

Pakistan a Habitual Offender: Misuse of UN Forum against India

Historically, the Indus frontier has shaped India's history from early times. The Aryans, the Persians, Alexander the Great, Mohammed Ghazni, the Mongols, the Mughals and the Afghans were amongst those who invaded India from this route. The British, of course, entered by sea disguised as traders but their focus for much of their stay in the subcontinent remained on the threat from this direction (the west) as they feared a Russian invasion. They were, however, caught looking in the wrong direction when the Japanese during World War II attacked India from the East.

Post-Independence, the Western threat retained its primacy as Pakistan remained obsessed with its revisionist policy regarding the erstwhile princely state of Jammu and Kashmir and India witnessed wars in 1947-48, 1965 and 1999 while the proxy war has remained firmly in place, initially, with the lashkars and more recently through various terrorist groups. However, the Pakistani Army has been consistent in losing all the wars it fought against India.

Pakistan PM at UNGA

There are certain consistencies in Pakistan that endure, while, one of course is the role of the Army. The other is the fact that over the years the Pakistan leadership has used the UNGA Address as a platform to raise the Kashmir issue and attack India on various counts. This year the interim Prime Minister has not only abided by this narrative but also sharpened the tone and widened the scope.

Addressing the General Debate of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly, the interim Prime Minister Anwar ul Haq Kakar said "Kashmir is the key to peace between Pakistan and India," he said. Predictably he harped upon what he perceived is the illegal occupation of Jammu & Kashmir by India.[\[1\]](#)

Talking of terrorism, he referred to countering "All terrorists without discrimination, including the rising threat posed by far-right extremist and fascist groups, such as Hindutva-inspired extremists threatening genocide against India's Muslims and Christians".[\[2\]](#)

"We also need to oppose 'state terrorism'; address the root causes of terrorism, such as poverty, injustice, and foreign occupation; and distinguish genuine freedom struggles from terrorism".[\[3\]](#)

Naturally, he did not touch upon systemic violence against minorities in Pakistan, including the recent large-scale 'brutality' perpetrated against the minority Christian community in August in Jaranwala in Faisalabad District where a total of nineteen churches were gutted and eighty-nine houses of Christian were burnt down. Jaranwala being the latest in a series of violent incidents propagated to persecute minorities that have little to hope in Pakistan. The state's repeated failure to prosecute those responsible for these crimes inspires minimalistic confidence amongst minorities.

Pakistan Today

Anatol Lieven in his analysis of Pakistan; 'A Hard Country' wrote that it remains "Divided, disorganized, economically backward, corrupt and violent, unjust, often savagely oppressive towards the poor and women and home to extremely dangerous forms of extremism and

terrorism". All this remains unchanged, in fact, it has only worsened over the last ten years since the book was published.^[4]

The Pakistani Army still remains the institution binding the country. Which it does by its constant interference in politics and foreign policy and literally holding the levers of power. It accounts for a major share of the GDP, is deeply entrenched in the economy and responsible, to a large degree, for Pakistan's failure to develop a stable democratic system. But as per an article in RUSI; "The Pakistan Army is the one institution that inculcates a spirit of national unity". For it to survive, constantly blocking peace with India is paramount.

Pakistan always harped on its significance due to its geostrategic location which resulted them in developing their nuclear weapons with the West literally turning a blind eye. Since the NATO exit from Afghanistan, Pakistan no longer enjoys any leverage over Western foreign policy. Its economy is in a free fall and this has resulted in its diminishing role on the global stage. Pakistan has the lowest per capita income in South Asia and the largest number of out-of-school kids in the world. Further, it is facing increasing terror attacks from Afghan soil; ironically the Taliban are biting the 'hand that fed it'. There is no doubt, it is facing a convergence of economic, security, and political crises.

India's Response

Petal Gahlot, India's First Secretary at its Permanent Mission in the UN stressed that Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India and Pakistan had no locus standi to comment on the issue.

"Pakistan has become a habitual offender when it comes to misusing this forum to peddle baseless and malicious propaganda against India. Member states of the UN and other multilateral organisations are well aware that Pakistan does so to deflect the international community's attention away from its own abysmal record on human rights".^[5]

"Pakistan has been the home and patron to the largest number of internationally proscribed terrorist entities and individuals in the world. Instead of engaging in technical sophistry, we call upon Pakistan to take credible and verifiable action against the perpetrators of the Mumbai terror attacks, whose victims await justice even after fifteen years," Gahlot said in the scathing response.^[6]

She said Pakistan needs to take three-fold action for there to be peace in South Asia. "First, stop cross-border terrorism and shut down its infrastructure of terrorism immediately. Second, vacate Indian territories under its illegal and forcible occupation, and third, stop the grave and persistent human rights violations against the minorities in Pakistan".

Conclusion

While Pakistan continues to face a multitude of challenges its tactics lie in constantly diverting attention to issues such as Kashmir. But does the "threat from India" create a national solidarity against the current state of affairs?

Serious reform has never been on its agenda. Hence, its ability and willingness in making policy shifts continues to elude them. Statements such as these by a nuclear armed state which

continues to use terrorism as an instrument of state policy reinforces the fact that Pakistan is not keen on peace and stability in the region and remains focused on its revisionist agenda.

Petal Gahlot has rightly pointed out that "Pakistan has become a habitual offender when it comes to misusing this august forum to peddle baseless and malicious propaganda against India. Member states of the United Nations and other multilateral organisations are well aware that Pakistan does so to deflect the international community's attention away from its own abysmal record on human rights".

Endnotes

[1] ANI, Pak caretaker PM Kakar rakes up Kashmir at UNGA, India's right to reply on Saturday, The Print, 22 September 2023, <https://theprint.in/world/pak-caretaker-pm-kakar-rakes-up-kashmir-at-unga-indias-right-to-reply-on-saturday/1774154/>

[2] PM Kakar calls for countering all terrorists, including 'Hindutva inspired extremists', in UNGA address, The Dawn, 22 September 2023 <https://www.dawn.com/news/1777295>

[3] Ibid

[4] Book Review: A Primer on Pakistan- Anatol Lieven 'A Hard Country', New York Times, 24 June 2011 <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/26/books/review/book-review-pakistan-by-anatol-lieven.html>

[5] 'Vacate POK, stop terrorism': India hits back at Pakistan at UN, Business Today, 23 September 2023, <https://www.businesstoday.in/latest/world/story/vacate-pok-stop-terrorism-india-hits-back-at-pakistan-at-un-399439-2023-09-23>

[6] Ibid

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