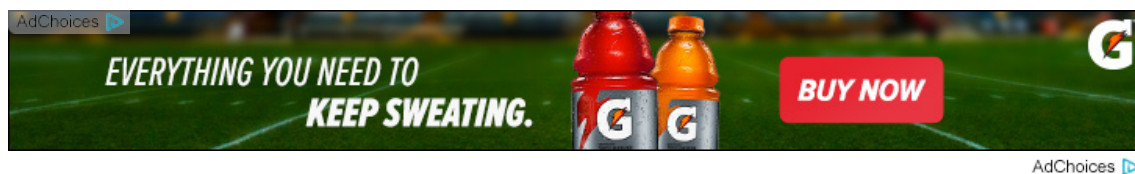


August 12, 2015

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Assistant Professor, Georgetown University's Security Studies Program

Pakistan Tests Modi's Mettle With Gurdaspur Terror Attack

Posted: 08/04/2015 10:07 am EDT | Updated: 08/04/2015 10:59 am EDT



MUMBAI -- When it was obvious that Narendra Modi would become India's prime minister, Pakistan grew alarmed. Modi's party, the Bharatiya Janata Party, is the party that gave India its nuclear status. Indians voted for Modi and the brave India he promised in hopes that his government would not indulge Pakistani predations, and punish them instead.

Pakistan has developed one core strategy in dealing with India over the decades: deploy Islamist militants to attack India while seeking cover from retaliation under its nuclear weapons. It should be noted that while Pakistan is most notorious for supporting Islamist terrorists, it also supports religious and ethnic insurgencies within India as well. Pakistan not only seeks to use terrorism to illegitimately acquire territory in Indian Kashmir, it also wants to resist India's rise in the international system. Until the Modi administration, Pakistan has remained fairly confident that India will not respond militarily to punish Pakistan for its state-sponsored terrorism or to deter it from doing so in the future.

Modi's election prompted Pakistan to wonder how India will respond to a bold Pakistan-backed terrorist attack. Would it follow the path of the previous prime minister, Manmohan Singh, and defuse public demands for revenge in effort to avoiding any skirmish with Pakistan that would impede India's economic growth? Or would it embrace a more hawkish approach that would punish Pakistan?

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Would a Modi-led government embrace a more hawkish approach that would punish Pakistan?

Last week, Pakistan tested the water by dispatching three terrorists into Gurdaspur via the Ravi River. The attackers killed seven people, including the Punjab state police superintendent, before the three themselves were killed. Modi's government has been fairly quiet, ostensibly due to the mourning period to commemorate the life of India's president, Abdul Kalam, who passed away on the same day as the attack. Despite the deafening silence, Pakistanis, Indians and the global public are anxious to see how India responds.

This is not the first time that Pakistan has sought to test Modi's mettle: the first time it did so was in May 2014, before Modi had been sworn in. On that occasion, Pakistani terrorists attacked the Indian consulate in Herat, Afghanistan. Analysts believed that the Herat attackers were either associated with Lashkar-e-Taiba, now operating under the moniker "Jamaat-ud-Dawa," or the Haqqani network, both of which operate at the behest of the ISI, Pakistan's intelligence agency. Pakistan has backed several terrorist attacks on Indian personnel and facilities in Afghanistan in effort to compel India to maintain a small footprint in Afghanistan, fearing that India will use its presence there to support militants and terrorists operating in Pakistan.

Then, in June, India's government announced that it had staged a raid into Myanmar's territory to pursue militants who had ambushed an army convoy in Manipur that killed 20 security personnel. India was making it clear that it will not tolerate its neighbors harboring terrorists who act against India. Pakistan, understanding that the message was directed at them, retorted that Pakistan is not Myanmar and brandished various nuclear threats.

Why Gurdaspur?

The attack on Gurdaspur is an important escalation by Pakistan. It is the first attack during the Modi government's tenure that has taken place outside of Jammu and Kashmir, the territory that Pakistan seeks to wrest from India. Yet Gurdaspur, a middling third-tier city that will not capture the attention of India's public for long, does not have the provocation power of, say, an attack on Delhi or Mumbai. It is unlikely, in the minds of Pakistanis, that India would risk war for Gurdaspur. However, it is almost certain that a tepid response to the Gurdaspur attack will most likely invite more ambitious attacks on high-value targets within India. This moment harkens back to an event in 1965 when Indian and Pakistani troops confronted each other in the Rann of Kutch. Pakistan interpreted India's lackluster riposte as a signal of weaknesses and thus launched a more aggressive attack in Kashmir later that year. Pakistan, in that case, miscalculated. India responded by opening a new front along the international border in the Punjab.

Gurdaspur, apart from being an important signal of Pakistani escalation, is a target laden with historical and symbolic significance. Historically, it animates a grudge that Pakistan has nursed since partition: namely, that Muslim-majority *tehsils* from Gurdaspur went to India in connivance with the British to facilitate India's acquisition of Kashmir. Few Pakistanis ever concede that not all of Gurdaspur went to India -- Pakistan got Shakargarh. Pakistan asserts that this allocation of "Gurdaspur district" permitted India to move troops into Kashmir. Of course Pakistanis conveniently omit that these districts were allocated to India instead of Pakistan likely due to the large population of Sikhs there, and Pakistanis also fail to acknowledge that Pathankot -- with a Hindu majority and close ties to Kashmir -- would have gone to India in any event. Symbolically, the "original sin of Gurdaspur" animates Pakistani military, militant and popular thinking about India.

“

Gurdaspur is a target laden with historical and symbolic significance; it animates Pakistani military, militant and popular thinking about India.

Gurdaspur is also important because it brings up memories of those bloody days of a terror campaign waged by Sikh militants who committed wanton acts of violence in the guise of an ethno-religious campaign to secure an independent Sikh state known variously as Sikhistan or Khalistan. The so-called "Khalistani militants" enjoyed significant support from Pakistan. In fact, in 1993, I met a Khalistani hijacker who had taken a passenger plane from Delhi, destined for Amritsar and forced it land in Lahore. That hijacker was residing in a prominent Sikh temple (Gurdwara) across from Lahore's famous fort.

Over the years Khalistani activists have continued to enjoy sanctuary in Pakistan. A few weeks ago, the head of the committee that oversees Sikh shrines in Pakistan met with Hafiz Saeed, the Jamaat-ud-Dawa leader and mastermind of the November 2008 terror attacks in Mumbai. Equally disconcerting, Khalistan's most generous support lies in the diaspora communities of Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States where they can freely interact with ISI officials should they desire.

In the weeks prior to the Gurdaspur attack, #Khalistan was trending on social media. Reports of t-shirts and posters celebrating Sant Bhindranwale in India's Punjab have further raised concern about a resurgent Khalistan movement. Bhindranwale was a prominent Sikh militant leader who was killed in 1984 in an Indian army operation against the Golden Temple, Sikhism's most sacred shrine. Bhindranwale had fortified the shrine and used it as a military base from which his lieutenants conducted their terror campaign.

“

There is reason to believe that Pakistan seeks to reopen the Punjab as a new theater of terrorism.

There is reason to believe that Pakistan seeks to reopen the Punjab as a new theater of terrorism. Pakistan is anxious to persuade militants to stop fighting Pakistanis and resume the fight in India and Afghanistan. To this end, Pakistan has rejuvenated Jaish-e-Mohammad in effort to lure fellow Deobandis out of the Pakistani Taliban and refocus on India. Lashkar-e-Taiba's cadres are also anxious to re-engage in India.

To add to India's concerns about the Punjab, the state faces a rampant drug problem which creates numerous opportunities for militant-criminal-trafficking collusion.

Despite tense developments this summer, peaceniks heralded new portents for South Asian peace after Modi met his Pakistani counterpart, Nawaz Sharif, in Russia and made a much-celebrated agreement on a definition of terrorism. This, however, would be of little comfort to Indian victims of Gurdaspur.

Optimism for a breakthrough was misplaced for several reasons. First, Nawaz Sharif does not hold any lever of power that matters. Even if Sharif wants peace himself -- a questionable assertion -- he is not the Sharif that matters: Pakistan's army chief Raheel Sharif is the one in charge. Pakistan's army has no incentive to normalize relations with India; rather, it wants to protect its preeminent hold upon the state, its resources and its people, all of which is predicated upon an interminable, civilizational war with "Hindu India."

Second, such meetings can be productive if there is some glimmer of joint preferences. Alas, there is little evidence of any common ground. Pakistan wants to change the status quo through terrorism backed by nuclear proliferation, while India wants to ratify the status quo and get on with the business of being a rising power. The Gurdaspur attack proves Pakistan's men on horseback do not want peace with India. The attack was a clever move.

“

The Gurdaspur attack proves Pakistan's men on horseback do not want peace with India.

So far, Pakistan has used terrorism under its nuclear umbrella because it is cheap, effective, difficult to deter and ultimately successful in prompting an international chorus to call for "resolving the Indo-Pakistan problem."

Now What?

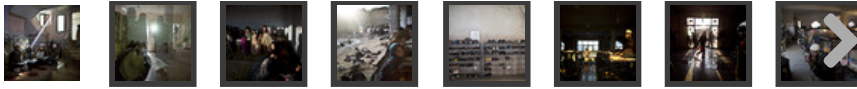
If India fails to respond, it will no doubt court further Pakistani adventurism. After the bust-up in Myanmar, a failure to take decisive action to punish Pakistan will mean that Pakistan has essentially called India's bluff.

India has options that include political, diplomatic, economic and military modes of redress. Diplomatically, it can downgrade Pakistan's mission or even oust Pakistan's ambassador. India can engage in economic sabotage. Military options that are proportionate include air raids on terror camps in Pakistan-administered Kashmir from aircraft safely within Indian airspace. These are all options at the lower end of the spectrum.

Politically, India must change the narrative about this conflict with its major partners. India would be behooved to tell its international backers bluntly that there is no "India-Pakistan problem" -- only a Pakistan problem. India's partners should support India in its application of power and join hands to force Pakistan to abandon terror under a nuclear umbrella as tools of foreign policy rather than, as is the case, finding ways of excusing Pakistan's behavior in order to continue writing checks to Islamabad.

Pakistan is not just India's problem. It's time the international community understood this and began acting accordingly.





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Conversations

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Nick Farahshah · Works at Business Owner

Writer is very biased toward Pakistan. Pakistan did not do the attack in Gurdaspur. This attack was done by RAW. Pakistan is already involve in FATA and Balochistan. Pakistan can't afford to open a new front.. India is sheling across the ceasefire line in Kashmir and killing Pakistani civilians. Today's Pakistan is not a Pakistan of 1971. I dare India to attack Pakistan. Christine Fair you are attacking Pakistan for not recognizing the illigitimate of Israel. Pakistan was a member of Seato an Cento and yet USA supported India. You are anti Pakistan and Islam phobist.

Like · Reply · 164 · Aug 4, 2015 11:02am



Tej Prakash · Rockville, Maryland

U r an l--t.

Like · Reply · 28 · Aug 4, 2015 11:12am



Muthukumar Ponnambalam · Database Administrator at Valassis

Of course, this is how the response of a low-life creature whose brain was affected by leprosy.

Like · Reply · 29 · Aug 4, 2015 12:00pm



Arshad Ahmad · Magadh University

Tej Prakash, you are absolutely right about the author of this article.

Like · Reply · 22 · Aug 4, 2015 12:24pm

[Show 10 more replies in this thread](#)



Raja Tahir

One of the most stupid writer acting like a spy writer and living in a dream land

Like · Reply · 65 · Aug 4, 2015 11:14am



Sarmad Mirza · Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea

Very one sided and poor on facts. Writer need to study more indo pak history and wars of 1958, 1965, 1971 and present role of india in Balochistan and Afghanistan or at least read international Human right violation reports on India. India do not need terrorists from outside while have such a infinte history of suppressing minorities.

Like · Reply · 50 · Aug 4, 2015 11:22am



Manish Patel · University of Houston

what history?

Like · Reply · 11 · Aug 4, 2015 12:36pm



Chinmay Nagarkar · Maharashtra Institute of Technology

Proof that pakistan supports terrorists:
http://www.dailymotion.com/.../x2md0vr_ex-dg-isi-gen-asad...
<http://www.dawn.com/news/1198061>

Like · Reply · 4 · Aug 4, 2015 2:08pm



Rahul Sharma · Senior Research Scientist at Sony Analytics



Kanui Sharma · Senior Research Scientist at Stry Analytics

//Writer need to study more indo pak history and wars of 1958, 1965, 1971 and present role of india in Balochistan and Afghanistan or at least read international Human right violation reports on India...// - Perhaps you need to pick her excellent book on the subject(WARNING: guaranteed to cause you further discomfort if you are allergic to facts) - <http://www.amazon.in/Fighting-End-The.../dp/0199892709>

Like · Reply · 11 · Aug 4, 2015 4:28pm

[Show 9 more replies in this thread](#)



Mike Best · San Francisco, California

Cowardlly!

Why is Pakistan so obsessed with Terror ? This despite the fact that its own people are getting slaughtered every day!

Its time for the World to come together and force Pak to change for better!

Like · Reply · 40 · Aug 4, 2015 11:43am



Adnan Mazher Khan · Karachi, Pakistan

Mike Best - It is wrong and I do not agree to it. We have been the worst affectees of terror and our 40,000 have died in just 3 years due terror activities.

Like · Reply · 27 · Aug 4, 2015 1:04pm



Carlos Diaz · Marketing Manager at Urban By Design

Adnan Mazher Khan

How can you not agree to it when you have been the worst affected by terrorism? The government supports terrorism by the very fact you have been the worst affected by it.

Like · Reply · 15 · Aug 4, 2015 2:26pm



Melissa Khan · Iqra University

Don't worry, Pakistan has broken the terrorist funding from RAW and other international agencies. So keep your notions to yourself, I can bet if China starts to funds American citizens for all the wrong cause then people would speak the same way for USA. Keep your notions in your tiny inch by inch head and always remember, that Talibans were first created by USA to counter Russian invasion of Afghanistan. Finally, it is America who wants her say in opposite side of globe not Iran or Pakistan.

Like · Reply · 36 · Aug 4, 2015 4:09pm

[Show 10 more replies in this thread](#)



Sree Pulapaka

Congratulations to the author for a well researched narrative. The comments below speak to the mind of Pakistanis. There is no reasonableness in Pakistan. Unfortunately, the country is a huge suicide bomber ready to take out India and the world with it.

Like · Reply · 31 · Aug 4, 2015 11:45am



Danial Durrani · Islamabad, Pakistan

ur another freakin indian on the streets like many o f your millions in poverty n slums. try fixing that issues living in dirt on the dirty filthy streets of india we give a rats ass about india couldnt care less, i dont even like talking to a freakin indian shudar...haha

Like · Reply · 14 · Aug 4, 2015 4:10pm



Nick Farahshah · Works at Business Owner

Christine if for rent. I like to know that how much she got paid to right article.

Like · Reply · 10 · Aug 4, 2015 11:01pm



Able Table

Sree Pulapaka:GAPV SE KAHQ HUM HINDI HAIN AIIR MEREV

See Palapala.GARV SE KATO HON HINDU HAN AOR MERE
SPERM SE GARBH VATI HO JAO!!!!!!

Like · Reply · Aug 5, 2015 1:59am

[Show 4 more replies in this thread](#)



Kamran Ahmad · Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan

Sorry excuse for journalism. How can she blame it on Pakistan so openly without any evidence or proof. The way she has written article it seems that Pakistan as a country has formally launched an attack on Gurdaspur. Don't know what is cooking in her mind

Like · Reply · 27 · Aug 4, 2015 11:26am



Muthukumar Ponnambalam · Database Administrator at Valassis

Proof ? My a** ! Do you need a mirror to check your wound on your hand ?

Like · Reply · 13 · Aug 4, 2015 12:02pm



Kamran Ahmad · Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan

You are only giving a response based on biasedness towards Pakistan in your mind. From that perspective I can also say that all the terrorism in Pakistan is done by India but I will not. And it does not prove that you are right and I am wrong.

Like · Reply · 20 · Aug 4, 2015 12:19pm



Chinmay Nagarkar · Maharashtra Institute of Technology

Proof that pakistan supports terrorists:
http://www.dailymotion.com/.../x2md0vr_ex-dg-isi-gen-asad...
<http://www.dawn.com/news/1198061>

Like · Reply · 4 · Aug 4, 2015 2:09pm

[Show 10 more replies in this thread](#)



Carlos Diaz · Marketing Manager at Urban By Design

Then you have Pakistanis claim Pakistan is not a terror state. There will be a terror attack, Pakistan is the culprit, but then Pakistanis will go on the defensive and claim, no it is not Pakistan. Pakistan is a peaceful place. A terror attack will happen IN Pakistan and then Pakistanis will claim the media is biased. If there was no terrorism in Pakistan, the media cannot report a thing, most Pakistani people forget. Osama Bin Laden was hiding in Pakistan. America should stop giving money to this country, it uses to spread terrorism.

Like · Reply · 18 · Aug 4, 2015 2:19pm



Imran Ali · New York, New York

pakistan has been victim of indian sponsor terrorism for decades, even indian minister admit that they have been sponsoring and keep giving funds to terrorist to carry out terrorist attack in pakistan

Like · Reply · 12 · Aug 4, 2015 2:49pm



Carlos Diaz · Marketing Manager at Urban By Design

Imran Ali

No, they haven't. Pakistan has actually admitted to sponsoring terrorism as per General Durrani and former dictator, General Musharraf. This sort of Pakistani propaganda is a way to make Pakistani terrorism okay. Pakistan hides Bin Laden, Pakistan sponsors bombings in Mumbai and in Afghanistan and then immediately blames India so the world attention goes away from Pakistan's terror activities. No one believes Pakistan's claims except insecure Pakistanis who on domestic policy distrust the government and blame it for the problems in Pakistan but on foreign policy trust it when it says India is to blame. Who is the minister? What is the source?

Pakistan is known for sponsoring terrorism. There have been admissions made by the Pakistani government as well as international papers published by the US and people like this professor.

Why can't Pakistanis admit to what is something that is known the world over?

Like · Reply ·  18 · Aug 4, 2015 2:56pm



Faisal Pervez · Georgetown University

Carlos Diaz u don't know sh*t, now a guy who is sitting in new york, has a diploma from hunter college ???, has never been to Pakistan will tell me Pakistan supports terrorism.... should i even take this guy serious?

Like · Reply ·  11 · Aug 4, 2015 5:38pm

[Show 8 more replies in this thread](#)



Asim Badar

C. Christine Fair, a sorry excuse for a human being.

Like · Reply ·  14 · Aug 4, 2015 10:56am



Rahul Sharma · Senior Research Scientist at Scry Analytics

<http://ecx.images-amazon.com/images/I/31HUewAyPcL.jpg>

Like · Reply ·  2 · Aug 4, 2015 4:41pm



Ali Abbas · FAST-NUCES

Rahul Sharma proof India behind all terrorist activities inside Kashmir and Mumbai.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/.../artic.../21062116.cms>

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1192307>

Like · Reply ·  3 · Aug 5, 2015 1:47pm



Sucheta Maheshwari · New Delhi, India

Rahul Sharma Ha ha h h ! .. exactly
Truth hurts very badly that's why they have all crawled up here to stand up for the 'truth'.

Like · Reply ·  2 · Aug 6, 2015 1:51am



Prakash Gautam · Brookings, South Dakota

The comment section thus proves that Pakistanis are Pathological liars.

Like · Reply ·  11 · Aug 4, 2015 3:51pm



Raja Tahir

Lying like bcci or a butcher of Gujarat Anjum Modi

Like · Reply ·  1 · Aug 5, 2015 10:36pm



Amit Dah · University of Illinois at Chicago

Raja Tahir Modi kaa naam suntee hee tteri gaand mein khuzli hote hae kya?

Like · Reply · Aug 6, 2015 8:29pm



John Dsonice · Any High School USA

Pakistan supports terrorism all over the world. It is about time we start recognizing that and treating Pakistan just as we treat Iran, North Korea and other terrorist states.

Like · Reply ·  9 · Aug 4, 2015 12:02pm



Imran Ali · New York, New York

try it once, don't like Pakistan feet all the time

Like · Reply ·  2 · Aug 4, 2015 12:30pm



Shining Stars · Accountant General at FMCG DUBAI

wow, John, it seems that you are the owner of the whole Universe. Just try your best, then you will see the effects of that.

Like · Reply · Aug 6, 2015 3:56am

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