminating high-value terrorist masterminds, India has not only avenged innocent lives but has also sent a clear message to terror sponsors that no sanctuary is safe anymore.

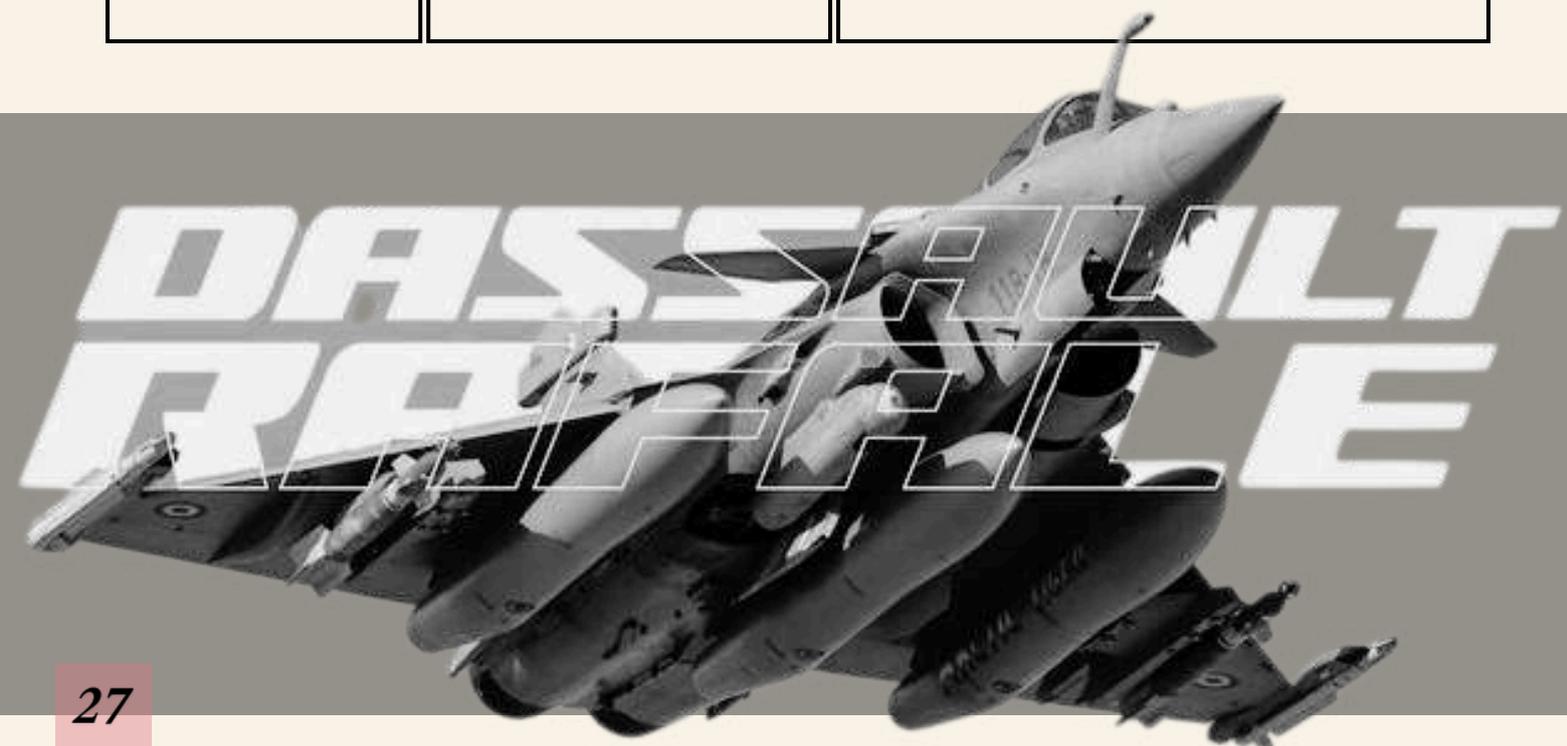


DEFENSE AND MILITARY ASPECTS

WEAPONS USED BY INDIA

Name	Description	How was it used
L-70 Anti-Aircraft guns	Developed by Sweden's Bofors and manufactured in India under license. This has been upgraded with radars, sensors and trackers.	This system was used by India to counter the swarm of drones that was sent by Pakistan into India.
HAROP Drones	Developed by the IAI, it is deployed for precision strikes and high-value target elimination.	It was used as a loitering missile remotely piloted on close-range manual navigation.
ZSU-23-4 Schilka	Developed by Russia, mounted on a platform with 4 23mm guns, targets up to 20 km with the help of radars.	The rapid-fire capability was used for targeting UAVs and even enemy helicopters.
Akash Missiles	Indigenously developed surface-to-air missile system by DRDO.	This missile system was used to target missiles coming in from Pakistan and prevented Pakistani attacks on bases in Jammu, Srinagar and Pathankot.
S-400 Missile System	This was developed and purchased from Russia and creates a dome of safety net from foreign missiles and attacks.	The Indian forces used this system to track incoming attacks by drones and missiles and intercept them.

Anti-Drone D4 system	Indigenously developed Anti-Drone system	D4- Drone, Detect, Deter and Destroy system was a system developed to destroy incoming enemy drones.
Brahmos Supersonic Missile	A supersonic missile developed with Russia with a range of 300 to 600 kilometres.	Pakistani Prime Minister Mr Sharif informed a retaliatory strike by India attacking several targets, including Rawalpindi Airport.
Dassault Rafale	An aircraft developed by the French, purchased by India for its enhanced strike capabilities and capacity to carry nuclear warheads.	Rafale aircraft were used to carry out precision strikes into Pakistan
Sukhoi-30 MKI	The IAF's Sukhoi-30 MKI is licensed produced domestically by HAL.	This aircraft was used in Operation Sindoor for strikes inside Pakistan
Akashteer	A medium surface-to-air missile with a speed up to Mach 2.5 and an altitude ranging from 30 metres to 20 km.	With an extended range, this missile intercepts drone swarms and missiles



WEAPONS USED BY PAKISTAN

<i>Name</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>How was it used</i>
J-10 and JF-17 Thunder	Both these aircraft are Chinese-developed and have currently inducted into the Pakistani Air Force and are used as frontline fighters.	These aircraft were used by Pakistan to attack Indian aircraft across the border
PL-15	This is an air-to-air missile	Supposedly used by the Pakistanis to attack the Indian aircraft on the Indian side of the border. The debris of the missile was recovered in India.
F-16	These are American aircraft given to the Pakistanis to fight against terrorism	The Pakistanis used these aircraft to defend their territory.
Asisguard Songar model drones	These UAVs have the capability to detect and attack targets.	These drones were used to attack Indian cities and military bases. The drones were also used to test the air defence system of India.
Fateh-2 ballistic missiles	This is a rocket used by the Pakistani forces to attack India	The Missile was used to attack Indian targets and was intercepted by Indian defence systems.
Fateh-1 missile	This is an artillery rocket with a range of 140 km.	This missile was used to attack India and was on a trajectory to Delhi, but was intercepted by the Indian defence system above Sirsa, Haryana.

THE RISE OF DRONE-BASED WARFARE IN OPERATION SINDOOR

Operation Sindoor was characterized by the extensive and advanced use of drones by both India and Pakistan, marking a significant evolution in modern warfare. Traditional ground battles and skirmishes still took place at crucial border outposts; however, the majority of the conflict's intensity was experienced in the air.

Drone warfare played a pivotal role in this operation, offering tactical advantages such as enhanced reconnaissance, precision strikes, and reduced risk to personnel. This reliance on unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) highlighted a broader transformation in military strategy, showcasing how modern nations are increasingly incorporating technology into their military operations. The implications of drone warfare extend beyond immediate tactical benefits, reflecting changes in global power dynamics and the nature of conflict in the 21st century. Overall, Operation Sindoor serves as a case study in the shifting landscape of warfare, where technology increasingly shapes the strategies and outcomes of military engagements.



Rationale for Drone Deployment

The use of drones, or Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), provides several strategic advantages that continue to transform modern warfare.

Firstly, one of the most significant benefits of drones is the minimization of human casualties. Drones can perform a range of military operations, including surveillance, intelligence gathering, and precision strikes, without placing pilots in harm's way. For instance, during Operation Sindoor, the deployment of drones was vital in conducting low-visibility operations and executing rapid retaliation against cross-border infiltration, effectively reducing risks to human life while maintaining operational effectiveness.

Secondly, the cost-effectiveness of drones presents another compelling advantage. The financial savings when utilizing drones compared to traditional manned aircraft, such as fighter jets and helicopters, can be substantial. Drones require much lower investment for deployment and maintenance. Tactical drones, like the Indian "Nagastra" series and the Pakistani "Shahpar-II" models, have been pivotal in both reconnaissance and attack missions. They enable military forces to run extensive operations without overstressing budgets, making them attractive assets for nations with varying financial capabilities.



Thirdly, drones provide real-time data and advanced targeting capabilities. In contemporary military operations, such as those seen in the aforementioned conflict, Indian drone swarms were integrated with sophisticated battlefield AI systems. These systems processed real-time data on enemy troop movements and tactics, enabling them to inform both central command and mobile strike teams quickly. This real-time feedback loop enhances operational awareness and tactical decision-making in dynamic environments, improving overall mission outcomes.

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The Global Trend: Drone Warfare as the New Norm

Operation Sindoor not only reflects regional tactics but also represents a global trend in modern warfare. Similar to Ukraine's Operation Spiderweb and Israel's precision drone strikes in Gaza, contemporary military operations are increasingly driven by digital technology and remote execution. This trend is influenced by several key factors:

- **Miniaturisation of Technology:** Smaller and more lethal drones can be launched from vehicles, ships, or even carried in backpacks, enhancing mobility and versatility in combat.
- **AI-Powered Swarming:** Multiple drones can now operate semi-autonomously in a coordinated “swarm,” effectively overwhelming enemy air defence systems.
- **Repurposing Civilian Technology for Combat:** Commercial drones can be modified into improvised explosive devices (IEDs), making them accessible to even non-state actors.
- **Psychological Warfare:** Drones flying over urban areas induce constant stress among civilian populations and can also record propaganda footage, amplifying their psychological impact.

These factors illustrate a significant shift in the landscape of warfare, making it more technologically advanced and complex.



India's Counter-Drone Capabilities

During Operation Sindoor, one of the notable challenges faced by the Indian armed forces was the strategic deployment of swarm drones by Pakistan. This tactic involved launching groups of 10 to 50 drones simultaneously, which were directed at critical military assets such as ammunition depots, command bunkers, and radar stations. The use of swarm tactics significantly increased the complexity of aerial threats, requiring a robust and multi-faceted response from India.

In response to this evolving threat, India developed a comprehensive anti-drone defence strategy, which included several advanced technologies and methodologies:

1. SkyDome Radar Integration: The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) developed the “SkyDome” radar system, which was crucial for the early detection and tracking of multiple small drones. This system employed advanced radar technology to provide real-time situational awareness and early warning capabilities, enabling defence forces to prepare for incoming drone swarms.

2. Laser-based Drone Killers: To neutralise low-flying drones, India deployed prototype Directed Energy Weapons (DEWs) that utilized focused laser beams. These systems were integrated on armored vehicles and strategically positioned at critical defence sites. The advantage of using laser systems lies in their speed and precision; they could engage drones at short ranges effectively, offering a targeted solution with minimal collateral damage.



3. RF Jammers and DroneNet: Additionally, Indian forces implemented RF jamming systems, including a specialized network known as “DroneNet.” These systems were designed to disrupt the GPS and control signals that guided the drones, resulting in many drones either crashing to the ground or reverting to their base due to loss of control. This tactic effectively minimized the operational effectiveness of enemy drones, thwarting their missions.

4. AI-based Swarm Neutralization: Recognizing the need for adaptive and proactive measures, India introduced a counter-swarm strategy utilising autonomous drones equipped with artificial intelligence. These drones acted as aerial interceptors, capable of engaging hostile drones mid-air. Depending on the situation, they could jam incoming threats or physically ram into them, ensuring a dynamic and versatile defence against swarm attacks.



THE ROLE OF HAROP DRONE IN OPERATION SINDOOR & STRATEGIC INSIGHTS FROM SPIDERWEB

During the initial phase of Operation Sindoor, the deployment of HAROP drones played a crucial role in neutralising enemy air defences and targeting high-value assets, including radar installations, mobile command posts, and missile systems. The use of these drones significantly reduced the reliance on traditional airstrikes, effectively minimising collateral damage and lowering the risk to manned aircraft. Operating deep within contested areas, the HAROP drones were able to strike targets that were previously deemed too dangerous or costly to engage using conventional methods. Their impactful performance on the battlefield established them as a leading tactical asset in the early stages of the operation, marking a notable shift towards unmanned, precision warfare.

India's Operation Sindoor highlighted the effectiveness of drones in border warfare. In contrast, Ukraine's Operation Spiderweb, conducted in June 2025, demonstrated the strategic depth and psychological impact of drone-based weapons on a global scale. During this operation, Ukraine launched strikes deep into Russian territory, targeting five major airbases.

The mission successfully destroyed over 40 aircraft, including Tu-95 and Tu-160 bombers, as well as Beriev A-50 airborne early warning aircraft.

Both operations highlight a significant evolution in warfare: the asymmetric advantage of loitering drones in equalising military power. With minimal investment, countries can now deploy systems capable of targeting and destroying technologically superior forces. The use of drones like the HAROP represents not only a tactical innovation but also a strategic disruption.

This shift challenges traditional airpower doctrines and compels militaries worldwide to reconsider their approaches to asset protection, airbase defence, and escalation control.

HAROP as a Precision Loitering Munition

Operation Sindoor showcased India's strategic use of advanced drone technology to establish airspace dominance and conduct precise strikes without escalating into a full-scale conventional war. Central to this approach was the deployment of the HAROP loitering munition, a system that offers significantly greater accuracy, stealth, and targeting capabilities compared to traditional First-Person-View (FPV) or swarm drones employed by Ukraine and Pakistan.

A Different Class: HAROP as a Loitering Missile

Unlike FPV drones that are remotely piloted and rely on close-range manual navigation, HAROP drones are autonomous, strategic-class loitering missiles. They operate on a hybrid model combining:

- Cruise missile-like range and lethality
- Drone-like endurance and ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance) capability

Stealth Characteristics: Designed to Evade Detection

HAROPs are engineered with a low radar cross-section, enabling them to penetrate contested airspaces without early detection. This stealth is enhanced by:

- Low-speed, low-altitude flight profiles
- Minimal heat signature
- No electronic emissions unless activated by target acquisition

During Operation Sindoor, this allowed Indian forces to silently loiter above Pakistani defense positions, scan for radar or electronic signals, and strike with no advance warning, effectively catching enemy defenses off-guard.

Accuracy Beyond FPV Drones

FPV drones, widely used by Ukraine and now increasingly by Pakistan, are low-cost and man-in-the-loop, but suffer from:

- **Limited range (typically under 10 km)**
- **Dependency on direct line-of-sight and signal**
- **Susceptibility to jamming and electronic warfare**

In contrast, the HAROP:

- **Can loiter up to 6 hours over the battlefield**
- **Is equipped with electro-optical sensors and anti-radiation homing, allowing it to lock on to radar signals or visual targets autonomously**
- **Has a Circular Error Probable (CEP) comparable to precision-guided munitions, allowing it to hit mobile targets like command trucks, radars, or even moving convoys**

Its 23 kg warhead ensures that when it strikes, the damage is on par with tactical missiles, making it both a drone and a missile in one platform.

In an era where agility, precision, and cost-efficiency are crucial, drones like the HAROP have become essential for achieving victory rather than just supplementary tools. Operations Sindoor and Siderweb demonstrate that the future battlefield will be dominated not by large platforms, but by intelligent, autonomous systems that can deliver significant effects with exceptional accuracy.

The use of drones in Operation Sindoor was not just a tactical choice; it marked a strategic evolution in warfare. Drones represent a significant transformation in how conflicts are conducted, focusing on speed, precision, automation, and information dominance. As India faces complex regional threats, mastering both drone warfare and counter-drone technology will be crucial for national defence. The lessons learned from Operation Sindoor highlight this reality and point toward an increasingly unmanned and AI-driven future of warfare.



War between nations leaves deep scars — not only on the land but also on people's lives and livelihoods. Employment opportunities disappear, prices rise, and families endure hardship. Even after hostilities end, economies often take years to recover. Ultimately, there are no true victors when trade, trust, and progress are disrupted. In this context, it is crucial to analyze the impact of Operation Sindoor on the respective economies, trade, and stock markets of India and Pakistan.

ECONOMIC IMPLICATINS

IMPACT ON INDIAN ECONOMY

While both India and Pakistan are experiencing geopolitical crises, their economic responses differ significantly. India's outlook remains strong, with the IMF projecting 6.4% GDP growth for 2025 and foreign reserves at approximately \$690.6 billion, demonstrating India's capacity to absorb external shocks. The INR has remained stable, inflation is under control, and the fiscal outlook is steady, all of which reflect a resilient macroeconomic environment and prudent economic management.

Immediate Economic Costs

Operation Sindoor Expenditure: India deployed Rafale jets equipped with SCALP missiles and HAMMER bombs. Each SCALP is estimated to cost ₹30–35 crore (~\$3.6–4.2 million), and HAMMER bombs ₹3–5 crore (~\$360K–600K). The overall cost of the operation is estimated between ₹500–700 crore (~\$60–84 million) covering munitions, fuel, and logistics.

Military Asset Losses: Pakistan has claimed the downing of five Indian aircraft—three Rafales, one MiG-29, one Su-30MKI—and 12 HAROP drones. However, no independent verification or official confirmation

has been provided by the Indian government. Reputed media and fact-checking outlets have labelled the claim as unverified.

Daily Mobilization Expenses: With increased troop deployments, aerial patrols, and logistics, daily costs during heightened alert are estimated to be in the range of ₹200–300 crore (~\$24–36 million).

Defensive Measures: India deployed S-400 ‘Sudarshan Chakra’ air defence systems to counter aerial threats. Each S-400 battery is valued at approximately ₹10,000 crore (~\$1.25 billion). This system intercepted multiple drones and missiles during peak alerts.

Destruction to Property and Lives Lost: Pakistan’s retaliatory shelling caused infrastructure damage and the deaths of at least 15 civilians, with 43 injured, mainly near the Line of control(LoC).

Indian Stock Market

India’s markets show resilience: Despite initial volatility, Indian indices like Nifty 50 and Sensex recovered quickly, with defence stocks even gaining. Investor confidence remains high, underpinned by strong fundamentals and faith in the government’s crisis management. India commands market confidence and demonstrates economic strength.



Sector-wise Impact

Who Gained, Who Paused?

Defence Stocks: Defence stocks in India surged following Operation Sindoor, with companies like Hindustan Aeronautics (HAL) and Bharat Electronics (BEL) rising up to 4% amid heightened India-Pakistan tensions. As India manufactures 88% of the required ammunition, investors expect increased defence spending and fresh orders². The government called for meetings with defence manufacturers to discuss ramping up production. Dassault aviation initially surge was attributed to the operation while subsequent drop may have been due to concern about possible losses during the operation or due to rumours.

Mid And Small Caps: There was some volatility in both mid- and small-cap stocks as a few investors opted to rotate capital into sectoral and thematic funds. Hence, the total inflow in these stocks (and funds) decreased slightly.

FMCG And Pharma: It is critical to understand that FMCG giant Hindustan Unilever was among the top rallying stocks during the Kargil War. It is still very early to predict the movements of these stocks in the near future. Still, the overall market sentiment and sector-specific factors will continue influencing these sectors.



IMPACT ON PAKISTAN ECONOMY

The economic aftermath of Operation Sindoor had a compounding impact on the already pauperized state of Pakistan's fiscal health. Thus, the government was forced to divert essential and scarce resources towards defense spending and crisis management at the India-Pakistan Line of Control and strike locations.

Immediate Economic Costs

Destruction of Terrorist Infrastructure: Operation Sindoor destroyed 9 terror camps in Bahawalpur, Muridke, and Kotli linked to Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), JeM, and Hizbul Mujahideen. Estimated financial damage includes loss of safehouses, weapons depots, training equipment, and vehicles — total approximately ₹150–200 crore (~\$18–24 million USD).

Military Resource Losses: Pakistan fired multiple missiles in retaliation and deployed air defence systems and drones in active combat zones. Estimated daily operational and ammunition costs post-May 7 are around ₹60–80 crore (~\$7.2–9.6 million USD), excluding long-term logistics and refuel expenses.



Civilian Infrastructure Damage: Precision airstrikes damaged key civilian zones in Bahawalpur, including parts of Jamia Mosque. Satellite imagery confirmed damage to nearby housing clusters and roads. Restoration and compensation costs are estimated at ₹100–120 crore (~\$12–14.4 million USD).

Loss of Overflight Revenue: Pakistan's closure of its airspace to Indian airlines halted more than 800 overflights weekly. This move is estimated to cost Pakistan approximately \$8–10 million (₹65–83 crore) monthly in lost air navigation fees.

Trade Revenue Disruption: The closure of the Attari-Wagah trade corridor and breakdown of bilateral shipments impacted Pakistan's exports (notably textiles, cement, agriculture). Estimated direct trade loss: ₹1,100–1,400 crore (~\$132–168 million USD) since May 1.

Pakistan Stock Market

Pakistan's stock market is bleeding: The KSE-100 index plunged over 6% in a single session, triggering trading halts and reflecting deep investor anxiety. Since April 22, the index is down 12.6%. The Pakistani rupee weakened sharply, capital flight accelerated, and global investors are reassessing risks. This isn't just about stock prices—it's about trust, stability, and the fear premium now embedded in Pakistan's economy

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PAKISTAN'S 25TH IMF BAILOUT SINCE 1950- A SIGN OF FAILED REFORMS

Pakistan's economic malaise is not an accident. What began as a post-independence promise quickly curdled into chronic mismanagement. A toxic mix of military overreach, poor planning, and an import-heavy growth model has left its fiscal core hollow and its institutions weak. By end-2024, Pakistan's external debt had ballooned to over \$133 billion, which is more than a third of its GDP. Interest payments alone devour 43% of federal revenues. Its foreign exchange reserves are also dwindling. And with over \$26 billion in repayments looming in 2025–26, Pakistan's economic troubles are far from over.

The money given to Pakistan is meant to keep its economy stable and prevent it from collapsing completely. The country is facing high levels of debt, a falling Pakistan rupee, and severe pressure on its foreign exchange reserves. Dr. Manoranjan Sharma, Infomerics Valuation and Ratings aid that this bailout is ostensibly intended to keep Pakistan's economy from collapsing, subject to conditions: cut subsidies, tax the untaxed, stop the rupee's freefall, and most importantly, close the war. "But the proof of the pudding is in the eating. Given

Pakistan's abysmal track record in using previous financial aid responsibly and concerns about the misuse of IMF funds, India opposed this bailout."

Pakistan's economic vulnerabilities have only deepened since the 2010s. External debt had surged to US\$130 billion by 2024, with nearly 22 percent owed to China, mainly for projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The 2022 floods in Pakistan caused losses estimated at US\$30 billion, further straining the economy. In 2023, with persistent political instability and global inflationary pressures exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and supply-chain disruptions, Pakistan was pushed to the brink of default, necessitating the most recent IMF intervention.

Pakistan now faces its hardest truth: the world is still bailing, but it keeps sinking. Unless Islamabad ends its twin addictions to borrowed money and ideological extremism, it will not just default on loans. It will default on the very promise of stability and prosperity for its people. Whether Pakistan embraces reform or retreats into old habits will determine if its future lies in genuine recovery, or if the hopes of its economy will forever rest on bailouts.

HOW OPERATION SINDOOR COULD RESHAPE GLOBAL FINANCIAL DYNAMICS FOR INDIA AND PAKISTAN

Market Volatility & Investor Sentiment: Operation Sindoor has already triggered volatility in both the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) and Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX). Emerging market investors typically retreat during geopolitical instability, prompting risk-off behaviour and capital flight. This not only weakens local currencies like the INR and PKR but also affects global emerging market ETFs and mutual funds.

Energy Prices & Strategic Trade Routes: Any large-scale conflict in South Asia threatens the security of trade routes near the Persian Gulf, a critical artery for the global oil trade. A prolonged confrontation could escalate shipping costs, spark oil price fluctuations, and intensify global inflationary pressures—especially for oil-dependent economies like India.

Global Defence & Cybersecurity Sectors: While conflict harms many sectors, it tends to boost defence and cybersecurity industries. Nations may ramp up spending on surveillance, weapons systems, and

digital infrastructure, creating a surge in demand across allied markets. Investors often shift capital toward these sectors as a hedge.

Geopolitical Realignment: Operation Sindoor puts pressure on global diplomacy. Reactions from the U.S., China, Russia, and the UN could influence economic sanctions, trade partnerships, or military alliances—ultimately affecting regional and global economic flows to both nations.



ASSESSMENT: RAFALE VS. CHENGDU

The geopolitical ripples of Operation Sindoor, have been notably reflected in the global defence stock markets. Central to this dynamic is the contrasting performance of Dassault Aviation, the French manufacturer of the Rafale jets deployed by the Indian Air Force and China's state-owned Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC), particularly its Chengdu Aircraft division which designs and manufactures the JF-17 and J-10C fighter jets used by the Pakistan Air Force.

Between 7 and 12 May 2025, Dassault Aviation witnessed a 6.4% decline in its stock value, plummeting from ₹31,406 to a low of ₹29,405. This fall coincided with mounting speculation surrounding the operational setbacks faced by India, first hinted at by Air Marshal A.K. Bharti on 11th May and later confirmed by Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan during the Shangri-La dialogue in Singapore. Although Dassault's stock rebounded to ₹31,367 by 15th May driven by renewed confidence following successful precision strikes using SCALP and AASM systems and the announcement of domestic Rafale fuselage production by Tata Advanced Systems underscores investor sensitivity to combat outcomes

and defence procurement policy shifts.

In stark contrast, AVIC's Chengdu division, which designs the JF-17 and J-10C fighter jets used by Pakistan, experienced a dramatic 38% surge in its share price, from ₹828 on 7 May to ₹1,145 by 12th May, before settling at ₹939, still registering a net gain of 13%. This bullish trend reflects market optimism surrounding China's expanding role in Pakistan's aerial defence architecture, especially with potential acquisitions of the fifth-generation FC-31 stealth fighters. Additionally, AVIC Airborne Systems, a subsidiary providing avionics and weapons for J-series jets, recorded a 5.9% rise during the same period.

The subsequent rebound in both Dassault and AVIC stocks hints that the initial market fluctuations were largely reactive, shaped by immediate battlefield narratives rather than structural realities. The sharp rise of Chengdu and the dip in Rafale were temporary reflections of perceived tactical outcomes. In the broader context, these movements do not necessarily indicate a long-term shift in aerospace dominance but rather underscore the market's sensitivity to unfolding geopolitical discourse.



India, a civilizational state built on the tenets of peace and tolerance, has long embodied the Bhagavad Gita's call to "stand up and fight for righteousness." But like Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, India too has had to pick up arms — not out of aggression, but because silence in the face of terror would amount to complicity.

From the Ministry of External Affairs' desk, Operation Sindoor was more than a military engagement; it was a calibrated geopolitical signal — a message to the world, conveyed not only through missiles, but also through memos, diplomatic cables, and press statements. It was a philosophical statement that terror shall never go unanswered. While the world watched with bated breath, nations began revealing their positions — some out of moral alignment, others out of strategic necessity. Some nations spoke with clarity, while others communicated in riddles.

INTERNATIONAL REACTIONS AND STRATEGIC ALIGNMENTS

STATES SUPPORTING INDIA'S POSITION

Japan, known for its soft diplomacy, made its stance unusually bold: “In regard to the terrorist act that occurred in Kashmir on April 22, our country firmly condemns such acts of terrorism.” Israel, familiar with the cost of terror, stated, “Israel supports India’s right to self-defense. Terrorists should know there’s no place to hide from their heinous crimes against the innocent.” Russia, India’s trusted friend through decades of war and peace, offered solidarity while urging calm. Russia’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Maria Zakharova, said, “We are deeply concerned about the intensifying military confrontation between India and Pakistan after the terrorist attack near the city of Pahalgam.” The UK government urged India and Pakistan to show restraint and engage in direct dialogue to find a swift, diplomatic path forward.

MEDIATION EFFORTS BY THIRD PARTY STATES

The U.S. President Donald Trump expressed hope that the escalated situation between India and Pakistan would deter quickly, acknowledging the long-standing tensions between the two nations. The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the UAE, Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, called on both India and Pakistan to exercise restraint, de-escalate tensions, and avoid further confrontation. The UK government also urged India and Pakistan to show restraint and engage in direct dialogue to find a swift, diplomatic path forward.

STATES SUPPORTING PAKISTAN'S POSITION

Turkey's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hakan Fidan, expressed outright solidarity with Pakistan in response to India's Operation Sindoor. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan also reaffirmed Turkey's support for Pakistan during high-level talks with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Istanbul, emphasizing the "unbreakable" bond between the two countries and calling for enhanced cooperation in defense, intelligence sharing, and counter-terrorism. Turkey's diplomatic statements and direct outreach to Pakistan highlighted Ankara's consistent alignment with Islamabad during the crisis, while also calling for an international investigation into the attacks and lauding Pakistan's "measured and restrained response."

China described India's military operation as "regrettable," signalling its disapproval of New Delhi's response. Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim expressed "full understanding of the difficult circumstances Pakistan is facing," while also hoping for a swift de-escalation of the situation. He strongly condemned any form of violence and affirmed

Malaysia's support for an independent and transparent investigation to identify those responsible. In addition to extending sympathies to Pakistan, the Malaysian Prime Minister attempted to project neutrality by expressing a willingness to mediate between India and Pakistan if needed.



SINO-PAK NEXUS AND PROXY WAR

While Pakistan may have pulled the trigger in Pahalgam, the fingerprints of the culprit extended further north, with China-made drones, missiles, and propaganda saturating the operation. This clearly indicated that the conflict was more than a bilateral dispute; it had evolved into a proxy contest involving China. Former Pakistani officer Adil Raja even alleged that the Pahalgam attack had China's approval, reportedly conveyed through Munir. China's involvement was not limited to military hardware — reports highlighted the use of advanced Chinese communications technology, satellite links, and encrypted devices by militants, all pointing to a high level of coordination and support. Diplomatically, China shielded Pakistan at the United Nations, refused to label the Pahalgam attack as terrorism, and called for an “impartial investigation,” underscoring Beijing's strategic alignment with Islamabad and its willingness to manipulate regional instability for its own interests.

India's response was not only a military victory over Pakistan but also a technological and information warfare triumph over China. Despite China's assistance to Pakistan — ranging from advanced weaponry and intelligence

sharing to coordinated influence operations — India managed to expose the strategic limitations of this partnership. While Pakistan achieved some success on the information front with support from Chinese and Turkish media, India's Press Information Bureau (PIB) and fact-checking mechanisms played a crucial role in debunking misinformation and countering propaganda swiftly and effectively. Through coordinated use of IT regulations and international lobbying, India strengthened its policy framework to combat narrative aggression, highlighting the growing importance of information warfare capabilities in contemporary conflict.

The ‘Made-in-India’ BrahMos supersonic cruise missile, developed in collaboration with Russia, along with the fully indigenous Akash surface-to-air missile and the Akshateer missile defence system, significantly enhanced India's technological edge. Additional assets such as the Rudram anti-radiation missile, Netra airborne early warning and control (AEW&C), loitering munitions like SkyStriker and Harop, and the D4S counter-unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) system—a multilayer indigenous drone defence system integrating radar, radio frequency

jammers, sensors, and kinetic kill options—provided India with a comprehensive and advanced air defence capability.

These indigenous and collaborative systems gave India a clear upper hand over several Pakistan-owned but Chinese-built HQ-9/HQ-16 surface-to-air missile systems, LY-80 and FM-90 air defence systems, and CH-4 drones. India's technological superiority, supported by its robust domestic defence manufacturing and integration of advanced platforms, ensured operational flexibility and a decisive advantage in the evolving dynamics of regional military power.



TURKEY'S COVERT HAND: WEAPONS, DRONES, PROPAGANDA

Turkey openly supported Pakistan following India's strikes on terror camps in Pakistan and Pakistan occupied Kashmir. Turkish drones such as the Asisguard SONGAR and Bayraktar TB2 were reportedly used in the May 8 drone attacks against India. A Turkish warship was also seen in Karachi during this period. Along with this, six Turkish Air Force C-130 Hercules military transport aircraft arrived in Karachi on April 27, 2025, carrying war equipment, in what appears to be a significant show of support for Pakistan amid escalating regional tensions. Reports suggest that this was part of a broader defense collaboration between the two nations. Simultaneously, F-16, J-10, and JF-17 fighter jets had been deployed at these bases, with combat air patrols (CAP) already underway. Skardu airbase had been upgraded to function as a crucial hub for air defense operations, surveillance activities, and combat preparedness.

Pakistan used 300-400 Turkish drones to attempt infiltration, tried to target India's military installations on May 8-9, said MEA.

Turkey has also set up a propaganda team, in collaboration with Pakistani ISI, to further their anti-India propaganda, reported Mediterranean-Asian Investigative Journalists. TRT World was found to be disseminating misinformation and fake news following India's precision airstrikes on terror camps in Pakistan and POK on May 6 and 7. These state-owned media houses such as TRT World and Anadolu Agency have been hiring a large number of Pakistani and Indian Kashmiri journalists. While undermining journalistic principles, TRT World and Anadolu Agency have been carrying out pro-Turkey and pro-Pakistan propaganda.

On the other hand, India has reacted strongly to Turkey's military aid to Pakistan, with widespread outrage on social media and calls for boycotting Turkish tourism and airlines. This reaction stems from perceptions of Turkey's betrayal, especially considering India's humanitarian assistance to Turkey during the 2023 earthquake crisis.

THE DICHOTOMOUS STANCE OF THE UNITED STATES

The United States adopted a cautious approach to Operation Sindoor. While acknowledging the escalating situation between India and Pakistan, U.S. officials consistently expressed a desire for a peaceful resolution and emphasized close monitoring of developments. They reiterated the importance of dialogue and de-escalation, with Secretary Marco Rubio stating he was “monitoring the situation closely” and would continue to engage with both Indian and Pakistani leadership to find a peaceful resolution. The U.S. neither explicitly condemned nor supported Operation Sindoor, instead focusing on the need for restraint and diplomatic engagement.

On 10th May, President Trump announced on social media, “After a long night of talks mediated by the United States, I am pleased to announce that India and Pakistan have agreed to a FULL AND IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE.” The U.S. played a role in de-escalation by placing direct pressure on Pakistan, reportedly linking the provisional release of a \$1 billion IMF loan to immediate acceptance of the ceasefire, with the remainder contingent on full compliance. After four days of missile strikes and military posturing, India and Pakistan agreed to halt military operations, a decision brokered through a direct military call rather than traditional diplomacy, as Indian officials clarified. Notably, the U.S. response was complicated by the emergence of a Trump-backed cryptocurrency firm

facing a Senate inquiry after striking a deal with Pakistan just days before the ceasefire announcement. World Liberty Financial Inc. (WLFI), majority-owned by Trump and his family, signed a Letter of Intent with the Pakistan Crypto Council, raising questions about the intersection of business interests and foreign policy. Trump also remained silent on the root cause of the crisis — cross-border terrorism and carved out exceptions for Pakistan in his foreign policy, including exempting \$396 million in security assistance and omitting Pakistan from travel bans imposed on other countries.



Trump's actions effectively provided Pakistan with economic relief during the standoff, with claims that he used the threat of sanctions to compel India to halt its military operations. While the U.S. advocated restraint, India's operational choices sent a distinct strategic message: the conflict was addressed on India's own terms, using domestically developed and non-U.S. defense platforms. Operation Sindoor relied exclusively on indigenous systems and equipment sourced from longstanding partners like Russia, France, and Israel, with no American-origin weaponry employed. This strategic autonomy underscored India's self-reliance and reframed the American role, demonstrating that India's military success was self-earned, not reliant on foreign hardware.

In the context of global terrorism, India's actions highlighted that neutrality is not an option. As the Bhagavad Gita reminds, "Whenever righteousness declines, and unrighteousness rises, I manifest Myself." Thus, India's response was not rooted in arrogance but in awareness, supported by allies, principles, and a world increasingly recognizing the necessity of confronting terror directly. Operation Sindoor served as a reminder that indifference to terrorism is untenable, as its consequences inevitably reach beyond regional boundaries.



INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY OF STRATEGIC BALANCE

Today, the new India rises, a nation that can strike back within days, sharp and certain. What once depended on global mercy now rests firmly in our own grip. India's ambitions to become a major global power, with strategic autonomy and national security, all depend on the indigenization of defense production. By lowering its reliance on outside suppliers, India was able to make independent decisions free from outside influence in alliances, conflicts, and geopolitical alignments.

India-Israel Relations and Foreign Policy Approach

India-Israel relations are at their peak today, and both nations are working together, especially in defence. India has been a buyer of Israeli Harop drones and a strong supporter of their moves to protect their sovereignty. Palestine has been Israel's concern for decades, but India has always supported the two-state theory and supported the separation and peaceful coexistence of both nations. Even in the case of Ukraine-Russia, though India condemned the actions, India chose to abstain from voting against Russia in the UN, and no decisive action was taken.



India has furthered a nimble-footed policy towards other nations and has always chosen a silent and long route towards advancing relationships between the countries. The same attitude was seen towards Nepal, Bhutan, and the Maldives when the relations were tense between the nations. The government has acted like a big brother for its neighbourhood nations and thus adopted the “Neighbourhood First Policy.”

India as a Net Security Provider in Indo-Pacific

A robust domestic defense sector also establishes India as a net security supplier in the Indo-Pacific, facilitating defense alliances and arms sales that increase its influence internationally. Earlier, nearly 75% of our military hardware was imported. Today, 3 out of every 4 defense contracts are awarded to Indian firms.

Just as Arjuna’s astras required Krishna’s charioting and Draupadi’s cause to become divine, India’s modern arsenal needed an ecosystem of strategic autonomy. From ₹47,000 crore in defense production in 2014 to over ₹1.27 lakh crore in 2024, India’s transformation was not accidental—it was engineered. 65% of all defense equipment used in Operation Sindoor was indigenous. This was not just Make in India; it was Trust in India.



Atmanirbhar Bharat and Indigenous Defense Exports

‘Atmanirbhar Bharat’ is at the heart of its strategy to foster domestic innovation, manufacturing, and technological advancement in defense. India has evolved from one of the world’s largest arms importers to an emerging defense exporter. These exports include not just low-tech items but frontline systems like the BrahMos missile, Akash air defense systems, and PINAKA rocket launchers. Many are co-developed with international partners yet manufactured mainly in India.

Another advice of Chanakya in Arthashastra, that a state must produce its own war material stands in sync with the policy. The Ministry of Defense in 2020 announced a list of 101 items that were put on the prohibited list of imports. Since then, the list of defense items banned from imports has been growing every year to give a push to locally produced defense material. Thanks to the far-reaching reforms and sustained efforts, India achieved an export of defense to the tune of Rs. 210.83 billion or 2.63 billion in U.S. dollars during the financial year 2023-24. This speaks volumes for the country’s determination to become self-reliant in defense.

The emphasis on the indigenization of the defense sector played a crucial role in the strategic autonomy of India’s foreign policy. Today, India stands out with its perspective on various international issues, which can partially be attributed to the ongoing indigenization programs of defense.



Multi-Alignment and Foreign Policy Independence

India's multi-alignment strategy does not seek comfort in either the West or East. Instead, it chooses partnerships based on interest, not ideology. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's famous line, "Europe's problem is not India's problem" became a doctrine. With a gradual decrease in such imports and self-reliance, the external pressure tends to reduce on India's foreign decision-making.

Reforms in Defense Procurement and FDI

The liberalization of the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) policy, which allows for 74% of FDI to be made through the automatic route; the simplification of the Make Procedure; the launch of the Innovations for Defense Excellence (iDEX) project, which involves start-ups and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs); and the Public Procurement (Preference to Make in India) Order 2017 are being put into effect. The expenditure on defense procurement from foreign sources has decreased from 46% to 36% because of the efforts taken by the government during the previous three years, from 2018-19 to 2020-21.



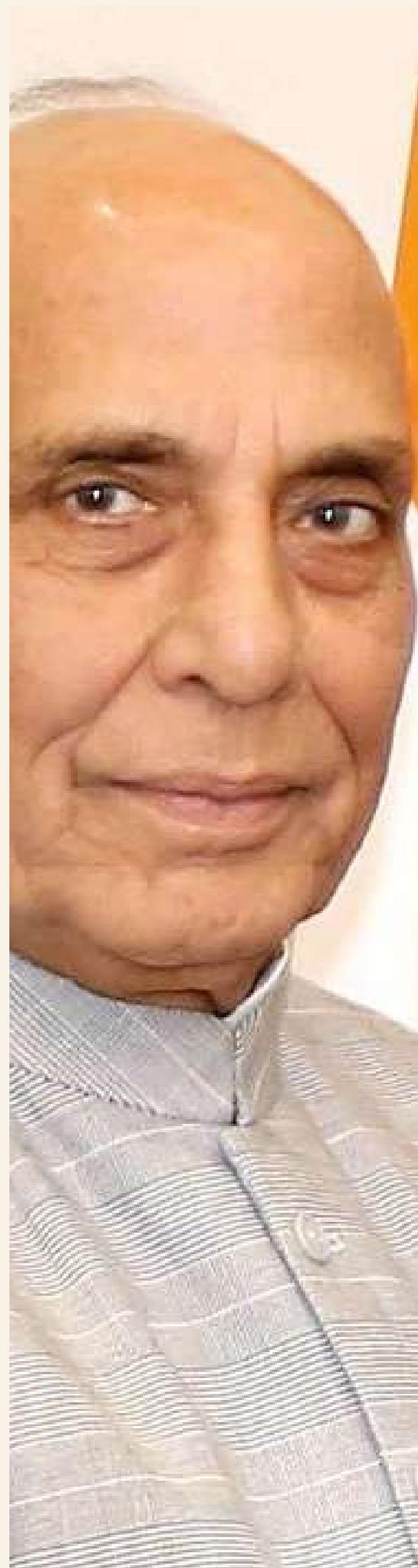
Operation Sindoor: A Symbol of Digital and Military Excellence

Operation Sindoor was as much a software triumph as a hardware one. India's cyber units thwarted multiple infiltration attempts by hostile actors, while indigenous satellite networks like NavIC guided precision strikes. The Defense Space Agency and Defense Cyber Agency, both post-2019 creations, coordinated seamlessly with theatre commands. AI-enabled command centres fused battlefield data, drone imagery, and real-time updates into decision-making dashboards.

This is what Kautilya envisioned when he wrote, "A wise king watches with eyes that are always open—the spy, the warrior, and the scholar." Today, India has all three, digitised and declassified. The message is clear: India will build, India will defend, and when provoked, India will strike while reinforcing India's move to remain neutral and make choices which are crucial for our development.

Shifting Dependency and Strengthening Defense Industry

The Indian policy, when it comes to defence, has changed since 2014. The Modi government has made it mandatory for the military to purchase a significant portion of its weapons from domestic producers.



This move has India moving towards self-reliance and the subsequent growth of the defence industry in India. India has a heavy reliance on Russia for its weapon requirements, and both nations have been major dependents on each other. India's policy towards Russia has always been that of an ally, starting from Independence, where socialism attracted Nehru towards the USSR, and today, where the defence and gas trade are keeping the nations together.

Export-Import Reforms and Emerging Defense Sectors

The Indian policy regarding exports and imports from other countries has seen recent reforms. The licensing has been eased, and frameworks like the Defence Technology and Trade Initiative have been established to promote the collaboration of the public and private sectors and academia. This change in policy has led to the growth of industries like EV and drone systems in India, making it possible to procure goods domestically. India has started to make a mark in defence strategies and industries, with major nations like Germany importing goods made by Indian companies. Our Foreign Minister, S. Jaishankar, has reinforced India's move to remain neutral and make choices which are crucial for our development. Today, we march forward with our choice of maintaining world peace and progressing with the idea of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.





The contemporary international order, rooted in the post-Westphalian principles of state sovereignty and codified through an evolving corpus of international law, remains paradoxically haunted by the persistence of armed conflict and the strategic use of force. While the Charter of the United Nations (UN) and various international instruments uphold a general prohibition against the use of force (Article 2(4) of the UN charter), they also acknowledge certain exceptions, particularly in the domain of self-defence (Article 51 UN charter) and the legitimate conduct of hostilities. The recent Indian military operation, code-named Operation Sindoor, launched in response to the Pahalgam terrorist attack of April 22, 2025, invites scrutiny through the twin prisms of jus ad bellum (the right to use force) and jus in bello (the conduct of force during conflict). This essay situates the operation within these normative frameworks, offering a comprehensive legal evaluation.

LEGAL DIMENSIONS

JUS AD BELLUM: THE RIGHT TO USE FORCE UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW

Article 2(4) of the UN Charter enshrines a foundational principle of international law, mandating that “All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.” However, Article 51 introduces an important exception, the inherent right of individual (or collective self-defence) in the event of an armed attack.

India’s Invocation of Self-Defence

India has justified Operation Sindoor as an act of self-defence in response to the deadly terrorist attack in Pahalgam, attributing the incident to Pakistan-based non-state actors with alleged state complicity. This raises a complex challenge: the UN Charter primarily envisages self-defence in a context where states are primary actors. However, evolving state practice and jurisprudence have stretched these boundaries to accommodate scenarios involving non-state actors, especially when such groups operate with the tacit or explicit support of host states.

The landmark *Nicaragua v. United States* (1986) judgment of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) is particularly instructive. The Court held that the provision of material support in terms of logistics, training, and financing by a state to armed non-state actors constitutes a violation of the principle of non-intervention.



In the present case, India contends that Pakistan's harbouring and enabling of terrorist organizations like Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed amounts to indirect aggression, thereby triggering India's right to use force in self-defence.

The “Unwilling or Unable” Doctrine

India's legal position is also informed by the "unwilling or unable" doctrine, which posits that if a host state is either unwilling or unable to prevent its territory from being used by non-state actors to launch armed attacks, the victim state may lawfully use force in self-defence. Though this doctrine lacks universal endorsement, it has been invoked by countries like the United States (in Syria and Pakistan), Turkey, and Israel in similar contexts. India's reliance on this doctrine adds a layer of legal and moral complexity to the evolving norms of self-defence under customary international law.

UNGA Resolutions and the Question of Aggression

Pakistan has sought to frame India's action as “aggression,” invoking UNGA Resolution 3314 (XXIX), which defines aggression to include acts committed by irregulars or mercenaries on behalf of a state. However, this definition can arguably be turned on its head to support India's justification. The same resolution states that aggression includes “sending by or on behalf of a State of armed bands, groups, irregulars or mercenaries...” Thus, since Pakistan's complicity



in sponsoring cross-border terrorism is well established, India's use of force can be classified as a legitimate response to aggression, not an act of aggression itself.

Similarly, the 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations reiterates the prohibition on aiding or tolerating terrorist acts directed at another state. India's diplomatic communication aligns closely with this principle, emphasizing the operation as a necessary act of self-defence. By describing it as "focused, measured, and non-escalatory," India signals its adherence to the principles of necessity and proportionality — the two cornerstone principles of jus ad bellum.



JUS IN BELLO: LEGALITY OF CONDUCT DURING ARMED CONFLICT

While jus ad bellum concerns the legality of initiating force, jus in bello or International Humanitarian Law (IHL) governs the conduct of force during conflict. The Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, particularly Article 51(5)(b) of Additional Protocol I, establish the principle of proportionality, which prohibits attacks that are expected to cause excessive civilian harm with the anticipated military advantage.

The proportionality principle under jus in bello involves two evaluations:

1. Whether the anticipated civilian harm is excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage.
2. Whether the scale and intensity of the force used are commensurate to halt or repel the armed attack (jus ad bellum proportionality).

In the case of Operation Sindoor, India has demonstrated a calculated effort to balance military necessity against humanitarian considerations, reflecting adherence to both dimensions.

India has maintained that Operation Sindoor targeted terrorist infrastructure with precision strikes, avoiding civilian areas and minimizing collateral damage. Official reports confirm the destruction of multiple terrorist camps and the neutralization of over 100 militants. India asserts that its armed forces employed real-time intelligence and high-precision weaponry to ensure strict compliance with the principle of distinction, which obligates belligerents to differentiate between combatants and non-combatants.



MILITARY NECESSITY AND LEGITIMATE TARGETS

Under customary international law, particularly Rule 14 of the ICRC's Customary IHL Study, military operations must be directed strictly at achieving legitimate military objectives. India argues that the operation was necessary to dismantle terror networks actively plotting further attacks and to degrade their operational capabilities. The selection of targets—believed to include command centres, ammunition depots, and logistical hubs—reflects compliance with the necessity requirement.

LAW, LEGITIMACY, AND THE GREY ZONES OF SOVEREIGNTY

Operation Sindoor represents a contemporary case study in the legal, diplomatic, and ethical dilemmas surrounding the use of force in the international system. While the prohibition of force remains a cardinal rule of international law, the evolving nature of security threats, particularly from transnational non-state actors, necessitates a flexible yet principled interpretation of self-defence doctrines. India's legal argument, grounded in the right to self-defence and principles of necessity and proportionality, aligns with a growing body of state practice and legal commentary that seeks to reconcile state sovereignty with the imperatives of security.

Nonetheless, as Operation Sindoor illustrates, such uses of force must always be accompanied by diplomatic transparency, robust evidence, and a clear commitment to International Humanitarian Law. Operation Sindoor stands out on all of these, its legitimacy lies not only in its legal justifications but in the restraint, precision, and proportionality with which it is carried out.





ETHICS



ETHICAL AND MORAL DIMENSIONS

BETWEEN JUST WAR THEORY AND DHARMAYUDH

The moral legitimacy of military action has long been a subject of philosophical inquiry, transcending legal justifications to encompass ethical, cultural, and civilizational imperatives. India's Operation Sindoor, launched in May 2025 in response to the terrorist attack in Pahalgam, not only invoked legal doctrines of self-defence but also raised significant ethical questions: Was the use of force morally justifiable? Did India act proportionately and with restraint? And how do ethical traditions—both global and indigenous—inform our understanding of such state conduct?

To answer these questions, this essay draws on Just War Theory, Indian traditions of Dharmayuddha, asserting that Operation Sindoor reflects a morally defensible and ethically coherent use of force grounded in both universal and indigenous moral reasoning.



JUST WAR THEORY: CRITERIA OF MORAL LEGITIMACY

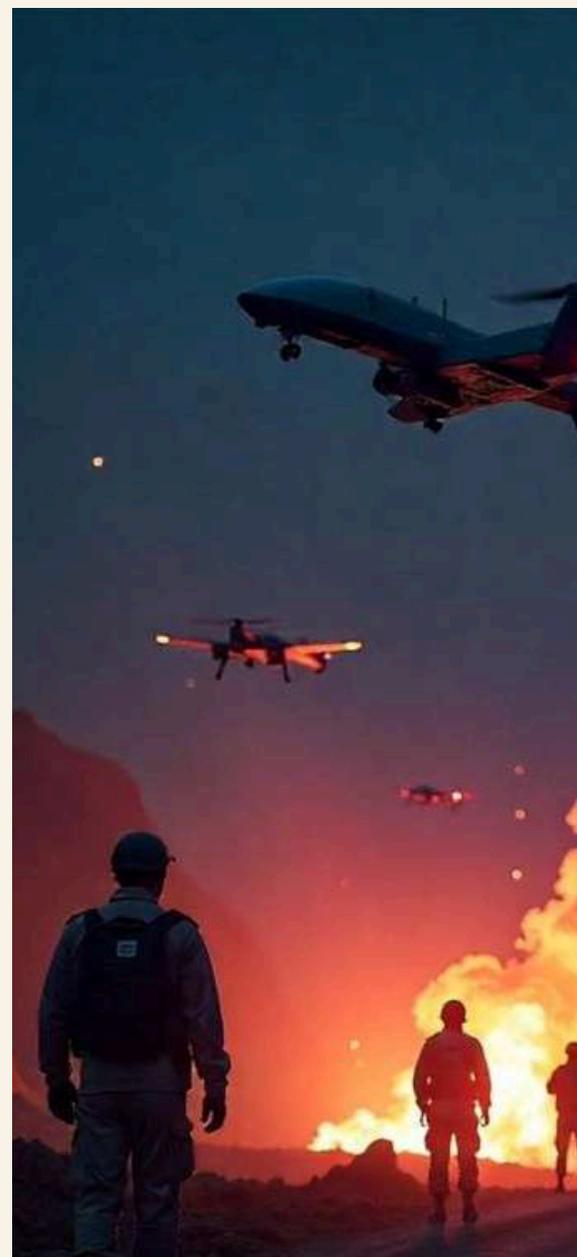
Just War Theory, with its roots in classical Western philosophy particularly in the works of Augustine, Aquinas, and later theorists like Grotius offers a structured ethical framework to evaluate the morality of war. India's response to the April 22 attack fits the core criteria of a just war:

Just Cause

The primary requirement of Just War Theory is the presence of a just cause. India acted in response to an unprovoked terrorist attack that resulted in the death of civilians and security personnel. Preventing further harm and ensuring national security are morally defensible objectives.

Right Intention

The operation was explicitly framed as non-escalatory and limited in scope, with no territorial ambitions or desire for regime change. The stated intention was to degrade terror infrastructure, not to punish Pakistan or its civilian population, which satisfies the ethical condition of right intention.



Last Resort

India has a long-standing diplomatic and strategic record of restraint. Numerous dossiers, bilateral warnings, and appeals to international forums have been made over the years regarding Pakistan's sponsorship of terror. Operation Sindoor came only after other avenues had failed, marking it as a proportionate last resort.

Legitimate Authority

The Indian state, as a sovereign and democratically accountable actor, exercised its constitutional and legal prerogative to defend its people (Article 355 of Indian Constitution). In Just War tradition, legitimate authority is a critical moral prerequisite, distinguishing justifiable military action from private or rogue violence.

Further, India's adherence to the principles of proportionality and legitimate targeting also strengthens the moral baggage justifying operation Sindoor as ethically just one.



DHARMA-YUDDHA: INDIAN ETHICAL TRADITIONS ON JUST WAR

Beyond Western ethics, India's own intellectual heritage offers a robust moral framework for evaluating state violence. The concept of Dharma-Yuddha (righteous war) from the Mahabharata, Ramayana, and classical texts like Manusmriti and Arthashastra emphasizes principles that strikingly parallel Just War Theory:

Non-Aggression and Moral Necessity

In the Mahabharata, war is portrayed as a last resort, undertaken only when peaceful negotiation fails. Similarly, Operation Sindoor followed prolonged diplomatic overtures and efforts at bilateral engagement.

Restraint and Fair Conduct

Dharma-Yuddha obliges warriors to avoid treachery, respect civilian life, and fight with fairness. India's calibrated and precise targeting of terror sites echoes these values, especially when compared with indiscriminate violence by non-state actors.



Protection of Dharma (Order and Justice)

The overarching aim of dharma-yuddha is to restore moral order. In this context, Operation Sindoor can be seen as an effort not merely to retaliate, but to preserve a rules-based order and prevent recurrence of unprovoked attacks on innocents. This convergence between ancient Indian ethics and modern moral reasoning highlights the cultural and philosophical depth of India's strategic posture.



BETWEEN ETHICS & STRATEGY

Operation Sindoor stands as a compelling example of ethical statecraft. Rooted in both international moral norms and civilizational principles, the operation was neither vindictive nor imperial; it was a calibrated assertion of sovereign responsibility. The ethical legitimacy of force must ultimately rest not on power alone, but on restraint, necessity, and proportionality. In that regard, Operation Sindoor represents a case where moral philosophy, legal norms, and national interest were carefully aligned, affirming India's claim to be a responsible global actor committed to justice, peace, and human dignity.



The future of Indo-Pak relations following Operation Sindoor is expected to be influenced by a complex combination of military, diplomatic, and geopolitical factors. Operation Sindoor, believed to be a significant Indian military operation aimed at targeting terror infrastructure in Pakistan, represents a notable shift in India's strategy. It signals a more assertive stance against cross-border terrorism.

FUTURE OF INDIA-PAKISTAN BILATERALISM

Increased Military Vigilance and Border Tensions

Following Operation Sindoor, tensions are likely to escalate along the Line of Control (LoC) and the International Border. Both nations are expected to increase military deployments, conduct regular surveillance, and remain on high alert for potential retaliation or infiltration attempts. This militarized posture may persist for weeks or even months, raising the risk of border skirmishes and ceasefire violations.

Diplomatic Breakdown and Freeze in Bilateral Engagements

The operation could disrupt any ongoing or proposed diplomatic efforts. High-level negotiations may be cancelled, and people-to-people exchanges suspended. The trust deficit between the two nuclear-armed neighbours would deepen, potentially freezing diplomatic relations until third-party intervention or a backchannel initiative opens the door for renewed dialogue.

Kashmir Policy and Internal Security Measures

Operation Sindoor may encourage India to further solidify its control over Jammu and Kashmir. This could include enhancing counterinsurgency efforts, increasing the security presence in the region, and accelerating integration measures. Although human rights concerns and international criticism may arise, India is likely to prioritise internal stability.

International Reactions and Strategic Narratives

The operation is likely to elicit mixed global reactions. India will justify it as a counterterrorism measure, citing its right to self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter. Western allies such as the United States, France, and Australia may offer muted support or call for restraint. In contrast,

countries like China, Turkey, and Malaysia are expected to criticise the operation and offer diplomatic backing to Pakistan.

Shift Toward Hybrid Warfare and Cyber Conflict

Rather than opting for a conventional military response, Pakistan may resort to asymmetric and hybrid warfare, including cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns, and support for non-state actors. In turn, India would likely strengthen its cyber defence, electronic warfare capabilities, and counterintelligence apparatus. Both nations could become locked in a covert struggle, seeking to undermine each other without escalating to open warfare.

The Role of Gulf Nations and Third Parties

India's growing ties with Gulf nations such as the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar may limit Pakistan's diplomatic leverage. With significant economic interests in India, these countries could act as informal mediators to help de-escalate tensions. Additionally, major powers like the United States and Russia are expected to step in to prevent further deterioration of the situation.

Deterrence, Red Lines, and Nuclear Signalling

Despite rising tensions, the presence of nuclear weapons continues to act as a deterrent against full-scale war. However, both sides may engage in aggressive signalling, including missile tests, military exercises, and public threats. Establishing reliable hotlines between military leaderships is essential to manage escalation and avoid misunderstandings.

Prolonged Cold Peace Scenario

In the long term, the region may settle into a state of “cold peace” marked by persistent hostility, the absence of active conflict, and stalled diplomatic efforts. Trade, tourism, and cultural exchanges would remain minimal. Normalisation of ties would likely depend on significant changes in Pakistan's civil-military dynamics and a reorientation of its approach toward crossborder terrorism.

Strategic Realignment and the Indo-Pacific Equation

India's strategic alignment with the Quad (United States, Japan, Australia) may strengthen in the aftermath of Operation Sindoor. These partnerships will enhance India's deterrence posture and reduce diplomatic isolation. Increased defence cooperation and intelligence sharing would improve India's capacity to manage regional threats.





Truth is the first casualty in war

Half the battle in modern warfare is fought with guns and bombs on the field, while the other half unfolds in the minds of people—domestically, across borders, and, most crucially, on the global stage. The domain of psychological warfare and narrative conflict has become profoundly significant in international politics, fundamentally shaping global perceptions of a nation's legitimacy, intentions, and actions.

In this context, Operation Sindoor, while marking a resounding military success for India on the battlefield, simultaneously exposed a critical Achilles' heel: India's struggle to assert narrative control in the face of orchestrated disinformation and propaganda within a global media ecosystem that has historically exhibited a proclivity for Pakistani narratives.

BEYOND WEAPONS: PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE

WESTERN MEDIA'S DUBIOUS NARRATIVES

A scroll through headlines from Western media during and after Operation Sindoor reads like a déjà vu from previous India-Pakistan crises. Outlets such as The Guardian, The New York Times, Al Jazeera, and even the BBC often echoed Pakistan's claims, sometimes without adequate scrutiny or context. However, this tendency is not accidental but part of a larger pattern where "India's security concerns are often downplayed, while Pakistan's victimhood is amplified." A British political commentator David Vance, who described Western media coverage as "absolutely atrocious and biased in favour of Pakistan," ignoring India's legitimate security concerns and the context of repeated terrorist provocations from across the border.

Scholarly literature attributes this pattern to several factors: historical legacies of Cold War alliances, orientalist biases, and the persistence of a "colonial gaze" that frames India as an unruly regional actor. The Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism notes that Western media often adopt a "narrow nationalism" in India-Pakistan conflicts, frequently omitting context regarding Pakistan's role in fostering terrorism. For example, The New York Times and CNN emphasized alleged civilian casualties in Pakistan while downplaying the April 22, 2025, terrorist attack in Pahalgam that triggered the operation. And it is important to note that this was not an isolated phenomenon. From Kargil to Balakot, Pakistan has consistently leveraged its propaganda apparatus to shape international opinion, often with success. In this lieu, western outlets highlighted India's military

actions while underreporting Pakistan's initial infiltration.

Al Jazeera's coverage of Operation Sindoor focused on "Indian aggression" and "Pakistan vows retaliation". Similarly, The Guardian published opinion pieces that questioned the proportionality of India's response, while absolutely turning deaf towards the Pakistan's consistent support for terrorism. Policy analysts note that such narratives "shape international diplomatic responses, influence public opinion in third countries, and can even affect multilateral forums' stances on South Asian security issues".

A deeper academic analysis of these biases suggests that Western media's treatment of the Pahalgam massacre was not merely accidental neglect, but rather ideologically choreographed through selective language and inverted victimhood narratives. Conversely, Palestine-Israel coverage exhibits extensive scholarly documentation of consistent bias against Palestinians through disproportionate emphasis on casualties caused by Israeli strikes. This differential treatment is not surprising to India; rather, it has a protracted history. While Hindus and other non-Abrahamic minorities remain brutalized in our immediate neighbourhoods to the east and west, and are subjected to selective communal violence, Western media has shown persistence in favouring minority politics and defaming India and her secular societal fabric.

PAKISTAN'S VICTIMHOOD CAMPAIGN

On one hand, western media narratives backed this propaganda with Pakistan's rapid, coordinated, and technologically dense information campaign. The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) and affiliated media outlets quickly disseminated emotionally charged content— images, videos, and testimonials, purporting to show civilian suffering and Indian aggression to aid their “victim-hood promotion campaign”. By foregrounding narratives of victimhood and humanitarian crisis, Pakistan seeks to internationalize the Kashmir dispute and delegitimize Indian security operations while triggering emotion resonance and calling for international condemnation for India's response.

INDIA'S NARRATIVE DEFICIT: A MISSED OPPORTUNITY?

India has certainly missed an opportunity to effectively address the narrative warfare during and post Operation Sindoor. This aspect can be well examined via the “Power Vacuum Theory” in international relations. As Arnold Wolfers famously observed, “nations, like nature, abhor a vacuum”. Accordingly, when a dominant actor fails to assert control or influence in a given domain, a vacuum of authority emerges, thus, creating an opportunity for adversarial forces to rapidly fill that void and shape the environment to their advantage. In the context of Operation Sindoor, India's delayed and fragmented communication created a strategic vacuum in the information space, allowing Pakistan's side of the story to become the dominant narrative. Thus, reluctance or inability of India's strategic communication apparatus to immediately project a coherent and compelling narrative ceded the psychological battlefield to Pakistan, effectively setting the agenda in Pak's favour for the international discourse.

“If you don't tell your story, someone else will”

Perception shapes policy, and in a digitally interwoven world with global affairs being more transparent and accessible than ever; media narratives and soft power easily influences diplomatic support, economic partnerships, and even military alliances. Alongside, the rise of Artificial Intelligence, deepfakes, and bot-driven amplification have introduced newer dimensions in this narrative warfare, thereby, making it faster, more sophisticated, and harder to counter. Operation Sindoor demonstrated that military victories can be often undermined by narrative failure. Despite overwhelming evidence of cross-border terrorism, India's story struggled to cut through the noise, while Pakistan's victimhood narrative found traction in influential capitals and newsrooms. Thus, Pakistan's coordinated, emotionally charged messaging is a textbook example of discursive warfare.

Lessons from History

India's outreach and communication strategy during this operation exposed several fault lines, which are critical to her ability to reshape the global narrative. It is important to note that our diplomatic and media outreach significantly lagged behind during the most important and crucial window — immediately after the Pahalgam attack, highlighting the communal and anatic undertones of the attack that costed innocent lives.

Whereas, Pakistani ministers, spokespersons, and diplomats appeared on more than 25 major foreign TV channels and media outlets, actively re-framing the entire incident as “the Kashmir issue,” while shifting the focus away from “terrorism.” This was further compounded by inadequate embassy and diaspora engagement within the international community: over 75% of Indian embassies in G20 and other key countries were reluctant to conduct interviews or openly publish opinions in the mainstream media.

Most of them continued to address the developments by reposting content from Indian government accounts, thereby reducing the issue as a bilateral dispute rather than projecting it as an international security threat. Likewise, they failed to engage with the local media and actively shape the public opinion of the locale, thus facilitating our counterpart to gain an upper hand in the narrative warfare.

Similarly, experts and surveys have suggested that India's communication was not only characterized by restraint but also lacked localization and cultural sensitivity, making it less engaging. For example, the Indian embassy in South Africa posted only three updates using relevant keywords, while embassies in Brazil, France, and Italy made no effort to personalize the issue by providing content in regional or local languages. On the other hand, the Indian Embassy in Algeria stood out by posting content about the unfolding operation in Arabic and French and engaging directly with local communities, thereby exemplifying contextual and proactive communication.



All-Party Delegation Towards Multilateral Engagement

India's deployment of all-party delegations following Operation Sindoor was driven by the urgent need to present a unified national front and counter Pakistan's diplomatic and media offensive, particularly in the wake of widespread misinformation and attempts to internationalize the issue. The merit of this initiative lay in its bipartisan composition, with leaders from both the ruling alliance and opposition parties, such as BJP's Ravi Shankar Prasad, Congress's Shashi Tharoor, and others, visiting over 30 countries and major international organizations. This broad representation projected a rare consensus on India's zero-tolerance policy towards terrorism, lending credibility and legitimacy to India's diplomatic outreach and reinforcing the message that the fight against terrorism transcends domestic politics.

However, by the time India deployed this delegation, it had missed a crucial opportunity to solidify the facts and establish its narrative, which was already crowded out by Pakistan and its allies. Additionally, it is important to note that the attention span or the brevity of the global retention period in such crises is remarkably short, often lasting only a few days or weeks before the world's focus shifts to new developments elsewhere. Therefore, in such a dynamic environment, a swift and immediate response is not only a prerequisite to capture global perception at the critical moment but also to intercept adversarial propaganda. A post-facto effort, no matter how comprehensive, has a diminished impact because the global discourse has already moved on to the next agenda.

Academically, these observations reflect a broader lack of adaptation to hybrid warfare, wherein information, perception, and communication are as critical as kinetic force on the battleground. This demonstrates that India's military and



diplomatic structures remain largely rooted in conventional paradigms, necessitating urgent integration of modern-era warfare tools and strategies to strengthen its soft power capacities and deter future conflicts.

However, in the same breath, it is crucial to admire the strengths demonstrated by Dr. S.

Jaishankar's diplomatic leadership that can act as a precedent to build India's future outreach. It should seek to institutionalize his integration of narrative management and digital diplomacy as core elements of discursive warfare. Jaishankar's proactive engagement through direct statements, participation in international forums, and strategic use of social media showcased the effectiveness of assertive, context-aware, data-driven communication in countering adversarial narratives and shaping global perceptions.

His approach stands as a model for the broader diplomatic corps, highlighting the value of real-time, culturally attuned, and decentralized communication strategies. This would not only bridge the gap between leadership-driven narrative control and operational execution but also ensure that India's information strategy is robust, adaptive, and capable of shaping international discourse in real time. By aligning the entire outreach apparatus with the principles championed by Jaishankar, India can enhance its effectiveness in the evolving landscape of information and discursive warfare.

CRITIQUE

Operation Sindoor marks a significant shift in India's counter-terrorism strategy, embodying a transformation from symbolic and limited response to a more open, bold, and calibrated use of state instruments and conventional force against the terrorist infrastructures. As Walter Ladwig observes that, "... it adds a new approach to India's strategic toolbox," signalling that crossborder punitive measure is no longer an exception, but a rule and a direct response to future terror attacks traced to Pakistani soil. This marks a departure from earlier Indian restraint, where the distinction between sub-conventional (terrorism) and conventional (state military) aggression was maintained largely due to concerns over escalation and nuclear threats. And likewise, Operation Sindoor directly challenges the aforementioned paradigm, as policymakers now reject the notion that Pakistan's nuclear deterrent can indefinitely shield it from consequences for sub-conventional aggression.

Strategically, this operation has redefined escalation thresholds in the South Asian security architecture and concretely establishes the notion that any terrorist attack will likely provoke a conventional military and intelligence response. The onus now lies squarely with states such as Pakistan, which have become launchpads for such terror operations. This shift has diminished Pakistan's ability to exploit the buffer zone between terrorism and open warfare, thereby

leaving no room for our neighbour to offer ambiguous remarks about a "lack of conclusive evidence" to shape the international narrative or bargain for time. Furthermore, the execution of the operation characterised by measured and precision air strikes on multiple terror camps was simultaneously underpinned by multi agency intelligence approach reflecting a higher degree of operational synergy to minimise the collateral damage.

However, this rather new and bold posture has been surrounded by controversy and criticism in several Western media outlets. They opined that the operation has triggered an intense debate with respect to normalizing cross-border strikes and potentially threatening the long-standing wisdom of bilateralism through diplomacy and peaceful means within India and abroad.

Similarly, since the operation has exacerbated volatility in regional and international markets and disrupted cross-border trade with heightened scrutiny of goods, services, and human resources from Pakistan; the opposition has raised questions about the economic merit of same.

The suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty and the termination of bilateral agreements by Pakistan and its allies further signal a shift towards politicized fiscal decisions.

India's defense spending is making headlines and has sparked considerable debates, not just for its sheer size but for the tough choices it forces on the country. The government's FY26 defense budget has

recorded INR 6.81 trillion, which is a 9.5% jump from the previous year.

Our defense basket including Rafale fighter jets, the S-400 air defense system, and a growing fleet of homegrown drones showcase India's push for military modernization and self-reliance.

About a quarter of this budget is set aside for new acquisitions, while another sizable chunk goes to pensions for retired personnel.

Critics and policy experts worry that as defense now consumes around 1.9% of India's GDP, and thus, creates a crowding-out effect and neglects urgent investments in health, education, and climate resilience. Despite the headline numbers, much of the budget is still tied up in salaries and pensions, with only modest growth in capital expenditure for new equipment and infrastructure. Experts like Harsh V. Pant and Kartik Bommakanti observe that unless India finds a way to balance these competing priorities, the country could struggle to both strengthen its military and meet its broader development and welfare goals.

From a diplomatic perspective, Operation Sindoor momentarily disrupted regional peace efforts, as substantiated by Pakistan's immediate retaliatory measures, including the temporary closure of its airspace for 48 hours and the diversion of flights from major hubs like Islamabad and Lahore. Pakistan has consistently made attempts to internationalize the crisis, bending the global narrative as a 'victim' state, thus, capitalizing on its pauperized state of being. However, India's proactive global outreach through the multi-party delegations and direct engagement with key countries in Asia, Africa, and West Asia has effectively countered Pakistan's narrative and underscored India's zero-tolerance stance on terrorism.

Several environmental concerns have also resurfaced, particularly regarding the alleged radiation leaks from targeted sites,

thus raising questions about the unintended consequences of high-intensity military operations near sensitive infrastructure and their impact on human life and the environment. While the military objective may have been achieved with minimal collateral damage, there is a pressing need for a formal environmental impact assessment (EIA) in the wake of such operations. Interdisciplinary literature calls for integration of ecological cost accounting into conflict analysis, especially in ecologically sensitive regions like the Kashmir Valley itself.

Thus, this conflict has unintentionally reignited serious debates about the fragility of nuclear peace in South Asia, the environmental costs of military combat, and the vulnerability of human settlements and other biotic habitations located in conflict zones.

Experts have observed that the absence of overt nuclear saber-rattling might reflect a dangerous normalization of brinkmanship rather than a genuine sense of strategic stability.

CONCLUSION

Sindoor, Sovereignty, and the Shaping of a New Strategic India

India's journey to Operation Sindoor is best understood not merely as a sequence of military manoeuvres or counter-terrorist response, but rather, as a profound reckoning with its own history and values. For decades, India, just like Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, was grappled with restraint between the dilemma of moral responsibility and the imperatives of one's duty on the battlefield.

The operation itself unfolded with a meticulousness that reflected both technological sophistication and moral intent. Each phase, right from the midnight roaring Rafale jets to the silent orchestration drone swarms, was not just a display of military prowess, but a statement of principle. And thus, it is clear that we were not seeking vengeance; we were seeking justice, and that made all the difference.

Additionally, the operation's precision, which did not intend, nor did it endanger the civilian lives and infrastructure even as it dismantled terrorist networks stood in stark contrast to Pakistan's indiscriminate attacks on schools and hospitals and religious places like Gurudwara in Poonch. The choice of the name "Sindoor"—an invocation of sacred feminine strength, was itself a reminder that the operation was as much about upholding dharma as it was about deterrence.

India's emergence as a multidomain power was evident not only in its integration of indigenous technologies with advanced weaponry, but also in the resilience of its economy and society.

Markets rebounded, defense stocks surged, and investor confidence held firm which serves as a testament to the country's ability to absorb shocks without losing its composure. In contrast,

Pakistan's cascading crises, military, fiscal, and diplomatic, underscored the asymmetry of resolve and capability.

Internationally, Operation Sindoor redrew the contours of alliances and doctrines. India's invocation of Article 51 of the UN Charter and the "unwilling or unable" doctrine was not just legal manoeuvring, but a reaffirmation of its commitment to international norms and being a "responsible power." As political scholars observe, "India acted not in anger, but in accordance with law and conscience." By consciously adhering to the ethics of war, i.e. the dharmayuddha, India signalled that her actions were guided by responsibility, not retribution.

Thus, Operation Sindoor marks a watershed in India's foreign policy doctrine. The era of "dossier diplomacy" and "strategic patience" has given way to a new paradigm, one where calibrated, credible, and cross-border retribution is both a deterrent and a declaration of intent.

Yet, as Chanakya warns, "A nation that forgets its internal enemies in its fear of the foreign enemies is a nation that is doomed to perish." India's greatest strength in Operation Sindoor was not just its military might, but its unity, narrative control, and moral conviction.

In conclusion, this is not the end of the conflict, but a prologue to a new chapter in India's story, a chapter defined by confidence, self-reliance, and the courage to shape its own destiny.



We wrote this chapter not just with strategy and fire, but with justice and hope

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‘बिनय न माने जलधि जड़ गए तीनि दिन बीति। बोले
राम सकोप तब भय बिनु होई न प्रीति’।।

