



## INDIA'S ALTERED STANCE HAS LEFT PAKISTAN PERPLEXED



**Dr Shalini Chawla**

*Senior Fellow, CAPS*

06 October 2017

**A**t the 72<sup>nd</sup> session of United Nations General Assembly on September 23, 2017, India's external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj, in her candid response to Pakistan's accusation of India being a violator of human rights in Kashmir, said, "Pakistan is an 'exporter of terrorism' and is a champion of hypocrisy. India and Pakistan became independent at the same time but there is a rather perilous inequality between both the nations".

The Indian Minister, in her speech (NDTV) said, "*We are completely engaged in fighting poverty; alas, our neighbour Pakistan seems only engaged in fighting us..... Pakistan's Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi wasted rather too much of his speech in making accusations against us. He accused India of state-sponsored terrorism, and of violating human rights. Those listening had only one observation: 'Look who's talking!' A country that has been the world's greatest exporter of havoc, death and inhumanity became a champion of hypocrisy by preaching about humanity and Human Rights from this podium.*"

Indian external affairs minister was not wrong when she compared the achievements of India and Pakistan in the last 70 years. India is a 'recognized IT superpower' globally and Pakistan is 'recognised only as the pre-eminent export factory for terror'.

Pakistan has been widely acknowledged as a state nurturing terrorism and its role as a safe haven for militants came into global spotlight with the killing of Osama bin Laden on May 2, 2011 in Abbottabad, center of Pakistan's military training. Following Osama's killing, US-Pakistan relations went on a downslide as Washington did not see Islamabad as a trusted partner anymore. President Trump announced his Afghan policy on August 21, 2017 and he bluntly blamed Pakistan

for harbouring militants. Trump issued a serious warning to Pakistan in his message and also announced a deduction in the US financial assistance to Pakistan. During the UNGA meeting, Trump refused to meet Pakistan's interim Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi.

While the intensity of the tensions between India and Pakistan has varied, the current decade has witnessed an escalation of tension levels, increasing mistrust and inability to communicate between the two neighbours. Pakistan has been reluctant to control cross border terrorism and India has responded with a firm stance. India's military response to the Uri attack, call for a diplomatic isolation for Pakistan and insistence on a conditional dialogue have perplexed Pakistan!

Beijing, Pakistan's all weather friend, which has been Pakistan's companion in its military and nuclear build-up and now (with CPEC) in economic growth, did acknowledge that "there is indeed terrorism in Pakistan" in its state run daily *Global Times*. However, China was also quick to add, "*What will Pakistan gain from exporting terrorism?*" The answer to this can be well understood by analyzing *what Pakistan aspires for*.

From the time of its inception, Pakistan has writhed under a perceived threat perception and is probably one of the most insecure nations which diverts a major share of its national resources towards defence build-up. It has consistently tried hard to acquire high technology weapons from the West, even during times of economic crisis. It is the only country which managed to build alliances with the two major powers, the United States and China.

Pakistan's perceived threat perceptions can be traced to two factors; firstly, its geography, which posed several security challenges in the minds of its leadership. Secondly, the 'two-nation theory', which forms the basis of the creation of Pakistan and avows that the Muslims and Hindus are two separate nations, and for Muslims to spend their lives peacefully and freely according to the glorious teachings of Islam, an autonomous homeland for Muslims, in the Muslim majority areas of the British India was a necessity. The theory defines that Hindus and Muslims are two distinct nations unable to coexist. The fear of being taken over by 'hegemonic' India (as claimed by the Pakistani leadership) allowed the unchallenged growth of their military institution, which is seen as the sole savior of the state.

The perceived threat perceptions which were 'managed' by the men in khaki, contributed to Pakistan's notion of *attaining parity with India*. Pakistan did divert a majority of its national resources in order to be at par with India. It opted for covert war options starting with as early as its first aggression in 1947, under the name of 'tribal revolt', while the partition

∟ | [www.capsindia.org](http://www.capsindia.org)

of defence resources was still underway. Pakistan felt it had inferior conventional military capability and thus, the covert war option was most suitable. The military has pursued a covert war strategy through terrorism with notable persistence for more than five decades, although the tactics of covert war have been modified and evolved. Covert war through terrorism provides an element of surprise with an offensive approach, and, more importantly, an element of plausible deniability.

To support the strategy of using terrorism as a foreign policy tool against India, Pakistan not only built nuclear weapons with Chinese assistance but excessively relied on the weapons for the last three decades to be able to shield its strategy of using terror. It continues to rely on terrorism, and thus on nuclear weapons since it has failed to build other strengths or overcome its fundamental challenges. Its most daunting problems include economic stress, power shortage and rising extremism in the society. Being crippled with inherent problems of extremism and inconsistent economic growth, Pakistan significantly lags behind India on most parameters of national security. It has failed to develop any fundamental strengths and support for its youth, who seem to be trapped in the culture of violence, terrorism, unemployment and, very importantly, an extreme identity crisis.

Pakistan's insecurities, its desire to be at par with New Delhi, and more importantly, India's growth at the national level and at the global level, can be well related to Islamabad's acts of blaming India for its troubles and seeking to internationalise Kashmir.

*(Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Centre for Air Power Studies [CAPS])*

**Keywords:** 72<sup>nd</sup> UNGA, India-Pakistan relations, India in UN, Foreign policy