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- ❖ **India in a US-led Bilateral World Order**
- ❖ **Information Space in India-Russia Relations**
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Pahalgam: Sordid Tale of Terrorism

War euphoria has been running down the spine of most Indians ever since on April 22, 2025 a group of terrorists opened fire in cold blood on innocent terrorists in Baisaran Valley of Pahalgam in Kashmir. It led to the killing of 26 Indians and supposedly two foreigners. Majority of Indian citizens are pressurizing government to teach a lesson to Pakistan and punish in strictest terms. Media is projecting as if the war has begun. Majority of nation-states of the world have criticized the ghastly attack and have expressed their support to India for a scale and time which India may choose to punish the perpetrator of the inhuman crime. Terrorists were armed with M4 Carbines and AK-47s and singled out the men and shot them dead after ascertaining their religion.

Indian leadership was quick to react and responded by immediately initiating five strong measures: (i) suspended the Indus Waters Treaty with Pakistan till Pakistan ceases fomenting cross-border terrorism; (ii) closure of main border crossing between the two countries; (iii) travel ban on all Pakistani nationals to India under the SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme; (iv) cancellation of all previously issued Visas; and (v) declaring Pakistani military advisors at the High Commission of Pakistan in New Delhi as persona-non-grata and withdrawing its own counterparts from Islamabad.

The Resistance Front (TRF), a dummy of Lashkar-e-Taiba, initially took the responsibility of the attack for allowing non-Kashmiris to live and work in Kashmir. However, four days later on April 26 they backtracked from the responsibility they took, and accused Indian intelligence operative to be involved in the incident which they are investigating. NIA (National Investigating Agency) of India visited the site on April 23rd and has assumed the task of investigating. India has candidly accused Pakistan to be behind the entire episode and accordingly taking actions against Pakistan.

Entire episode has raised number of issues: (i) should India go for military offensive against Pakistan? The answer should be a big no. Fighting war in this era where technology rules the roost is not an easy task. It would be detrimental to both India and Pakistan. Both the countries would be drained out of their economic achievements and would only emerge devastated. India is fifth largest economy and has been doing quite well since recent past. Hence, would be at the receiving end after the war. Pakistan which is largely based on foreign aid, help and grants would stand further pauperized and with no stakes in the global system would be increasingly involved in bleeding India through thousand cuts. Therefore, war would be India's diplomatic failure and Pakistan's success as this is what the present Pakistani Army leadership stands for. Pakistan has been provoking India thorough such attacks to bring down the image of strong Indian leadership. India must devise means and mechanism to address the issue diplomatically (including other hard measures) rather than militarily.

(ii) Public memory is a temporary phenomenon. The emotions which are pouring out in the aftermath of the attack would subside subsequently in due course. However, a war would create an impact on India as well as on Indians for long time to come. Therefore, one must understand that the weapons are procured for maintaining the minimum credible deterrence and not to fight a war, which could be avoided. Weapon System projects the military might and prowess of a country and deters the adversaries that in case they resort to any misadventure the consequences would be devastating for them. Pahalgam is an injury inflicted on India to provoke India to attack Pakistan or take stringent measures in the valley so that its economy slips into doldrums.

(iii) Other motive behind the attack is to frighten the tourists coming to Kashmir so that the extremists can have their way in Kashmir. This is completely detrimental to the economy of Kashmir and locals would lose their job and livelihood. Reportedly, mitigation of Article 370 from Kashmir has facilitated peace and prosperity in the valley which may have been an eye-shore to the enemies. Hence, the attack could dislodge and dislocate peace in the valley, which must be kept in mind while advocating for war with Pakistan. It is not Pakistan which would be at loss, but India.

— BK