

Government's Initiatives for J&K Confronting the Uncomfortable

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Government's Initiatives for J&K Confronting the Uncomfortable

Pakistan considers Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) an unfinished agenda of the partition. Since 1947, it has made repeated attempts to annex J&K, but all of them ended in a failure. In 1998, both India and Pakistan acquired nuclear weapons making it impossible for either country to force a decision in a full-scale war. In 1989, Pakistan initiated a proxy war by providing material, moral and diplomatic support to terrorist groups, in a hope to further its cause. The Indian Security Forces (SFs) have been able to thwart the Pakistani design by causing unacceptable attrition to various terrorist groups forcing Pakistan to modify its J&K policy. Pakistan's chosen option for the moment is to instigate a section of people in J&K to create an environment of instability in the state.¹ It hopes to create a perception of breakdown in law and order and the administrative machinery in the state. The aim is to manipulate the environment of instability in conjunction with the actions of the terrorist groups to force India into a negotiated settlement in favour of its J&K policy.² Since 2008, when the number of terrorists operating in J&K plummeted, 'agitational politics' became the central theme of Pakistan's J&K policy.³ Since then, it has been orchestrating and calibrating agitations by violent mobs of Kashmir is with the help of the separatists and terrorist groups to draw world attention to its Kashmir agenda. The change in Pakistani strategy called for the reassessment of India's response.

In all these years of proxy war, the primary objective of the Indian state has been to resolve the problem politically and diplomatically while keeping the security situation within manageable limits. The governments, at various points in time, have attempted to negotiate with Pakistan as also with the various shades of peoples' representatives in the state. In support of the government's initiatives, the Indian SFs' over arching objective has been to eliminate terrorists and terrorist groups and create conditions for civil administration to implement the rule of law. The SFs have focused on preventing infiltration of terrorists from across the line of control and have launched intelligence-based operations to neutralise

terrorists in the hinterland. Besides the military operations, the SFs are also involved in programmes to win hearts and minds of the populace. The SFs have been consistent with this approach for over the last 29 years. In all these years of fighting a proxy war in J&K, very few attempts have been made to resolve the problem using the whole of government approach. Lately, there has been a demonstrable change in the political and military situation in the state, as also in the modus operandi of the separatists, terrorist groups and Pakistan. The Indian Government, too, has initiated a number of proactive measures to neutralise terrorists and their support base, marginalise the separatists and has made attempts at reconciliation with all those who are willing to talk to the government. Attempts are also being made to force Pakistan to give up supporting anti-India forces. This paper aims to study and analyse the government's recent initiatives to resolve the Kashmir imbroglio.

Environmental Scan: Changing Security Situation and Governmental Response

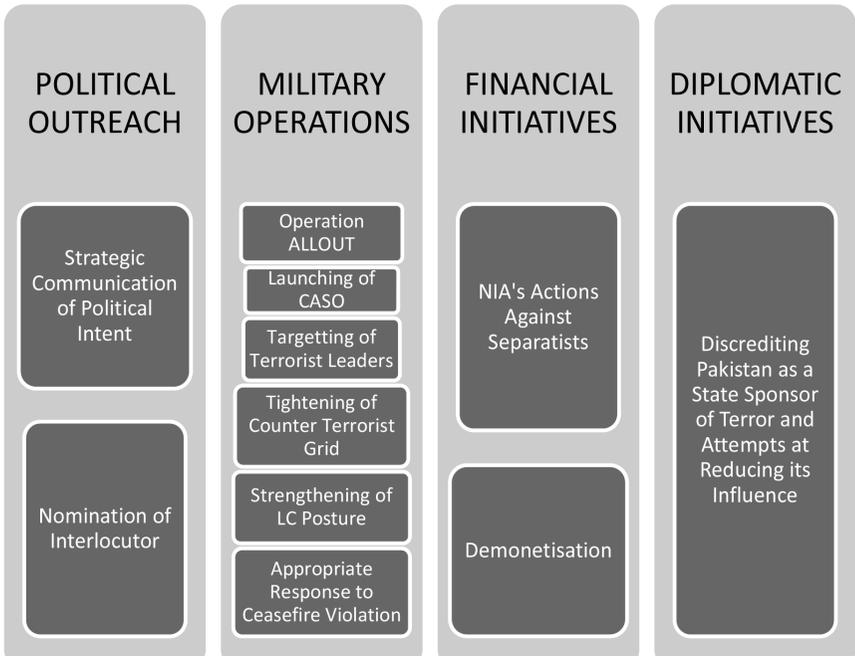
The widespread perception that the state elections in 1987 were unfairly influenced by the government of the day is considered as a trigger for the start of the insurgency in Kashmir valley, which gradually engulfed the Jammu Division as well. The movement started with the demand for *azadi* and was supported by Pakistan. In the initial days, the movement was dominated by ethnic Kashmiri leaders and terrorists. This was gradually taken over by foreign terrorists, with the active connivance of Pakistan, which changed the character of the insurgency. The terrorists and their support base gradually became radicalised⁴ and the demand for 'azadi' became subservient to the demand of a section of the extremist population for the merger of Kashmir with Pakistan. In the early years of the insurgency movement, Pakistan facilitated infiltration of a large number of terrorists and highlighted their actions with an aim to destabilise the administrative apparatus of the state and internationalise the issue. Over the years, the Indian SFs have managed to get an upper hand in the situation and the number of terrorists operating in J&K has declined and today, they are perhaps the lowest in any time in the history of insurgency in the state.⁵ In the last 29 years, the insurgency, which earlier manifested mainly as terrorist actions against SFs and other government agencies, has metamorphosed into a hybrid war with subversion, sabotage and criminal activities also forming a part of the agenda to destabilise a legally elected

government. The separatists in J&K who pursue the policy of 'agitational politics' on behalf of Pakistan have the backing of the terrorist groups, the Lashkar-e-Taiba, Hizbul Mujahideen and the others. This gives them the flexibility of initiating, orchestrating and calibrating the intensity of their programmes as also to change their emphasis from one to the other on short notice. As the number of terrorists operating in J&K decline, 'agitational politics' will become a norm and perhaps more violent.

In the initial days of the movement, the violent activities of the terrorists had united the country in backing the SFs to give a befitting response and restore the administrative machinery of the state. Over the years, with a decline in the number of terrorists and their activities, and a gradual change in the character of the movement from violent extremism to 'agitational politics', has led to the dwindling of support in some quarters, for a strong military response.⁶ The government no more enjoys unqualified support for a strong military response against Pakistani proxies, including violent mobs. The 'agitational politics' of the separatists has struck a sympathetic cord with a section of the population in the country. This constituency, though small, has been vocal in its support of some of the demands and the activities of the separatists, and has managed to put the government on the defensive, especially on the issue concerning the response of the SFs while controlling violent mobs.⁷ The 'agitational politics' has been able to polarise India's polity and population. The extent of polarisation is a subject of debate.

In 2016–17, Central and South Kashmir saw a perceptible rise in the number of local terrorists and terrorist-related incidents in which the SFs suffered attrition. The J&K Police was specifically targeted to reduce their effectiveness. The lynching of Deputy Superintendent Mohammed Ayub Pandith and murder of Lt Umar Fayaz⁸ were carried out to deter the public from supporting the Indian establishment. Notwithstanding the reduction in public demonstrations and mob violence in the recent past, a section of the population still harbours anti-government sentiment. It is under these circumstances that the present government has come out with some new initiatives to reduce terrorist violence and curb the separatist activities which will assist in implementing the rule of law. For the purpose of this paper, the governmental initiatives have been categorised under the four broad heads; political, military, financial and diplomatic. Sub-initiatives under each of these broad headings are elucidated in the figure below.

Figure 1. Government's Adaptive Initiatives.



Understanding Government Initiatives

In the timeline of the campaign against any externally supported hybrid war, there will be occasions when the elected representatives will be faced with the Hobson's choice to either change the strategy or to continue with the existing one which would be prohibitively expensive in terms of time, effort, resources and reputation. Now is perhaps, as good a time as any for a change in strategy to resolve the J&K imbroglio.

The resolution of the problem in J&K will involve convincing Pakistan, the separatists and the terrorist groups that it is better to surrender their interest and in the case of population, to switch allegiance to the government—than to continue fighting. The J&K insurgency will not end because the last terrorist has been neutralised, rather it will end when the separatists, terrorists and their supporters in the state and across the border realise that continuing with the movement is no longer worthwhile because it is too costly as well as too dangerous and also because success is unlikely.⁹ Unlike a conventional war between states where there are tangible assets which can be targeted for punitive actions, in the case of a proxy war, such as in J&K,

such coercive levers which can be targeted by the establishment are few. In the case of J&K's proxy war with many of the terrorist leaders and their benefactors sitting across the border, the task of coercion becomes much more complicated and challenging. As regards convincing the population to switch allegiance, it would be contingent on the government reaching out with proposals which are acceptable to the public and which will seem to alleviate their real or perceived grievances. It is under these set of conditions that the paper will analyse the government's recent initiatives, prognosticate the future course and possible challenges to the initiatives and offer solutions to the problems if any.

Political Outreach

On August 15, 2017, Prime Minister Narendra Modi surprised some security analysts with his announcement that “na golise, na gaalise, dil jeetenge kashmir ko gale laganese”, even though it was not the first time that the Prime Minister had indicated his intent to widen the canvas of engagement with the stakeholders of J&K.¹⁰ Speaking from the ramparts of the Red Fort, on the occasion of Independence Day, this was perhaps the most forceful articulation of his appreciation that the time was right to start the dialogue process in the state. In pursuance of the PM's initiative, Home Minister Rajnath Singh has made multiple trips to the Valley, met all the stakeholders and even indicated his desire to meet the separatists (but the separatists have refused to meet him). In order to further the government's initiative, Dineshwar Sharma has been appointed as the interlocutor for J&K. Rajnath Singh had recently talked about coming up with a permanent solution to the J&K problem and the appointment of the interlocutor is a step in that direction.¹¹

The political outreach has taken place in the backdrop of the government making its stand clear that it will not talk to Pakistan, if it continues to support terrorists inimical to Indian interests, thereby delinking Pakistan from any possible solution to the issue. The government has simultaneously taken steps to isolate Pakistan diplomatically. The SFs' Operation ALL OUT has been greatly successful in neutralising a large number of terrorists, including their leaders. Multiple initiatives have also been directed towards separatist leadership to marginalise them. Demonetisation and National Investigation Agency (NIA)'s investigation into the financial transactions of some of the separatist leaders has reduced their capability to undertake insurgency-related activities. It is from this position of strength that the government has appointed an interlocutor to 'initiate a sustained interaction and dialogue to understand legitimate aspirations of people of Jammu and Kashmir'.

Dineshwar Sharma, as the government's interlocutor, has a difficult task at hand. His agenda for talks as also a future solution will have to be within the framework of the constitution, which is the stated position of the Government of India. Importantly, the solution has to be in keeping with the realities of the time.¹² Any demand of any stakeholder which is not in line with these two truisms is unlikely to find favour with the government.

Challenges to Government's Political Outreach

Any political outreach to be effective, first and foremost, must have the support of the mainstream parties of the state of J&K. Going by past experience, the political parties of the state have always favoured dialogue with Pakistan as part of the composite arrangement to resolve the Kashmir dispute. The parties believe that this appeases a section of voters in the state. This time around, however, the appointment of the interlocutor has been welcomed by Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti while Omar Abdullah of the National Conference has avoided 'prejudging' the initiative. He has, however, questioned as to who will decide "what are the 'legitimate' aspirations of the people of J&K?" The J&K problem is not an issue that the central government can resolve alone. The J&K state government being 'representative of the people' has a role in furthering the central government's initiatives. The two cannot act at cross purposes. Till date, the two mainstream political parties of the state support the initiative but emerging situation and political expediency may force them to change their stand which will be a major setback to the whole process. The separatists, on the other hand, have rejected any talks with the interlocutor and his appointment has not generated the euphoria in the people of J&K, which one would normally associate with an impending resolution of the crisis. Lastly, Pakistan till date retains the capability to calibrate violence in the state which can be a spoiler in the peace efforts.

How can the Interlocutor make Headway?

The actions of the mainstream political parties would be dictated by their political expediencies and do not, at the moment, present greatest of the challenges to the interlocutor. The government has initiated steps to make the separatists irrelevant and until that happens, it is they who would require his urgent attention. Dineshwar Sharma will also need to work to identify new groups and leaders with whom he can open dialogue and provide new direction to the whole process.

The separatists and the terrorist groups have used the term *azadi* to invoke passion among the masses even though there is no common

understanding of the term. *Azadi* in the context of the dispute has been variously interpreted and could mean anything from independence to autonomy. P. Chidambaram, former Home Minister, has gone on record to suggest that in his understanding, *azadi* is synonymous with autonomy. Speaking to reporters he has said, “Yes...The demand in Kashmir Valley is to respect in letter and spirit of Article 370. And that means that they want greater autonomy. My interactions in Jammu and Kashmir led me to the conclusion that when they ask for *azadi*, most people—I am not saying all—(an) overwhelming majority want autonomy.”¹³ In reaction to the statement, the Prime Minister, on a campaign trail just before the Gujarat Assembly elections, came down heavily on P. Chidambaram for suggesting *azad*’ and said, “We will not make any compromise on the country’s unity and integrity nor will allow anyone to do so.” He went on to say that it was a reprehensible attempt by the Congress to support those calling for *azadi* in Kashmir and this was nothing but “an insult to our soldiers.”¹⁴ Besides this, additional dimension that Dineshwar Sharma as the interlocutor will have to contend with will be the separatists’ demand that the government engages ‘with the Kashmiri people’s political will and aspiration of self-determination’.¹⁵

The two major demands of the separatists, *azadi* and self-determination, will be a major impediment in the progress of the talks; they would also not like to be restricted by the provisions of the Constitution and the ‘political realities of the time’. The separatists, till date, command some following in the Valley and have street presence besides the covert support of the terrorist groups and of Pakistan. For the talks to fructify the interlocutor would either have to negotiate the demands of the separatists or the government will have to make them irrelevant for the talks. In order to marginalise the influence of the separatists for the eventual resolution of the problem, the government will have to come out with a multipronged approach to target their present leadership as also the second and the third rung of leaders who are likely to take over the leadership role in the future. The government has already taken some steps in this direction and they have been discussed in the paper.

Miscellaneous Issues

In addition to the above, the central government in conjunction with the state machinery can and must initiate measures which can help in easing the political tension in the state and improve the governance. No such measure can be regarded as small and insignificant, considering the complexity and the intractable nature of the problem and the suspicion with which most of the stakeholders view each other. The three measures which the state

government can institute include attempts to identify genuinely misguided youth from verifiable miscreants and initiate suitable follow-up actions to book such miscreants under the relevant provisions of the law. Secondly, the government must initiate measures which improve the social harmony among various communities of the state. Lastly, a gradual change in the course curriculum which will help in building social cohesion and invoke a sense of nationalism and pride among the students can be considered. Due care, of course, will have to be taken to avoid inflaming passion of the already aggrieved population.

Military Operations

The J&K problem is a complex issue which has a historical context, external dimension, is political in nature and also suffers from challenges of terrorism and religious radicalism. The national strategy^{16, 17} for J&K will have to take into account all of the above besides India's certain core concerns, such as the constitutional validity of the possible solution. The military strategy will be a consequence of the national strategy and will have to factor the issues that go into the making of the national strategy. With the reduction in the number of terrorists operating in the state, the political dimension of the J&K problem has come to fore and has become one of the more significant issues of the problem. This aspect will need to be factored in the national and military strategies. The political dimension of the J&K problem assumes even greater significance considering the fact that Pakistan has adopted 'agitational politics' as its new strategy. As discussed earlier, Pakistan would make all attempts to destabilise the elected government(s) and if it does succeed it would have partially achieved its objective and would perhaps be in a better position at the negotiating table, if and when there is a dialogue between the two countries on the subject.

Relentless operations by the SFs, since the start of the proxy war, have resulted in the reduction of a number of terrorists to perhaps the lowest ever. Resultantly, Pakistan has changed its J&K strategy in 2008 and the state has witnessed an increase in the number of violent mass protests. In the recent past, there were reports of an increase in the recruitment of local terrorists, mainly in South Kashmir. All this raised some concerns in the establishment. The SFs intensified their operations to regain their dominance over the counter-terrorist grid. After careful assessment of the situation, Operation ALL OUT began with the redeployment of forces in more sensitive areas and went on to tighten the counter-terrorist and counter-infiltration grid. Terrorist leaders were successfully targeted and eliminated. The army also

launched the traditional cordon and search operations warning terrorists and their sympathisers that nothing was 'off the table', should the situation so demand. The measures paid dividends with the highest number of terrorists being neutralised in 2017 compared to those in the last couple of years.¹⁸ Of late, fewer cases of terrorists related incidents are being reported. The security situation is fast returning to a level where the government can pursue its initiatives and Dineshwar Sharma can progress his negotiations with the stakeholders.

Military Strategy: A Case of Winning Battles and Not Winning War

The J&K problem has been festering for over 70 years and the country has been afflicted by proxy war for almost 29 years now. In this period, thousands of terrorists have been killed and today, the number of terrorists operating in the state is the lowest. Infiltration figures and local recruitment are also not a cause of great concern. All this can be attributed to hard work and dedication of the SFs. Despite the success, some of it at a great human cost, the resolution of the J&K issue is nowhere in sight. If anything, the problem has only exacerbated in many other dimensions. The situation can perhaps be best described as a case of winning battles but not war. Killing terrorist commanders or even neutralising groups has not and is unlikely to bring the issue of J&K closer to resolution.¹⁹ The outcome of any military operation, at the tactical level, is decided on objective criteria such as neutralisation of terrorists, destruction of terrorist infrastructure, support bases, logistic installations and the casualties suffered and such factors. In contrast, the resolution of the J&K problem will depend on the outcome of the military campaign at a strategic level and may not depend on any of these factors. Resolution of the problem will be contingent on the perception of the situation and may not be related to facts. Perception is of the effects and not of the effort. The citizens of the country as well as the population of J&K at large and Kashmir in particular will largely decide what will constitute victory and who has won the proxy war launched by Pakistan.²⁰ If the people, including the Kashmiris, are convinced that under no circumstances Pakistan or its proxies can ever force a military decision on India, the government would find it easier to progress political negotiations with the various stakeholders. Therefore, India's military campaign besides neutralising terrorists needs to win the battle of perceptions.

A cost-benefit analysis of Burhan Wani's encounter provides an interesting insight as to how the same operation can have different outcomes at

tactical, operational and at a strategic level and is also indicative of the relative emphasis that the government will have to give to its various initiatives from here on to achieve its political objectives.²¹ Burhan Wani's elimination may have been a tactical or even an operational victory militarily, but in political terms, it certainly cannot be described as a victory. The operation may be considered a remarkable success for the Rashtriya Rifles battalion and the police officials involved, but for many, the state and the central governments lost much as a result of this operation.²² It is also to be understood that tactical victories do not automatically guarantee a strategic or even operational victory. In fact, military history is replete with examples when in the ultimate analysis, countries have lost despite winning many tactical victories.²³ There is much more to victory than tactical and operational success, which are considered as facilitators but not as sufficient conditions by themselves to define victory. In J&K, India and Pakistan are fighting a political battle, so the victory will have to be defined in political terms. "At the strategic level (and the portions of the operational that directly overlap the strategic), public opinion decides who wins or loses and to what extent, based on an assessment of the post-war political conditions. The military situation, as the public understands or interprets, will, of course, play a huge role in the assessment, but the overriding criteria will be political."²⁴ To bring in political and administrative stability in the state will be the next big challenge for the establishment and this is a prerequisite for consolidating the gains made by the SFs in over the last two decades. In order to better integrate the state with the union, political considerations will play a more significant role than military operations. Military victory at any level of war, even a decisive one is no guarantee of peace. The recent examples of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan substantiate the argument that insurgencies continue to plague the country despite decisive military victories. Well-thought-of and considered political measures have a great calming influence on the restive population and at some stage of the campaign, political measures will have to take precedence over all other considerations.

The Indian SFs' strategy of focusing on the elimination of terrorists to re-establish the rule of law has been successful to a very large extent. This is reflective in the amelioration of the political and administrative situation in the state. However, there is a limitation to the number of terrorists that can be neutralised. Pakistan has created safe sanctuaries in its territory where it trains and houses the terrorists. It will, therefore, not be possible to completely and forever eliminate all the terrorists. The terrorist groups do

not pose an existential threat to the state; it is the political destabilisation of the establishment by the enemy which is a far graver threat. Preserving J&K's political establishment, governing institutions, as well as their systems and the processes from the attacks of Pakistan-sponsored state and non-state actors, should be the priority. With the reduction in the number of terrorists and terrorists-related violence, it is now up to the decision makers to employ all other arms of the state that will (as suggested elsewhere in the paper) persuade Pakistan, the separatists and the terrorist groups to surrender their interests and in the case of population, to switch allegiance to the government—than to continue fighting. Financial and diplomatic initiatives of the government, being discussed in the subsequent paragraphs, are a step in the direction.

Financial Initiatives

The only way to defeat the Pakistan-sponsored proxy war in J&K, which has all the elements of a hybrid war, is through the 'whole of government' approach. The military arm of the J&K strategy can and should be employed to restore order which enables the governing functions and political outreach to be undertaken without fear of reprisal from the Pakistani proxies. Since Pakistan is fighting a hybrid war in multiple domains, the J&K strategy has to counter Pakistan through multiple initiatives. The separatists have been furthering their agenda through various media, including the social media and more importantly through the network of mosques. The change in the narrative of J&K movement from *azadi* to 'merger with Pakistan' and possible radicalisation of the Kashmiri society is a result of sustained efforts of the separatists, which would not have been possible without adequate financing from various sources. The government has realised the gravity of the situation and the NIA has initiated an investigation into the financial dealings of some of the separatists. In November 2016, the government also announced demonetisation of high-value currency. The two measures had an immediate impact on the security situation of the state. However, will the measures have any long-term impact and how will they help resolve the J&K imbroglio is the question which needs to be answered.²⁵

Demonetisation

On November 08, 2016, the government in a sudden and surprising move announced a currency reform measure to demonetise high-value denomination notes of Rs. 500 and Rs. 1000. This measure was instituted to curb black money hoarding and eliminate fake currency from circulation. In addition, the

reform measure also targeted the separatists and the terrorists operating in J&K and elsewhere in the country. These groups are known to amass money through extortion, taxation, use of fake currency,²⁶ investment in real estate and jewellery and transfer through 'hawala' channels, and so forth. Quite early, after the implementation of the measure, it became apparent that the measure will have limited impact in short to medium term and the groups were likely to recuperate fast since they have alternate sources of income.²⁷

Terror finance in India follows 'hybrid model', which includes funding from within and outside the country, employing a variety of means to collect funds. Demonetisation would have negatively impacted the cash reserves of the groups, although the money invested in real estate and jewellery would not have been affected as adversely. It is likely that the money invested in real estate and jewellery would suffer from liquidity crisis in short to medium term; however, it may benefit the groups in the long run. The cross-border trade would have suffered a limited negative impact considering the low volume of trade with Pakistan. 'Hawala' transactions are likely to have been impacted the most. It is apparent from the above that demonetisation, by itself, would have had limited impact on terror financing and more measures and sustained efforts are required to have a tangible impact to take counterterrorism efforts forward.²⁸

NIA's Financial Offensive against Separatists

Consequent to an expose on the illegal financial activities of some of the separatist leaders by a media channel, the NIA has initiated an investigation, thereby attempting to restrict the scope of the activities of these leaders. Lt Gen Ata Hasnain, former General Officer Commanding 15 Corps, opines:-²⁹

The National Investigation Agency's serious investigation is already leading to loss of Separatist effectiveness. Sustained efforts at making financing almost impossible will prevent the supply of military wherewithal, draw away potential stone throwers, compromise the rising strength of vigilantes in rural mosques and force LoC infiltration guides out of business. A possible 50percent reduction in overall antisocial activity will be possible over the next few months but sustainability is the key.

For years, the role finance played in the sustenance of terrorist violence and anti-national activities in Kashmir were known but 'there appeared to be tremendous reluctance to act against these'.³⁰ So when the government announced demonetisation and investigation into the financial activities

of some of the separatists, it affected the separatists' programmes and there was an immediate reduction in the number of mass mobilisation and terrorists-related incidents. Demonetisation, however, is likely to have a limited impact if follow-up actions are not taken and the various groups are likely to recover from the effect of the initiative. The NIA's financial offensive against certain separatists, on the other hand, seems to have discredited the Hurriyat leadership and has restricted their space for political manoeuvring. The two financial initiatives are a step in the right direction but are not adequate to have a long-term tangible effect on the proxy war situation in the state. It is incumbent upon the government to implement additional measures such as those which will create electronic trails of transactions, have greater control over the non-governmental organisations (related to the separatists and terrorist groups), bring greater fiscal transparency in their working and maintain a continuous pressure on the various groups.

Diplomatic Initiative

Terrorism in J&K is supported politically, militarily, financially and diplomatically by Pakistan. This problem cannot be resolved in India's favour unless Pakistan is forced to cut-off all forms of support to anti-India groups operating in the state. To that end, India has been consistent in raising its concerns regarding the support Pakistan is providing to the terrorists and the separatists. Some of the recent initiatives of the government have started to pay dividends and there are reasons to believe that Pakistan has started to feel the heat of international condemnation and isolation. Some Pakistani commentators have also concluded that Pakistan is isolated and terrorism emanating from Pakistan is the real cause of its diplomatic isolation.³¹ The 19th South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation summit scheduled to be held in Islamabad was cancelled due to four member countries taking a common position that state-sponsored terrorism cannot be dealt with only at the bilateral level. This was a serious diplomatic blow to Pakistan and was reflective of the success of India's diplomatic campaign. India's concerns were recognised by the United States also when James Mattis, Defence Secretary, testifying in front of the House Armed Services Committee on October 03, 2017, referred to his visit to India and said that, "he recognised the threat it faces from across the border." He also highlighted India's role in bringing stability to the region. Mattis further confirmed that, the Inter-Services Intelligence has connections with terrorist groups and that there are 'safe havens' in Pakistan.³²

There is, however, a flip side to the issue, countries do not make policies and conduct diplomacy on altruistic motives. They are made to suit national

interests. This is true for all countries around the world. Nevertheless, India must continue its attempt to isolate Pakistan in the international forum. Pakistan, besides being a nuclear power, has successfully leveraged its location to extract benefits from all major leading powers of the world, mainly from China and the United States. The recent being the Chinese investment in the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor.³³ Both China and the United States have interests that can only be realised with the support of Pakistan. It is, therefore, an uphill task for India to fully isolate Pakistan that it starts doing India's bidding. This was quite evident in the aftermath of the Uri terror attack when there was, 'measured expression of support for India' from most of the countries around the world. In their initial statements, 'most countries refrained from either referring to the assault as an act of cross-border terrorism or directly linking Pakistan to it'.³⁴

The idea that India will be able to isolate Pakistan on the ground that it supports and sponsors terrorism, in India and elsewhere, is perhaps disingenuous, considering the fact that there is no consensus on the definition of terrorism. Pakistan claims to be a victim of terrorism and has been a US ally in its Global War on Terror. Results of past efforts to isolate countries in the comity of nations are not very encouraging. It is not easy to take actions against countries like Pakistan, which are useful to some of the most advanced and economic powerhouses of the world. This is not to suggest that India should stop its diplomatic offensive, rather India should come out with newer and more innovative ways to isolate and pressurise Pakistan and make a common cause with countries which are victims of Pakistan-sponsored terrorism. This would provide some teeth to India's J&K strategy.

Conclusion

One of the challenging aspects of making and executing strategy for J&K is how to employ all instruments of state power on merit and not merely to enhance the efficacy of kinetic operations. It is essential that none of the governmental initiatives are treated as an appendage of political or military strategy and whose value is measured merely in terms of their ability to facilitate or enhance traditional combat functions. A successful strategy for J&K will require multiple initiatives, each having their respective importance at different stages of the campaign. All initiatives must seek to reduce the capability of the terrorists and their supporters and sympathisers, as also to dominate the battle of perception and beliefs.³⁵ The focus of Indian establishment has largely been to resolve the issue through political and military means and not much attention has been paid to other instrumentalities

available with the government. Lately, some attempts have been made to target terrorists, separatists and Pakistan using instruments other than political and military. It is essential that newer and innovative measures are considered and implemented to that end.

India's fight against Pakistan-sponsored proxy war will be a prolonged conflict, requiring both patience and 'adaptive response'—one that is based on past experience, including failures and one that seizes the opportunity offered by emerging situations. Pakistan's proxy war cannot be won through 'shock and awe' operations or any other doctrinal concept which predicts a quick victory. Defeating Pakistan will require a sustained effort over decades and will have to be fought in multiple domains. The government's initiatives are a step in the right direction but have to be consistent in its objective and adaptive in response. There is no quick fix solution and targeting Pakistan in multiple domains would go a long way in resolving the issue of J&K in India's favour.

Notes

1. The Amarnath land transfer row of 2008 snowballed into some of the biggest pro-independence demonstrations in Kashmir since an insurgency broke out in 1989. The protests and the consequent actions by the Security Forces (SFs) resulted in the death of over 30 protestors and more than a thousand were wounded. Parthasarathy reporting in 2010 writes, "While stone pelting has become a routine feature of street protests in Srinagar since the summer of 2008, it had revived with particular intensity after April, when three youths were alleged to have been killed in a fake encounter in Machhil. The accidental death of a schoolboy, Tufail Mattoo, as a result of tear-gas shelling on June 11 was the apparent flashpoint, setting the Valley afire as mass protests erupted all over." See Malini Parthasarathy, "Understanding Kashmir's stone pelters," *The Hindu*, (August 04, 2010). <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/understanding-kashmirs-stone-pelters/article550058.ece>, accessed on August 05, 2016. Although, since the last couple of months there have not been many violent protests, it is not because peace has returned to Kashmir, rather it can be attributed to lowering of the 'agitation stamina' of the local population. Pakistan retains the capability to calibrate mob violence at will.
2. Husain Haqqani writing about Pakistan's position on Kashmir states, "Pakistan assumed that Kashmir would become part of Pakistan by the logic of Partition. It did not prepare to secure the state's accession and tried to make up for that error through the use of force. The invasion of Kashmir by tribal raiders played into India's hands, giving India the pretext to incorporate the state. Since then, India has strategically made and broken promises with Kashmiris about self-determination and special status. It managed to ride through UN demands for a plebiscite with a series of similar premeditated steps. Pakistan still lacks an endgame for Kashmir, acting emotionally and reacting to India's deliberate actions with military incursions, terrorism and appeals for international support that increasingly fall on deaf ears." See Husain Haqqani, *India Vs Pakistan Why Can't We Just be Friends?* (New Delhi: Juggernaut Books, 2016), pp. 64–65.
3. At the turn of this century, there were approximately 2000 terrorists operating in the Kashmir valley. Ajai Shukla writes in his column, "now according to J&K Police and army figures, there are just 147 armed militants active in Kashmir." See Ajai Shukla, "As Militancy

Wanes Violent Public Protests Rise,” *Business Standard*, New Delhi, August 03, 2016. Since August 2016, there have been reports of some new recruitment of terrorists, especially in South Kashmir, but the resultant figures are nowhere close to what they were in the early years of the millennium.

4. There is an ongoing debate among the J&K watchers whether the Kashmiri society has become radicalised or not. Nandita Haksar, in her book, mentions that even Afzal Guru had expressed his concerns in his letters to friends and to the author about the growth of radical Islam. See Nandita Haksar, *The Many Faces of Kashmiri Nationalism* (New Delhi: Speaking Tiger, 2015), pp.xv.
5. See Note 3 above.
6. Operations such as, cordon and search of one or multiple villages, night searches of houses, stringent population control measures, and so forth, are not conducted as a matter of routine. Greater emphasis on the issues of human rights and proliferation of news media, including social media, has imposed caution on the SFs’ operations.
7. Since July 2016, the use of pellet guns has become a point of contention, to the extent that the Home Minister, Rajnath Singh, was forced to issue a statement. The Supreme Court too directed the government to consider alternatives to the pellet guns. The issue of the use of pellet guns was repeatedly flagged by many and had put the government on the defensive. Also, a new dimension was added to the separatist movement in Jammu and Kashmir when a mainstream politician, Iftikhar Misgar of the National Conference, publicly renounced mainstream politics and pledged support to separatism.
8. On June 23, 2017, Deputy Superintendent of Police Mohammed Ayub Pandith was lynched by a mob outside Srinagar’s main mosque, while Lt. Umar Fayaz was kidnapped and killed by terrorists on the night of May 8/9, 2017.
9. See Alan J. Vick et al., “Air Power in the New Counterinsurgency Era,” *RAND Corporation*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/mg509af.12>, accessed on December 18, 2017, pp. 64–66.
10. Addressing the nation through his monthly radio broadcast *Mann ki Baat*, the Prime Minister had indicated his intent to initiate dialogue in order to find solution to the Kashmir problem. He had said, “Unity and affection were the pivotal words during my interaction with other political parties on the Kashmir issue. Those who are inciting the Kashmiri youth for indulging in violent clashes and stonepelting will have to answer someday and those who have died in the ongoing phase of unrest in Kashmir are Indians.” See Santosh Chaubey, “Modi and Mehbooba must be on same page to solve Kashmir problem,” *Dailyo*, (August 29, 2016), <https://www.dailyo.in/politics/kashmir-narendra-modi-mehbooba-mufti-pakistan-balochistan-burhan-wani/story/1/12637.html>, accessed on December 15, 2017. Interacting with a 30-member delegation of the All Jammu and Kashmir Panchayat Conference, an apex body of Panchayat leaders representing 4000 village Panchayats of the state, “Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday, laid stress on a humanitarian approach to address problems concerning Jammu and Kashmir and said ‘Vikas’ (development) and ‘Vishwas’ (trust) will be the cornerstones of the central government’s development initiatives for the state hit by the unrest. He said growth and development of Jammu and Kashmir are high on his agenda, particularly the development of villages where a majority of people live.” See PTI, “Development, trust to be cornerstones of initiatives for Jammu & Kashmir: Modi,” (November 05, 2016). <http://www.livemint.com/Politics/cdx8O9EnMipDop4pzNhljf/Development-trust-to-be-cornerstones-of-initiatives-for-Jam.html>, accessed on December 15, 2017.
11. See ET Bureau, “Centre appoints former IB chief as interlocutor for Kashmir,” (October 24, 2017). http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/61187630.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst, accessed on December 18, 2017.

12. *Italic* is for emphasis. This is my understanding of the situation based on the statements made by various political parties and some government functionaries. One of the possible solutions for the J and K imbroglio, which perhaps will find acceptance among the separatists and a large section of the population in Kashmir valley, relates to 'autonomy as guaranteed by Article 370 of the constitution'. Over the years, many of the original provisions of the Article have been 'diluted'. All governments have shied away from making their stand clear on the 'autonomy debate.' Barring a few individuals, no government in the centre has publicly supported the idea to even discuss issues related to the autonomy, self-rule or any such concession for the state of Jammu and Kashmir. On the other hand, some political parties have publicly opined on the need to do away with Article 370 and for a greater merger of the state with the rest of the country. Issues related to Article 370 and a greater autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir are emotive and politically sensitive issues for the country's polity. Any possible solution which talks of 'autonomy' is unlikely to be accepted by the government.
13. See Ali Ahmed, "The Kashmir Charade This Winter," *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 52, no. 47, (November 25, 2017). <http://www.epw.in/journal/2017/47/strategic-affairs/kashmir-charade-winter.html>, accessed on December 15, 2017. Also see PTI, "Chidambaram says PM Modi 'imagining a ghost' on J-K autonomy issue", (October 29, 2017). <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/chidambaram-says-pm-modi-imagining-a-ghost-on-j-k-autonomy-issue-4912439/>, accessed on December 19, 2017.
14. *Ibid.*
15. PTI, "Appointment of Representative on J&K Is Time-buying Tactic: Separatists," *Press Trust of India*, (October 31, 2017). http://www.ptinews.com/news/9195374_Appointment-of-representative-on-j-amp-K-is-time-buying-tactic--Separatists, accessed on December 19, 2017.
16. After the Industrial and the French Revolution and the onset of the total wars, the understanding of the concept of strategy underwent a major transformation. The term 'policy' as defined by Clausewitz was replaced by 'national strategy.' Admiral Eccles has defined the concept of national strategy as "the comprehensive direction of all the elements of the national power to achieve the national objectives." See Henry Effingham Eccles, *Military Power in a Free Society* (Newport, Rhode Island: Naval War College Press, 1979), pp. 70.
17. The US Department of Defense is more explicit, defining the national strategy as the "art and science of developing and using the political, economic and psychological powers of a nation, together with its armed forces during peace and war, to secure national objectives." See David Jablonsky, "Why is Strategy Difficult?," in J. Boone Bartholomees, Jr. ed., *Theory of War and Strategy Volume I*, 4th ed., (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: US Army War College, 2010), pp. 9.
18. As per the last count, over 220 terrorists have been neutralised in 2017 in Jammu and Kashmir. The number of terrorists neutralised in 2017 are more than in any recent years. The SFs have also been successful in eliminating some of the important terrorist leaders to include Burhan Wani.
19. "Elimination of militants does not always lead to elimination of militancy. Nor is the end of militancy synonymous with the end of alienation." See Balraj Puri, "Post-Militancy Scenario in Kashmir," *Economic and Political Weekly* vol. 30, no. 38, 1995, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4403235>, accessed on December 05, 2017, pp. 2354.
20. Bartholomees' views on the subject of victory have been taken as a guide to analyse the situation obtaining in Jammu and Kashmir. See J. Boone Bartholomees, Jr., "A Theory of Victory," in J. Boone Bartholomees, Jr. ed., *Theory of War and Strategy Volume I*, 4th edition, (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: US Army War College, 2010), pp. 79–94.
21. Burhan Wani was amongst the wanted terrorists in Kashmir Valley, credited with having created

- a wave of what is called New Militancy in South Kashmir. His Robin Hood image inspired a new phenomenon: the attempted protection of terrorists by local mobs at encounter sites and large-scale eulogising of even neutralised Pakistani terrorists at their funerals. In just five years, Burhan Wani managed to create a band of 60–70 young locally recruited terrorists. Many were well-educated and technically proficient in exploiting social media for their cause. On July 08, Burhan Wani was killed in a joint operation by SFs in the Kokernag area of South Kashmir. See Syed Ata Hasnain, “Burhan Wani’s Killing And Its Aftermath,” *Swarajya*, (July 09, 2016). <http://swarajyamag.com/politics/burhan-wanis-killing-and-its-aftermath#.V4DSEfnSSps.twitter>, accessed on August 05, 2016.
22. Opining on the subject of victory, Liddell Hart had articulated that a victory is useless if it breaks the winner’s economy or military or society. Basil Henry Liddell Hart, *Strategy* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1954, reprint 1967), pp. 366–370.
 23. The French in Algeria and the United States in Vietnam are the cases in point. Col. Harry Summers, while talking to a North Vietnamese Officer about the war, commented that the United States had won all the battles. To this, the North Vietnamese replied, “that may be so, but it is also irrelevant.” Harry G. Summers, Jr., *On Strategy: The Vietnam in Context*, Carlisle Barracks (Pennsylvania: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, fifth printing, 1989), p. 1.
 24. Boone J. Bartholomees, Jr., op. cit., p. 89.
 25. Despite being a victim of terrorism since the 1950s, India enacted antiterrorist financing legislation only in 2010 by amending the Prevention of Money Laundering rules. In 2013, Fake Indian Currency Note was included in the ambit of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act making counterfeiting and its circulation a terrorism-related offence. This has allowed NIA, set up in 2008 and India’s premier Counterterrorism Law Enforcement Agency, to investigate offences related to the financing of terrorism. See Shweta Desai, “Demonetization is a body blow, not a death knell for terror funding,” *DNA*, December 03, 2016.
 26. “As per the study done by the Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata, in 2015, the only concrete work done on the subject, at any given point in time Rs. 400 crore worth of fake notes were in circulation in the economy. This is merely 0.025 percent of the total budget outlay of Rs. 19.7 lakh crore as announced this fiscal.” The Indian Statistical Institute, based on their study, also came to the conclusion that “Rs. 70 crore fake notes were pumped into the economy every year.” See Vijaita Singh and Dinakar Peri, “Demonetisation will hit terror financing hard,” *The Hindu*, December 02, 2016.
 27. Shri Hansraj Gangaram Ahir, Ministry of State Home Affairs, replying to a question in Lok Sabha stated that as per the data provided by National Crime Records Bureau, 2.60 lakhs of fake currency notes were seized in Jammu and Kashmir after demonetisation from November 09, 2016 to July 14, 2017. See Press Information Bureau, Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, July 25, 2017.
 28. For this and greater analysis of the impact of demonetisation on terror activities, see Vivek Chadha, “Demonetisation and Beyond: Addressing the Finance of Terrorism,” *IDSA Policy Brief*, (November 18, 2016). https://idsa.in/policybrief/demonetisation-and-beyond-addressing-the-finance-of-terrorism_vchadha_181116, accessed on December 10, 2017.
 29. Lt. Gen. (Retd) Syed Ata Hasnain, “Handling J&K: What is Right and What More Needs To Be Done?,” *IPCS*, (July 31, 2017). <http://www.ipcs.org/article/india/handling-jk-what-is-right-and-what-more-needs-to-5333.html>, accessed on December 06, 2017.
 30. Ibid.
 31. Munir Akram, “Is Pakistan Isolated?,” *Dawn*, August 07, 2016.
 32. Geeta Mohan, “US puts pressure on Pakistan with threat of ‘diplomatic and economic isolation’ if attitude to fight against terror fails to change,” *Mail Online India*, October 04, 2017.

33. China has unveiled one of the greatest infrastructure projects ever to be conceived by any country—the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). China Pakistan Economic Corridor is a part of the BRI project and runs through Pakistan. “BRI spans some 65 countries in Asia, Africa and Europe covering 70 percent of the world population, threequarters of its energy resources, a quarter of goods and services and 28 percent of global GDP (\$21 trillion). Beijing’s rationale appears to be clear: these are large, resource-rich nations in close proximity to it with a severe infrastructure deficit, which China has the resources and expertise to redress. By boosting connectivity, China can hope to spur growth in the short term, gain access to valuable natural resources in the mid-term and create new booming markets for its goods into the extended future.” See Ashok Sajjanhar, “China’s Belt and Road Initiative: Prospects and Pitfalls,” *IDS Comment*, (November 28, 2017). https://idsa.in/idsacomments/china-belt-and-road-initiative_asajjanhar_281117, accessed on December 10, 2017.
34. See Elizabeth Roche, “Uri terror attack: Diplomatic isolation of Pakistan an uphill task,” *Livemint*, September 20, 2016. The United States and United Kingdom condemned the act in very generic terms and did not mention Pakistan by name. France, without mentioning Pakistan, said action should be taken against terrorist groups targeting India, particularly Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed and HizbulMujahideen.
35. See Alan J. Vick et al., op.cit., pp. 63–64.

