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India’s Revisionist Posture and Pakistan’s Strategic Countermeasures in South Asia

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ABSTRACT

Since Pakistan and India became nuclear weapons states the dynamic of their conflict have fundamentally altered. For the last 27 years the latter has been probing ways for military misadventure against the former, below the nuclear threshold as evident in its military doctrines and modernization drive. From Sunderji doctrine to Cold Start, all aimed to launch a swift offensive against Pakistan. However, with the rise of the BJP to power under Narendra Modi, the dynamics of political thought process and the military posturing have experienced further modifications. The BJP government has materialized false flag operations as central to India’s policy against Pakistan. Land Warfare Doctrine 2017 and the Joint doctrine of Indian Armed Forces 2018 aimed to strengthen Indian capabilities for surgical strike. These doctrines aim to impose new escalation dynamics, thereby compelling Pakistan to recalibrate its security strategies to restore balance. Pakistan’s doctrine of Full Spectrum Deterrence, reinforced by Quid Pro Quo Plus responsiveness, has proven effective in countering India’s attempts to create a “new normal.” Its ability to impose costs on New Delhi during the May 2025 crisis depicts its preparedness, adaptability, and commitment to safeguarding sovereignty. On other hand, it raised questions on Indian armed forces preparedness in a contested landscape. The research employs qualitative research method to collect primary and secondary data.

Key Words: Indian Strategic Culture, Surgical Strike, Strategic Stability, False Flag Operation, Military Modernization

Introduction

Strategic Culture plays a crucial role in the behavior of a state during peace and wartimes. It comprises of evolving patterns over the years contributing to the thought process of the state. Indian Strategic culture which has evolved from Hindu Strategic Culture amid its facets emanating primarily from Hindu religious texts and Chanakya Kautiliya’s teachings. It has a collective consciousness of the

sacred origins of Indian-ness that give mythological and metaphysical significance to the subcontinent as a territorial expression. Its ideologues have advocated for the superiority of the Hindu religion and further efforts towards the creation of an Undivided Greater India (Akhand Bharat). These traits are considered the core or skeleton of India's strategic culture aiming to reshape the regional security architecture, expand strategic space, and impose new escalation dynamics, thereby compelling Pakistan to recalibrate its security strategies to restore balance. Consequently the division of India following British withdrawal was not accepted by the Hindus of the subcontinent. Moreover the controversial Redcliff award laid the basis of a further fault line in the region, the Kashmir conundrum which further toxified the relations between newborn states. India remains trapped in its strategic culture driven by prestige, religious symbolism, and Kautilyan deception but with increasing strategic miscalculations.

After disintegrating East-Pakistan by the rest of the country, Indian sense of superiority intensified and in the same vein, in 1974, after detonating Smiling Buddha, it demonstrated its use of nuclear energy for military purposes, creating a strategic imbalance in South Asia. Since the conflict zone primarily revolves around the lingering Kashmir issue, India attempted to threaten Pakistan with nuclear posturing to make it back off. During 1980s, India became overconfident in launching any offensive against Pakistan. Gen K. Sunderji proposed a doctrine to split Pakistan into two and destroy its nuclear program through a swift military offensive. However, in 1998, Pakistan's nuclear tests served as a deterrent to prevent war between the two nuclear powers. Pakistan's nuclear test restored the strategic balance in South Asia (Akram, 2023).

Nuclear weapons emerged as the most effective deterrent a state can have. Soon after nuclear weapons were developed, academics contended that they were so powerful that no two nuclear-armed powers would dare engage in combat, or at least; they would be discouraged from doing so. Kenneth Waltz, an American political scientist, argues that the cost of nuclear conflict is too high, rational actors would avoid direct war (Sagan & Waltz, 1995). Bernard Bordie, military strategist also argues that war under a nuclear overhang becomes catastrophic and less usable as a policy option (II, 2021). Despite possessing nuclear weapons, the frequent escalations between India and Pakistan could also be explain under the stability-instability paradox. The combat cannot go too far; hence, instability and conflict are likely to emerge at lower levels even while nuclear weapons may guarantee stable deterrence at the strategic or nuclear level. India for the last 27 years has been searching ways for military misadventure below the nuclear threshold evident in its military doctrines and modernization drive. India's desire to exercise its strategic superiority over Pakistan did not fade. India remained firm in its resolve to threaten Pakistan even after nuclearization. Similarly, Operation Parakram was planned after the 2001 Parliament attack; however, it revealed gaps in Indian armed forces' ability to launch an offensive against Pakistan amid slow troop mobilization along the India-Pakistan border. To address these strategic

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shortcomings, India introduced the Cold Start Doctrine in 2003, aiming to engage in a limited war with Pakistan below the nuclear threshold. Although India denied the existence of CSD until 2017, former Chief of Army Staff Gen. Bipin Rawat acknowledged it. This doctrine required the Indian army to split into eight integrated battle groups (IBGs), which would need to respond within 72 hours of receiving orders. These forces would launch simultaneous surprise attacks on eight distinct locations (Faraz, 2021). Once again, a common problem arose when India failed to operationalize CSD. However, Pakistan countered CSD and restored the strategic balance in South Asia with the induction of the Nasr missile, a strategic weapon tested in 2011. The Nasr missile system can carry a low-yield nuclear warhead, designed to be transportable, with a short-range of 60 kilometers.

Since Pakistan's military posture is India-centric, it has always restored the imbalance created by India. With the rise of the BJP in power under Narendra Modi, the dynamics of political thought process and the military posturing changed. Before 2014, India pursued a policy of restraint under several governments. India's response to retaliation against freedom fighters in Kashmir was mostly diplomatic, involving the suspension of diplomatic relations, the expulsion of diplomats, and public accusations. However, military action against Pakistan under the pretext of terrorism was never an option under the nuclear umbrella. Under the Modi-led BJP regime, a significant doctrinal shift occurred, wherein false flag operations were employed as a justification for offensive actions against Pakistan.

False Flag Operations and the Moral Construction of the Enemy

The lingering conflict between both nuclear powers has a potential to severe consequences not only for the region but for the global security as well. Pakistan's diplomatic efforts and the indigenous freedom struggle in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir have exhausted India's efforts to create a facade of normalcy in its occupied territory. In frustration amid prevailing nationalistic political environment, India has gradually transformed its stratagem concerning bilateral tensions with Pakistan. Although the Indian false flag operations against Pakistan traces its roots back to 1971, the infamous Ganga Hijack, however executing an offensive under this pretext was never an option (Courier, 2023). The BJP government has materialized false flag operations as central to India's policy against Pakistan. To justify its military actions against Pakistan, false flag operations like Pathankot, Pulwama and Pahalgam are the distinctive ones during the current BJP tenure. However, this strategy has also not served Indian interests because the justification of action against Pakistan requires concrete evidences which India never presented. Pakistan has not only always denied the responsibility to such attacks but also demand an independent probe into the incidents, hence questioning the logic of Indian urge to launch offensive against Pakistan.

Surgical Strike Narratives and Status-Driven Posturing

Following the Kautilyan emphasis on perception management and status-driven policies, the BJP government under Narendra Modi has introduced a surgical strikes strategy. This strategy was first put into practice during the 2016 Uri incident, widely regarded as a false flag operation, which resulted in the deaths of 19 Indian soldiers. In its aftermath, Prime Minister Narendra Modi claimed to have carried out a surgical strike inside Pakistan, a claim later denied by Pakistan. The primary objective behind this narrative was to project Modi as a strong and decisive leader, aiming to galvanize domestic support ahead of the 2017 Uttar Pradesh elections.

India attempted to retest its surgical strike capability after the false flag operation in Pulwama before the April 2019 elections. Although its airstrike failed and Pakistan's strong and measured response, along with the capture and safe return of the Indian pilot, prevented the situation from escalating into full-scale war. India climbed to step four of the escalation ladder, which involves direct military engagement, violating Pakistan's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

To set a new normal of launching a swift offensive against Pakistan in the pretext of false flag operations, India officially introduced the Joint Doctrine of Indian Armed Forces (2017), (proposed the formation of Integrated Theatre Command) and Land Warfare Doctrine (2018), (proposed the formation of Integrated Battle Groups). These doctrines aimed to institutionalize jointness by integrating the Army, Navy, and Air Force and to prepare armed forces for network-centric warfare and joint operations to enhance rapid response capabilities.

Techno Prestige and Military Modernization

The strategic community of India, initially influenced by Nehruvian Ideals and later by the Modi-led assertive nationalism, believes that for the civilizational resurgence, regional dominance, and the great power status, technology, particularly military and space tech holds great significance. Technological accusation and self-reliance are tightly connected to India's prestige driven identity at the global level. In the same vein, along with the doctrinal evolution, Indian military modernization, in the technological domain, paced up in the last decade, securing the S-400 Air Defense System deal with Russia, the Rafael jet deal with France in 2016. This decade was marked by the delivery of 36 Rafael jets and the first three squadrons of S-400 to India from 2021 to 2023. Furthermore, it also imported military hardware, including missiles, radars, surveillance, and combat drones from Israel, worth 2.9 billion dollars (TRT Global, 2025). In 2019, India successfully conducted the (Mission Shakti) ASAT test, becoming the only 4th country to demonstrate the capability to shoot down a satellite in orbit (Kosambe, 2019). This was a further step toward weaponizing

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space, even though India does not face a direct threat in that domain. Significantly, heavy investments in PSLV, Gaganyaan (human spaceflight), and satellite constellations showcase India's desire to join the elite space club. Recently, India increased its budget for the Gaganyaan human spaceflight mission to \$2.32 billion. Following the pattern of major powers, India is striving to excel in outer space, which has become a new arena of strategic symbolism.

The acquisition of modern technology not only strengthened India's strategic stance in the region but also boosted its efforts to be seen as a Vishwaguru (world leader). Furthermore, its strategic partnership with the US also encouraged it to pursue military adventures in the region. This sense of superiority led India to behave like a major power, and clearly, major powers influence events worldwide. Additionally, it gradually moved toward unilateral actions on issues with Pakistan. However, most of its efforts ultimately proved counterproductive to its national interests. Pakistan's response remained resolute and proportionate in every domain of conflict with India balancing Indian across the board.

The May 2025 Crisis and Escalation Dynamics

Following the rapid military modernization drive and the acquisition of modern technology such as S-400 Defence system from Russia and Rafael jets from France, India was confident of its air superiority aimed to test it in a battlefield. Indian strategic culture does not allow the state to engage in a two-front war. Before engaging in a confrontation with Pakistan, India reduced border tension with China by signing an agreement on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Russia in October 2024. India has been struggling with the growing resistance movement in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, which questions its claims of normalcy. Additionally, the revocation of Article 370 did not succeed in suppressing the Kashmir freedom struggle. Furthermore, the statements of officials revealed Indian hegemonic designs and covert intentions for another military misadventure in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. J. Shankar, while defying UN resolutions at the UN, asserted that, "the part of Jammu and Kashmir illegally controlled by India's neighbor Pakistan is the only thing which was left from attaining complete resolution of the issue (First Post, 2025)."

To make a ground for the surgical strike to test its conventional superiority in air domain, India planted false flag operation at Pahalgam on April 22, 2025. Without any prior investigation, following the attack within 15 minutes FIR was registered against Pakistan. India, under its self-serving hegemon, launch a missile strike against Pakistan on May 7, 2025, not conventionally anticipating the horrors and humiliations it might face as a consequence. India was confident in its military modernization, expecting uncontested air superiority. Moreover, the sense of being Vishwaguru further emboldened its offensive moves against Pakistan. The Pahalgam incident provided India with the opportunity to pursue further military escalation with Pakistan. In light of the lessons learned from the Balakot strike,

Indian fighter jets refrained from entering Pakistan’s airspace during the recent escalation on the nights of May 6 and 7, 2025, which targeted six locations, including Muzaffarabad (the capital of Azad Jammu and Kashmir), Kotli, and Bagh, as well as Ahmedpur Sharqia, Muridke, and Shakargarh in Punjab province (CNN, 2025). The missile attacks between Pakistan and India were not confined to surgical strikes but represented widespread military engagement. Pakistan in retaliation launched Operation Bunyanun Marsoos targeting multiple military installations of India. Its S-400 defence system was destroyed, Brahmos missile storage sites at Nagrota and Beas were also attacked. India lost its seven jets along with multiple drones. May 2025 crisis exposed critical gaps in India’s operational readiness, a significant blow on its defence capabilities. The event highlights the inconsistency in India’s strategic military planning. The Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs) on which India was investing for years seems to be redundant as India selected standoff weaponry in four day crisis. Furthermore, the deployment of IBGs scheduled for 2025 may now be abandoned (Singh, 2025). It reveals a lack of institutional commitment and may erode public trust in long-term defense reforms as well as military morale.

Defence Expenditures and Operational Preparedness Gap

India is the fourth largest military spender in the world as per SIPRI report (SIPRI, 2025). The recent escalation proves the highest defence spending could not be the decisive factor in any escalation. The will to fight and operational readiness remains at the center of any conflict. Indian huge defence spending on S-400 defence system, Rafale jets and other emerging technologies unable to defeat the readiness of our armed forces.

Category	Pakistan	India	Remarks
Annual Defence Budget	\$7.5 billion	Rafale deal alone costs \$16 billion	India’s single program exceeds Pakistan’s entire budget
Navy Budget vs. INS Vikrant	\$900 million allocated to Navy	INS Vikrant cost \$3.1 billion	India’s one ship costs over 3× Pakistan’s Navy budget
Weapon Acquisition Budget	\$1.7 billion per year	\$22 billion per year	India spends over 12× more annually on new weapons
Air Force Fighter Jets	J-10C jets at \$40 million each	Rafale jets at \$244 million each (36 units)	India’s jets cost over 6× more per unit
Combat Performance (May 2025)	Shot down 3 Rafales, 1 Su-30MKI, 1 MiG-29, and 12 drones in 87 hours	—	Despite spending gap, Pakistan inflicted significant aerial losses on India
Per Soldier Expense	\$11,363	\$57,333	India spends 5× more per soldier
Military Pensions	\$2 billion	\$17 billion	India’s pension cost alone is more than twice Pakistan’s total defence budget

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Armoured Forces	1,400 tanks in total	Ordering 1,700 new tanks under FRCV project	India's new tank order exceeds entire Pakistani tank fleet
Cumulative Defence Spending (2012–2025)	—	\$748 billion	Yet faced major losses in recent 87-hour conflict

This table compares the defence spending of India vis-à-vis Pakistan.

The recent escalation proved the operational preparedness is pre-requisite then the huge defence spending. India despite fourth largest military spender suffered major loss in four days conflict with Pakistan.

The recent drone battle has initiated another arm race in a region. India perceive drone strikes as a method to exert military pressure without provoking immediate large-scale escalation. It is planning to spend 470 million dollars on drone in next two years, three times more than its defence budget. India has also approved 4.6 billion dollar in emergency military procurement fund to be use for drones (Ghoshal, Shahid, & Patel, 2025). The huge defence spending in drones predict the nature of future escalation between Pakistan and India. To deter India, Pakistan is likely to intensify its cooperation with China and Turkey to advance domestic drone research and production capability. As Pakistan's response to recent drone attack by India raised questions why Pakistan did not use its air defence system. It embolden India to engage in another drone fight with Pakistan, the use of surveillance drones would further raise the stakes for Pakistan. It has to invest in anti-drone system, Punjab government has announced to deploy anti-drone system in border areas.

However, the preparedness of the Indian armed forces remained a pressing question behind the modernization drive. The concerns raised about the shortcomings in command and control systems during peacetime, demonstrated by missile accidents and losses in the Navy and Air Force, raised questions about its armed force's preparedness in a contested landscape (Basit & Bukhari, 2024).

Water Weaponization and Coercive Diplomacy

The next world war will be fought over water. This phrase define the suspension of Indus Water Treaty by India widely viewed as water weaponization. The Arthaśāstra and Hindu scriptures link raj-dharma the king's obligation to preserve, grow, and protect his realm to authority over natural resources, especially water. In addition to fighting wars, a king must also use indirect methods (upāyas), like economically strangling enemies, according to the Dharma–Kṣatra framework. This indirect method is appropriate for water deprivation. Refusing river waters in spite of the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) is viewed as a display of yaśas (prestige) and śakti (power) rather than just a violation. Presenting it as a rightful claim of the vijigīṣu (the conquering king), it asserts India's supremacy in South Asia.

Indus Water Treaty, a water sharing agreement between the two nuclear-armed neighbors survived the war of 1965 and 1971. The suspension IWT kept the space for another escalation between the nuclear-armed neighbors. Narendra Modi used these planted incidents as a strategic move in implementing its election manifesto in letter and spirit. The same pattern followed in the Pahalgam incident, Indian PM vowed to stop water in his 2019 election manifesto, the next day of Pahalgam incident, Indus Water treaty suspended (Dheer, 2019). These threats to halt the flow of Indus River more often communicated to Pakistan. Following the Uri attack he said, “Blood and Water cannot flow together at the same time (The Indian Express, 2016).” In his address to the nation post May 2025 escalation, he again repeated that, “Blood and Water cannot flow together.”

The IWT ensures that Pakistan’s rights as a downstream riparian are not adversely affected. As per Article III, India is bound to let the flow of all the waters of the Western Rivers aside from the precise, restricted uses permitted under the treaty, which include run-of-river hydroelectric power generation, residential usage, non-consumptive use, and agricultural (within certain limits) (United Nations, 1960). Following the construction of Kishenganga and Ratle hydroelectric project that disrupts the flow of Neelum and Chenab River flowing to Pakistan, Islamabad initiated Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) proceedings. As these projects violate the clause of Indus Water Treaty while India objected its jurisdiction that was later on dismissed by PCA. India started sending vague letter to modify Indus Water Treaty offended by the legal steps taken by Pakistan (The Nation, 2023). The suspension of Indus Water Treaty in the wake of Pahalgam incident exposes how India was looking for an excuse for this water aggression. Its hidden intentions to economically crippled Pakistan, as agriculture is the backbone of its economy.

The clauses of the Indus Water Treaty does not empower India to unilaterally alter or amend the treaty. The article XII of the IWT, make it a permanent legal binding instrument that neither state party can alter or modify unilaterally. The World Bank President Ajay Banga also highlighted it (The Express Tribune, 2025). Moreover, World Bank is the guarantor in the Indus Water Treaty. India expedite planning and execution of projects on the Chenab, Jhelum and Indus rivers, three bodies of water in the Indus system that are designated primarily for Pakistan's use. This coercive diplomatic maneuvering by India aims to tilt Indus Water in its favor.

Following these developments, Pakistan must prioritize building dams to increase its water storage capacity, which would guarantee the sustainability of agriculture and reduced dangers related to upstream water flow alterations. Such investments are essential for the preservation of the food security and economic stability.

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Pakistan's Stabilizing Response

Sri Prakash, Indian First High Commissioner to Pakistan in his letter to Jawahar Lal Nehru, proposed, the "best thing" India could do, was to give Kashmir to Pakistan "for the sake of peace all around," as it would be an economic burden on India. Jawaharlal Nehru rejected this suggestion stated, "Kashmir will be a drain on our resources, but it will be a greater drain on Pakistan (Khawaja, 2020)."

The recent escalation between Pakistan and India proves Kashmir issue to be a greater drain on India; it not only faced huge economic cost, human cost but also the diplomatic cost. India has suffered a huge set back at diplomatic level. It is important to consider how its poor handling of the Pahalgam incident and Operation Sindoor exacerbated India's diplomatic disaster. First, India's reaction to the terrorist incident in Pahalgam was poorly thought out. New Delhi alienated possible international assistance by blaming Pakistan directly for the tragedy and turning down Islamabad's offer to carry out an impartial investigation. No nation supported Operation Sindoor, in which India launched cross-border strikes on Pakistan on May 7, or endorsed India's charges against Islamabad. Frustration in New Delhi, particularly with the United States, grew as the international community refused to accept India's story after the events of Pahalgam and Operation Sindoor.

Category	Sub-Component	Amount (USD)	Details
Macro-Economic Losses	GDP Loss	\$3.20 billion	0.9% of monthly GDP (\$356 billion)
	Fiscal Deficit Increase	\$0.82 billion	+0.23 pp of GDP; prorated annual \$76.9 billion
Subtotal (Macro)		\$4.02 billion	
Sectoral & Direct Losses	Financial Market Loss	\$83.00 billion	1.6% of \$5.2 trillion market cap
	Military Equipment Losses	\$0.52 billion	6 fighters (\$420m) + 77 UAVs (\$100m)
	Ordnance & Operations	\$0.038 billion	BrahMos, PGMs, sorties (~\$38 million)
	Infrastructure Repair	\$0.04 billion	Homes, schools, utilities repair (~\$40 million)
	Humanitarian Relief & Compensation	\$0.007 billion	Fatalities, injuries, relief camps (~\$6.74 million)
	Cybersecurity Response	\$0.007 billion	Emergency IT responses (~\$7 million)
	Tourism & Events	\$1.00 billion	IPL suspension, hospitality industry impact

	Aviation Disruptions	\$0.03 billion	Rerouting, cancellations
	Trade Disruptions	\$0.05 billion	Indo-Pak trade halt, logistics issues
Subtotal (Sectoral & Direct)		\$84.692 billion	
Total Estimated Cost		\$88.712 billion	Macro + sectoral/direct combined impact

The table highlight the losses India faced in four days escalation triggered by its missile raid in Pakistan and AJK (Shabbir, 2025). The war serves as a reminder of the serious economic dangers that come with a military confrontation between the two nuclear-armed neighbours. The last two escalations, particularly Pulwama crisis and the May 7-10, 2025 pushed both states to the brink of nuclear war. India's objective to create a "new normal" in which any "terrorist" attack on Indian Territory would be met with a conventional military reaction that would strike deep within Pakistan consequently triggered May 2025 escalation. With the goal of undermining Pakistan's military prowess, forcing action against what India refers to as "terror infrastructure," and undermining Pakistan's nuclear deterrence. The "new normal" ostensibly presumed that Pakistan will not defend its sovereignty militarily, a position that Pakistan has adamantly denied, promising to defend its sovereignty "swiftly and brutally." India launched airstrikes in Azad Kashmir in response to a terror assault in February 2019 in Indian Illegally Occupied Kashmir. The attacking planes were intercepted by Pakistan, who shot one down and detained the pilot before releasing him as a sign of goodwill. The recent escalations between India and Pakistan during May 2025 deescalated with a new normal established by Pakistan that any Indian belligerence would be met with a Quid Pro Quo Plus response. Pakistan's swift response was proportionate and resolute across the domain, establishing its strategic and diplomatic dominance in region, further strengthening its deterrence posture. Quid Pro Quo Plus responsiveness and reliable signaling in both conventional and strategic domains form the foundation of Pakistan's Full spectrum deterrence posture.

The May 2025 war also highlights India need to revisit strategic thoughts of hegemony. Pakistan's response punctured the aura of India's conventional superiority and air dominance. The recent escalation has increased the chances of miscalculation between Pakistan and India, the latter's accidental launches (such as Brahmos incident) in future would bring serious consequences. The cost of conflict under nuclear overhang became too high neither the region nor the international community can afford another misadventure between the two nuclear-armed neighbors. Need to address the lingering issue of Kashmir that pushed South Asian region to the nuclear brink. Otherwise, Narendra Modi has set the precedent for the upcoming governments in India to climb up the escalation ladder and it would go beyond the disputed territory.

Conclusion

The repeated cycle of conflict between Pakistan and India depicts a dangerous horizon ahead. The unresolved dispute primarily the Kashmir conflict remains at the heart of the strategic instability in South Asia. Over time the hostility has intensified while India remains in the quest to outmaneuver Pakistan. This Indian pursuit for catalyzing instability Vis a Vis Pakistan is guided by its Strategic culture which is deeply rooted in ancient Hindu scriptures. This ingenuity leads India to shape its aggressive posture against Pakistan. India remained persistent in its efforts to translate its strategic ambitions into operational success, however these prestige driven efforts have always failed. From Sunderji Doctrine to Joint Doctrine of Indian Armed Forces 2018, Indian offensive posture against Pakistan has always backfired. Pakistan remained consistent in restoring the strategic equilibrium through proportionate and resolute responses maintaining deterrence stability across nuclear, conventional, and sub-conventional domains. Its doctrine of full spectrum deterrence reinforced by quid pro quo plus response has remained effective in countering Indian misadventures. Despite decades of military modernization, nuclear acquisition, and the pursuit of prestige-driven technological advancements, India has repeatedly failed to translate its strategic ambitions into operational success. Instead, these practices have exposed its vulnerabilities, produced strategic miscalculations, and eroded international credibility. The May 2025 crisis accentuates clarity that Pakistan's preparedness, adaptability and its commitment to safeguard sovereignty is undeniable. It also highlights that massive defense spending and symbolic displays of military might cannot substitute for preparedness and credibility.

India efforts including the normalization of false flag operations, surgical strikes stratagems and coercive tools including weaponization of water remained unsuccessful to serve its interest. The evolution of India's strategic culture, deeply rooted in Hindu religious texts, Kautilyan thought, and civilizational exceptionalism, continues to shape its aggressive posture towards Pakistan.

Stability in South Asia cannot be achieved through military coercion, prestige-driven policies, or technological symbolism. Rather, it requires addressing the core political disputes through dialogue and diplomacy. The future trajectory of the regional security will depend on whether India continues its revisionist course or reconsiders its hegemonic aspirations following repeated setbacks. Unless the Kashmir issue is resolved in accordance with international commitments and the aspirations of its people, both states will remain on the brink of catastrophic escalation, with grave consequences for regional and global security.

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