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Issue Brief

Deciphering Pakistan's Kashmir Lexicon

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S*ummary*

Kashmir has been claimed by Pakistani leaders as central to their foreign policy. But a closer look shows that it has been more of a political convenience for Pakistan since 1947, both as a smokescreen to cover up endemic deficiencies and as a convoluted foreign policy mechanism to use state sponsored terrorism in the quest for “strategic depth” – a concept which is increasingly viewed as illusory.

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Exploiting the Kashmir Protests

A cursory glance at Pakistan's current lexicon on Kashmir demonstrates both these above aspects. After the killing of Hizbul Mujahideen leader Burhan Wani on July 8 in Kokernag, Anantnag district, barbed references have been made by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his cabinet members eulogising Wani as a martyr and emphasising anti-Indian, anti-Hindu, sentiments in the Valley. Much of this was in fact underwritten by the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). The Pakistani cabinet, not so subtly, declared July 21 as Kashmir Black Day, to coincide with elections in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). The result was the ruling PML-N winning a landslide victory with 31 of the 41 seats. Nawaz Sharif, who was under a cloud due to his family connections with shell front companies allegedly involved in money laundering which had been disclosed in the Panama papers, and also under threat from a section of the armed forces and public obliquely supporting Chief of Army Staff, General Raheel Sharif, seized the opportunity to proclaim his political relevance and resilience. The leitmotif of his victory speech at Muzaffarabad was “*Kashmir banega Pakistan*”, which was repeated in his Independence Day address on August 14. Pakistan's President, Mamnoon Hussain, reiterated the message in his address to the nation. As did Pakistan's High Commissioner to India, Abdul Basit, who emphasised Islamabad's unswerving commitment to the Kashmir cause, testing the already strained relations with India.

These Independence Day speeches reflected the current reality in Pakistan, where the emphasis was primarily on terrorism; paeans of praise for the success of Operation Zarb-e Azb, criticism of terrorist attacks from Afghanistan, and of course the Kashmir issue. There was no talk about economic growth, job creation, or any serious development agenda. The rhetoric on the Kashmir issue is now serving as an effective smokescreen for the flailing economy and fractured politics of the country.

Pakistan's Diplomatic Campaign

At the multilateral level, Pakistan's Foreign Secretary, Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, requested the Islamabad-based Ambassadors of the member countries of the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir, which comprises Azerbaijan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Niger, to raise their voice against "the blatant human rights violations" affecting Kashmiri Muslims in the Valley. Subsequently, the Secretary General of OIC, Iyad bin Amin Madani, (former Saudi minister for Information and Hajj), going beyond the usual litany of the Kashmiri right to self-determination and a referendum as per UN resolutions, publicly stated on August 21 that Kashmir was not India's internal problem but an international issue given humongous human rights violations. He exhorted the international community to raise its voice against alleged Indian atrocities. And added that the OIC contact group would meet in New York in the run-up to the United Nations General Assembly session, where Nawaz Sharif would be delivering an emotive speech on the situation in Kashmir, and warned that several groups would be demonstrating against Prime Minister Modi there. The OIC Chairman's speech was uncharacteristically harsh, and indicative of the sustained campaign launched by Pakistan regarding Kashmir.

Later, the President of PoK, Sardar Muhammad Masood Khan, and Prime Minister of PoK, Raja Farooq Haider, in a statement issued on August 25 following the swearing in of the former, pledged that they would ensure that "the blood offered by the men, women and children in Kashmir in the current struggle will not go vain." Muhammad Masood Khan, a career diplomat, who was earlier Foreign Ministry spokesperson and Ambassador to China in addition to a successful stint as Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN, has been nominated as PoK President to further Islamabad's Kashmir agenda in the UNGA. In his inaugural speech, Masood Khan emphasised that Kashmiris needed to increase their outreach and multiply their friends to influence powerful countries and multilateral agencies. He noted that "[t]he UN will not come to us, we will have to go to the UN to remind it of its seemingly forgotten commitments on Kashmir."¹ He also added that Islamabad needs to work on the UN Secretary-General and influence him to use his good offices and appoint a special emissary for Kashmir without waiting for consent from India, as New Delhi was not prepared to accept mediation. Significantly, Masood Khan has also spoken about the necessity of cultivating sympathetic sections of India's political class

1 <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/pak-administered-kashmir/from-other-side-of-loc-pak-prez-pm-vow-to-support-kashmiris/226918.html>

and civil society in order to put pressure on the Government for agreeing to bilateral talks on Kashmir with all stakeholders.²

It is interesting to note that Congress leader Saifuddin Soz has publicly asked for the revival of Pervez Musharraf's four point action plan for Kashmir, which contemplates:

- (i) status quo on borders to remain, with people on either side of the Line of Control (LoC) allowed to move freely;
- (ii) autonomous status (not independence) to Jammu and Kashmir along with Pakistan-occupied Kashmir for internal management;
- (iii) troops to be withdrawn from the region in a phased manner; and
- (iv) a joint mechanism, with Indian, Pakistani and Kashmiri representatives, to supervise the implementation of such a road-map for Kashmir.

While the Musharraf plan has no legal basis either in the UN recommendations or the Constitution of India as regards autonomous status for Kashmir, Soz's statement provides a tailwind for Islamabad's international initiatives, given that such opinions are being voiced by members of mainstream political parties in India.

Pakistan's Plans for the UN General Assembly Session

Nawaz Sharif's chief international strategy is now focussed on the 71st UNGA session (September 13-26), where Islamabad wants to highlight what it terms India's bellicose jingoism in Kashmir. Sharif has appointed 22 "envoys" to work globally and sensitise countries about the situation in Kashmir before the UNGA session. Given below is a communication from the Pakistan Prime Minister's office appointing the Envoys and the countries they are to concentrate upon. Pakistan's Opposition and sections of the media have questioned these appointments, as all the appointees are from the treasury benches, and most of them have tardy attendance in parliament – their chief qualification being proximity to the establishment.

² <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/pak-administered-kashmir/from-other-side-of-loc-pak-prez-pm-vow-to-support-kashmiris/226918.html>

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE
ISLAMABAD

Subject: SPECIAL ENVOY ON JAMMU & KASHMIR AND THEIR VISIT TO KEY COUNTRIES

7. While approving the proposal at para 3 of the summary, the Prime Minister has been pleased to nominate the following Parliamentarians as Special Envoys to important capitals to highlight the Indian brutalities in IoK and to lobby for the Kashmir cause:

S #	Name of Country	Parliamentarians Nominated
1.	Belgium (Brussels)	- Mr. Ijaz-ul-Haq - Malik Uzair
2.	China (Beijing)	- Mr. Khusro Bakhtiar - Mr. Alamdad Laleka
3.	France (Paris)	- Ms. Ayesha Raza Farooq - Rana Muhammad Afzal Khan
4.	Russian Federation (Moscow)	- Mr. Raza Hayat Hiraj - Mr. Junaid Anwar Ch. - Mr. Nawab Ali Wassan
5.	Saudi Arabia (Riyadh, Jeddah)	- Maulana Fazal ur Rehman - Maj (R) Tahir Iqbal - Mr. Muhammad Afzal Khokhar
6.	Turkey (Ankara)	- Mr. Mohsin Shah Nawaz Ranjha - Malik Pervaiz
7.	United Kingdom (London)	- Lt Gen (R) Abdul Qayyoom - Mr. Qaiser Sheikh
8.	United States (Washington DC)	- Mr. Mushahid Hussain Syed - Dr. Shazra Mansab Ali Khan
9.	United Nations (New York)	- Mr. Mushahid Hussain Syed - Dr. Shazra Mansab Ali Khan
10.	United Nations (Geneva)	- Mr. Awais Leghari
11.	South Africa (Pretoria)	- Mr. Abdul Rehman Kanju

Pakistan's Continued Use of Terrorism

Pakistan's Kashmir script is being enacted, and to a large extent written by, state-sponsored actors, headed by Hafiz Saeed of the Lashkar-e Taiba (LeT)/Jamaa't ut Dawa (JuD) and ably supported by Masood Azhar and his cohorts of the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), Syed Salahuddin of the Hizbul Mujahideen, as well as minor terrorist *dramatis personae*. The US country report on Pakistan states unambiguously that

“Pakistan did not take substantial action against the Afghan Taliban or HQN, or substantially limit their ability to threaten U.S. interests in Afghanistan, although Pakistan supported efforts to bring both groups into an Afghan-led peace process. Pakistan has also not taken sufficient action against other externally-focused groups such as Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), which continued to operate, train, organize, and fundraise in Pakistan.”³

This report is borne out by the statements given by Bahadur Ali, alias Abu Saifullah, a resident of Raiwind, Lahore, who was arrested on July 25 in Yahama village in Handwara in North Kashmir. Bahadur Ali, who is a regular LeT cadre and Falah e Insaniyat Foundation activist, claimed that he was given three training sessions by the LeT – the ‘Daura-e-Tulba, which is the basic ideological training at Manshera in the year 2013, the ‘Daura-e-Aam’ which focused on arms training at Aksa camp near Muzaffarabad in 2014, and ‘Daura-e-Khas’, which involved training in the use of sophisticated arms and communications equipment at Tabook camp near Muzaffarabad in 2016. He was then infiltrated into India from the Mandaku area of PoK with the active assistance of the Pakistan Army on the LoC. According to him, officers who were called ‘Major Sahib and Captain Sahib’ by the trainees in the camp briefed them about the objectives in Kashmir, which included causing disaffection, engendering pro-Pakistan pro-Salafist sentiments, causing violence by lobbing grenades at security forces etc.⁴

This information has been corroborated by another LeT cadre, Mohd. Naveed, who was arrested following an attack on a BSF convoy at Udampur in August 2015. Bahadur Ali was in touch with his Pakistani handlers on a real time basis, with instructions given to him from a control room called Alpha-III which is said to be located in PoK. Communication was being carried out using Japanese I-com radio sets that had been

3 “Chapter 2. Country Reports: South and Central Asia Overview,” *Country Reports on Terrorism 2015*, June 2016, available at <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2015/257518.htm/>

4 <http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/Militant-Ali-confesses-LeT-involved-in-fuelling-Kashmir-unrest-NIA/2016/08/10/article3573046.ece>

modified to give them an enhanced range, a process which requires considerable technical skill. Similar sets have been seized by the NDS in Afghanistan and President Ashraf Ghani has openly accused the ISI and LeT of engineering terrorist attacks in Kabul.⁵

Red Corner Notices and a USD 10 million bounty on his head notwithstanding, LeT's Hafiz Saeed is one of Pakistan's designated 'good' terrorists who enjoys state privileges comparable to a serving minister. He has been permitted to file a preposterous public interest litigation in the Lahore High Court on August 12, seeking directives for Nawaz Sharif's cabinet to agitate the Kashmir issue at the Security Council in order to exert pressure on India to follow the Security Council's resolution passed in April 1948. The designated international terrorist was allowed to hold a public rally on Pakistan's Independence Day in Lahore, when he urged the Army Chief Rahil Sharif to send troops into India to teach it a lesson in order "to avenge the brutalities of Indian forces on Kashmiris."⁶

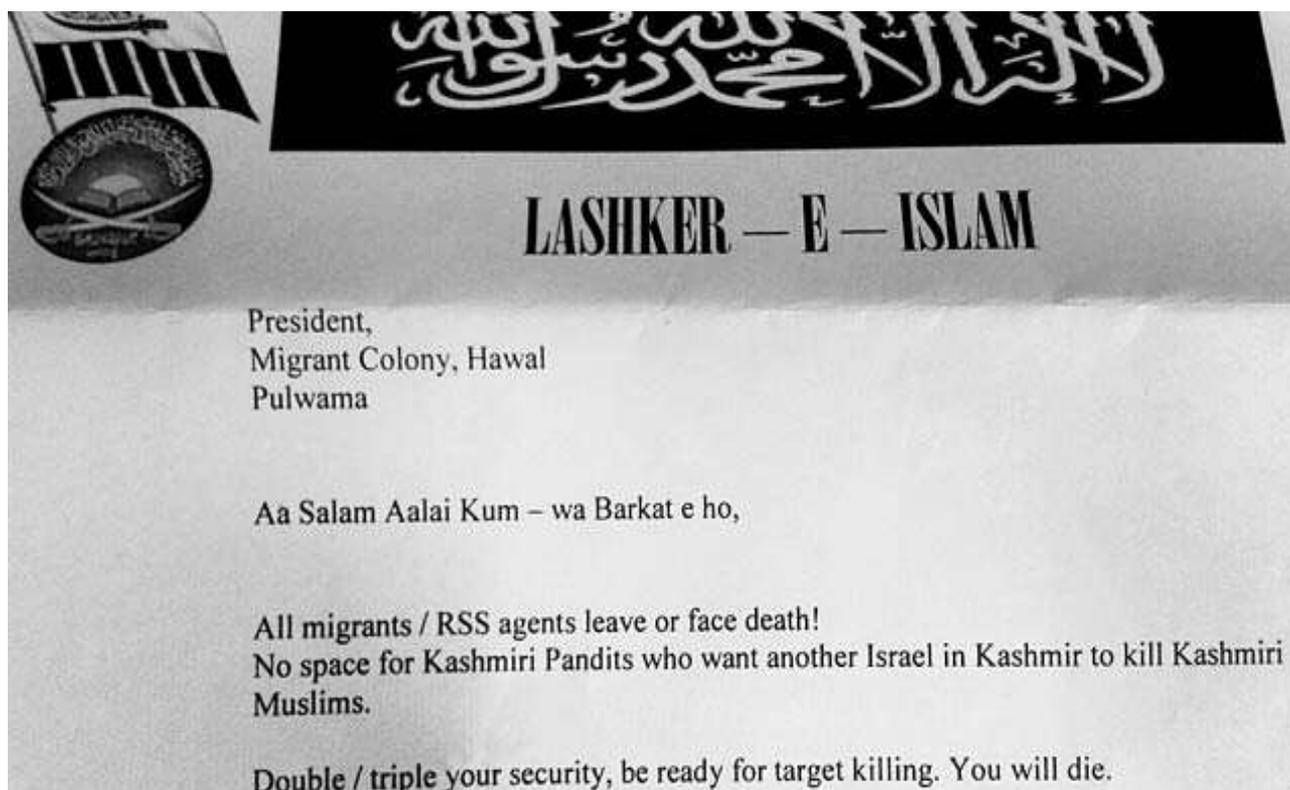
Similarly, Syed Salahuddin, alias Mohammad Yusuf Shah, of the Hizb ul Mujahedeen, in an interview to the *Times of India* on September 4 warned that he will turn Kashmir into a "graveyard" for the Indian armed forces and unleash an army of fidayeen because the region has been turned into a "concentration camp". Salahuddin, who normally resides in Pakistan, has five sons who are being supported in various ways by the Indian government – one son serves in Sri Maharaja Hari Singh Medical College, another is a research scholar in the University of Agricultural Sciences, and a third is doing his M Tech.⁷ It can be safely presumed that none of his five sons will join the proposed fidayeen army, and Salahuddin will continue to enjoy the patronage of Islamabad and encourage minor children to stand in the line of fire during riots, many of which are being nurtured and fed from across the border.

Meanwhile, on August 7, the Lashkar-e-Islam, a relatively unknown Salafist group headed by one Abdul Qayoom Najar, who was originally a Hizbul militant, has issued posters in Pulwama threatening Kashmiri Pandits and asking them to leave the Valley or be ready to face the consequences. Given below is a copy of the letter.

5 <http://www.wsj.com/articles/ashraf-ghani-attacks-pakistan-for-sheltering-terrorist-groups-1461603541>. Also see, <http://southasiamonitor.org/detail.php?type=sl&nid=16706/>

6 http://zeenews.india.com/news/india/send-troops-to-kashmir-to-teach-india-a-lesson-hafiz-saeed-urges-pakistan_1919579.html

7 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sayeed_Salahudeen



Earlier, in May 2015, Lashkar-e-Islam posters appeared in Sopore asking telecom operators to shut shop in North Kashmir, and subsequently some telecom operators were killed by the LeI.⁸ Styming Indian telecom operators appears to be yet another attempt to distance the Kashmiri public from the Indian state.

Radicalisation in the Valley

Syed Ali Shah Geelani, who often decried the lack of dialogue with New Delhi, refused to meet a small group of Opposition members of parliament headed by Sitaram Yechury on September 4 on the grounds that there was no basis for talks. Hurriyat leaders have made it clear that Home Minister Rajnath Singh's objective of holding talks in Srinagar with "individuals & groups who want peace & normalcy in Kashmir,"⁹ cut no ice with them, as it did not address any Pakistani claim or separatist agenda. Meanwhile, there are now three threads of narratives within Kashmir – pro-Pakistan, pro-Azadi, and pro-Salafist

8 <http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-another-migration-stares-at-kashmiri-pandits-2242002>

9 <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/front-page/in-srinagar-all-party-delegation-struggles-to-break-ice/227656.html>

Islam – with calls for Nizam-e Mustafa, and Khalifat-e Rashida gaining considerable currency. Pakistan-sponsored terrorists have fed a toxic narrative into the valley, espousing a recidivist Takfiri form of Islam, which is far removed from the original Sufi ideology of Mir Syed Ali bin Shahab-ud-Din Hamadani, Hazrat Khwaja Naqshband Sahib, Hazrat Noorud Din, and others, which characterised Kashmir. While Pakistan has used the rabid Islam card to try and distance the Kashmiri public from the Indian state, it has planted seeds of Islamic extremism that could prove far more dangerous in the long term than clarion cries of Azadi, which the protestors and the sponsors are both aware will not come to pass.

Finance for the Protests

Illegal money flows into the Valley through Pakistan-sponsored agents have given impetus to both armed protests and radicalism. Large transfers of money from Pakistan have been traced by the National Investigation Agency (NIA), which is tracking some 22 bank accounts in south Kashmir that received money from unaccounted sources and had the same withdrawn during the time of the current unrest. A case in point is that of JKART (Jammu Kashmir Affectees Relief Trust), a Pakistan-based front outfit of Hizbul Mujahideen. The trust, which was floated in 1999 by Syed Salahuddin in Rawalpindi and sponsored by the ISI, was regularly raising funds in Pakistan and sending it to India through both regular banking channels as well as Hawala networks. According to the NIA, around Rs. 80 crore was routed through JKART to India over eight years and distributed to various accounts some of which functioned only to facilitate transfers and then shut down.¹⁰ Witnesses in Kashmir have spoken about payments being given to protestors by the Hurriyat and Hizbul Mujahideen elements to throw stones and attack convoys. Sustained efforts have been made to ensure that minor children are the first line against security forces, and thus become victims of pellet guns and lathi charges, which leave crippling injuries. There is cynical disregard for human life in the quest for emotionally charging the local population with visuals of child victims, and to broadcast Kashmir's disconnect with the Indian state. The current round of conflict has been concentrated in southern Kashmir, the main constituency of the PDP, to demonstrate to Kashmiris and the rest of the world that Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti has lost her political relevance and that the PDP's coalition with the BJP has no real mandate in the state.

¹⁰ <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/22-bank-accounts-in-S-Kashmir-under-NIA-lens-for-terror-funding-Hizb-links/articleshow/53865260.cms>

Modi's References to Baluchistan and PoK

Nawaz Sharif's government, which was hoping to cash in on the current Kashmir conflict in the UNGA, has been rattled by Prime Minister Modi's reference to human rights violations in Baluchistan, Gilgit and Baltistan, and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in his Independence Day address to the nation. The chief minister of Balochistan, Sanaullah Zehri, decrying Modi's comments, castigated Brahamdagh Bugti, the grandson of the late Baluch leader Akbar Bugti and leader of the outlawed Baloch Republican Army (BRA), for supporting Modi. Anti-Indian demonstrations were held at Quetta, Harnai, Khuzdar, Mustang, Noshki, Sui and Dera Bugti, apart from a shutter down strike in Bolan and Dhadar.¹¹ And Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Hafizur Rehman has stated that Modi raised the issue of Gilgit-Baltistan, PoK and Baluchistan because he is feeling beleaguered both by the Kashmir protests and the growing cooperation between China and Pakistan on CPEC.¹²

The way forward

The Government of India, and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in particular, are in a quandary about suitable crowd control mechanisms in Kashmir. According to officers in the CRPF, security forces use force in a calibrated manner, with warnings on the loudspeaker, followed by teargas/lathis and then only pellet guns, which were considered to be less lethal than rubber bullets. Several of the protestors are not locals, as has been revealed in the statements of Bahadur Ali and Mohammad Naved, cited above. The damage caused by pellet guns, especially on children, are of course horrific, but the onus of responsibility needs to be suitably apportioned to elements across the border who sponsor the riots, and the misguided youth who have been fed a deceitful narrative without concern for their welfare or future. The MHA has now decided that a total suspension of pellet guns would not be possible, given the imperative of the security of the personnel of the CRPF and J&K police. However, it has resolved that a greater reliance would be placed on PAVA shells which contain Pelargonic Acid Vanillyl Amide, an organic compound found in chilli pepper. It derives its name from the compound, which is also known as Nonivamide, and causes extreme irritation and temporary paralysis. The Indian Institute of Toxicology Research, Lucknow, has been working on the shells for over a year now and the Tear Smoke Unit of the Border Security Force in Gwalior will be producing

11 <https://www.geo.tv/latest/111815-CM-Balochistan-assails-Brahamdagh-over-Modis-support>

12 <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1173589/modis-remarks-gilgit-baltistan-shows-frustration-cpec-cm-gb>

50,000 PAVA shells for immediate use.¹³ However, the Resident Doctors' Association (RDA) of Shri Maharaja Hari Singh Hospital has expressed concern about the Government's decision to use PAVA shells as capsaisin, the active chemical in the compound, could cause Periorbital Edema/Erythema, Ophthalmodynia, Blepharospasm, and respiratory failure, which could be fatal.¹⁴

Any adverse publicity on this matter will act as an adrenalin shot for Nawaz Sharif, who wants to build up his anti-India arsenal for the UNGA session. Given this, the dialogue process has little chance of proceeding within the contours of the Indian constitution. Emphasis needs to be put on Modi's call for 'vikas' and 'vishwas'. The finance minister of J&K, Haseeb Drabu, who is the ideologue of the PDP, has also emphasised development, revival of the Kashmiri crafts industry, and government-sponsored skill development programmes. Innovative confidence building measures need to be considered expeditiously. India has failed the Valley by not countering the false narratives of Pakistan's false lexicon on Kashmir. There is a need to revive the Sufi tradition of Kashmir, and counter the imported Salafi/Wahhabi tenets that are being used by Pakistan as a vehicle to cause dissonance. India needs to re-claim its Kashmiris.

13 http://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/centre-may-replace-pellet-guns-with-pava-shells-here-are-5-things-you-need-to-know-116082600155_1.html

14 <http://u4uvoice.com/doctors-point-out-potential-dangers-of-pava-shells>

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