

# Chronology of Pakistani Terror Attacks on India 1947 to 2025

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GEOPOLITICS

SECURITY

TECHNOLOGY & ECONOMY



Centre for Research on Strategic and Security Issues

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# About NatStrat

NatStrat is an independent, not-for-profit centre for research on strategic and security issues.

## Vision

The 21st century is upon us. The post-World War II global architecture is becoming unsustainable. The international security and strategic environment is changing. The centre of gravity of global influence is shifting, and new powers are emerging. India is one of them. Despite the odds, India has withstood internal and external challenges to preserve its democratic and constitutional ethos. Its diversity and pluralism have grown while being firmly rooted in its civilisational heritage. As a result, the states of India are more empowered today than before. More than half its population, larger than the combined size of Europe and the US, is under the age of thirty.

The transformation underway in India will unleash powerful impulses beyond India's borders. This will profoundly impact the world's political, social, cultural and economic systems. As India rises and finds its rightful place on the world stage, its unique identity, traditions and value systems will become critical to global peace and stability.

India is looking ahead to mark the centenary year of its post-independence existence. How India thinks will matter. How India acts will matter even more.

The success of India is crucial to humankind. We seek to understand the domestic and external security challenges facing India and what drives India's strategic calculations. We will ask the right questions without fear or favour and provide our views and insights fearlessly.

We will bring an authentic Indian perspective to understanding the world. We aim to make India's voice heard and count in the international community.

## Aims and Objectives

NatStrat undertakes research on issues that impact India's security and foreign policy interests with a focus on three areas – geopolitics, national security, technology, and economy. NatStrat's research is objective, impartial and rigorous. It upholds the highest standards of excellence and scrutiny.

NatStrat seeks to reach out to decision-makers, policymakers, practitioners and the strategic community within and outside India. It engages with international counterparts and with institutions and scholars across India.

NatStrat produces a variety of material, including research papers, commentaries, monographs and policy briefs. Its contributors are among the most authoritative and experienced professionals with international repute and acclaim. It also promotes new and fresh perspectives by encouraging young thinkers to write and work for it. As part of its activities, NatStrat hosts seminars, round table discussions, lectures, podcasts and interviews.

# Executive Summary

The story of India-Pakistan relations since 1947 has been one of confrontation and distrust, interspersed with brief periods of normal relations. The record shows that the relationship has been sabotaged by terror attacks in India, originating from Pakistan or territory under its control, orchestrated by the ISI and Army while keeping its civilian leaders in the dark.

The story begins with the tribal raiders who invaded the then princely State of Jammu and Kashmir on 22nd October 1947 to force the issue of the State's accession. A rare book by a former Pakistan Army Major General, Akbar Khan, chronicles the entire plan and how the raiders were actually regulars of the Pakistani Army. Since then, Pakistan has adopted terrorism as its State policy against India. This has evolved into other forms of hybrid warfare, such as narco-terrorism, information warfare, cyber-attacks and fuelling social unrest in India.

This document is a compilation of the major incidents, rather than a comprehensive listing of all incidents. The period since 1947 has been divided into five phases, which illustrates the consistency of behaviour

over several decades. Pakistan seeks to deny its culpability and has typically refused to cooperate in investigations. Despite this, several Pakistani-based entities are listed in UN Security Council Resolutions and the country was put on the grey list of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) for terror financing. Pakistan-origin individuals and terrorists have also been involved in incidents across the world, including the United States, Europe, and West Asia.

India's response has ranged from raising the matter bilaterally with Pakistan to taking the matter to the UN, the threat of use of force and, most recently, taking targeted military action against terror infrastructure and camps inside Pakistan.

The document is based on open-source information and inputs from experts and former security professionals, with special guidance from Dr Shantanu Mukharji, Advisor, NatStrat.

The saga of the last nearly eight decades is one of tragedy involving the loss of tens of thousands of innocent lives.

**Disclaimer: This is not an exhaustive list of terrorist incidents/attacks faced by India, but a chronicle of the significant ones.**

**PHASE-I**  
**1947-1971**





Indian Troops land in Srinagar, 1947. | Creative Commons.

## Introduction

From 1947 to 1971, Pakistan's policy on Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) was fundamentally rooted in the belief that, given its Muslim majority and geographical contiguity, Kashmir should have acceded to Pakistan under the Two-Nation Theory. Acting on this belief, Pakistan launched military action in 1947 by sending Pakistani Army units disguised as irregulars and tribesmen into Kashmir. This invasion prompted Maharajah Hari Singh, the then ruler of J&K, to seek urgent Indian military assistance and to formally accede to India. The conflict escalated into the first war between India and Pakistan.

India brought Pakistan's invasion before the United Nations (UN), demanding that Pakistan cease hostilities, withdraw its forces and tribal irregulars, and respect India's sovereignty and territorial integrity,

since J&K had legally acceded to India. The UN Security Council (UNSC) passed a series of resolutions calling for Pakistan to vacate its illegal occupation, after which a plebiscite/referendum could be held. Since Pakistan never withdrew, the preconditions for a referendum were never met. A ceasefire was declared in 1949, which left Kashmir divided and established a Ceasefire Line (later renamed the Line of Control (LoC) after the 1972 Simla Agreement).

During this period, Pakistan employed a dual strategy of diplomatic efforts and military action to achieve its objectives in J&K. Diplomatically, it persistently raised the "Kashmir issue" at the UN and other international forums, pressing for third-party mediation and a plebiscite. Militarily, after the inconclusive 1947-48 war, Pakistan launched "Operation Gibraltar" in 1965, a covert infiltration designed to incite an armed uprising in Kashmir. This operation triggered the Indo-Pakistan War of 1965,

during which India made major military gains. Domestically, the Pakistan military used the Kashmir issue to mobilise anti-India sentiment and legitimise its dominance over civilian institutions.

## 1. 1947– 1948 : Poonch Rebellion and The Tribal Invasion

**Date and Place:** 22 October 1947, Poonch Region, Jammu and Kashmir, India

**Background:** As part of the princely state of J&K under Maharajah Hari Singh, the Poonch region had a large Muslim population with a history of military service. Many had served in the British Indian forces during World War II. There was growing discontent against Hari Singh's rule after the war, by ex-servicemen and locals, which was used by Pakistan to secretly support the rebels with arms and training. What started as protests soon escalated into a full- scale armed uprising aimed at joining Pakistan and overthrowing Dogra rule. In the state's western regions, Dogra officials and soldiers were killed or forced to flee, as Pashtun tribal militias from the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) mobilised to support the rebellion.

**Motive:** The motive was to fuel the rebellion and play upon the religious sentiment to "liberate" Muslims from Hindu/Dogra rule.<sup>1</sup>

**Pakistan's Involvement:** Fearing Maharajah Hari Singh's potential accession to India, Pakistan orchestrated a tribal invasion to seize territory and create facts on the ground, aiming to pressure the Maharajah into joining Pakistan through a forced shift in control and a hoped- for popular uprising. Pakistan leveraged the rebellion to frame its tribal invasion as a local uprising, bolstering pro-Pakistan forces and undermining Dogra authority. In the early stages, Pakistan relied on tribal militias as proxies to avoid open war, while keeping its regular army unofficially involved to maintain plausible deniability

and minimise the risk of international condemnation and direct military retaliation.

### Attack Description:

22 October 1947: Operation Gulmarg launched by the Pakistani Army, around 5,000–7,000 Pashtun tribal militias (Afridi, Mahsud, etc.) from Pakistan's NWFP (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) invaded Kashmir, starting at Muzaffarabad.<sup>2</sup>

23-24 October 1947: Muzaffarabad and Uri fall to the tribal forces. Brutality, looting, and the massacre of civilians (especially non-Muslims) were reported. The invaders aimed to seize Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir.

25 October 1947: The tribal militias capture Baramulla, just 48 km from Srinagar, but their advance slowed due to widespread looting and atrocities—including an attack on a Christian mission—causing a crucial delay.

26 October 1947: As the situation deteriorated, Maharajah Hari Singh signed the Instrument of Accession to India in return for military assistance.

27 October 1947: The Indian Army airlifted troops to Srinagar to repel the tribal invaders. Battles followed at Baramulla, Uri, and other strategic locations.

One of the clearest admissions comes from a former Pakistani Major General Akbar Khan in his book "Raiders in Kashmir", where he describes how the operation was premeditated and not a mere tribal uprising. He coordinated with political figures like Mian Iftikharuddin, who had advised an unofficial operation without direct involvement of Pakistani troops, although that advice was not followed in practice:

*"Ultimately, I wrote a plan under the title of "Armed Revolt inside Kashmir". As open interference or aggression by Pakistan was obviously undesirable, it was proposed that our efforts should be concentrated upon strengthening the Kashmiris themselves internally, and at*

***the same time taking steps to prevent the arrival of armed civilians or military assistance from India into Kashmir.”***

The operation was further supported by key government officials such as Abdul Qayyum Khan, who provided hundreds of buses and logistical support, and the Nawab of Mamdot, who established a secret “Kashmir Fund” to finance the invasion. Akbar Khan admitted that the Pakistani troops had reached Baramulla, just 56 km from Srinagar, by 26 October 1947, when the Maharajah of Kashmir formally acceded to India. The strategic objective, as stated by Khan, was to prevent Indian military presence along Pakistan’s western border and to secure control over Kashmir’s vital water resources.

An article in The New Yorker in 1953 noted that the Kashmir invasion by the Pathan tribesmen was supported by Pakistan. The article suggested that Pakistan’s support was aimed at facilitating the invasion and subsequent annexation of Kashmir. Satya Bakshi, a well-known journalist and freedom fighter, wrote in an editorial published in the Socialist Republican on 8 November 1947, that former INA members such as Major General M.Z. Kiani and Colonel Habibur Rehman had led tribal forces into J&K. Pakistani accounts also acknowledged the participation of ex-INA officers in the invasion.<sup>3</sup>

***“Hussain Gul, a resident of Shalozan village in the Kurram tribal region who was then a soldier of the paramilitary Kurram Militia, was part of that force. “We were there to attack and recapture [the 2,800-metre] Pandu ridge, which the Indians had occupied during autumn,” he says.” An article in the BBC recounts first-hand accounts of the events of October 1947, with local villagers and former tribal fighters recalling the arrival of armed Pathan tribesmen in trucks and on foot, sent by Pakistan, crossing the border into Kashmir and overwhelming the small state army.***<sup>4</sup>

**Losses and Casualties:** The 1947-1948 India-Pakistan War, often called the First Kashmir War, inflicted substantial casualties on both sides. India lost an estimated 1,103 to 1,500 military personnel, with an additional 1,990 J&K State Force members killed or missing. On the Pakistani side, approximately 1,000 regular troops and 5,000 tribal militias and Kashmiri rebels were killed, with an estimated 14,000 wounded, leading to a total of around 20,000 military and irregular casualties for Pakistan.

**India’s Response:** India’s response was characterised by a combination of legal action (accession), swift military deployment, and diplomatic engagement, ultimately leading to a ceasefire and the realisation that Pakistan had decided to use military force camouflaged as a rebellion to separate Kashmir from India.

## 2. Since 1960s: Support To Insurgents In Northeast India

**Date and Place:** Late 1960s, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, Assam, India

**Background:** Pakistan’s military and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) turned to asymmetric warfare (supporting insurgencies and subversion) as a tool to destabilise India from within.<sup>5</sup> They facilitated training for Mizo insurgents (Mizo National Front (MNF)) and Naga insurgents (National Naga Council (NNC)/Naga Socialist Council Nagaland (NSCN) precursors). Training camps were set up in Chittagong Hill Tracts and Sylhet in East Pakistan,<sup>6</sup> where the ISI increased covert operations to arm, fund and guide insurgent cadres. Beyond providing material support, Pakistani agencies sought to unify tribal separatist movements under a shared anti-India agenda. They created safe corridors and hideouts along the India-East Pakistan border to sustain insurgent activity.

**Motive:** Pakistan aimed to destabilise India

from within, divert its military resources, and undermine its unity. This strategy was conceived as retaliation for India's perceived support of dissidents in East Pakistan.<sup>7</sup>

**Modus Operandi:** The insurgents engaged in armed resistance against Indian authorities, employing guerrilla tactics and ambushes.<sup>8</sup> Armed insurgent units launched simultaneous attacks on government posts across Mizoram to overwhelm Indian forces. Equipped with rifles, machine guns, and explosives, some looted from Indian police stockpiles and others smuggled in from East Pakistan, they exploited the dense terrain of the Naga Hills for ambushes and tactical retreats. The campaign also included targeted assassinations of Indian officials and local collaborators.<sup>9</sup>

**1964 – Ceasefire and Political Efforts:** A ceasefire was declared, leading to political negotiations. However, hardline factions within the NNC continued their insurgent activities.

**1 March 1966:** The MNF launched a full-scale armed rebellion against India (Mizo Uprising).

**4-8 March 1966 – Bombing of Aizawl:** Insurgents captured Aizawl and attacked security forces. After the Indian Air Force (IAF) bombed Aizawl (the first, post-independence, air operation on Indian soil), MNF fighters fled to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). Pakistan's ISI provided shelter, training camps, arms, and logistics to Laldenga's MNF.

**5 May 1966 – Operation Jericho:** The MNF launched a coordinated attack on Indian security forces, leading to significant casualties and the seizure of weapons.

**Post-1966 – Guerrilla Warfare:** The MNF resorted to guerrilla tactics, including ambushes, sabotage of infrastructure, and extortion from the local population.

**Pakistan's Involvement:** Pakistan's primary objective was to destabilise India and keep

the eastern region in turmoil, rather than out of any genuine sympathy for the Naga or Mizo cause. They saw these insurgencies as instruments to exert pressure on New Delhi. East Pakistan's intelligence agencies played an active role in establishing contact, providing training, and facilitating the cross-border movement of insurgents. Some MNF leaders, including Laldenga, operated from Dhaka while in exile.

**Losses and Casualties:** Data from the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs and the South Asia Terrorism Portal show that thousands of lives have been lost across the region since the insurgencies began in the mid-20th century. The toll, comprising security officials, civilians and militants, has fluctuated yearly, depending on the intensity of conflicts in states such as Assam, Manipur, and Nagaland.

**India's Response:** India's response to the complex and long-standing insurgencies in its Northeastern States has been multi-pronged, combining military operations, political dialogue, and socio-economic initiatives. Initially, the approach was dominated by military deployment and the imposition of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA), 1958, which granted broad powers to security forces for counter-insurgency operations. Over time, however, the strategy evolved to emphasise peace accords with militant groups, rehabilitation programmes for surrendered cadres, and measures to address the root causes of discontent, such as historical grievances, ethnic diversity, underdevelopment and a sense of alienation. In recent years, militant activity has sharply declined in many areas once under AFSPA, as the focus has shifted to improving governance and integrating the region more closely with the national mainstream. Together, these efforts signal a visible transition towards a more comprehensive and nuanced approach aimed at achieving lasting peace and stability.

### 3. 1965: Operation Gibraltar

**Date and Place:** August 1965, Jammu and Kashmir, India

**Motive<sup>10</sup>:** Pakistan aimed to change the status quo by reclaiming Kashmir based on the belief that the local Muslim population in Kashmir was discontented with Indian rule and would rise in support if aided. Furthermore, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's death in 1964 also created a perceived leadership vacuum in India. Ayub Khan's government faced internal pressure to address Kashmir, seen as a core issue for Pakistan's legitimacy and unity. Pakistan's alignment with Western powers and China gave it perceived strategic backing to challenge India.<sup>11</sup>

**Attack Description:** Pakistan initiated Operation Gibraltar, deploying soldiers disguised as locals into J&K to incite insurgency. The plan failed, leading to the India-Pakistan War of 1965.<sup>12</sup>

Early 1965: Pakistan plans Operation Gibraltar to infiltrate Indian Kashmir and spark an uprising.

1-5 August 1965: Thousands of Pakistani troops (disguised as locals) begin infiltration into J&K- Kupwara, Sopore, Handwara, Baramulla, Rajouri-Poonch sector.

6 August 1965: Indian forces detect infiltration; local support fails to materialise.

6-14 August 1965: Clashes intensify; India launches counter-operations.

1 September 1965: Pakistan launched Operation Grand Slam, a conventional military offensive in the Chhamb-Jaurian sector.

6 September 1965: India responded by launching a full-scale war, crossing the international border near Lahore.

**Modus Operandi:** Pakistan aimed to incite a local uprising in Indian-administered

Jammu and Kashmir by infiltrating troops disguised as locals. These were specially trained Pakistani troops (estimated range between 30,000 and 40,000), including regular army personnel and commandos.<sup>13</sup> Recruitment and training of mujahideen-style operatives were done within Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Planning of infiltration routes was done through rugged mountainous terrain into Indian-held Kashmir while coordinating supply lines, communications, and fallback strategies. Pakistan's ISI played a strategic advisory role, promoting the view that the operation would be quick, covert, and successful without provoking a full-scale Indian military response. Infiltrators were dressed in civilian clothes to appear as Kashmiri locals. They were grouped into various units named after historical Islamic figures (e.g., Salahuddin Force, Ghaznavi Force), to give the mission an ideological-religious appeal.

Infiltration occurred across the LoC, particularly through mountainous and forested terrain to avoid detection. The aim was to disrupt Indian communication lines, destroy infrastructure, create logistical problems for Indian forces and spread anti-India sentiment among local Kashmiris and incite the rebellion. They wanted to establish contact with potential sympathisers or underground networks within Kashmir.

**Pakistan's Involvement:** The ISI was established in 1948, following the first Kashmir war, which had exposed weaknesses in Pakistan's intelligence gathering and sharing. The ISI intensified covert operations and intelligence gathering inside Kashmir. It began to work closely with elements of the Azad Kashmir Regiment, local sympathisers, and informants.<sup>14</sup> It reported to President Ayub Khan and the military leadership (notably Foreign Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Major General Akhtar Malik) that there was a strong anti-India sentiment among the Kashmiri Muslim population, and a popular uprising could be triggered. These intelligence reports

were overly optimistic and arguably biased, misjudging the willingness of Kashmiris to join a Pakistan-led insurgency.

The Pakistani leadership, including President Ayub Khan, believed that the operation would lead to a swift and localised conflict. They anticipated that the local Kashmiri population would support the infiltrators and that India would limit its military response to the Kashmir region. Additionally, there was an expectation that China might intervene on Pakistan's behalf, opening a second front against India.

The Operation was planned by Pakistan's Major General Akhtar Hussain Malik, who was in command of the Kashmir Division at the time. Under his leadership,

approximately between 7,000 and 20,000 personnel, including regular army troops and local recruits from PoK, were trained in guerrilla warfare techniques. General Mohammad Musa Khan, then Chief of Pakistan Army Staff, had expressed reservations about the operation. He was reportedly opposed to Operation Gibraltar from the outset, believing it lacked proper preparation and support. In his memoirs, he stated that despite his reservations, the operation proceeded under his command.<sup>15</sup>

The Operation ultimately failed to achieve its objectives. The expected uprising did not materialise, and the infiltrators were met with strong resistance from Indian forces. The failure led to the escalation of the conflict into the 1965 India-Pakistan War.



Indian victory at Assal Uttar. | Defence Update.

**India's Response:** On 6 September 1965, India retaliated by crossing the international border in Punjab, opening new fronts to ease pressure on its forces in Kashmir. The conflict, marked by major tank battles like Asal Uttar, lasted 17 days and witnessed Indian forces advancing deep into Pakistan. The Indian Army reached Lahore and was poised to capture it but halted following international intervention. A UN-brokered ceasefire was

declared on 22 September 1965, paving the way for the Tashkent Declaration in January 1966.

## 4. 1971: Operation Chengiz Khan

**Date and Place:** 3 December 1971, East and West Pakistan

**Background:** Operation Chengiz Khan was the codename for a pre-emptive air strike initiated by Pakistan on 3 December 1971, marking the formal start of the India-Pakistan War of 1971.<sup>16</sup>

1947-1970: After Partition in 1947, Pakistan was formed with two geographically and culturally distinct wings: West Pakistan (modern-day Pakistan) and East Pakistan (modern-day Bangladesh). Despite East Pakistan housing the majority of Pakistan's population, political and military power remained concentrated in West Pakistan.<sup>17</sup> The differences between West and East Pakistan began to surface with the start of the Language Movement in 1952.

7 December 1970: Pakistan held its first general elections, won by the Awami League, led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The party secured a landslide victory, winning 160 out of 162 seats in East Pakistan. However, West Pakistan's ruling elite, particularly President Yahya Khan and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, refused to let the Awami League form the government. This political manipulation sparked massive unrest in East Pakistan.

25 March 1971: Operation Searchlight was launched as a brutal military crackdown on Bengali civilians, students, and intellectuals in East Pakistan. The violence forced an estimated 10 million refugees to flee to India, particularly to the states of West Bengal, Tripura, and Assam, leading to severe economic and logistical strain.<sup>18</sup>

April-November 1971: As anti-Pakistan sentiment grew, India began training and arming the Mukti Bahini, a guerrilla force of Bengali nationalists resisting Pakistani forces in East Pakistan.

21 November 1971: India formally recognised the Bangladeshi government-in-exile.<sup>19</sup>

the conflict, forcing powers like the US and China to intervene diplomatically before India could secure East Pakistan.<sup>20</sup>

**Modus Operandi:** On 3 December 1971, at approximately 17:45 IST, Pakistan launched a surprise air offensive designed to cripple the Indian Air Force (IAF) before it could strike East Pakistan. 11 primary airbases—Srinagar, Amritsar, Pathankot, Ambala, Agra, Jodhpur, Uttaralai (Barmer), Halwara, Sirsa, and Adampur—were targeted. The attacks, timed deliberately at dusk to exploit reduced visibility and limited Indian readiness, relied on aircraft flying at very low altitudes in terrain-hugging profiles to evade radar detection and minimise interception risks. The primary objective was to crater runways with high-explosive general-purpose and retarded bombs, thereby grounding Indian aircraft. However, the operation was conducted as an isolated air action, without broader strategic coordination or sustained follow-up, limiting its effectiveness.

**Losses and Casualties:** The 1971 India-Pakistan War, intrinsically linked to the Bangladesh Liberation War and the atrocities committed by the Pakistani military in East Pakistan, inflicted catastrophic human and material losses. India lost an estimated 2,500 to 3,843 military personnel, with another 9,851 to 12,000 wounded. Pakistan, however, suffered a far greater military setback with between 5,866 and 9,000 killed, 10,000 and 25,000 wounded, and the unprecedented capture of 93,000 personnel, marking the largest surrender since World War II. Yet the war's most devastating toll was borne by the civilians in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). Estimates of deaths from the Pakistani military's campaign of genocide range up to 3 million, accompanied by widespread sexual violence and the forced displacement of 10 million refugees into India.

**Motive:** Pakistan's leadership believed that war with India was inevitable and that India was preparing for a major offensive in East Pakistan. They also hoped to internationalise



**Lt. Gen. A.A.K. Niazi of the Pakistani Army (right) surrendering to Lt. Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora of the Indian Army (left) at the Dacca Race Course, signing the Instrument of Surrender, on 16 December 1971.**

**India's Response:** A meticulously planned and swiftly executed military campaign, involving coordinated operations by the Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force on both eastern and western fronts, quickly overwhelmed the Pakistani forces. This

culminated in the surrender of approximately 93,000 Pakistani troops in Dhaka on 16 December 1971, leading to the creation of an independent Bangladesh, fundamentally altering the geopolitical landscape of South Asia.

**PHASE-II**  
**1972-1989**





Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. | The Print.

## Introduction

Unable to match India's conventional power, Pakistan had been re-evaluating its unconventional warfare as early as the 1950s, after its push for a referendum in Kashmir failed to gain traction. In the 1970s and 1980s, the ISI had consolidated this approach around two main tactics: orchestrating plane hijackings and supporting the Khalistan movement in India as a means of destabilisation from within. The primary targets of this strategy were Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir, India's two sensitive border states.

General Zia ul-Haq openly recognised<sup>21</sup> the Khalistan movement as “an opportunity to weaken and distract the Indian government by miring it in yet another insurgent war ‘of a thousand cuts.’” Similarly, the former Director General of the ISI, Hamid Gul, argued that “keeping Punjab destabilised is equivalent to the Pakistan Army having an

extra division at no cost to the taxpayers.”<sup>22</sup> In line with this doctrine, Pakistan waged a sustained proxy war through hijackings, the creation of groups such as the Al Fatah terrorist organisation, the assassination of an Indian diplomat in the United Kingdom and extensive support for Khalistani separatists both inside Punjab and among the diaspora abroad.

These actions were designed not only to bleed India internally but also to “internationalise” its domestic unrest, drawing global attention to insurgencies and raising pressure on New Delhi over alleged human rights violations.

## 1. Hijackings And Terrorist Acts

Listed below are the major terrorist incidents that took place in Jammu and Kashmir, supported by Pakistan's ISI.<sup>23</sup>



Hijacked Indian Airlines domestic Fokker F27, also named “Ganga.”

**30 January 1971:** Hijacking of an Indian Airlines plane (Ganga) from Srinagar to Lahore by two Kashmiri separatists who blew it up on 2 February 1971 after the crew and the passengers had been released.

**Pakistan’s Involvement:** One of the hijackers, Hashim Qureshi, had travelled to Peshawar, in Pakistan, to attend to arrangements for his sister’s wedding. It remains unclear how he met Maqbool Butt, the founder of the National Liberation Front (NLF). However, Hashim soon volunteered to work for the organisation. Before returning to India, he received an intensive indoctrination in NLF ideology, along with rudimentary training in handling weapons and guerrilla tactics. The period following the Tashkent Declaration (1966) between India and Pakistan witnessed the emergence of Al-Fatah, a militant organisation that became active soon after the agreement. By 1969, Al-Fatah had become a full-fledged organisation with both a political wing and a well-planned strategy, combining economic sabotage with militant subversion

in Kashmir.

The main organiser and leader of Al-Fatah was Gulam Rasool Zehangir. The organisation’s primary objective included espionage, bomb explosions, dacoities and other acts of subversion. Its strategy also extended to the planned destruction of holy places such as ‘Maqdoom Saheb- Ke Ziarat’ to arouse communal passion. In addition, Al-Fatah circulated propaganda posters under the caption ‘Red Kashmir’, calling for an independent Kashmir.

The top leaders of Al-Fatah were guided, trained and motivated by officers of Pakistani Intelligence, among them were Major Habibullah, Major Qaisar Qureshi, Major Tufail, Major Asgar, and Zafar Iqbal Rather. These operatives frequently crossed the borders and maintained regular contact with the Pakistan Embassy in India to secure instructions and support. Al-Fatah also succeeded in infiltrating government offices for instance, Mohammad Ishaq Manhas, Head Assistant in the State Secretariat,

was an active member of the organisation. Simultaneously, Pakistani officials arranged for a large consignment of arms to be smuggled into Kashmir through one Saleem Jehangir, with the intention of equipping Al-Fatah militants who were responsible for the following three major terrorist incidents in Kashmir.

**3 February 1984:** Ravindra Mhatre, an Indian diplomat posted at Birmingham, was kidnapped<sup>24</sup> and brutally murdered on 5 February 1984 by activists of the Kashmir Liberation Army (KLA), an affiliate of the J&K Liberation Front (JKLF). The KLA demanded the release of terrorist Maqbool Butt from New Delhi's Tihar Jail, two of his accomplices, and seven other terrorists, along with £1 million in ransom.<sup>25</sup> In a 2023 investigation by News9Plus, it was revealed that the diplomat's killer was Malik Massarat, a resident of Kotli in PoK.<sup>26</sup>

Three suspects in the February 1984 murder of Indian diplomat Ravindra Mhatre fled to Pakistan. Islamabad repeatedly denied their presence or cited difficulties in tracing them when British authorities sought their extradition.<sup>27</sup> Documents released by Britain's National Archives reveal that the West Midlands Police had provided locations of the three suspects in PoK. However, officials in Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) stonewalled UK efforts to apprehend them.

**24 August 1984:** An Indian Airlines flight bound for Srinagar from Delhi via Chandigarh and Jammu was hijacked and diverted to Lahore by seven Sikh separatists, part of the outlawed All-India Sikh Students Federation. The aircraft was later flown onward to the United Arab Emirates. The hijackers initially carried fake weapons, but after diverting the plane to Lahore, they received a real pistol wrapped in paper from Pakistan's ISI.<sup>28</sup> No lives were lost during this incident, and the hijackers eventually surrendered in the UAE. They were extradited to India on 3 September 1984 and sentenced to life imprisonment in

1993. Until the hijacking of Indian Airlines IC 814 in 1999, this remained the longest hijacking in Indian aviation history.

**India's Response to Hijackings:** India's response to aircraft hijackings varied. New Delhi strongly criticised Pakistan's handling of the crises in some cases, while in others, it sought Islamabad's cooperation to safeguard passengers. To strengthen its legal framework, India enacted the Anti-Hijacking Act, 1982, which gave effect to the Hague Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft. The law sought to promote international cooperation, facilitate the extradition of offenders, and establish robust domestic legal mechanisms to address hijacking-related offences.

## 2. ISI's Support To The "Khalistan" Movement

During the 1980s, the Afghan war absorbed most of the ISI's time and resources. The ISI and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) worked closely to defeat the Soviets in Afghanistan, and in return, the CIA turned a blind eye, if not abetted, ISI operations in the Indian Punjab to keep Pakistan's eastern flank destabilised so that it could focus its energies on the Afghan front. At the same time, Zia ul-Haq and the ISI leadership dreamt of uniting Kashmir under Pakistani rule.<sup>29</sup> Pakistan had already gone to war in 1965 to alter the status quo in Kashmir, but the referendum issue remained buried in the UN archives. The bottom line was that Islamabad still lacked the diplomatic, military and economic means to expel India from Kashmir, something that ISI hoped to change.

While Kashmir remained the top priority, ISI also extended support to non-Muslim secessionist forces in India, including the Sikh extremist campaign for "Khalistan." This approach was rooted in Pakistan's strategic deficiencies in conventional weapons, allies and nuclear capability during the 1970s,

pushing the ISI to return to unconventional warfare. Proxy wars, compared to conventional conflicts, were relatively inexpensive yet destabilising. Islamabad's involvement in the Sikh secessionism was neither accidental nor new. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had earlier promoted the Khalistan idea politically at every opportunity, and under Zia, Pakistan's engagement deepened significantly. Pakistan had multiple motives to support the "Khalistan movement" in Punjab, such as avenging its 1971 defeat, discrediting India's global status, and punishing India for its anti-US tilt.



**Dr. Jagjit Singh Chauhan: An erstwhile Punjab minister, presently in U.K. is also the self -styled president of Khalistan**

Dr Jagjit Singh Chauhan. | Punjab Monitor.

In 1971, Dr Jagjit Singh Chauhan, a dentist and politician, left Punjab for London and declared himself the President of Khalistan. From that point on, his rise was facilitated by the US and Pakistan. The geopolitics of the time gave Chauhan some natural allies. His

plan aligned with American and Pakistani interests in punishing India for its perceived 'anti-American tilt' towards Moscow. Both nations sought to limit Soviet influence in Afghanistan, which made American allies out of the Pakistani Taliban.<sup>30</sup> Chauhan had barely begun his quest when he was warmly received in Pakistan by its military dictator, General Yahya Khan. He then travelled to New York, where, on 12 October 1971, he placed an advertisement in The New York Times proclaiming the birth of Khalistan. Indian intelligence agents alleged that the advertisement had been financed by the Pakistani Embassy in Washington. Pakistan's interest in the Khalistan movement intensified following its humiliating defeat in the December 1971 war with India.

Husain Haqqani, a former Pakistani ambassador to Washington, said that 'bleeding' India was the immediate motive, but that Pakistan also wanted to create a strategic 'buffer' between India and Pakistan. Such a buffer state, Haqqani said, would 'end India's land access to Kashmir' and that Kashmir was and is a perennial focus of Pakistani policy. It was clear that Pakistan's actions were motivated by self-interest and not by a desire to create a homeland for the Sikhs. This was about revenge and overcoming the constraints of geography. As the Khalistan movement grew, a largely declassified 1987 assessment by the CIA warned of the disastrous consequences that any loss of Punjab would have for India's defence strategy.

**Modus Operandi:** To attain such a goal, the ISI threw itself into its Khalistan adventure from the early 1980s. A newly created cell supported the insurgent Sikhs and channelled weapons and ammunition to the followers of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, who had emerged in the 1970s as the rising new star of Sikh militancy.

Terrorist training camps for young Sikhs were set up in Karachi and Lahore, while on the Indo-Pakistan border, Field Intelligence Units

(FIU) were the vectors of direct ISI support. The key insurgent groups supported by Islamabad included Khalistan Commando Force (KCF), the Bhindranwale Tiger Force (BTF), the Khalistan Liberation Force (KLF) and the Babbar Khalsa. The Punjab cell in the ISI's headquarters followed a three-stage plan:<sup>31</sup>

- **Precipitate Alienation of Sikhs:** The first phase sought to hasten the alienation of the Sikh population from mainstream India.
- **Mobilise Masses:** The second emphasised the need to subvert the state machinery and mobilise mass agitation against the government.
- **Onset of Terrorism:** The third phase marked the onset of a genuine reign of terror in Punjab in which the population became victims of violence and counter-violence by the militants and the state, respectively.

The ISI used their local Sikh partners for operations in East Punjab. Terrorist training for young Sikhs was strengthened, while the gurudwaras on both sides of the border were converted into rest, retreat and preparation areas, but also as depots for weapons and ammunition storage. Operation Blue Star, the storming of the Golden Temple in Amritsar in June 1984 by Indian army units, revealed the full magnitude of this phenomenon. The besieged Sikh insurgents proved to be well-organised, well-trained and well-stocked with supplies of weapons and ammunition.

The ISI contributed to the high number of fatalities in Punjab. Beginning in May 1987, its military support enabled Sikh extremists to acquire AK-47s, a weapon that quickly transformed the conflict. Lightweight, reliable and lethal, the Kalashnikov was the ideal weapon for guerrilla warfare, dramatically enhancing firepower and accuracy. By contrast, the Indian police and para-military forces were still armed with

Second World War vintage rifles; only a few had Self-Loading Rifles (SLRs), which were no match for the AK-47. It was only after Indian police stations and vehicles were reinforced with Light Machine Guns (LMGs) that a semblance of balance in firepower was restored. Besides the Kalashnikov, the ISI also delivered modern explosive materials, further intensifying the insurgency.

An intriguing account of ISI's role in training Khalistan insurgents emerged from the interrogation of a Babbar Khalsa member arrested by Indian authorities in the early 1990s.<sup>32</sup> He revealed that the ISI has invited him to join a flight training school in Mumbai. At an advanced stage of his training, he was instructed to crash his plane into an offshore oil rig during a solo flight. He refused, citing the Sikh faith's prohibition of suicide missions. His testimony carries credibility, given that the ISI has already orchestrated a series of plane hijackings by Sikh militants between 1981 and 1984, including one where a hijacker was handed a pistol in Lahore.

In 1984, the West German Intelligence Service (BND) traced a weapon used in a hijacking to a German manufacturer's delivery to the Government of Pakistan, directly linking the arms supply to Islamabad. The revelation angered the United States, then Pakistan's partner in the anti-Soviet operation in Afghanistan, which issued a stern warning to Islamabad. Following this, the wave of Sikh-led plane hijackings ceased. While suicide missions might have offered militants a potent tactical advantage, such operations were ultimately rejected by Sikh insurgents on religious grounds.

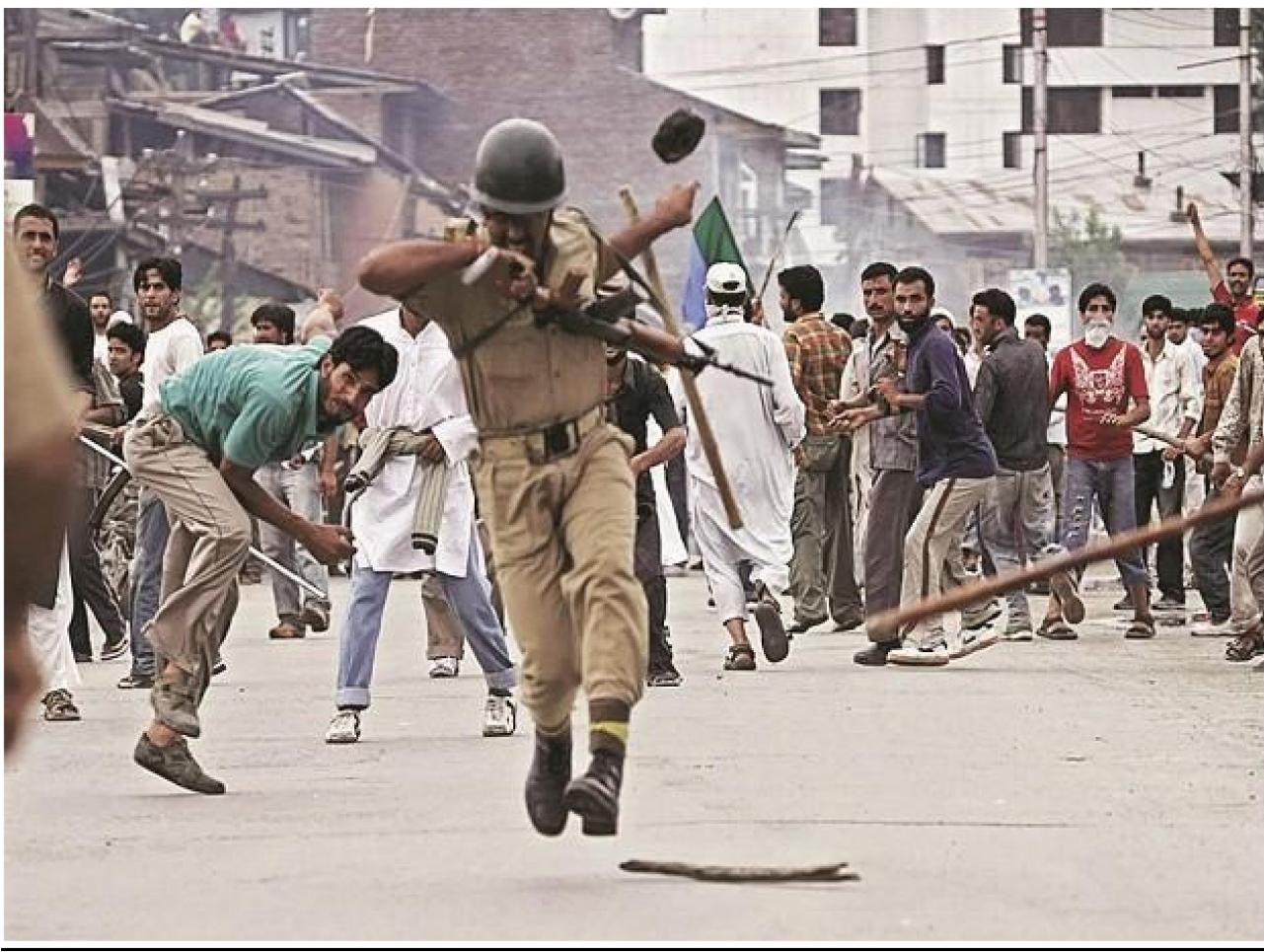
**India's Response:** India adopted a multi-pronged strategy to counter Pakistan's support for the Khalistan movement. On the security front, New Delhi launched a crackdown on militancy in Punjab. Diplomatically, it consistently called out Pakistan for providing support, including funding, training, and sheltering the Khalistani groups. At the political level, India

emphasised its secular and democratic credentials, highlighting the significant progress and representation of Sikhs within the Indian system. Simultaneously, the government engaged with the Sikh

community to address grievances and rebuild trust. By the early 1990s, these combined efforts had largely neutralised the “Khalistan movement,” which gradually lost steam and ceased to exist within India.

**PHASE-III**  
**1990-2000**





A stone pelting incident in Jammu and Kashmir, 1989. | The Print.

## Introduction

After the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1988, ISI operations against India in Punjab began to taper off, coinciding with the loss of the CIA's interest in the operations after the Soviet defeat. Even as the ISI's operations in Punjab wound down, it reopened the Kashmir front. The period from 1989 to 2000 was marked by terrorism becoming a central instrument of Pakistani foreign policy towards India. An intensive wave of terrorist attacks was launched in J&K and across the rest of the country, deliberately designed to exploit societal faultlines. Despite the scale and intensity of these operations, the Indian state and society displayed remarkable resilience, absorbing the shocks of large-scale terrorism while continuing to withstand Pakistan's campaign of destabilisation.

Although several incidents had preceded it, a turning point in the Kashmir insurgency

came in late 1989 with the kidnapping of Dr Rubaiya Sayeed, daughter of then Union Home Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed. The abduction, carried out by the JKLF, was accompanied by demands for the release of jailed militants. The government's eventual decision to concede to these demands emboldened separatist groups and marked the beginning of a more violent and intensified phase of the insurgency.

## 1. Jammu & Kashmir - The K2 Project

The ISI calculated that destabilising Punjab would weaken India's internal security posture in J&K and create conditions favourable to Islamabad's ambitions to annex J&K.<sup>33</sup> In the early 1980s, the Khalistani movement reached its peak, with Jarnail Singh Bhindrawale exerting a significant degree of influence in Punjab.

However, by the late 1980s and early 1990s, the movement was in decline as Indian security forces pushed back.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's strategic priorities shifted after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Co-opted by the US in the anti-Soviet campaign, Pakistan, through the ISI, trained Islamic mujahideen while receiving US funding and material. Washington's reliance on Islamabad on the western front created a permissive environment in which Pakistani support for proxies on its eastern front with India went unpunished, if not tolerated and encouraged. During the late 1989, as Indian security agencies were defeating Khalistani extremism, the Pakistani establishment turned its focus on J&K.<sup>34</sup>

Under General Zia-ul-Haq, the ISI reportedly pursued what was referred to as the "K2 Project", a two-pronged strategy aimed at destabilising India by fomenting separatism and insurgency in both Kashmir and Punjab.<sup>35</sup>

**Objective:** The objective was not an outright conventional victory, as Pakistan increasingly realised it could not match the Indian military, but rather to gain a strategic advantage through proxy warfare - arming, training, and financing militant groups; exploiting the porous border to establish sanctuaries and training camps; and using intelligence networks to sabotage and inflame communal fault lines. The doctrine of "inflicting a thousand cuts" sought to impose continuous, low-intensity costs on India, draining its resources and political cohesion while avoiding direct interstate war.

**Implementation:** The ISI was the primary executor of the K2 project, reportedly creating and supporting a range of militant groups in Indian-administered Kashmir. Although the plan is now largely considered dead on the ground in terms of its original large-scale operational intent, its ideological underpinnings continue to resonate with certain separatist elements, particularly

within the diaspora networks in countries like Canada, US, Germany, the UK and Australia.

At the time of the "K2 Project," Pakistan was simultaneously developing its clandestine nuclear weapons programme led by A.Q. Khan. Both projects were overseen by General Zia-ul-Haq, the former referred specifically to Pakistan's covert proxy warfare strategy against India, while the latter focused on advancing its nuclear capabilities.<sup>36</sup>

### Geographical Proximity and Cross-Border

**Influence:** The porous nature of the LoC, despite fencing and security measures, allows for cross-border infiltration of militants, weapons, and propaganda from Pakistan-administered Kashmir. Pakistan uses various channels, including media, social media, and religious institutions, to propagate its narrative of self-determination, "jihad", and alleged Indian oppression, aiming to radicalise and recruit Kashmiri youth. This includes spreading misinformation and false narratives. Pakistan's active support for various militant and separatist groups operating in Kashmir, including providing training, funding, and logistical assistance, gives these groups the ability to influence and mobilise sections of the population.

**Role of Religious Extremism:** The influx of trained jihadist militants from the Soviet-Afghan War, in the late 1980s, significantly altered the nature of the insurgency, introducing a more radical religious dimension. Pakistan-backed groups often exploited religious sentiments, framing the conflict as a holy war against an "occupying" force, thereby attracting some individuals to their cause.<sup>37</sup>

## 2. ISI & J&K

Asad Durrani headed the ISI from August 1990 to March 1992, a period when Kashmir, Afghanistan and internal affairs were the Agency's primary concerns. In Kashmir, this was the phase when the ISI became more

deeply involved, beginning in 1990. The LoC between India and Pakistan became more porous for the jihadis.<sup>38</sup>

By early 1990, more than thirty militant political and religious organisations were active in J&K. Several sought to radically Islamise society, directing attacks against bars, cinemas, beauty salons, and video shops. Women in the Kashmir valley were soon forced to wear veils, with fanatics attacking unveiled women using ink or acid. For the ISI, Kashmir thus remained a priority theatre of operations, with auxiliary forces readily available. Terrorist groups such as Hizbul Mujahideen, which gained prominence in the 1990s, continue to exist, while Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammad remain active, under new names.<sup>39</sup>

From 1988 onwards, the ISI began organising training camps for young militants from the Valley. Initially, they partnered with the JKLF, which recruited fighters, while the ISI provided training and equipment. Funding came from the Gulf region, the narcotics trade, and donations collected in the mosques across Pakistan, the US and Western Europe. These resources facilitated both the recruitment and training of new volunteers and the deployment of battle-hardened mujahideen from Afghanistan. While many recruits came from Punjab and NWFP, young Muslims from abroad were also enlisted. The training camps for volunteers from J&K were in PoK, close to the LoC, while those for Pakistanis and the foreign recruits operated in Punjab and NWFP.<sup>40</sup>

The ISI ran its own foreign policy throughout the 1990s. As Ahmed Rashid noted, "They were making their own foreign policy as they went along and as it pleased them."<sup>41</sup> He further described this as "a clandestine privatisation of Pakistan's foreign policy," referring to the ISI's activities in Kashmir, East Punjab, Central Asia, the Arab world, the Caucasus and the Balkans. The extent to which the successive Prime Ministers were

informed of these activities differs from case to case. In general, they were adequately briefed by their military and security advisors, with little deliberately concealed from them. The Foreign Office (FO), however, often remained on the sidelines, more a spectator than a participant in the decision-making process of the 1990s, as evidenced by Pakistan's involvement in Afghanistan and Kashmir.<sup>42</sup>

The modus operandi of Pakistan-backed terrorist groups in J&K between 1989 and 2000 involved a multifaceted approach aimed at destabilising the region, furthering separatist agendas, and undermining Indian sovereignty. Key elements of their operations included:

**Recruitment and Training:** In the early years, many recruits were local Kashmiri youth, often motivated by socio-political grievances or religious ideologies. A significant number of recruits were sent to training camps in Pakistan and PoK. These camps, allegedly run by or with the support of the Pakistani military and the ISI, provided training in weapons handling (AK-47s, machine guns, explosives), tactics, and survival skills. Gradually, the number of foreign fighters, primarily from Pakistan and Afghanistan (often with experience in the Soviet-Afghan war), increased. These fighters also took on leadership roles and brought more sophisticated training and ideologies.<sup>43</sup>

Militants regularly infiltrated into Indian-administered Kashmir across the LoC, often with the assistance of local guides familiar with the terrain. They exploited difficult, forested landscapes and gaps in India's security coverage to move undetected. The Pakistan Army frequently provided cover fire, including artillery shelling, to aid the infiltration process. As traditional routes became increasingly secured by Indian forces, militants explored and utilised lesser-known paths and, over time, employed modern tools such as GPS devices and detailed maps.

**Weapons and Funding:** Weapons, ammunition, and explosives were primarily supplied from across the border, allegedly by the ISI. These included assault rifles, grenades, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and, gradually, more sophisticated equipment. Funding was provided directly from the ISI, other Pakistani authorities and from sympathetic individuals and organisations, often routed through Pakistan-based entities. In addition, terrorist groups engaged in the drug trade, as well as local fundraising through illegal means,<sup>17</sup> such as extortion and robbery, to sustain their operations.

**Tactics and Targets:** Assassination of political leaders, government officials, security personnel, and civilians perceived as being against the militant cause, including Kashmiri Pandits and Sikhs, was a central strategy. Organised killings of groups of civilians were carried out to spread fear and achieve ethnic cleansing in certain areas. Planting explosives in public places, markets, and near security installations was commonplace, as was taking hostages for ransom or to secure the release of arrested militants to gain media attention and leverage. Ambushes on security forces, hit-and-run attacks, and utilising the difficult terrain for cover and spreading fear and misinformation through media and local networks to demoralise the population and security forces were conducted.<sup>44</sup>

**Organisational Structure and Coordination:** Most groups had a hierarchical structure with commanders, trainers, and field operatives. While rivalries existed, there were also instances of coordination between different militant groups, sometimes facilitated by the ISI. Local sympathisers provided logistical support, including shelter, reconnaissance, and communication channels.

**Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM)** is a Pakistan-based Deobandi-jihadist militant group founded in 2000 by Masood Azhar. Its primary

goal is to separate Jammu and Kashmir from India and integrate it into Pakistan. It has carried out major terrorist attacks, including the 2001 Indian

Parliament attack and the 2019 Pulwama attack. JeM is closely linked to Pakistan's ISI and has ideological ties to Al-Qaeda.

**Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)**, meaning “Army of the Pure,” is an Islamist-Jihadist Pakistani militant organisation driven by a Salafi jihadist ideology. The organisation's primary stated objective is to merge the whole of Kashmir with Pakistan. It was founded in 1985–1986 by Hafiz Saeed, Zafar Iqbal Shehbaz, and Abdullah Azzam with funding from Osama bin Laden (Al-Qaeda) during the Afghan War. It has been responsible for several major terrorist attacks on India, such as the 2000 Red Fort attack and the 2008 Mumbai attack. LeT is also closely linked with Pakistan's ISI.

**Shifting Objectives and Groups:** Initially, the JKLF advocated an independent Kashmir. However, Pakistan turned its support towards groups like Hizb-ul Mujahideen, LeT, and JeM, which favoured integration with Pakistan or establishing an Islamic state. The increasing prominence of foreign fighters led to a more religiously motivated and pan-Islamic dimension to the conflict.

#### J&K Timeline of Terror Attacks

31 July 1988: Two bomb blasts triggered by JKLF in Srinagar marked the beginning of the full-blown insurgency.<sup>45</sup>

14 September 1989: Assassination of BJP leader Tika Lal Taploo.<sup>46</sup>

4 November 1989: Assassination of retired Judge Nilkanth Ganjoo.<sup>47</sup>

**Kidnapping of Rubaiya Sayeed:** Kidnapping of the daughter of the then Union Home Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, leading to the release of militants.<sup>48</sup>

21 January 1990: Gawkadal massacre, where the CRPF opened fire on protestors, killing a large number of civilians. Estimates vary, but some sources cite around 50 deaths.<sup>49</sup>

13 February 1990: Assassination of Lassa Kaul, Director of Doordarshan.<sup>50</sup>

6 April 1990: Assassination of H. L. Khera, CEO of Hindustan Machine Tools.<sup>51</sup>  
Assassination of the Vice Chancellor of the University of Kashmir, Mushir-u-Haq.<sup>52</sup>  
1 May 1990: Assassination of Sarwanand Koul Premi and his son.<sup>53</sup>

21 May 1990: Assassination of Imam Mohammad Farooq Shah.<sup>54</sup>

October 1993: A group of armed terrorists, members of Hizbul Mujahideen and Al Umar Mujahideen groups, occupied the Hazratbal Shrine. The army cordoned the site, leading to a 31-day siege.

1993: Lashkar-e-Taiba made its first incursions into Jammu and Kashmir.<sup>55</sup>

1995: Kidnapping of six Western tourists by Al-Faran. One was beheaded, one escaped, and the other four remain missing.<sup>56</sup>

22 March 1997: Sangrampora massacre, where seven Kashmiri Pandits were killed.<sup>57</sup>

January 1998: Wandhama massacre, where 24 Kashmiri Pandits were killed by militants dressed as Indian Army officers.<sup>58</sup>

17 April 1998: Prankote massacre, where 26 Hindu villagers were killed.<sup>59</sup>

19 June 1998: Chapnari massacre, where 25 Hindu villagers were killed.<sup>60</sup>

20 March 2000: Chittisinghpura massacre, where 35 Sikhs were massacred by Lashkar-e-Taiba.<sup>61</sup>

August 2000: Amarnath pilgrimage massacre, where a large number of Hindu pilgrims were killed (exact numbers vary; some reports suggest over 30).<sup>62</sup>

### 3. 1993 Mumbai Blasts

**Date and Place:** 12 March 1993, Mumbai, India

**Background and Motive:** The primary motivation for the bombings was to avenge the riots that had erupted in Mumbai following the demolition of the Babri Masjid mosque in Ayodhya in December 1992.

**Pakistan's Involvement:** Investigations suggested the involvement of Dawood Ibrahim's D- Company, with links to Pakistan's ISI. Pakistan allegedly facilitated the RDX and conspirators' training.

**Modus Operandi:** The 1993 Mumbai bombings were a series of 12 coordinated bomb explosions.



Mumbai Blasts, 1993. | Indian Express.

**Losses and Casualties:** The bomb explosions killed 257 people and injured over 1,400, targeting major landmarks including

the Mumbai Stock Exchange and Air India Building.

**India's Response:** The trials resulted in the conviction of over 100 people, with sentences ranging from life imprisonment to the death penalty for key conspirators like Yakub Memon, who was executed in 2015. However, the primary masterminds, including Dawood Ibrahim and Tiger Memon, fled the country and remain at large. The bombings exposed significant lapses in the country's security and intelligence apparatus, leading to heightened focus on counterterrorism and a more streamlined approach to handling such threats. However, bureaucratic and inter-agency issues persisted for many years.

#### 4. 1996 Lajpat Nagar Blast

**Date and Place:** 21 May 1996, New Delhi, India

**Background and Motive:** The investigation

and subsequent court proceedings, which were noted by the Supreme Court to have been compromised by a significant delay, revealed that the blast was part of a larger "international conspiracy to cause disruptive activities in India." The perpetrators were found to be in close contact with the ISI, and the attack was orchestrated using the logistics of the D-Company

**Pakistan's Involvement:** The JKLF claimed responsibility. Police investigations and court convictions revealed close contact between the bombers and Pakistan's ISI.

**Modus Operandi:** The perpetrators, members of the militant group JKLF, stole a Maruti car, which they then used to plant the explosive device. The bomb, made with RDX, was a powerful improvised explosive device (IED) that detonated in the crowded Central Market of Lajpat Nagar, a busy commercial and residential area. The bomb's materials, including the RDX, a gas cylinder, and a battery, were procured and assembled by the conspirators in Delhi itself.



Lajpat Nagar Blast, 1996. | Hindustan Times.

**Losses and Casualties:** The bomb explosions killed 257 people and injured over 1,400, targeting major landmarks including the Mumbai Stock Exchange and Air India Building.

**India's Response:** The trials resulted in the conviction of over 100 people, with sentences ranging from life imprisonment to the death penalty for key conspirators like Yakub Memon, who was executed in 2015. However, the primary masterminds, including Dawood Ibrahim and Tiger Memon, fled the country and remain at large. The bombings exposed significant lapses in the country's security and intelligence apparatus, leading to heightened focus on counterterrorism and a more streamlined approach to handling such threats. However, bureaucratic and inter-agency issues persisted for many years.

## 5. 1998 Coimbatore Bombings

**Date and Place:** 14 February 1998, Tamil Nadu, India

**Motive:** The primary motive for the bombings was a retaliatory strike for the communal riots that had swept through the city in November and December 1997. Another key motive was to assassinate Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader L.K. Advani. The bombings were strategically timed to coincide with a public election meeting that Advani was scheduled to address in Coimbatore.

**Pakistan's Involvement:** While perpetrated by the local Islamist group Al-Umma, reports suggested these groups were influenced by Pakistan's ISI to disrupt commerce and target the BJP leader.

**Modus Operandi:** Bombings were characterised by a highly coordinated and deliberate modus operandi aimed at maximising casualties and targeting specific individuals and locations. The attacks involved 12 separate explosions, all within a small 12 km radius. The perpetrators,

members of the Al-Ummah organisation, used a variety of methods to conceal and deliver the bombs. The explosives, which were later identified as gelatine sticks with timer devices, were hidden in everyday objects such as cars, motorcycles, bicycles, side boxes of two-wheelers, denim and rexine bags, and fruit carts.

**Losses and Casualties:** A series of 12 bomb attacks killed 58 people and injured over 200, occurring shortly before a rally by BJP leader L.K. Advani.

**India's Response:** The bombings did not trigger any immediate or significant diplomatic sanctions against Pakistan or a suspension of bilateral talks. Instead, the response was largely an internal matter of law enforcement, intelligence gathering, and a prolonged judicial process, with the larger diplomatic narrative remaining a persistent, though separate, issue.

## 6. Kargil War

**Date:** 3 May 1999, Kargil, India

**Background:** Ironically, just months before the Kargil War, Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif signed the Lahore Declaration. This landmark agreement aimed at reducing nuclear risks, promoting peace, and resolving disputes through peaceful means, including the Kashmir issue. The Kargil intrusion, coming so soon after this peace initiative, was widely seen in India as a blatant betrayal of trust and a deliberate attempt by elements within the Pakistani establishment (particularly the military, led by then- Army Chief General Pervez Musharraf) to sabotage the peace process.<sup>63</sup>

In essence, the Kargil War was a calculated military misadventure by Pakistan, taking advantage of difficult terrain and a perceived intelligence vacuum on the Indian side, all while attempting to leverage its nascent nuclear capability to achieve strategic goals

in Kashmir. The immediate trigger was the discovery of these infiltrations by local shepherds and Indian Army patrols in early May 1999, which quickly escalated into a full-scale conflict.<sup>40</sup>

**Pakistan's Involvement:** Nearly 20 years since the war ended, journalist Nasim Zehra has written an extraordinary tell-all book, “From Kargil to the Coup: Events that Shook Pakistan” (2018), drawing on her “insider” access to a host of senior military figures. Zehra retells the operations through the voices of those who planned and executed it. Among them were former Army chief General Pervez Musharraf, Lt. Gen. Nadeem Ahmad, Lt. Gen. Gulzar Kiani, Lt. Gen. Javed Hassan, Lt. Gen. Amjad Shuaib, Brig. Syed Azhar Raza, Brig. Khalid Nazir. She also mentioned some “critics” of the Kargil Operation within the Pakistani establishment who publicly questioned the Kargil war, officially codenamed Operation Kohpaima (mountaineering trip). These included former Chief of General Staff Gen. Ali Kuli Khan and Musharraf’s “blue-eyed boy,” Lt. Gen. Shahid Aziz.<sup>64</sup>

Zehra’s book gave a grim and clear verdict: “The country’s chief executive, the Prime Minister, had neither cleared the Operation, nor was he taken in the loop by the Army chief. All SOPs [standard operating procedures] had been ignored.” Four officers, whom she called the “Kargil clique,” put into practice the strategically toxic plan that had been brewing for years, ever since 1984, when India took control of the Siachen glacier and the General Headquarters under General Zia-ul-Haq could do nothing to stop it. However, after the ouster of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan, a new headiness prevailed, and some senior officers began raising the possibility of an operation against India.

**Motive:** The idea, at its core, was to “block India’s lifeline to its troops in Leh” in India-administered Kashmir by cutting off the National Highway route New Delhi was using

to travel to and from Srinagar. According to Zehra, Musharraf’s appointment as Army Chief in October 1998 further reinforced the idea based on the assumption that “the Indians would never fight back.”

**Modus Operandi:** Pakistan’s modus operandi involved a clandestine military operation to seize strategic high ground, disguised as an insurgency, with the overarching aim of cutting off Indian supply lines, internationalising the Kashmir issue, and exploiting the post-nuclear environment to its strategic advantage.

**Casualties and Losses:** The Kargil War in 1999 resulted in significant casualties for both sides. For India, official figures report 527 soldiers killed and approximately 1,363 wounded. India also lost one MiG-27, one MiG-21 and one Mi-17 helicopter. For Pakistan, official figures claimed 453 soldiers killed, though other estimates, including US and former Pakistani officials, suggest figures ranging from 700 to over 4,000 fatalities. Pakistan also reported over 665 wounded and had eight Prisoners of War. The disparity in Pakistani casualty figures is due to the covert nature of their involvement in the initial stages of the conflict.



Indian soldiers after victory in the Kargil War, 1999. | The Economic Times.

**India's Response:** India combined decisive military action with astute political and diplomatic manoeuvring, achieving a clear military victory while safeguarding its international image and preventing a larger conflict. Separately, India set up a High-Level Kargil Review Committee under K. Subrahmanyam to investigate the cause of the War and recommend measures to safeguard national security. A series of major internal security reforms were carried out based on the report from a Group of Ministers.

## 7. 1999 IC-814 Hijack

**Date:** 24 December 1999, Kandahar, Afghanistan

**Background:** Seven months after the Kargil War, Indian Airlines Flight IC-814 was hijacked.<sup>65</sup> In 1999, Kashmir was already facing a surge of terrorist attacks and counter-terror operations. Two major

incidents occurred shortly before the hijacking: a LeT suicide attack on the Badami Bagh Cantonment in Srinagar,<sup>66</sup> in which 10 soldiers, two militants and the PRO Defence were killed, and an assault on the J&K Police's Special Operations Group (SOG) headquarters during the hijack crisis, where a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) and 11 policemen lost their lives.

**Pakistan's Involvement:** Former Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) chief A.S. Dulat stated that there was "no doubt that the ISI had a role" in the IC-184 hijacking, citing intelligence assessment and reports from a Pakistani journalist in Kandahar suggesting that the operations were orchestrated by the ISI.<sup>67</sup> G. Parthasarathy, India's High Commissioner to Pakistan at the time, also asserted it was "totally Pakistani involvement," noting that both the hijackers and the individuals they sought to be released were Pakistani nationals. Although the Taliban, who controlled Kandahar at the time and where the plane eventually landed,

acted as mediators during the crisis, multiple reports indicated the presence of ISI officers on the ground supporting the hijackers.<sup>68</sup> The group behind the hijacking, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, was itself based in Pakistan.<sup>69</sup>

**Motive:** The hijack was conducted to secure the release of LeT leader Masood Azhar.<sup>70</sup>

**Modus Operandi:** The five hijackers were identified by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs as Pakistani nationals: Ibrahim Athar

(from Bahawalpur), Shahid Akhtar Sayeed, Sunny Ahmed Qazi, Zahoor Mistry (all three from Karachi), and Shakir (from Sukkur).<sup>71</sup> Investigations suggested the hijacking was planned over two months, with the hijackers and associates making multiple trips to Kathmandu, which was reportedly a hub for Pakistan's ISI and illegal activities. Underworld operative Dawood Ibrahim, who had strong links to Pakistan, allegedly facilitated access to the airport for the hijackers.<sup>72</sup>



The hijacked plane, Indian Airlines IC-814, at Kandahar, with Taliban men in the foreground. | The Defence Archives.

**Losses and Casualties:** The IC-814 hijacking resulted in one fatality, Rupin Katyal, who was stabbed to death. Additionally, 17 passengers were injured. The hijackers released 27 passengers and Katyal's body in Dubai. The remaining 155 passengers and crew were eventually released in Kandahar, Afghanistan, in exchange for three terrorists held in Indian prisons.

**India's Response:** The Indian Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) stated that while Nepal and the UAE provided exemplary

help during the investigation, the Pakistani government offered no cooperation. Arrest warrants for the remaining accused were sent to Islamabad for extradition, but as per reports, these individuals, including the five hijackers, remained in Pakistan.<sup>73</sup>

## 8. 2000 Red Fort Attack

**Date and Place:** 22 December 2000, Delhi, India

**Background and Motive:** The Red Fort, a

UNESCO World Heritage Site in the heart of Delhi, is a major historical monument and a symbol of Indian sovereignty from where the Prime Minister of India addresses the nation on Independence Day. The attack on this iconic landmark was intended to undermine India's sense of national security and project the militants' capability to strike at the country's core. Second, the attack's timing was also politically motivated. It was seen as an attempt to derail the ongoing India-Pakistan peace talks and escalate tensions between the two nuclear-armed nations.

**Pakistan's Involvement:** The Pakistan-based LeT was identified as the perpetrator. Evidence like abandoned assault rifles and detonators with Urdu markings pointed to Pakistani complicity.<sup>74</sup>

**Modus Operandi:** Two heavily armed terrorists, later identified as members of the Pakistan-based militant group LeT, entered the Red Fort complex, which was under the security of the Indian Army at the time. The

attackers were armed with AK-47 assault rifles and grenades. They were able to breach the security perimeter and enter the complex at around 9:00 PM.

**Losses and Casualties:** Terrorists attacked the historic Red Fort, killing two soldiers and one civilian security guard.

**India's Response:** While there was no immediate military retaliation, the incident contributed to a significant deterioration in India-Pakistan relations and was cited as part of the evidence of Pakistan's support for terrorism. The attack, along with the subsequent Parliament attack in 2001, led to India's policy of "coercive diplomacy," which involved massing troops on the border to pressure Pakistan to dismantle terrorist infrastructure on its soil, codenamed "Operation Parakram". This firm stance marked a shift from previous responses, demonstrating India's growing resolve to use all instruments of state power to counter terrorism.<sup>75</sup>



**PHASE-IV**  
**2001-2009**





2001 Parliament Attack remembrance ceremony. | Frontline Magazine.

## Introduction

India's relations with Pakistan between 2001 and 2008 were a volatile mix of diplomatic overtures and severe setbacks, primarily due to terrorism. Following the Kargil War, tensions peaked with the 2001 terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament. Despite this, a significant ceasefire along the LoC in 2003 paved the way for the initiation of the Composite Dialogue process in 2004, aimed at resolving outstanding issues, and the beginning of cross-LoC travel in 2005.

However, these fragile peace efforts were repeatedly derailed by major terrorist incidents. The most impactful event was the 26 November 2008 Mumbai attacks, carried out by LeT. This devastating assault brought bilateral relations to a near standstill and led to the suspension of the Composite Dialogue, highlighting the enduring challenge of cross-border terrorism in the relationship during this period.

## 1. 2001 Parliament Attack

**Date and Location:** 13 December 2001, New Delhi, India

**Background:** The Kargil War had just ended, but J&K continued to face terrorist attacks, along with the rest of the country.

**Pakistan's Involvement:** The five terrorists who attacked the Indian Parliament were identified as Pakistani nationals who belonged to Jaish-e-Mohamed (JeM), an organisation known to operate from and receive support in Pakistan.<sup>76</sup> Delhi Police stated that the terrorists received instructions from Pakistan, and the operation was carried out under the guidance of ISI.<sup>77</sup> Investigation revealed that Mohammad Afzal Guru, a key conspirator, had received training in a camp run by ISI in Muzaffarabad, located in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.<sup>78</sup> Afzal Guru stated that he was assigned the task by a Pakistani national, Gazi Baba of Jaish-e- Mohammad.<sup>79</sup>

**Motive:** To attack the centre of political power in India, the capital, New Delhi.<sup>80</sup>

**Modus Operandi:** Pakistan's modus operandi was to leverage non-state militant actors (Jaish-e-Mohamed and Lashkar-e-Taiba), provide them with covert support (logistics, funding, training and intelligence), and direct them to execute high-impact, high-casualty attacks on symbolic Indian targets, while maintaining a façade of

deniability.

**Casualties and Losses<sup>81</sup>:** The attack on 13 December 2001, resulted in the deaths of nine individuals, including Indian security forces and a gardener, along with all five terrorists involved. Additionally, approximately 18 people were injured.



Leaders pay tribute to the martyrs of the 2001 Parliament attack on its 22nd anniversary, at Parliament House in New Delhi, 2023. | Indian Express.

**India's Response:** New Delhi's immediate response was an aggressive diplomatic campaign to internationally isolate Pakistan, demanding concrete action against cross-border terrorism, ultimately leading to international pressure on Pakistan. This took the form of statements, speeches and press conferences by then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee<sup>82</sup> and Home Minister L.K. Advani.<sup>83</sup> India subsequently launched "Operation Parakram" in the first week of January 2002,<sup>84</sup> a massive military mobilisation, to exert pressure on Pakistan to dismantle terrorist infrastructure.

## 2. 2002 Akshardham Temple Attack

**Date and Location:** 24 September 2002, Gandhinagar, Gujarat, India

**Background:** In February 2002, Hindu-Muslim riots killed more than 1,000 people in Gujarat, increasing communal tensions and the possibility of a major terror attack.<sup>85</sup>

**Pakistan's Involvement:** At the Chief Minister's Conference on Internal Security, then Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee stated that the attack was "... sponsored, supported and funded by Pakistan as a matter of its State policy."<sup>86</sup> The two terrorists who carried out the attack were

identified as Murtaza Hafiz Yasin and Ashraf Ali Mohammad Farooq.<sup>87</sup> Documentary evidence pointed towards a JeM-LeT joint operation.<sup>88</sup> Investigators believed that Rizwan Ali was handled by an elusive terror recruiter named Farhatullah Ghori, which confirmed the intelligence assessment that the ISI was recruiting Indian University and College students by making them believe that they were part of ISIS (Islamic State).<sup>89</sup> Two letters written in Urdu were found on the attackers, claiming they belonged to a previously unknown group called “Tehreek-e-Qisas-Gujarat” (Movement for Revenge in Gujarat). However, intelligence sources suggested a link to existing Pakistan-based terrorist proxies operating on the border.<sup>90</sup>

**Motive:** The plan was to cause a major

communal flare-up inside India by targeting a temple and taking revenge for the Gujarat riots and spreading terror.<sup>91</sup>

**Modus Operandi :** Subsequent investigations and arrests of those who provided logistical support revealed connections to LeT. For instance, one arrested suspect, Mohammad Yasin Bhat, allegedly a LeT operative described as a prime conspirator, confessed to having fled to PoK after the attack. He was accused of supplying the weapons used in the attack.<sup>92</sup> Investigations indicated that the conspiracy for the attack was hatched with the involvement of LeT operatives. Some arrested individuals were reported to have received training with Pakistan-based terror outfits before the attack.<sup>93</sup>



Swaminarayan Akshardham Temple, New Delhi. |Wikimedia Commons.

**Casualties and Losses:** 33 people were killed, including civilians, security personnel and the two terrorists who carried out the assault. Additionally, over 80 people were injured.<sup>94</sup>

**India's Response:** While India's primary focus was on maintaining internal peace and

security, its diplomatic response centred on condemning the attack, highlighting its cross-border linkages, and urging international action against terrorism. Several other accused in the Akshardham bombing case remained absconding for years, with some believed to have fled to Pakistan.<sup>95</sup>

### 3. 2005 Delhi Bombings

**Date and Location:** 29 October 2005, Sarojini Nagar, New Delhi, India

**Background and Motive:** The attack was planned for the month of the Diwali festival in New Delhi, which meant the streets and markets would be packed with thousands of shoppers. It was in this context that terrorists detonated three bombs planted in the market at Sarojini Nagar and Paharganj, as well as on a Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) bus, days before the festival, killing 67 people and injuring more than 200.<sup>96</sup>

**India's Response:** Then Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh reminded Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, in a telephone conversation, of Pakistan's commitment to fighting terrorism.<sup>97</sup> This underscored India's consistent diplomatic pressure on Pakistan regarding the issue. The political leadership projected a message of national unity and resilience, emphasising that such acts would not undermine India's resolve or disrupt its social fabric.

### 4. 2006 Mumbai Train Bombings

**Date and Location:** 11 July 2006, Mumbai, India

**Background and Motive<sup>98</sup>:** About two weeks before the attack, Nawa-e-waqt, an Urdu daily published in Karachi, reported LeT chief Hafeez Muhammad Saeed telling a group in Muzaffarabad that "The Hindus have included blasphemous cartoons in their textbooks. We will take revenge. We will intensify jihad against the Hindus." Additionally, two days after the blasts, Saeed was quoted as saying in the weekly Ghazwa Times that "Nobody could stop us from our mission. We will continue to do what is just according to our mission." While this indicated a continuity in the mindset of organisations like the LeT, it also showed the

culpability of Pakistani authorities towards such organisations. It is, therefore, more likely that the attacks were planned and trial runs carried out much earlier.

**Pakistan's Involvement and Modus Operandi<sup>99</sup>:** Mumbai Police's Anti-Terror Squad (ATS) alleged that four of the 13 men were Pakistani and had entered India illegally. ATS also alleged that the Indian men among the 13 accused had posed as Shi'ah pilgrims to Iran and instead travelled to Pakistan for training. Members of the banned Students' Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) were the key conspirators of the blast, while some Pakistani nationals were also involved. The charge sheet said Mohammed Majid Shafi had arranged for the transportation of Pakistani nationals to India via the Bangladesh and Nepal border and back after the blasts. LeT was the mastermind behind the bombings and provided arms and training to the accused men. SIMI developed links with Jihadist groups in Pakistan and played into the hands of the ISI. Mumbai's Police Chief alleged that the ISI was behind the Mumbai bombings. Pakistan immediately denied the claims and demanded evidence.

**Losses and Casualties:** More than 200 people lost their lives, and over 800 were injured.<sup>100</sup>

**India's Response:** The attacks severely strained the already fragile peace process between India and Pakistan. An earlier Joint India-Pakistan Statement had asserted that "... both sides strongly condemned all acts of terrorism and agreed that terrorism is a scourge that needs to be effectively dealt with."<sup>101</sup> In September 2006, a "Joint Anti-Terror Mechanism" was agreed upon between Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf at the Nonaligned Summit in Cuba. The Mechanism was aimed at mutual cooperation in combating terrorism, but the continued accusations and Pakistan's denials created significant mistrust.<sup>102</sup> India

often viewed Pakistan's response to the evidence presented as a "litmus test" of its commitment to this mechanism. The overall dialogue on various political and economic issues was suspended or significantly slowed down.

## 5. Indian Embassy Kabul Attack

**Date and Location:** 7 July 2008, Kabul, Afghanistan

**Background and Motive:** The attack on the Indian Embassy in Kabul was part of a long-standing rivalry between India and Pakistan for influence in Afghanistan. India's growing closeness with Afghanistan heightened the rivalry and upset Pakistan and other pro-Taliban elements. The bombing was the latest in a series of attacks in the Afghan capital, occurring at a time when the Taliban seemed to be gaining strength and American and NATO casualties had surpassed those in Iraq.

**Pakistan's Involvement:** While no group claimed responsibility for the attack, in the following weeks, the CIA presented Pakistan with evidence, obtained from intercepted communications, that Pakistan's ISI had helped coordinate the attack. Indian and Afghan agencies believed that the Pakistani Army's 324 Military Intelligence Battalion based in Peshawar had orchestrated the attack on the Indian embassy and executed it in collaboration with either the Taliban or al-Qaida. Afghanistan's Interior Minister has stated that the suicide bombers were trained in Pakistan. India's National Security Advisor M.K. Narayanan said, "We have no doubt that the ISI is behind this." In August 2008, the US intelligence officials confirmed that the Pakistani intelligence services helped the Haqqani network plan the attack.

**Modus Operandi:** On 7 July 2008, a suicide bomber detonated his Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED) at the

main gate of the Embassy of India in Kabul, Afghanistan, at 8:30 AM local time. The main target of the attack was the Indian Embassy. The attack was the deadliest in Kabul since the fall of the Taliban in 2001.

**Losses and Casualties:** The attack on the Indian Embassy, Kabul, resulted in the death of 59 people, including the Indian defence attaché, a senior diplomat, two other officials and a local driver. More than 150 persons, including 5 ITBP personnel, were seriously injured in the incident.<sup>103</sup>

**India's Response:** The Indian leadership immediately condemned the attack and described it as a deliberate targeting of Indian presence in Afghanistan. In response to the attack, India significantly strengthened the security of all its diplomatic missions in Afghanistan—Kabul, Kandahar, Jalalabad, Herat, and Mazar-e-Sharif. India also increased the deployment of ITBP personnel and improved coordination with Afghan intelligence (NDS). The governments from across the world condemned the attack, including the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. The UN Security Council issued a statement expressing its grave concern and condemning the attack, calling it a "reprehensible act of terrorism."<sup>104</sup>

## 6. 2008 Mumbai Terror Attacks



Mumbai Terror Attacks 2008. | IANS.

**Date and Location:** 26 November 2008, Mumbai, India

**Background:** In October 2008, cross-LoC trade between the two sides of Kashmir was initiated. Hours before 26/11, Pakistan's Secretary, Ministry of the Interior, Syed Kamal Shah, and India's Home Secretary, Madhukar Gupta, issued a joint statement in Islamabad as a part of the Interior/Home Secretary level talks,<sup>105</sup> with two of the key points being the release of prisoners and fishermen captured and detained by both sides, and a firm commitment to take joint action against terrorism.<sup>106</sup> The Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi was visiting Delhi on the day of the attack. The Indian Home Secretary gave the Pakistani Interior Minister a list of Indian and Pakistani terrorists for crimes committed in India, including “the 1993 bombing suspects Memon,<sup>107</sup> Dawood and Maulana Masood Azhar, wanted for the December 2001 attacks on India’s Parliament”.<sup>108</sup>

**Motive:** Strike at India’s financial capital to

cripple the Indian economy and business, and take Mumbai hostage.<sup>109</sup> Also, escalate the border situation to potentially sabotage the India- Pakistan peace dialogue between Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari.<sup>110</sup>

**Pakistan’s Involvement and Modus Operandi:** The attacks were planned and directed by LeT militants based in Pakistan. They were guided remotely during the attacks via mobile phones and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP).<sup>111</sup> Initially, Pakistan denied responsibility, but later confirmed that the sole surviving attacker, Ajmal Kasab, was a Pakistani citizen.<sup>112</sup> In July 2009, Pakistani authorities admitted that LeT plotted and financed the attacks from their camps in Karachi and Thatta.<sup>113</sup> Investigations by Mumbai police identified 37 suspects, most of whom were Pakistani nationals, including two alleged Pakistan Army officers.<sup>114</sup> David Coleman Headley, a Pakistani-American, conducted reconnaissance of the target sites in Mumbai before the attacks on behalf of LeT.<sup>115</sup> He had been in contact with LeT

operatives in Pakistan and provided them with crucial information. Headley confessed in a US court to his involvement and is currently serving a 35-year prison sentence in the United States.<sup>116</sup>

The 10 attackers, who had undergone extensive training in LeT camps in Pakistan, were Pakistani nationals. Ajmal Kasab, the only attacker captured alive, confessed that the group was controlled from Pakistan.<sup>117</sup>

Tahawwur Hussain Rana, a Pakistani-Canadian and a childhood friend of Headley<sup>118</sup> and a co-conspirator, was extradited to India in April 2025 for his alleged involvement. Headley testified that Rana facilitated a cover for his surveillance activities in Mumbai.<sup>119</sup> Rana had helped Headley open an office in Mumbai, which was used for reconnaissance.<sup>120</sup> There have been allegations of involvement by rogue elements within ISI in supporting LeT for the attacks.<sup>121</sup> Headley mentioned meeting ISI officers who assisted in the planning and funding of his reconnaissance.<sup>122</sup> Pakistan claimed to have arrested several individuals in connection with the attacks, including Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi, a senior LeT leader alleged to be a mastermind. However, India has accused Pakistan for the lack of progress in the trials and the release of some of the accused on bail.<sup>123</sup>

**Losses and Casualties<sup>124</sup>:** The 2008 Mumbai attacks, executed by Lashkar-e-Taiba on 26 November 2008, resulted in severe human and economic losses. A total of 166 people were killed, including security personnel and civilians (148 Indians and 18 foreign nationals), along with nine of the 10 terrorists. Over 300 people were injured.

**India's Response:** India's response to the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks was characterised by immediate condemnation, a diplomatic offensive and significant internal security reforms, while avoiding a direct military confrontation with Pakistan. India conducted a series of investigations,

and the Mumbai trial led to the prosecution and eventual conviction of Ajmal Kasab, who was tried, convicted and executed in 2012.

After concluding its investigations into the attack, India presented a detailed dossier to Pakistan alleging planning and support for the attackers on Pakistani soil. New Delhi demanded immediate action against identified LeT operatives and their handlers and insisted on handing over suspects and extraditing facilitators. Over the years, Pakistan arrested and charged some LeT members (Hafiz Saeed, Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi), but the progress has been uneven and often criticised by New Delhi as insufficient.

While answering a Question in Parliament on 11 December 2008, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh stated that work must be done at three levels<sup>125</sup>: First, “galvanise the international community into dealing sternly and effectively with the epicentre of terrorism, which is in Pakistan. The infrastructure of terrorism has to be dismantled permanently.” Second, demanding the Government of Pakistan to stop “the use of their territory for launching an attack of this kind and the need for the strongest possible action against the perpetrators of such ghastly acts.” Third, “recognise as a nation that we cannot depend on either of these two approaches for obtaining the outcomes that we desire... We need to equip ourselves more effectively to deal with this unprecedented threat and challenge to our country’s integrity and unity.”

This attack hardened India’s stand on terrorism and was a precursor to several internal reforms:

- **The NIA Act, 2008** (passed in December 2008), created the National Investigation Agency, a central counter-terrorism investigative body.
- Implemented a three-tier coastal security arrangement (Navy, Coast

Guard, State marine police), established **Joint Operation Centres** (JOCs) at key ports (Mumbai, Visakhapatnam, Kochi), invested in coastal radars, and AIS.

- Established **National Intelligence Grid** or NATGRID (2016), an integrated intelligence master database structure for counter-terrorism purposes.

**PHASE-V**  
**2010-2025**





Prime Minister Narendra Modi pays tribute to the slain soldiers at Palam airport in New Delhi on February 15, 2019. | AFP via PIB.

## Introduction

From 2010 to the present, India has faced a persistent and adaptive wave of terrorism from Pakistan. Attacks ranging from the 2010 German Bakery blast to the 2016 Pathankot and Uri strikes, the 2019 Pulwama suicide bombing, and the 2025 Pahalgam massacre reflected a calibrated effort by Pakistan-based organisations, LeT, JeM, IM, and their proxies, to target India's civilians, security forces, political processes, and economic stability.

Throughout this period, India confronted a shifting threat landscape from cross-border infiltrations and high-profile assaults on military installations to drone-enabled smuggling, hybrid militancy, and narco-terrorism designed to finance militant networks. New Delhi's responses evolved accordingly, from leading an international campaign to cut terror financing and blacklisting Pakistan in the Financial Action Task Force to intelligence crackdowns and surgical strikes in 2016 to the Balakot

airstrikes in 2019 and finally the punitive, doctrine-shifting Operation Sindoor in 2025.

The 2010–2025 period thus illustrates how Pakistan's sustained support for terrorism remained the single greatest external threat to India's national security, compelling India to progressively harden its counterterrorism posture and redefine the threshold for state responses.

## 1. 2010 German Bakery Attack

**Date and Location:** 13 February 2010, Pune, Maharashtra, India

**Background:** The German Bakery attack was the first major terrorist incident after the 2008 Mumbai attacks and the meeting between the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan in Sharm el-Sheikh in July 2009. Intelligence agencies revealed that the attack was part of a broader "Karachi Project" linked to LeT and Indian Mujahideen (IM).

**Pakistan's Involvement and Motive:** The motive was to derail the recently initiated peace talks between India and Pakistan, retaliate against India's intensified counterterrorism operations, and revive the Indian Mujahideen's network and relevance following a series of arrests post-2008. Reportedly, the attack was retaliation for the 2008 Batla House encounter and aimed to target Western tourists and Jews visiting the nearby Osho Ashram and Chabad House.

**Modus Operandi:** The attack involved meticulous planning, including reconnaissance of the café and surrounding areas. The IED was concealed inside a backpack left in the bakery, which detonated around 7:15 PM, when the café was crowded. The investigation revealed that Himayat

Baig, an alleged IM operative, played a key logistical role, with other suspects such as Yasin Bhatkal and Riyaz Bhatkal believed to have masterminded the attack from Pakistan. The attack reflected IM's signature style of low-cost, locally assembled IEDs in public spaces with high symbolic value. According to court documents, Baig provided logistical support and transport to Yasin Bhatkal, who planted the bomb. The attack demonstrated IM's shift toward urban soft targets to maximise media impact and psychological fear.<sup>126</sup>

**Losses and Casualties:** 17 people were killed, including five foreigners (from Iran, Sudan, Nepal, and Italy) and over 60 others were injured.



The German Bakery blast in Pune, 2010. | NDTV.

**India's Response:** The Indian government launched a multi-state crackdown on IM sleeper cells. The incident also prompted better integration between the NIA, the Intelligence Bureau (IB), and state ATS units. The key accused, Himayat Baig, was convicted in 2013 for aiding the conspiracy, though the Bombay High Court

in 2016 commuted his death sentence to life imprisonment, due to a lack of sufficient evidence to establish a direct link.

## 2. 2016 Pathankot Attack

**Date and Location:** 1-2 January 2016, attack on Pathankot Air Force Base, Western Air

Command, Pathankot, Punjab, India

**Background:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi had invited Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif for his swearing-in ceremony in May 2014 and followed it up by himself visiting Lahore in December 2015. These gestures were a signal that the new Modi government was desirous of normalising relations with Pakistan.

**Pakistan's Involvement and Motive:** The United Jihad Council (UJC), a PoK-based militant conglomerate, had claimed responsibility for the attack. The LeT is one of 13 groups that make up the UJC.<sup>127</sup> The incident fit a larger pattern of keeping India engaged and weakened, “bleeding it by a thousand cuts”, while also attacking strategically when prospects for peace would appear to be improving. Evidence on record indicates the attackers belonged to the JeM, and that this terrorist attack was planned by JeM chief Maulana Masood Azhar and his associates.<sup>128</sup>

**Modus Operandi:** Six terrorists smuggled in heavy explosives through the drug-smugglers’ route in Punjab, killing seven security personnel and one civilian, while 37 security personnel and one civilian were injured.

**Losses and Casualties<sup>129</sup>:** The Pathankot attack in January 2016 resulted in significant casualties for India’s security forces. Seven security personnel and one civilian were killed during the multi-day operation. The deceased included a Lieutenant Colonel from the National Security Guard, a Garud Commando from the Indian Air Force, and five personnel from the Defence Security Corps. Additionally, 37 security personnel and one civilian were injured in the attack, which successfully prevented the terrorists from damaging the strategic assets of the airbase. All six terrorists were neutralised by the security forces.

**India’s Response:** India launched a

multi-pronged strategy that included a prolonged military operation by the National Security Guard and other special forces to neutralise the terrorists at the airbase and secure high-value assets. Simultaneously, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) collected substantial evidence, including phone records, which was compiled into a dossier and shared with Pakistan to demand accountability. On the diplomatic front, India condemned the attack, stalled the newly renewed peace process with Pakistan, and repeatedly pressured Islamabad to take decisive action against the JeM terrorist group and its leadership, which were held responsible for orchestrating the assault.

### 3. 2016 Uri Attack

**Date and Location:** 18 September 2016, Uri, Jammu and Kashmir, India

**Background:** The attack occurred against a backdrop of escalating tensions and unrest in the Kashmir Valley, which had been ongoing for months.

**Motive:** To target the Indian military installations and security forces.

**Pakistan’s Involvement:** The two terrorists had initially been recruited by Pakistan-based terror outfit JeM to help its operatives infiltrate India. Over time, they extended their support to other terror groups as well.<sup>130</sup> Captured terrorists hailing from Pakistan or PoK had confessed to receiving training and arms within Pakistan or territory under its control.<sup>131</sup> Both individuals, residents of PoK, were interrogated by the Indian Army to ascertain their knowledge of the Uri attack, in which 18 soldiers were killed. While they initially claimed to have entered India inadvertently, sustained interrogation revealed details about the two guides who had facilitated the infiltration. They also helped security agencies identify one of the terrorists involved in the attack, who was later confirmed by the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) as Hafiz Ahmed of Darbang in

Muzaffarabad Tehsil, PoK.<sup>132</sup>

During these terrorist attacks and infiltration attempts, Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and stores bearing Pakistani markings were recovered. According to the senior NIA official, “The role of Pakistan has been established beyond doubt; the four terrorists who carried out the attack were killed in the

encounter.” Initially, there was some lack of clarity among Indian agencies regarding the suspects, as one agency suspected LeT terrorists, while the Indian Army believed it to be JeM. However, the situation became clearer when Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JUD) chief Hafiz Saeed organised funeral prayers in absentia for one of the Uri attackers, making LeT the prime suspect.<sup>133</sup>



Uri terror attack, 2016. | Indian Express.

**Modus Operandi:** The attackers, believed to be from the Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist group, infiltrated the Indian Army brigade headquarters in Uri, J&K, by breaching the camp’s perimeter security. They launched a surprise assault, reportedly using grenades to set fire to temporary tents where troops were sleeping, leading to a high number of casualties. This particular vulnerability arose from a change of shifts, with incoming soldiers being housed in these temporary accommodations. The attack’s success was attributed to the element of surprise, use of incendiary devices to cause maximum casualties, and a seeming familiarity with the camp’s layout, which suggested a high level of planning and possibly reconnaissance.

**Losses and Casualties:** The attack resulted in significant casualties for the Indian Army. In the pre-dawn assault, 19 Indian soldiers were killed. Additionally, between 19 and 30 other soldiers were injured. The high number of casualties was largely attributed to the use of incendiary grenades, which set fire to tents where a number of the soldiers were sleeping. All four of the militants who carried out the attack were killed in the ensuing gun battle.

**India’s Response:** The Indian Army conducted “surgical strikes” across the LoC, targeting and destroying several terrorist launch pads in PoK. This military action was publicly announced to demonstrate India’s resolve to counter cross-border

terrorism and send a strong message to Pakistan. Concurrently, India escalated diplomatic pressure on Pakistan, providing evidence of the attackers' Pakistani origins and mobilising international condemnation against state-sponsored terrorism. This strategy marked a significant shift in India's policy, moving beyond purely diplomatic responses to terrorist attacks.

## 4. 2016 Nagrota Attack

**Date and Location:** 29 November 2016, Nagrota, Jammu and Kashmir, India

**Background:** The Nagrota attack was a militant assault on an Indian Army unit on 29 November 2016, which was located close to the headquarters of the 16 Corps near Jammu. The attack was carried out by three heavily armed militants, who were believed to be from the JeM terrorist group. The attack occurred just two months after the Uri attack, further escalating tensions between India and Pakistan.

**Modus Operandi<sup>134</sup>:** Three heavily armed unknown terrorists, on the directions of their foreign handlers, had entered the Army Camp at Nagrota, near the Baleeni Bridge and started indiscriminate firing upon the army personnel with the intention to kill them.

**Pakistan's Involvement:** The NIA of India, after a nearly two-year investigation, concluded that the terror attack was orchestrated by the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM). The final chargesheet named Abdul Rauf Azhar, the deputy chief of JeM and brother of Maulana Masood Azhar, as the mastermind behind the attack.<sup>135</sup> The investigation revealed that the three Pakistani terrorists involved were facilitated by four local Kashmiri JeM members who transported them from the International Border to Nagrota.<sup>136</sup> Evidence collected included details of how the terrorists entered India, arranged finances, and received local assistance.<sup>137</sup> The NIA also highlighted the

recovery of phones, a list of items, and ammunition indicating their origin across the Line of Control (LoC) in Pakistan.<sup>138</sup>

**Losses and Casualties:** Seven Indian soldiers, including two officers, and all three militants were killed in the attack.<sup>139</sup>

**India's Response:** India lodged a strong protest with Pakistan, summoning a senior diplomat to the Ministry of External Affairs. India reiterated its long-standing demand for Pakistan to stop its policy of supporting terrorism and to dismantle the infrastructure used by groups like JeM. This diplomatic response aimed to internationalise the issue and hold Pakistan accountable, while security forces were instructed to maintain a high state of vigilance.

### Narco Terrorism

Pakistani "narco-terrorism" against India refers to the nexus between drug trafficking and the funding of terrorist activities, primarily orchestrated by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and various terror groups.<sup>140</sup>

**New Modus Operandi:** With increased border vigilance and counter-infiltration measures, Pakistan has reportedly shifted its tactics. Instead of large-scale physical infiltration of terrorists, there is a growing reliance on:

**Drone Drops:** Drones are used to deliver weapons, ammunition, and narcotics across the border, especially in Punjab and Jammu.

**Hybrid Terrorists:** Local youth are recruited and radicalised online, acting as lone-wolf attackers or facilitating the drug and weapons trade without crossing the border themselves.

**Exploiting Porous Borders:** Despite fencing, remote and difficult terrains along the India-Pakistan border, as well as vast maritime routes, are exploited for smuggling.

**Infiltrating Couriers:** There are reports of individuals, sometimes under the influence of drugs or posing as mentally unstable,

being sent into India to deliver messages or facilitate drug trafficking for jailed terrorists.<sup>141</sup>

#### Key Aspects of the Narco-Terrorism Nexus:

**Golden Crescent Connection:** India's proximity to the Golden Crescent, a major global hub for opium production, makes it highly vulnerable. Heroin and other opiates are trafficked into India via land routes through Pakistan and increasingly through maritime routes.<sup>142</sup>

**ISI's Role:** The ISI is widely believed to orchestrate and facilitate these operations, welding drug trafficking with militant finance. They reportedly choreograph smuggling rings to ensure a steady flow of funds for their proxies.<sup>143</sup>

**Impact on Indian States:** States like Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Gujarat are particularly affected due to their direct border with Pakistan or proximity to trafficking routes.<sup>144</sup>

**Dual Threat:** Narco-terrorism poses a dual threat to India's security – it fuels terror activities and simultaneously creates a severe public health crisis due to rampant drug addiction.<sup>145</sup>

India has been actively working to counter this threat through enhanced border security, intelligence sharing, law enforcement operations, and international cooperation to combat drug trafficking and terror financing.<sup>146</sup>

Mohammed (JeM) claimed responsibility for the attack immediately after it occurred. They also released a video of the suicide bomber, Adil Ahmad Dar, a local Kashmiri youth who had joined the group a year prior.<sup>147</sup> Adil Ahmad Dar, the suicide bomber, was a resident of the Pulwama district. He joined the JeM in 2018. His family reported that his anger against the Indian state grew after he was injured during a protest in 2016.<sup>148</sup> The involvement of JeM, a known Pakistan-based terrorist organisation, directly linked Pakistan to the attack. Security analysts widely believe that JeM is a creation of Pakistan's ISI.<sup>149</sup> The mastermind behind the attack was identified as Mohammad Ismail Alvi, also known as Saifullah, Adnan, or Lamboo, a commander of JeM.<sup>150</sup> The explosives used in the attack were determined through forensic investigation to be ammonium nitrate, nitroglycerine, and RDX.<sup>151</sup> Investigations revealed that a key operative of JeM, Shakir Bashir Magrey, provided shelter and logistical assistance to the suicide bomber and other Pakistani terrorists involved in the planning and execution of the attack. He confessed to collecting and delivering arms, ammunition, cash, and explosive materials. Magrey also admitted to harbouring the suicide bomber and a Pakistani terrorist named Mohammad Umar Farooq in his house and assisting in modifying the vehicle and fitting the improvised explosive device (IED).<sup>152</sup>

**Modus Operandi:** A local Kashmiri man, who had been radicalised and was a member of the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terrorist group, drove a civilian vehicle laden with a large amount of explosives (reportedly over 350 kg of RDX) and rammed it into a bus that was part of a large convoy of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel. The explosion was so powerful that it destroyed the bus completely and severely damaged nearby vehicles, resulting in a high number of casualties. The attack demonstrated a shift in tactics from traditional infiltration and guerrilla-style attacks to a more devastating, suicide-bombing approach.

## 5. 2019 Pulwama Attack

**Date and Location:** 14 February 2019, Pulwama, Jammu and Kashmir, India

**Background and Motive:** To destabilise the situation in J&K on the eve of the General Elections and sabotage the election process, particularly the prospects for the return to power of a Modi-led BJP government.

**Pakistan's Involvement:** The Pakistan-based Islamist terrorist group Jaish-e-



Security personnel near the Aawantipora blast site. | Express Photo.

**Losses and Casualties:** The suicide bombing claimed the lives of 40 CRPF personnel and left 35 others injured. No civilians were harmed in the incident. The lone suicide bomber, a local Kashmiri named Adil Ahmad Dar, was killed in the explosion.

**India's Response:** India responded with military force and conducted punitive airstrikes on a JeM terrorist training camp in Balakot, Pakistan on 26 February 2019. Indian Air Force Mirage 2000 jets struck across the LoC, killing a large number of terrorists.<sup>153</sup> This was the first time since 1971 that Indian warplanes had crossed the LoC to strike inside Pakistani territory. On the diplomatic front, India revoked the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status bestowed upon Pakistan.

## 6. 2025 Pahalgam Attack

**Date and Location:** 22 April 2025, Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, India



General Asim Munir, Pakistan Army Chief.

**Background:** On 16 April 2025, Field Marshal Asim Munir made an inflammatory and rousing speech declaring that Pakistan would continue to stand by the Kashmiri people in the “struggle against the Indian occupation.” He added, “It [Kashmir] was our jugular vein, it is our jugular vein, we will not forget it”.<sup>154</sup> Three days after Munir’s speech, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was scheduled to visit Srinagar to inaugurate the Chenab Railway Bridge and the Vande Bharat Express. At the same time, the US Vice President J.D. Vance was on a

visit to India.<sup>155</sup>

**Motive:** To deliver a setback to the economy and booming tourist industry in Jammu and Kashmir and attract global attention to the “Kashmir Issue.”<sup>156</sup>

**Pakistan’s Involvement:** The Resistance Front (TRF), believed to be an offshoot of the LeT, initially claimed responsibility. All terrorists were thought to have undergone special training in Pakistan, including heavy indoctrination and brainwashing, unarmed combat, firearms proficiency, language and cultural training, and unconventional warfare techniques, among others. It was concluded that the operatives were a part of Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e- Mohammed, or Hizbul Mujahideen.<sup>157</sup>

**Modus Operandi:** A group of men shot dead innocent tourists in cold blood in the Baisaran Valley of Pahalgam town. US-made M-9 carbine rifles and AK-47 assault rifles with 60-70 spent cartridges were collected from the meadow. Sophisticated action cameras mounted on the caps of the terrorists were used to record the attack. This method has been used previously in attacks conducted by the People’s Anti-Fascist Front and Kashmir Tigers, a proxy of the JeM.<sup>158</sup> Over Ground Workers (OGWs) helped terrorists with logistical support, cash, shelter, and other infrastructure with which the HM, LeT and JeM could operate in J&K.<sup>159</sup> This was a targeted attack driven by religious identity, where the terrorists separated the men from their families and forced them to disclose their faith, shooting mostly Hindu tourists.

**Losses and Casualties:** 26 innocent tourists were killed in the assault. The victims included 25 tourists and one local pony operator who reportedly tried to intervene. An additional 20 people were injured. The high number of casualties was largely due to the militants targeting unarmed civilians.

**India’s Response:** The Indian Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) met on 23

April 2025 and decided to take the following measures<sup>160</sup>:

- To place the Indus Water Treaty placed in abeyance.
- Closure of Wagah-Attari Border.
- Cancellation of the SAARC visa scheme for Pakistani nationals.
- Reduction in personnel in the High Commissions from 55 to 30.
- Pakistani military diplomats declared persona non grata.

Immediately after the attack, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that “India will identify, trace and punish every terrorist, supporter and conspirator,” and “we will not differentiate between the government sponsoring terrorism and the masterminds of terrorism.” Soon after, the Prime Minister announced that the Indian Armed Forces had “complete operational freedom to decide on the mode, targets and timing” of India’s response.<sup>161</sup>

Based on the above mandate, on 7 May 2025, at around 0100 hrs India launched Operation Sindoora<sup>162</sup> during which India targeted nine terror sites (Bahawalpur, Muridke, Gulpur, Bhimber, Chak Amru, Bagh, Kotli, Sialkot, Muzaffarabad). These attacks were primarily focused on dismantling the terrorists’ infrastructure and disabling terrorist organisations in Pakistan. Pakistan retaliated by targeting civilians along the International Border and the LoC in Kupwara, Baramulla, Uri, Poonch, Mendhar and Rajouri sectors in J&K, and resorting to drone and missile attacks. In response to Pakistan’s attacks on Indian military targets and escalation, the Indian Armed Forces responded by hitting Pakistani military assets, including Air defence systems<sup>163</sup> and other military targets, notably, military posts at the LoC and 11 Pakistani airbases—Chunian, Sargodha, Skardu, Bholari, Jacobabad, Nur

Khan (Chaklala), Rafiqui, Murid, Sukkur, a radar site in Pasrur, and an aviation base in Sialkot.<sup>164</sup> Following devastating precision strikes by India, Pakistan approached India for a ceasefire on 10 May 2025. In response to this request, India agreed to a ceasefire, which came into effect at 1700 hours IST the same day.

Operation Sindoos marked a historic doctrinal and policy shift in India's response to cross-border terrorism. The response was geared to be punitive yet calibrated. The Defence Minister Rajnath Singh explained in his address, "India's policy against terrorism...[is] that any attack on Indian

soil will be considered as an act of war."<sup>165</sup> On 12 May 2025, Prime Minister Modi, in his address to the nation, congratulated the valour of the armed forces and civilians for their victorious efforts in the fight against terrorism and added that "We have now set a new normal," "We will take stern action at every place from where the roots of terror spring forth. India will not accept any nuclear blackmail...We won't see the government that sponsors terror and terror outfits as different." This was a significant change in Indian policy towards terrorism, setting a "new normal."

# Conclusion

The history of Pakistan-sponsored terrorism against India needs to be told and retold. This is a story of pain, destruction and the pursuit of war by all means. India's multireligious and diverse society and constitutional democracy have shown remarkable resilience in withstanding such assaults. They have not stopped India's march as a nation. Instead, Indian society and polity have pushed back attempts to divide the country or slow down its progress. The grim catalogue presented in this publication is a reminder that while terrorism is an affront to humanity, state-sponsored terrorism and its use as an instrument of state policy is dangerous and a source of grave instability. It is contrary to the principles of international law and inter-state relations. It is a scourge that affects the whole world and must be fought unitedly, without reservation or double standards. No cause can justify terrorism. The perpetrators of terrorism and those behind them must be held to account and brought to justice. This compilation is a homage to all victims of terrorism and a tribute to all those who fought against it. We will never forget.

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## **ANNEXURES**



## ANNEXURE I - List of Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence Chiefs

1. Major General Walter Cawthorn (January 1948 – June 1948)
2. Brigadier Syed Shahid Hamid HJ (14 July 1948 – 22 August 1950)
3. Brigadier Mirza Hamid Hussain (23 August 1950 – May 1951)
4. Colonel Muhammad Afzal Malik (May 1951 – April 1953)
5. Brigadier Syed Ghawas (April 1953 – August 1955)
6. Brigadier Sher Bahadur (August 1955 – September 1957)
7. Brigadier Muhammad Hayat (September 1957 – October 1959)
8. Brigadier Riaz Hussain (October 1959 – May 1966)
9. Major General Muhammed Akbar Khan (May 1966 – September 1971)
10. Major General Ghulam Jilani Khan (September 1971 – 16 September 1978)
11. Lieutenant General Muhammad Riaz Khan (17 September 1978 – 20 June 1979)
12. Lieutenant General Akhtar Abdur Rahman NI(M) HI(M) (21 June 1979 – 29 March 1987)
13. Lieutenant General Hamid Gul HI(M) SBt (29 March 1987 – 29 May 1989)
14. Lieutenant General Shamsur Rahman Kallu HI(M) TBt (30 May 1989 – August 1990)
15. Lieutenant General Asad Durrani HI(M) (August 1990 – 13 March 1992)
16. Lieutenant General Javed Nasir HI(M) SBt (14 March 1992 – 13 May 1993)
17. Lieutenant General Javed Ashraf Qazi HI(M) SBt (14 May 1993 – October 1995)
18. Lieutenant General Naseem Rana (October 1995 – October 1998)
19. Lieutenant General Ziauddin Butt HI(M) (October 1998 – 12 October 1999)
20. Lieutenant General Mahmud Ahmed HI(M) (20 October 1999 – 7 October 2001)
21. Lieutenant General Ehsan ul Haq HI(M) (7 October 2001 – 5 October 2004)
22. Lieutenant General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani HI(M) SI(M) TI(M) (5 October 2004 – 8 October 2007)
23. Lieutenant General Nadeem Taj HI(M) TBt (9 October 2007 – 29 September 2008)
24. Lieutenant General Ahmad Shuja Pasha HI(M) (1 October 2008 – 18 March 2012)
25. Lieutenant General Zaheerul Islam HI(M) (19 March 2012 – 7 November 2014)
26. Lieutenant General Rizwan Akhtar (7 November 2014 – 11 December 2016)
27. Lieutenant General Naveed Mukhtar (11 December 2016 – 25 October 2018)
28. Lieutenant General Asim Munir HI(M) (25 October 2018 – 16 June 2019)
29. Lieutenant General Faiz Hameed HI(M) (17 June 2019 – 19 November 2021)
30. Lieutenant General Nadeem Anjum (20 November 2021 – 29 September 2024)
31. Lieutenant General Asim Malik (30 September 2024 – Incumbent)

## ANNEXURE II - List of Pakistan Army Chiefs

### **Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Army (1947-1972):**

1. General Sir Frank Walter Messervy (15 August 1947 – 10 February 1948)
2. General Sir Douglas David Gracey (11 February 1948 – 16 January 1951)
3. Field Marshal Muhammad Ayub Khan (16 January 1951 – 26 October 1958)
4. General Muhammad Musa (27 October 1958 – 17 June 1966)
5. General Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan (18 June 1966 – 20 December 1971)
6. Lieutenant General Gul Hassan Khan (20 December 1971 – 3 March 1972)

### **Chief of Army Staff (COAS) (1972-Present):**

1. General Tikka Khan (3 March 1972 – 1 March 1976)
2. General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq (1 March 1976 – 17 August 1988)
3. General Mirza Aslam Beg (17 August 1988 – 16 August 1991)
4. General Asif Nawaz Janjua (16 August 1991 – 8 January 1993) † (Died in office)
5. General Abdul Waheed Kakar (11 January 1993 – 12 January 1996)
6. General Jehangir Karamat (12 January 1996 – 6 October 1998)
7. General Pervez Musharraf (6 October 1998 – 29 November 2007)
8. General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani (29 November 2007 – 29 November 2013)
9. General Raheel Sharif (29 November 2013 – 29 November 2016)
10. General Qamar Javed Bajwa (29 November 2016 – 29 November 2022)
11. Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir Ahmed Shah (29 November 2022 – Incumbent)

## ANNEXURE III

On 15 December 2025, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) filed a chargesheet in connection with the Pahalgam attack. The chargesheet named Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), The Resistance Front (TRF), and five individuals, all accused of “planning, facilitating, and executing” the attack. The NIA’s official press release is reproduced below.



### NIA Press Release

NIA chargesheets Pak-Based LeT/TRF & 6 other accused in Pahalgam terror attack case

New Delhi, 15th December 2025

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Monday chargesheeted seven accused in the Pahalgam terror attack case, including the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) / The Resistance Front (TRF) terrorist organisation.

The chargesheet, which details Pakistan’s conspiracy, roles of the accused, and supporting evidence in the case, has charged the banned LeT/TRF as a legal entity for its role in planning, facilitating, and executing the Pahalgam attack. The attack, which involved religion-based targeted killings by the Pak-sponsored terrorists, left 25 tourists and one local civilian dead.

Pakistani handler terrorist Sajid Jatt is also named as an accused in the 1,597-page chargesheet, filed before the NIA Special Court, Jammu. NIA’s chargesheet further names the three Pakistani terrorists killed by Indian security forces during the action in Operation Mahadev at Dachigam, Srinagar, in July 2025, weeks after the deadly terror attack. The three have been identified as Faisal Jatt @ Suleman Shah, Habeeb Tahir @ Jibran, and Hamza Afghani.

LeT/TRF, as well as the four abovementioned terrorists, have been charged under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, the Arms Act, 1959, and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. In its chargesheet, NIA has also invoked the penal section against the accused for waging war against India.

NIA, through a meticulous scientific probe spanning the past almost 8 months, had traced the conspiracy in the case RC-02/2025/NIA/JMU to Pakistan, which has been unabatedly sponsoring terrorism against India.

The two accused persons viz Parvaiz Ahmad and Bashir Ahmad Jothattd were arrested by the NIA on 22nd June 2025 for harbouring terrorists have also been chargesheeted. During interrogation, the two men had disclosed the identities of the three armed terrorists involved in the attack, and had also confirmed that they were Pakistani nationals affiliated to proscribed LeT terror outfit.

Further investigation in the case is continuing.

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