

GLOBAL STRATEGIC PULSE



CISSS Journal of Geopolitical and Geo-Economic Studies

July - December 2025 | Volume II, Issue I

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Abstract

From 6 to 10 May 2025, Pakistan was engaged in a Four-Day War initiated by India under the pretext of avenging the Pahalgam attack, yet another false flag operation. This paper analyzes the geopolitical impact of Pakistan's victory in the Four-Day India-Pakistan War across multiple domains, resulting in a significant geopolitical shift in South Asia. The resounding success of Operation Bunyanum Marsoos, a well-calibrated counter-response by Pakistan to India's Operation Sindoor exposed the inherent vulnerabilities of the Indian Armed Forces, particularly the Indian Air Force (IAF). The demonstration of a well-synergized military strategy and impressive warfighting capabilities of the Pakistan Armed Forces have shattered the long-standing myth of India's conventional military superiority over Pakistan, resulting in the establishment of conventional deterrence between the two nuclear-armed neighbors. India's recent military misadventure against its nuclear-armed neighbor has once again raised questions about its behavior as a nuclear weapon state, as it threatens regional and international peace and security. Notably, the Four-Day War has re-hyphenated India with Pakistan in the global discourse and highlighted the need for the resolution of the Kashmir dispute, a nuclear flashpoint in South Asia. The diplomatic support received by Pakistan before and after the war from the international community signified rejection of India's false narrative in the aftermath of the Pahalgam incident, failure of its diplomacy and isolation at the global level.

Keywords: Pahalgam Incident, Indian Aggression, Conventional Deterrence, Regional Power Shift, Diplomatic Isolation, Operation Sindoor, Operation Bunyanum Marsoos, Kashmir Dispute, Peace and Security, Four-Day War

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Introduction

Concerns have been raised internationally regarding India's practice of attributing nearly every terrorist attack on its territory and Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) to Pakistan, immediately after the incident and without providing any evidence. Such incidents include: (i) Chittisinghpura massacre of Sikhs (2000); (ii) Attack on Indian Parliament (2001); (iii) Godhra train burning (2002); (iv) Samjhauta Express bombings (2007); (v) Mumbai attacks (2008); (vi) Pathankot attack (2016); (vii) Uri attack (2016); and (viii) Pulwama attack (2019). These incidents, initially blamed on Pakistan, were later exposed as false flag operations or found to have been committed by Indian nationals.² The latest in the series of Indian false flag operations was the Pahalgam incident of April 2025.

In the aftermath of the Pahalgam attack, which resulted in twenty-six deaths and injuries to seventeen others on 22 April 2025 in the Baisaran Valley in the Indian occupied Kashmir, concerns were expressed by many observers including Indians about the exploitation of the deadly incident by the Modi government to advance its domestic political agenda.³ In the days that followed, the Indian political landscape was dominated by warmongering, political rhetoric and saber-rattling.⁴ The Indian compliant media was quick to point fingers at Islamabad.⁵ Pakistan was blamed within ten minutes of the incident.⁶ The killings were instantly framed as an act of war by the Modi government, without sharing any credible evidence with the world.⁷

² Reema Shaukat, *India's False Flag Operations*, February 27, 2024, <https://www.nation.com.pk/27-Feb-2024/india-s-false-flag-operations>, accessed June 18, 2025.

³ "Leaked Document Alleges RAW Role in Orchestrating Pahalgam False Flag Operation," *The Express Tribune*, May 2025, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2543404/indian-intelligence-accused-of-staging-pahalgam-attack-according-to-leaked-psy-ops-file>.

⁴ Haroon Janjua, "Pahalgam Attack: Tensions Rise between Pakistan, India," *dw.com* (Deutsche Welle, April 24, 2025), <https://www.dw.com/en/pahalgam-attack-tensions-rise-between-pakistan-india/a-72339533>.

⁵ "Kashmir: Why Was India so Quick to Blame Pakistan?," *Lowy Institute*, 2025, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/kashmir-why-was-india-so-quick-blame-pakistan>.

⁶ "Tarar Tears through India's False Flag Op," *The Express Tribune*, April 25, 2025, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2542313/tarar-tears-through-indias-false-flag-op>.

⁷ "India's 'New Normal' of Perpetual War Will Damage Its Democracy," *Al Jazeera*, May 13, 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2025/5/13/indias-new-normal-of-perpetual-war-will-damage-its-democracy>.

India initially took some non-kinetic diplomatic measures against Pakistan, followed by military aggression in May. On 24 April, at the press conference held by Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, following the special Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, false and unfounded allegations were made against Pakistan. He stated, "The Cabinet Committee had decided that the Pahalgam attack had cross-border links to Pakistan".⁸ Notably, India failed to provide any evidence linking the incident to Pakistan, despite Islamabad's repeated insistence.⁹

Consequently, the Modi government undertook following decisions: (i) The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) 1960 was held in abeyance; (ii) Wagah-Attari border was closed; (iii) Pakistani nationals were restricted from travelling to India; (iv) Defence Attachés in the Pakistani High Commission in New Delhi were declared persona non grata; and (v) The overall strength of Pakistan's diplomatic staff at New Delhi was reduced from fifty-five to thirty.¹⁰ Pakistan perceived these steps as a pretext for Narendra Modi's impending military aggression against Pakistan.¹¹ Regrettably, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's offer to support a "credible, neutral and transparent international investigation" into the Pahalgam incident¹² was rejected by India.¹³

In view of India's escalatory measures, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif convened a meeting of the National Security Committee (NSC) on 24 April 2025. According to the statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO):

⁸ "India Unleashes Hydro Terror," *The Express Tribune*, April 24, 2025, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2541925/india-unleashes-hydro-terror>.

⁹ "Pakistan Army Says India Gave No Evidence on Pahalgam Terror Attack," *Hindustan Times*, April 29, 2025, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/pakistan-army-says-india-gave-no-evidence-on-pahalgam-terror-attack-101745949090499.html>.

¹⁰ Dr Hasan Zafar, "False Flags and Fallout: The Politics behind the Pahalgam Attack," *The Friday Times*, April 24, 2025, <https://thefridaytimes.com/24-Apr-2025/false-flags-and-fallout-the-politics-behind-the-pahalgam-attack>.

¹¹ Kalika Mehta and Matt Ford, "Pakistan Accuses India of Planning 'Military Strike' Soon," *dw.com*, April 29, 2025, <https://www.dw.com/en/pakistan-accuses-india-of-planning-military-strike-soon/a-72391287>.

¹² "PM Shehbaz Says Pakistan Open to 'Neutral, Transparent' Probe into Pahalgam Attack," *DAWN*, April 26, 2025, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1906694>.

¹³ Anirban Bhaumik, "India Rejects Pakistan's Call for a Joint Probe into Pahalgam Attack, Says Evidence Shared Earlier Used to Shield Terrorists," *Deccan Herald*, May 8, 2025, <https://www.deccanherald.com/india/india-rejects-pakistans-call-for-a-joint-probe-into-pahalgam-attack-says-evidence-shared-earlier-used-to-shield-terrorists-3531930>.

(i) Pakistan categorically rejected India's decision to hold the IWT in abeyance, declaring that any attempt to stop the flow of water from India will be considered as an act of war and will be responded to with full force across the complete spectrum of national power; (ii) Pakistan would consider suspending all bilateral agreements with India, including the Simla Agreement, until India ceased its involvement in terrorism inside Pakistan and its violations of international norms and United Nations (UN) resolutions; (iii) Wagah Border was closed, suspending all cross-border transit, with those already in Pakistan required to return to India by 30 April; (iv) Visas issued under SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme (SVES) to Indian nationals were suspended and cancelled, excluding Sikh religious pilgrims; (v) Indian Defence, Naval and Air Advisors posted in Indian High Commission in Islamabad were declared *persona non grata* and directed to leave Pakistan by 30 April, along with their support staff; (vi) Indian High Commission in Islamabad was downsized to a maximum of thirty diplomats and staff members; (vii) Pakistan's airspace was closed to all Indian-owned or Indian-operated airlines; and (viii) all trade with India, including transit to or from any third country through Pakistan, was suspended.¹⁴

On the night of 6–7 May, India launched a series of airstrikes, codenamed Operation Sindoor, inside Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), in blatant violation of Article 2(4) of the UN Charter.¹⁵ The IAF flagrantly breached Pakistan's territorial sovereignty by targeting civilian population with standoff weapons across the international border in Muridke, Sialkot and Bahawalpur, as well as across the Line of Control (LoC) in Kotli and Muzaffarabad. Indian jets also targeted the Nauseri Dam, a part of the Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower project.¹⁶ The unprovoked Indian attacks resulted in the death of thirty-one innocent civilians, while leaving fifty-seven people injured.¹⁷ India's aggression was termed as "a shame" by the US President

¹⁴ "Prime Minister's Office, Islamabad, Pakistan," *Pmo.gov.pk*, 2025, https://www.pmo.gov.pk/press_release_details.php?pr_id=6034.

¹⁵ Jillian Kestler-D'Amours, "Kashmir updates: Pakistan claims Pahalgam attack 'false flag operation'," *Al Jazeera*, April 24, 2025, accessed June 13, 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2025/4/24/kashmir-attack-live-india-summons-pakistan-envoy-hunts-pahalgam-gunmen>.

¹⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan, "Pakistan Strongly Condemns India's Blatant Aggression," May 7, 2025, <https://mofa.gov.pk/press-releases/pakistan-strongly-condemns-indias-blatant-aggression>, accessed June 13, 2025.

¹⁷ "31 Civilians Martyred, 57 Injured in Unprovoked Indian Aggression: DG ISPR," *The News International*, May 7, 2025, <https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/1309295-31-civilians-martyred-57-injured-in-unprovoked-indian-aggression-dg-ispr>.

Donald Trump.¹⁸

Pakistan Air Force (PAF) gave a measured response to Indian aggression on 6–7 May by shooting down six IAF fighter jets, including four Rafale, and an Israeli-made Heron combat drone. Pakistani forces also destroyed a Brigade Headquarters and several check posts along the LoC.¹⁹

As part of “Marka-e-Haq” (the Battle of Truth), the official name given by Pakistan to the May 2025 conflict with India, Pakistan Armed Forces launched “Operation Bunyanum Marsoos” (Iron Wall) on 10 May 2025, in response to the Indian military’s dastardly attacks.²⁰ It comprised a series of strikes by Fateh-1 and Fateh-2 missile systems targeting 26 critical Indian military installations, including airbases, missile facilities and other strategic sites, with the primary objective of deterring further aggression.²¹ The targets included: (i) BrahMos missile storage sites in Beas and Nagrota; (ii) Airbases and airfields at Udhampur, Pathankot, Adampur, Bathinda, Sirsa, Akhnoor, Halwara, Mamun, Suratgarh, Jammu, and Barnala; (iii) Artillery gun positions in Dehrangyari and Mankot, IIOJK; (iv) Brigade Headquarters at K G Top and Bhimber Gali, along with a supply depot in Uri; (v) Indian military posts including Dharam Sal 1, Danna 1, Table Top and positions opposite the Phuklian sector, as well as forward posts such as Rabtanwali, Danna, Khawaja Bhaik Complex and Ring Contour near Sankh along the LoC; (vi) Additional LoC positions including Rahtanwali Post, Jazeera Post Complex, Kafir Mehri, Shahpar 3 and Ghadar Top; (vii) Indian Military Intelligence training center in Rajouri; and (viii) S-400 air defense system at Adampur neutralized using JF-17 Thunder.²²

¹⁸ Sanaullah Khan et al., “Pakistan Downs 5 Indian Jets as Retaliation for Late-Night Strikes at 6 Sites: Officials,” *DAWN*, May 6, 2025, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1908824>.

¹⁹ “31 Civilians Martyred, 57 Injured in Indian Missile Attacks: DG ISPR,” *Associated Press of Pakistan*, May 7, 2025, <https://www.app.com.pk/national/31-civilians-martyred-57-injured-in-indian-missile-attacks-dg-ispr/>.

²⁰ Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), “Afghan National Among 3 Terrorists Killed in North Waziristan Operation,” press release, February 6, 2025, ISPR (Pakistan), accessed [today’s date], <https://ispr.gov.pk/press-release-detail?id=7283>.

²¹ “Pakistan Military Releases Details of Operation ‘Bunyanum Marsoos,’” *Brecorder*, May 12, 2025, <https://www.brecorder.com/news/40362281/pakistan-military-releases-details-of-operation-bunyanum-marsoos>.

²² “Pakistan Launches,” *Radio.gov.pk*, 2025, <https://radio.gov.pk/10-05-2025/pakistan-launches-operation-bunyan-un-marsoos-to-respond-indian-aggression>.

Eventually, after four days of intense military confrontation, a ceasefire was announced on 10 May by the US President Donald Trump, at Indian request, ending the hostilities that had significantly heightened tensions between the two nuclear-armed neighbors.²³ Pakistan's victory in the Four-Day War marks a pivotal moment in South Asian geopolitics. The outcome of the war has not only shattered longstanding assumption about India's conventional military superiority over Pakistan, but also defined the new strategic realities, both regionally and globally. Furthermore, the war has yet again highlighted the intricate interplay of regional geopolitics and international diplomacy, underscored by the role played by President Trump in brokering a ceasefire and offering to mediate between India and Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir dispute. Pakistan's decisive victory has prompted a fundamental reassessment of regional power dynamics, diplomatic strategies and the prospects for lasting peace in South Asia.

This paper aims to answer the following two research questions: (i) What is the geopolitical impact of Pakistan's victory in the Four-Day War with India?; and (ii) How Pakistan's victory in the Four-Day War with India has shifted the balance of power in South Asia and contributed to maintaining strategic stability in the region?

Research Methodology

This research paper uses a qualitative research methodology based entirely on secondary sources to analyze the geopolitical impact created by Pakistan's victory in the Four-Day War with India. The research draws from a wide range of publicly available sources, including official statements, think-tank reports, academic analyses, media coverage and expert opinion. Through thematic analysis, the study examines key topics such as conventional deterrence, regional power dynamics, diplomatic responses and the evolving discourse on the Kashmir dispute. The research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the strategic and diplomatic implications of the war for India and its impact on the regional peace, strategic stability and security.

²³ "India and Pakistan Agree Ceasefire: What Does It Mean?" *Al Jazeera*, May 10, 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/5/10/india-and-pakistan-agree-ceasefire-what-does-it-mean>, accessed June 13, 2025.

Critical Assessment of Operation Sindoor

Operation Sindoor stands as a glaring example of strategic miscalculation and under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Launched in the aftermath of the Pahalgam incident, the operation was hastily conceived and poorly executed, reflecting lack of coherent military planning and political foresight. Rather than demonstrating strength, it exposed deficiencies in India's defense preparedness and ability to manage crises diplomatically. The downing of advanced Indian military aircraft by PAF not only eroded India's military credibility but also delivered a blow to its global power aspirations. India's request to Washington to broker a ceasefire, in view of Pakistan's massive retaliation that caused colossal damage to Indian military installations, radar stations and missile depots, further revealed India's vulnerability and inability to defeat Pakistan in the conventional domain.

Tactical and Strategic Defeat of Operation Sindoor: Operation Sindoor was touted as a decisive tactical operation aimed at neutralizing those responsible by pursuing the so-called perpetrators of the Pahalgam attack "to the ends of the earth."²⁴ However, it failed to translate into operational success.²⁵ Despite the scale and symbolism of the strikes, Operation Sindoor has exposed a critical gap between New Delhi's intent and the resultant outcome.²⁶ The Indian authorities have been unable to capture any of the four alleged perpetrators, raising serious questions about the intent and effectiveness of India's counterterrorism measures.²⁷ The inability to translate tactical moves into sustained geopolitical influence has exposed weaknesses in India's strategic approach.²⁸

²⁴ Narendra Modi, "PM Narendra Modi's Address to the Nation - Operation Sindoor," *YouTube*, May 12, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZkICICEHUSE>.

²⁵ Sophie Landrin and Elise Vincent, "Military Operation in Pakistan Reveals Weaknesses of India's Air Force," *Le Monde*, May 8, 2025, https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2025/05/08/military-operation-in-pakistan-reveals-weaknesses-of-india-s-air-force_6741047_4.html.

²⁶ Shemin Joy, "How Is Operation Sindoor Successful If Pahalgam Terrorists Haven't Been Caught? Congress Asks BJP," *Deccan Herald*, May 12, 2025, <https://www.deccanherald.com/india/how-is-operation-sindoor-successful-if-pahalgam-terrorists-havent-been-caught-congress-asks-bjp-3536783>.

²⁷ Aswini K Ray, "Lesson from Op Sindoor: To Truly Win, India Must Tone down Its Public Trumpeting," *The Wire*, July 2025, <https://thewire.in/politics/lesson-from-op-sindoor-maga-miga-modi-trumpeting>.

²⁸ "What Do These Six Indicators Tell Us of India's Diplomacy after Operation Sindoor?," *The Wire*, June 7, 2025, <https://thewire.in/diplomacy/operation-sindoor-india-modi-diplomacy-situation>.

At the strategic level, this failure carries significant implications. First, by launching a high-risk operation without demonstrable tactical gains, India has weakened its deterrent credibility and exposed limitations of its military capabilities.²⁹ Second, Operation Sindoor appeared driven more by the need to project India's military muscle and personal bravado of Narendra Modi than by a coherent counterterrorism strategy.³⁰ Third, the failure of Operation Sindoor would not only remain confined to the Indian battlefield losses, but also reverberate through the strategic calculus, both regionally and globally, ultimately impacting India's long-term strategic ambitions.³¹

India suffered heavy losses as Pakistan's swift mobilization, precise strikes and use of advanced drone and missile systems outmatched Indian conventional tactics.³² Pakistan downed six Indian fighter aircraft in rapid succession. The aircraft losses comprised four Rafale, one Su-30MKI and one MiG-29, marking a significant setback for the IAF in the initial phase of the conflict.³³

The loss of Indian fighter jets has been acknowledged by Indian Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, who stated that their downing by Pakistan was due to "tactical errors" made by the Indian pilots.³⁴ Similarly, India's Defence Attaché to Indonesia, Captain Shiv Kumar, has also publicly acknowledged the loss of several aircraft on the first night of the conflict.³⁵

²⁹ Prasenjit Bose, "Operation Sindoor — a Case of Doubtful Deterrence," *The Hindu*, May 18, 2025, <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/operation-sindoor-a-case-of-doubtful-deterrence/article69591261.ece>.

³⁰ Mehul Malpani, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi Declares Operation Sindoor as Biggest and Most Successful Anti-Terror Operations in India's History," *The Hindu*, May 31, 2025, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/operation-sindoor-is-biggest-and-most-successful-anti-terror-operations-in-indias-history-says-pm-modi/article69641111.ece>.

³¹ Omair Ahmad, "The Many Failures of Operation Sindoor," *The Wire*, May 23, 2025, <https://thewire.in/politics/the-many-failures-of-operation-sindoor>.

³² Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), "11 Soldiers Martyred, 78 Wounded While Defending Pakistan in Indian Attack," press release, May 13, 2025, *ISPR*, accessed July 2, 2025, <https://ispr.gov.pk/press-release-detail?id=7283>.

³³ "India Loses Four Rafale Jets, Pakistan Condemns Aggression: Ishaq Dar," *Aaj News*, June 4, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6mx1wBP6gE>.

³⁴ "India Confirms It Lost Fighter Jets in Recent Pakistan Conflict," *Bloomberg Television*, June 1, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YaUyntSzgds>.

³⁵ "India Again Admits Jet Losses in Pakistan Clash," *The Express Tribune*, June 30, 2025, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2553367/india-again-admits-jet-losses-in-pakistan-clash>. "India Finally Admits It Lost War Planes in Recent Clash with Pakistan," Associated Press of Pakistan, May 31, 2025, <https://www.app.com.pk/foreign-correspondent/india-finally-admits-it-lost-war-planes-in-recent-clash-with-pakistan/>.

According to Lieutenant General Rahul Singh, the Deputy Chief of Army Staff (Capability Development and Sustenance), India's indigenous defence equipment faced significant performance failures and supply chain delays during Operation Sindoor, exposing serious shortcomings in India's preparedness and its claims of self-reliance.³⁶ Pravin Sawhney, a renowned Indian security analyst, has emphasized the need for India to assess how Pakistan's military, operating with just a fifth of India's defense budget, manages to hold its own in military engagements.³⁷

India's Diplomatic Failure: While Operation Sindoor received broad endorsement within the country,³⁸ India found itself diplomatically isolated, as none of its key strategic partners, including the US, Russia and France, publicly displayed any solidarity with New Delhi.³⁹ The diplomatic isolation underscored increasing skepticism among the world's key capitals concerning New Delhi's unconvincing justification for initiating the conflict, as none offered public support throughout the escalation.⁴⁰ In a most desperate diplomatic stunt, India sent seven all-party delegations to thirty-two countries across the world to explain its military aggression against Pakistan.⁴¹ Despite this outreach, the effort was largely ineffective, as the delegations failed to garner international backing, highlighting the growing disconnect between India's domestic narrative and global perceptions.⁴²

³⁶ "Five Key Revelations from Army's Deputy Chief on Operation Sindoor," *The Wire*, July 4, 2025,

<https://thewire.in/security/five-key-revelations-lt-gen-rahul-singh-operation-sindoor>.

³⁷ Tom Stevenson, "Tom Stevenson | across the Line of Control," *London Review of Books*, May 18, 2025, <https://www.lrb.co.uk/blog/2025/may/across-the-line-of-control>.

³⁸ Omair Ahmad, "The Many Failures of Operation Sindoor," *The Wire*, May 23, 2025, <https://thewire.in/politics/the-many-failures-of-operation-sindoor>.

³⁹ Amit Baruah, "Has the Fallout from Operation Sindoor Isolated India? A Frontline Webinar," *Frontline*, June 16, 2025, <https://frontline.thehindu.com/world-affairs/operation-sindoor-india-pakistan-diplomacy-geopolitics/article69700900.ece>.

⁴⁰ Devirupa Mitra, "World Capitals Urge Calm in Wave of Diplomatic Activity after India's Missile Strikes on Pakistan," *The Wire*, May 7, 2025, <https://m.thewire.in/article/diplomacy/despite-varying-alignment-world-capitals-urge-calm-post-indian-missile-strikes>.

⁴¹ Bharat Bhushan, "Will All-Party Delegation Strengthen India's Stance or Weaken Its Position?," *Deccan Herald*, May 23, 2025, <https://www.deccanherald.com/opinion/will-all-party-delegation-strengthen-indias-stance-or-weakenitsposition-3554036>.

⁴² Aswini K Ray, "Lesson from Op Sindoor: To Truly Win, India Must Tone down Its Public Trumpeting," *The Wire*, July 2025, <https://thewire.in/politics/lesson-from-op-sindoor-maga-miga-modi-trumpeting>.

Despite attempting to implicate Pakistan in the Pahalgam incident, India failed to present credible evidence to the international community, which declined to endorse its allegations against Islamabad.⁴³ In contrast, Pakistan's unified domestic response and effective diplomacy were able to ensure the failure of India's slanderous campaign against Pakistan.⁴⁴

Notably, none of the major powers or international multilateral forums, including the US, China, Russia, the United Kingdom, the EU, the UN, the QUAD, BRICS, the SCO, or even the G7, echoed New Delhi's claims or lent diplomatic weight to its stance.⁴⁵ Even within forums where India traditionally enjoys considerable influence, such as the BRICS, the member states refrained from endorsing India's position, underlining the fallacy of its unfounded allegations against Pakistan.⁴⁶

Political Defeat: Narendra Modi is facing severe criticism from opposition parties and defense analysts, who accuse him of undertaking Operation Sindoor for his political gains while withholding crucial information, including losses suffered by the IAF.⁴⁷ The security failure at Pahalgam triggered widespread public protests and calls for the resignation of prominent Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) officials, revealing significant divisions within India. The unprecedented call from Shiv Sena demanding resignation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah reflected growing discontent within the ruling establishment. The party accused the government of exploiting national security concerns for political gains, while presiding over a significant foreign policy failure following Operation Sindoor.⁴⁸

⁴³ Muhammad Abubaker, "India's Failed Diplomatic Bid to Isolate Pakistan Post-Pahalgam," *Strategic Vision Institute*, June 2, 2025, <https://thesvi.org/indias-failed-diplomatic-bid-to-isolate-pakistan-post-pahalgam/>.

⁴⁴ Qazi M. Khalilullah (Ret.), "India's Diplomatic Debacle," talk, *Center for International Strategic Studies Sindh*, Commemoration of Youm-e-Takbeer seminar/webinar, 29 May 2025.

⁴⁵ Muqtadar Khan, "Has Modi's Diplomacy Undermined India's National Interests?," *The Diplomat*, May 27, 2025, <https://thediplomat.com/2025/05/has-modis-diplomacy-undermined-indias-national-interests/>.

⁴⁶ Muhammad Abubaker, "India's Failed Diplomatic Bid to Isolate Pakistan Post-Pahalgam," *Strategic Vision Institute*, June 2, 2025, <https://thesvi.org/indias-failed-diplomatic-bid-to-isolate-pakistan-post-pahalgam/>.

⁴⁷ "Modi Government under Fire for Allegedly Hiding Losses in 'Operation Sindoor,'" *Ptv.com.pk*, 2025, <https://ptv.com.pk/ptvworld/newsdetail/6872>.

⁴⁸ Mrityunjay Bose, "'Operation Sindoor Is a Failure': Sanjay Raut Says Demanding Amit Shah's Resignation," *Deccan Herald*, May 27, 2025, <https://www.deccanherald.com/india/maharashtra/operation-sindoor-is-a-failure-sanjay-raut-says-demanding-amit-shahs-resignation-3558682>.

The dissent within the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) highlights the deepening political divide and increasing pressure on the Modi administration.⁴⁹ Narendra Modi has experienced a notable decline in public trust and legitimacy, reflecting a deep-seated dissatisfaction and political instability.⁵⁰ This decline in public trust was reflected in the electoral outcome of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The BJP managed to secure only 240 seats, against a target of 400, out of 543, signifying a noticeable decline in Modi's popularity as well as of the party. In 2014, the BJP won 282 seats, becoming the first party to do so since 1984, and further increased its tally to 303 in 2019.⁵¹

India's Disinformation Campaign: India's strategy of disinformation and media manipulation failed to secure international support, as independent investigations and open-source intelligence (OSINT) systematically debunked numerous Indian assertions, further undermining New Delhi's credibility. Leading Indian news channels, including Zee News, NDTV, Times Now, ABP News and Bharat Samachar, aired a series of sensational and unverified reports relating to Pakistan's civil and military leadership and destruction of critical infrastructure including Karachi Port, often accompanied by unrelated imagery or video-game footage, highlighting serious concerns about the deterioration of journalistic ethics within India's mainstream media landscape.⁵²

Indian social media became a source of disinformation with Pakistani journalists effectively countering false Indian narratives through verified evidence and satire, including a vibrant meme war. International observers criticized Indian media for sensationalism and false reporting, while acknowledging Pakistani media's responsible journalism. The conflict underscored the power of media narratives in modern warfare and highlighted

⁴⁹ "India S Shiv Sena UBT Calls on PM Modi Amit Shah to Resign over Operation Sindoor," *The Express Tribune*, May 12, 2025, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2545408/indias-shiv-sena-ubt-calls-on-pm-modi-amit-shah-to-resign-over-operation-sindoor>.

⁵⁰ Sandipan Sharma, "Indicate Left, Turn Right: PM Modi's Art of Deception Pakistan Failed to Notice," *India Today*, May 7, 2025, <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/operation-sindoor-pm-modi-art-of-deception-pakistan-strikes-pok-pahalgam-attack-2720731-2025-05-07>.

⁵¹ Tarique Ahmed Abro, "Modi 3.0: Electoral Autocracy," *The Nation*, July 28, 2024, <http://nation.com.pk/28-Jul-2024/modi-3-0-electoral-autocracy>.

⁵² Karishma Mehrotra, "How Misinformation Overtook Indian Newsrooms amid Conflict with Pakistan," *The Washington Post*, June 4, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2025/06/04/india-news-channels-misinformation-pakistan-conflict/>.

the strategic importance of credibility and professionalism in conflict reporting.⁵³

Operation Bunyanum Marsoos: A Resounding Success

Military Success: In response to the Indian aggression, Pakistan launched Operation Bunyanum Marsoos on the night of 9–10 May 2025, in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter. Pakistan's befitting response exemplified battlefield coordination through the integration of AI-driven surveillance and the precise utilization of long-range artillery and drone assets. Real-time intelligence integration, cutting-edge network-centric warfare capabilities and a seamless fusion of multi-domain assets were instrumental in achieving targets. It included well-coordinated strikes across twenty-six strategic locations in India, resulting in substantial destruction of and damage to Indian military assets.⁵⁴

The success achieved by Pakistan Armed Forces, including PAF, was made possible through the use of a secure and advanced data link system, which enhanced situational awareness, enabled network-centric warfare capabilities, facilitated real-time monitoring and targeting, and supported integrated multi-domain operations. Pakistan's strategic focus on the development and deployment of indigenous niche technologies served as a critical force multiplier in this engagement. Notably, the air encounter marked the inaugural operational deployment of Chinese-manufactured Beyond Visual Range (BVR) PL-15 missiles and J-10C fighter aircraft, both of which demonstrated their operational effectiveness under combat conditions.⁵⁵

The destruction of an Indian S-400 missile battery at Adampur Air Force Station in Punjab's Jalandhar district, executed via precision-guided hypersonic CM-400AKG missiles launched from JF-17 Thunder aircraft, highlighted Pakistan's advanced operational capabilities and effective

⁵³ Erum Tanveer, "Role of Pakistan & Indian Media in the 4-Day War: A Comparative Analysis," presentation, *CISSS webinar*, 29 May 2025.

⁵⁴ "Pakistan Carries out Strikes on 26 Locations in India, Inflicting Significant Losses on Enemy: Tarar," *Radio.gov.pk*, 2025, <https://radio.gov.pk/10-05-2025/pakistan-carries-out-strikes-on-26-locations-in-india-inflicting-significant-losses-on-enemy-tarar>.

⁵⁵ Abdul Samad, "Operation Bunyanum Marsoos: Pakistan's Decisive Response Redefining South Asia's Military ...," *The Friday Times*, May 27, 2025, <https://thefridaytimes.com/27-May-2025/operation-bunyanum-marsoos-pakistan-s-decisive-response-redefining-south-asia-s-military-balance>.

employment of emerging missile technologies. Furthermore, a Heron Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) of Israeli origin was successfully intercepted and brought down by Pakistan.⁵⁶

The operation exemplified an exceptional display of integrated tri-service collaboration by the Pakistan Armed Forces. The synergy among air, land, sea and cyber components facilitated precision targeting, overwhelmingly concentrated firepower and effective counterattacks. The unified employment of diverse military platforms enabled the delivery of highly synchronized strikes against strategically prioritized objectives, underscoring Pakistan's exemplary military proficiency and operational cohesion.⁵⁷

Notably, the Operation Bunyanum Marsoos was a strategically calibrated and doctrinally grounded military response by Pakistan to India's botched Operation Sindoor. Rather than escalating impulsively or activating nuclear deterrent, Pakistan employed its Quid Pro Quo Plus (QPQ+) policy, relying on precision conventional capabilities like Fatah-series missiles and airpower to defeat Indian aggression. The Marka-e-Haq demonstrated Pakistan's deterrence credibility, reaffirming that stability in South Asia is not self-sustaining but must be actively reasserted through discipline. It dismantled India's narrative of escalation dominance and restored strategic balance without brinkmanship, signaling Pakistan's commitment to restraint, readiness and regional stability.⁵⁸

Pakistan's Diplomatic Success: During and after Operation Bunyanum Marsoos, Pakistan achieved significant diplomatic successes by effectively rallying regional and international support against Indian aggression. Pakistan's proactive engagement with key global powers and multilateral organizations, including the UN Security Council, was helpful in highlighting India's destabilizing and irresponsible actions, exposing it as an aggressor. At the same time, Pakistan was able to highlight its commitment to promoting peace and stability in the region. By leveraging diplomatic channels and media

⁵⁶ Zeeshan.Ahmad, "Did Modi Inadvertently Confirm Pakistan's S-400 Claim?" *The Express Tribune*, May 13, 2025, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2545624/did-modi-inadvertently-confirm-pakistans-s-400-claim>.

⁵⁷ "Marka-e-Haq - 22 April 2025 to 10 May 2025," Press Release No PR-152/2025-ISPR (12 May 2025), ISPR, Islamabad, <https://ispr.gov.pk/press-release-detail?id=7283>.

⁵⁸ Brig Dr Zahir Kazmi (Retd), "Operation Bunyanum Marsoos: Deterrence & Power Balance Redefined in South Asia," *CISSS webinar*, 29 May 2025, online presentation, Center for International Strategic Studies Sindh (CISSS).

outreach, Pakistan successfully countered India's narrative and received valuable support from the international community, including China, Türkiye, Azerbaijan and many other countries.⁵⁹

In early June 2025, Pakistan sent two high-level delegations to key global capitals to present its perspective on the Four-Day War imposed by India on Pakistan and counter New Delhi's malicious campaign following the Pahalgam incident. One delegation, led by former Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, visited New York, Washington D.C., London and Brussels to engage with UN officials, Western governments, think tanks and Pakistani diaspora. The second delegation, headed by Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Syed Tariq Fatemi, visited Moscow to brief high-level Russian officials. Both the delegations highlighted Pakistan's call for dialogue, restrained response to Indian aggression and the need to resolve all outstanding issues including Kashmir dispute with India peacefully through dialogue.⁶⁰

While India was attempting to isolate Pakistan diplomatically, a series of international developments instead highlighted New Delhi's failure to sway global opinion, causing significant embarrassment. At the height of India's military campaign, Pakistan was appointed as the Chair of the UN Security Council's Taliban Sanctions Committee and Vice-Chair of the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee, a clear blow to India's efforts to malign Pakistan internationally. International financial institutions also ignored India's attempts to influence their policies towards Pakistan. To the contrary, continued provision of financial assistance by them to Pakistan under agreed programmes not only signaled confidence in Pakistan's stability and governance but also blunted Indian attempts to delegitimize it on the international stage during Operation Sindoor.⁶¹

⁵⁹ "Kashmir, Rafale, Modi: How Pakistan Turned a Crisis into Diplomatic Gain," *The Express Tribune*, May 20, 2025, <https://tribune.com.pk/article/98021/kashmir-rafale-modi-how-pakistan-turned-a-crisis-int-o-diplomatic-gain>.

⁶⁰ "Pakistan Despatches Two Delegations to Key Capitals to Present Its Perspective on Recent Conflict with India," *The Indian Express*, June 2, 2025, <https://indianexpress.com/article/pakistan/pakistan-despatches-two-delegations-key-capitals-india-10043979/>.

⁶¹ Aswini K Ray, "Lesson from Op Sindoor: To Truly Win, India Must Tone down Its Public Trumpeting," *The Wire*, July 2025, <https://thewire.in/politics/lesson-from-op-sindoor-maga-miga-modi-trumpeting>.

Debunking India's Conventional Superiority Myth: India's long-held image of conventional military superiority over Pakistan was decisively shattered during the Four-Day War. It exposed significant gaps in the Indian military's logistics, operational preparedness and tri-service coordination. Pakistan's use of next-generation cyber warfare capabilities, Electronic Warfare (EW) and autonomous drones and multi-domain operations proved to be a force multiplier. Contrary to prior assumptions of India's conventional military superiority, Pakistan demonstrated significant tactical competence, achieving air and ground superiority in several engagements.⁶²

Notably, PAF engaged 72 IAF fighters with 42 jets, downing six Indian aircraft without suffering any loss. Pakistan also showcased advancements in EW and air defense capabilities, neutralizing over 80 hostile drones before they could inflict meaningful damage. On the offensive front, Pakistan launched missile and drone strikes on 26 confirmed targets inside Indian territory, including the destruction of at least one S-400 air defense battery, challenging India's claims of strategic invulnerability.⁶³

Despite India's annual defense spending of nearly USD 80 billion and acquisition of advanced weaponry, Pakistan's strategic response exposed significant vulnerabilities in India's military machine. Pakistani forces, leveraging indigenous and Chinese-supplied technologies, effectively countered India's advancements, leading to the downing of multiple Indian aircraft, including Rafale and the neutralization of sophisticated air defense systems. This conflict underscored the limitations of technological superiority without cohesive strategy and operational integration, challenging the long-held myth about India's military invincibility.⁶⁴

Regional Power Shift Towards Pakistan: The Four-Day War between India and Pakistan marked a pivotal turning point in the region's strategic landscape. Pakistan's ability to rapidly and decisively neutralize key Indian military assets

⁶² Hamza Rao, "Modi Confronts War at Home amid Painful Soul Searching," *The Express Tribune*, May 15, 2025, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2545888/modi-confronts-war-at-home-amid-painful-soul-searching>.

⁶³ Sajid Salamat, "Breaking the Myth of Superiority," *Daily Times*, May 15, 2025, <https://daillytimes.com.pk/1301163/breaking-the-myth-of-superiority/>.

⁶⁴ Sohail A Azmie, "A Shattered Myth: India's Conventional Military Superiority," *The News International*, March 29, 2019, <https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/450521-a-shattered-myth-indias-conventional-military-superiority>.

demonstrated the emergence of a credible conventional deterrent, effectively recalibrating the balance of power in South Asia.⁶⁵ This shift underscores that deterrence is no longer solely predicated on quantitative superiority or possession of advanced weaponry but increasingly depends on the integration of innovative tactics, multi-domain operations and technological adaptability.⁶⁶ The resultant deterrence effect is twofold: First, it lowers the probability of large-scale military escalation by signaling Pakistan's capability to impose swift and significant retaliation. Second, it compels India to reassess its strategic assumptions, operational readiness and doctrinal postures. Consequently, the conflict has signaled a shift in regional power dynamics towards Pakistan, whereby deterrence stability is increasingly defined by qualitative factors, such as operational coherence and strategic innovation, rather than conventional force metrics alone.

Pakistan's effective employment of asymmetric capabilities – spanning cyber warfare, EW and precision strike platforms – illustrates how strategic agility can compensate for conventional disparities and impose substantial costs on a militarily superior adversary.⁶⁷

Re-hyphenation of India-Pakistan: The recent war decisively reversed India's prolonged diplomatic campaign aimed at de-hyphenating itself from Pakistan.⁶⁸ The ceasefire between India and Pakistan, announced by the US President Donald Trump, has effectively re-hyphenated the two nations on the global stage, something India had long tried to avoid. In asserting credit for brokering the truce via trade leverage, President Trump re-hyphenated both the states in his pronouncements. The re-hyphenation underscores the challenge Modi now faces in reclaiming India's narrative and resisting any framing that places the two nations on an equal footing.⁶⁹ This shift in international

⁶⁵ "Pakistan Established 'New Redline of Strategic Conventional Deterrence' in Conflict with India: Sherry," *DAWN*, May 15, 2025, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1911210/pakistan-established-new-redline-of-strategic-conventional-deterrence-in-conflict-with-india-sherry>.

⁶⁶ Inam Ul Haque, "India Pakistan Redefining Deterrence," *The Express Tribune*, May 22, 2025, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2547114/india-pakistan-redefining-deterrence>.

⁶⁷ "South Asia on the Brink: India and Pakistan's 2025 Military Balance Revealed," *Defence Security Asia*, April 25, 2025, <https://defencesecurityasia.com/en/south-asia-on-the-brink-india-and-pakistans-2025-military-balance-revealed/>.

⁶⁸ Faisal Siddiqi, "De-Hyphenation or Denial?," *The Nation*, June 18, 2025, <https://www.nation.com.pk/18-Jun-2025/de-hyphenation-or-denial>.

⁶⁹ "India-Pakistan Ceasefire: Modi Faces 'Re-Hyphenation' Challenge after Trump's Kashmir Mediation Claims," *Lowy Institute*, 2025, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/india-pakistan-ceasefire-modi-faces-re-hyphenation-challenge-after-trump-s-kashmir>.

discourse marks a significant diplomatic victory for Pakistan.⁷⁰

Kashmir: A Nuclear Flashpoint: The recent Four-Day India-Pakistan war has reignited scholarly and strategic discourse regarding Kashmir as a nuclear flashpoint, underscoring the persistent volatility of this internationally recognized dispute between two nuclear-armed neighbors.⁷¹ The world's renewed focus on Kashmir represents a crucial step toward creating conditions conducive to lasting peace, security and cooperation in South Asia. The brief yet intense war has brought renewed urgency to concerns over escalation dynamics, deterrence stability and crisis management in South Asia.⁷²

The intense military clashes underscored the high stakes involved, raising fears of escalation into a broader nuclear confrontation. This escalation prompted major world powers and international organizations to engage more actively in diplomatic efforts to prevent further conflict, highlighting Kashmir as a critical dispute with global security implications. As a result, Kashmir has re-emerged on the international security agenda, with increased scrutiny on the risks posed by India's belligerent posture in the region.⁷³ Kashmir has also made its way to President Trump's agenda, who has offered to mediate between Pakistan and India to resolve the dispute.⁷⁴

India's Great-Power Delusions: According to Ashley J. Tellis, India's assertive and often confrontational posture in its regional engagements can be interpreted as a reflection of what can be identified as its "great power delusion." Driven by sustained economic growth, advances in military

⁷⁰ Saad Hafiz, "The Pahalgam Attack and the Return of the India-Pakistan Hyphenation," *The Friday Times*, May 15, 2025, <https://thefridaytimes.com/15-May-2025/the-pahalgam-attack-and-the-return-of-the-india-pakistan-hyphenation>.

⁷¹ "Flashpoint Kashmir: The Nuclear Dimension," *Counterfire*, 2025, <https://www.counterfire.org/article/flashpoint-kashmir-the-nuclear-dimension/>.

⁷² "UK Parliamentary Study Warns Kashmir Flashpoint Could Spark Nuclear Conflict," *Pakistan Today*, May 18, 2025, <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2025/05/18/uk-parliamentary-study-warns-kashmir-flashpoint-could-spark-nuclear-conflict/>.

⁷³ Noreen Haider, "The Four-Day War: Kashmir, Missiles, and the Shadow of Nuclear Annihilation," *The Friday Times*, June 11, 2025, <https://thefridaytimes.com/11-Jun-2025/the-four-day-war-kashmir-missiles-and-the-shadow-of-nuclear-annihilation>.

⁷⁴ "Trump Offers to Work with India, Pakistan on Kashmir 'Solution,'" *Al Jazeera*, May 11, 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/5/11/trump-offers-to-work-with-india-pakistan-on-kashmir>.

capability and a growing global profile, India seeks to position itself as a dominant regional actor. However, this proactive posture, evident in its border tensions with China, increased naval activity in the Indian Ocean and firm policies toward Pakistan, may overstate its actual strategic capacity. India's aspirations significantly outpace its material capabilities. Moreover, its leadership has yet to fully acknowledge the structural limitations it faces. India's pursuit of strategic autonomy represents a desire for a global order that is neither currently attainable nor likely to emerge, raising concerns that India's aggressive approach could destabilize its neighborhood and hinder its long-term geopolitical ambitions.⁷⁵

Conclusion

The four-day India-Pakistan war stands as a crucial moment in South Asian geopolitics, fundamentally dismantling the myth surrounding India's conventional military superiority and diplomatic leverage. The war initiated by India not only exposed the operational and strategic vulnerabilities of its conventional forces but also challenged its regional hegemony. In contrast, Pakistan's measured yet decisive response, epitomized by the success of Operation Bunyanum Marsoos, underscored its growing military sophistication, technological adaptability and diplomatic maturity. The integrated use of multi-domain warfare, coupled with real-time intelligence and precision strikes, has revealed a new paradigm in Pakistan's defense strategy, decisively shifting the regional balance of power in favour of Islamabad. The war has demonstrated Pakistan's relevance as a regional stabilizer, re-hyphenated India and Pakistan, and reinvigorated the debate about Kashmir as a nuclear flashpoint. Lastly, it has redefined the strategic landscape of South Asia.

⁷⁵ Ashley J Tellis, "India's Great-Power Delusions," *Foreign Affairs*, June 17, 2025, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/india/indias-great-power-delusions>.