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Pak-India Conflict

Report | 2016 – 2018



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Author: Mohammad Nafees

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Overview

The recent stand-off between Pakistan and India after the Pulwama suicide attack on February 14 was a reminiscent of similar events in the past that had triggered tensions, if not large-scale hostilities. Two major incidents in 2016 – militant attacks at Pathankot Air Force Station and Uri Army Camp on the 2nd of January 2016 and the 18th of September 2016 respectively – did escalate political tensions and fueled nationalistic, often jingoistic rhetoric. The immediate Indian reaction to these two attacks was to blame them on Pakistan-based militant groups. The arrest in March/April 2016 of the Indian navy commander Kulboshan Jadhav, who was reportedly running an espionage network out of the Iranian port of Chabahar, brought the bilateral relations literally to a standstill. India demanded Jadhav back but Pakistan declined on the grounds that he had confessed having organized terrorist activities in the southwestern Balochistan province. Following his conviction to death by a Pakistani military court, India approached the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to get Jadhav off the hook. The ruling on the spy is expected in the latter half of the year.

This report takes a stock of what both countries have achieved and lost as a result of their dispute over the predominantly Kashmir Valley (Indian-administered Kashmir). It is based on Indian and Pakistani press. No editing is done to the reports that appeared in the Indian and Pakistani press with the basic intent to allow the readers to know how conflicting perspectives are at play and harming the bilateral relationship. Pakistan-based militant groups accused by India for terrorist activities in its part of Kashmir are central to the hostile relations. These include Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), Hizbul Mujahideen (HuM), and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) which are very active in the Indian Kashmir as became evident from the number of attacks claimed by them.

Fatalities from Cross-Border Firings in Pakistan

From October 2016 to 2018¹, the cross-border firings from India left 204 persons dead and 351 injured. Civilian casualties were twice the number of security personnel who fell victim to the Indian firings in the border areas of Pakistan (Table 1).

Table 1: Fatalities from Pak-India Border Conflicts	Oct 2016-17		2018	
	Pakistan		Pakistan	
Victims	Fatality	Injury	Fatality	Injury
Security personnel	44		20	129
Civilians	91	223	49	4
Total	135	223	69	133

¹ Data on cross-border firing starts from October 2016 because such occurrences escalated soon after the terror attack at Uri Army Camp on 18 September 2016.

Between October 2016 and 2017, border conflicts inflicted more fatalities as compared to 2018; a reflection of receding tensions between Pakistan and India. The sectors of Nakyal, Battal, Sialkot, Bhimber and Poonch witnessed higher number of fatalities compared to other sectors (Table 2).

Table 2: Fatalities from Cross-Border firings in Pakistan	Oct 2016-17	2018
Location	Fatality	
LoC	34	
Kotli		1
Nakyal	11	7
Lawat area	9	
Battal sector	8	2
Rajouri	8	
Sialkot	8	6
Bhimber	6	5
Rawalkot	5	2
Athmuqam	4	
Harpal sector	4	
Akhnor	3	
Keri sector	4	
Jehlum valley	3	
Muzaffarabad	3	
Poonch	3	15
Abbaspur	2	
Baramulla	2	
Bhabra	2	
Chapar	2	
Chrikot	2	
Haveli dist	2	
Nowshera	2	
Nezapir sector		2
Tangdhar		4
Chawah sector		2
Unknown	8	23
Total	135	69

Women, children, and elderly people besides soldiers and rangers also paid a price of the conflict because the leadership of both the countries could not resolve their issues through peaceful means (Table 3).

Table 3: Pak/India border conflicts	Oct 2016 - Aug 2017		2018	
Identity	Pakistan		Pakistan	
	Fatality	Injury	Fatality	Injury
Unknown civilians	73	191	38	110
Soldiers	39		20	4
Rangers	5			
Minor girl	1			
Driver - School bus	1		1	
Woman	8	9	6	3
Children	3	20	1	
Old man			1	1
Elderly woman	2	1	1	
Girl	2	2	1	
School girl				10
Mental woman	1			
Total	135	223	69	128

Fatalities from Cross-Border Firings in India

Indian casualties from cross-border firings were almost half of what Pakistan suffered; 278 in India as against 555 in Pakistan. The civilian fatalities in India (49) were almost half of the number of security personnel fatalities (101), which is completely opposite to what Pakistan suffered (Table 4).

Table 4: Fatalities from Pak-India Border Conflicts	Oct 2016-17		2018	
Victims	India		India	
	Fatality	Injury	Fatality	Injury
Security personnel	61	34	40	12
Civilians	25	65	14	27
Total	86	99	54	39

The sectors that suffered higher number of fatalities from cross-border firings in India were Poonch, Rajouri, and Samba sectors. Interestingly, both the countries reported human losses from the sectors that are common for India and Pakistan like Poonch, Rajouri, Baramullah, Chapar, Battal, Keran, and others. At Poonch, Rajouri, and Battal sectors, the fatalities were higher for both - Pakistan and India (Table 5).

Table 5: Fatalities from Pakistan Firings in India	Oct 2016-17	2018
Location	Fatality	Fatality
Poonch	13	3
LoC	5	
Baramullah	3	
Rajouri	7	9
Nowshera sector	1	1
Jammu	1	4
LoC	24	
Samba	8	10
Chapar	5	
Srinagar	5	
Tatta Pani	5	
Shopian	1	
Keran Sector	4	
Anantnag	2	
Kulgam	1	
Pura sector		5
Kupwara	1	4
Battal sector		6
Akhnor		1
Bandipura		2
Pargwal sector		2
Tangdhar		1
Unknown		6
Total	86	54

Like Pakistan, India also suffered from losses of their womenfolk and children because of cross-border firings from Pakistan, reflecting a dilemma of the conflict where innocent people are more vulnerable (Table 6). Although the civilian population of both countries became victims of cross-border firings, the number of such victims in India, for some reasons, are one third of the civilian fatalities in Pakistan – 49 in India and 140 in Pakistan.

Table 6: Pak/India Border Conflicts	Oct 2016 - Aug 2017		2018	
Identity	India		India	
	Fatality	Injury	Fatality	Injury
Unknown civilians	12	52	14	26
Soldiers	60	29	39	10
Captains			1	
Women	6	8		1

Children	6	3		
Girls		1		
Media reporters		2		
BSF Troopers		4		
Police	1			2
Guards	1			
Total	86	99	54	39

Fatalities from Insurgency in Indian Kashmir

Alongside the cross-border firings, the reports of militancy continued appearing in the Indian press. At the end of 2016, there were 81 fatalities from militant attacks in Indian Kashmir. This figure increased threefold in the year 2017 with a further upsurge during the year 2018. Within three years, India witnessed the loss of 757 persons as a result of violence in the Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK). This was interpreted as insurgency by India while Pakistan treated it as a struggle of freedom fighters against Indian hegemony in the valley. Nearly 60% of the total fatalities from insurgent attacks was of the militants (412) followed by the fatalities of security personnel (197)².

As many as 100 foreign militants were also killed during these three years. As claimed by the Indian press, they were Pakistan-based militants who tried to infiltrate into the Indian territory to carry out terror attacks. Besides foreign militants, there were incidents where security officials were found to have defected the Indian Forces and joined the militants. Idrees Ahmad and Zahoor Ahmad Thokar were two security officials who were killed on 6 November 2018 and 16 December 2018 respectively, and were identified as affiliated with Hizbul Mujahideen (HuM). This reflects a situation where insurgency has formed deep roots in the Indian Occupied Kashmir (Table 7).

Table 7: Fatalities from Insurgent Attacks in IOK	2016	2017	2018	2016-18
Victims	Fatalities	Fatalities	Fatalities	Fatalities
Militants	17	152	213	382
Security	46	74	77	197
Civilians	1	31	29	61
Foreign Militants	17	58	25	100
Politicians		3	10	13
Security Militants			2	2

² These figures don't include the fatalities of those Kashmiri people who were killed during their protests against the killing of militants in the valley during security operations.

Foreigners			1	1
Government officials			1	1
Media			1	1
Total	81	318	359	758

Among the districts in IOK affected by militancy during 2016-2018, the most affected were Pulwama, Shopian, Kupwara, Srinagar, Baramulla, Kulgam, Anantnag, Bandipora, Uri Base, in addition to many others, based on the fatalities of militants reported from these districts (Table 8).

Table 8: Fatalities from Insurgent Attacks in IOK		2016-18
Districts	Fatalities	
Pulwama	94	
Shopian	89	
Kupwara	88	
Srinagar	73	
Baramulla	63	
Kulgam	50	
Anantnag	44	
Bandipora	43	
Uri Base	17	
Jammu	12	
Sopore	10	
Budgam	10	
Border area	10	
Nagrota	10	
Poonch	9	
Tral	6	
Rajouri	6	
Macchil sector	5	
Hijjin	5	
Srigurwara	4	
Tangdhar	4	
Akhnor	3	
Keran sector	3	
Others	100	
Total	758	

Two forms of violence; encounters and armed attacks, have been the major causes of fatalities in the Indian Kashmir. A significant number of militants were killed when they allegedly tried to infiltrate into the Indian territory from across the border. Explosive weapons like IEDs, bombs, and hand grenades were also used by the militants. A suicide attack was also carried out in the valley on 30 November 2016 targeting an army base at 166 Artillery Unit of the Army at Nagrota in Jammu and killing seven soldiers and three militants (Table 9).

Table 9: Fatalities from Insurgent Attacks in IOK 2016-18	
Methods	Fatalities
Encounters	331
Armed attack	157
Infiltration attempt	85
IED	4
Kidnap & kill	4
Bomb	3
Clash	25
Gunned down	48
Gun fights	23
Suicide attack	10
Dead bodies found	17
Hand grenade	6
Ground operations	10
Killed	17
Others	18
Total	758

Three militant outfits; JeM, HuM, and LeT, were very active in the Indian Kashmir as is evident from a number of terror attacks claimed by them. A large number of terror attacks, however, remained unclaimed while nearly 50% of the total fatalities were reported from security operations carried out by Indian Forces (Table 10).

Table 10: Fatalities from insurgent attacks in IOK	2016	2017	2018	2016-18
Claimants	Fatalities	Fatalities	Fatalities	Fatalities
Militants - unknown	45	51	54	150
JeM		10		10
HuM		4	9	13
LeT	2	4	13	19
Police		2		2

Mob at mosque		1		1
Indian Forces	28	89	239	356
Unclaimed	6	157	44	207
Total	81	318	359	758

Based on the Indian press reports, the highest number of victims of militancy in the valley were affiliated with the Indian Forces (118), followed by LeT (93), HuM (53), Indian Police (50), JeM (34), and many others. As many as 29 militants were those who were reported to be Pakistani infiltrators³ whose affiliation with any militant outfit was not identified in the reports. Even Al-Qaida (AQ), and Daish (Islamic State) were reported to be active in Indian Kashmir as they lost some of their militants in the valley in security operations.

Two other militant groups; Al-Badr and Ansar Gazwat ul Hind, also were reported to have presence in the valley. The political parties that suffered the loss of their activists in terror attacks were People's Democratic Party (PDP) and All Pakistan Hurriyet Conference (APHC). Nearly 50% of the total victims of violence were those whose affiliation was not reported in the Indian press (Table 11).

Table 11: Fatalities from Insurgent Attacks in IOK	2016	2017	2018	Total 2016-18
Affiliations	Fatalities	Fatalities	Fatalities	Fatalities
Indian Forces	35	38	45	118
LeT (Lashkar-e-Toiba)	11	44	38	93
Indian Police	1	30	19	50
HuM (Hizbul Mujahideen)		23	30	53
JeM (Jaish-e-Muhammad)		16	18	34
Pakistani infiltrators	14	5	10	29
AQ (Al-Qaeda)		3		3
Minister's motorcade		3		3
PDP (People's Democratic Party)		2	1	3
AGH (Ansar Gazwat ul Hind)		1	6	7
Al-Badr/LeT		1	2	3
Daish (Islamic State)			1	1
APHC			1	1
Unknown	20	152	188	360
Total	81	318	359	758

³ Some other infiltrators were reported to be Pakistani having affiliation with JeM (3), and LeT (15)

Insurgents Arrested in Indian Kashmir

Another aspect of the militancy in Indian Kashmir was the number of militants belonging to different militant organizations that were arrested during the last three years. The highest number of militants were associated with LeT (59), HuM (22), Pakistani spies and their supporters (21), Al-Badr (6), JeM (13), and Daish (5). With the exception of one Hindu affiliate of LeT, all others were Muslims.

Of 21 Pakistanis arrested in India, 14 were reported to be taken into custody in Kashmir and the remaining 7 were arrested from Delhi, Meerut, Patiala, Punjab, and UP. In some cases, the names and addresses of Pakistanis were also provided in the reports (Table 12).

Table 12: Insurgents Arrested in Indian Kashmir	2016-17	2018	2016-18
Affiliation	Arrested	Arrested	Arrested
LeT	49	10	59
HuM	16	6	22
Pakistani agents, supporters, etc	8	12	21
Al-Badr	6		6
Banihal attackers	4		4
Indian Police	2		2
JeM	1	12	13
Daish		5	5
Indian Forces		1	1
Religious hatred		1	1
Unknown	8	15	23
Total	94	62	156

Five districts of Indian Kashmir - Baramulla, Srinagar, Kupwara, Budgam, and Pulwama - appeared to be highly affected by militancy based on the number of militants who were arrested from there (Table 13).

Table 13: Insurgents Arrested in Indian Kashmir	July 2016-17	2018	2016-18
Districts	Arrested	Arrested	Arrested
Baramulla	6	21	27
Srinagar	13	10	23
Kupwara	16	1	17
Unknown	3	10	13
Budgam	13		13
Pulwama	5	8	13

Chennab valley	7		7
Shopian	7		7
Bandipura		6	6
Gund-Jahangeer	5		5
Ferozepur	2	3	5
Kulgam	4		4
Anantnag	3		3
Jammu	2		2
Ramban	2		2
Uri Base	2		2
Chandni chowk	2		2
Tral		2	2
Loc	1		1
Samba	1		1
Lahore gate		1	1
Total	94	62	156

Insurgency-Related Incidents in Pakistan

Like India, Pakistan has its own kind of insurgency in its territory but its forms and shapes, in many cases, are very different from the type of insurgency encountered in the Indian Kashmir. The insurgency in Pakistan can be divided in three categories:

- Territorial insurgency
- Religious insurgency
- Political insurgency

Territorial insurgency

It is largely confined within the province of Balochistan where a number of insurgent groups operate and seek a separate homeland or redressal of their grievances. Unlike the separatists of Indian Kashmir, the Baloch separatists do not enjoy a strong following among the people of Balochistan. There were no reports of any Baloch population observing shutter-down strike in protest against the killings of any insurgent by the security agencies as it is reported in the Indian Kashmir. However, the presence of Baloch insurgency is an undeniable fact as it continues inflicting death and destruction in the province of Balochistan; the data collected shows 46 fatalities during 2016-2018 from terror attacks that were carried out by different insurgent groups (Table 14).

Table 14: Claimants of Violence in Balochistan	2016 Fatalities	2017 Fatalities	2018 Fatalities	Total
BLA	14	18	4	36
BLF	4		0	4
BRP/BLA	6		0	6
Total	24	18	4	46

As many as 136 insurgents, with known and unknown identities, also lost their lives in security operations during 2016-2018. The insurgent groups who lost the highest number of insurgents were BRA, BLA, BLF and UBA. There were some fatalities of outlaws in security operations in Balochistan where the victims were defined as labor attackers/Mastung attackers, and belonged to some banned outfits. These outlaws are considered to be associated with some insurgent groups as no clear-cut identity was available for them (Table 15).

Table 15: Fatalities of insurgents - 2016 – 2018				
Affiliation	Year 2016	Year 2017	Year 2018	Total
Banned outfits	20		0	20
BLA	42	5	3	50
BLF	5	3	1	9
BRA	4	0	0	4
BRP	1		0	1
UBA	34	2	0	36
Other	9	7	0	16
Total	115	17	4	136

In the last three years, 70 insurgents were arrested by the security agencies who they claimed were associated with different insurgent groups of Balochistan, like BLA, BRA, BLF, and BNF. Unlike Indian Kashmir, the province of Balochistan did not experience any infiltration of insurgents from across the border. Only one incident of Indian infiltration into Pakistan was recorded in the year 2016 when the famous Indian Agent, Kulbhusan Yadav, was arrested from Balochistan. Soon after his arrest, multiple arrests were made and it was claimed by the security agencies that as many as 500 Indian trained terrorists⁴ posing as Muslims had entered Pakistan and were engaged in promoting terrorism and religious conflicts by arousing anti-army sentiments and other anti-state activities. Following this, there were no further reports of the arrested individuals and neither India nor Pakistan ever raised this issue again. However, some of the insurgents belonging to BLA were reported to have been trained by RAW.

⁴ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/92474/13-more-cohorts-of-nabbed-raw-agent-arrested/>

Religious Insurgency

The militant groups like Tehreek-e-Taliban, Pakistan (TTP), Al-Qaeda (AQ), Lashkar-e-Islami (LI), Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), and Islamic State (Daish), are some of the leading religious insurgent groups which seek to establish the religious system that they believe in but do not aim for having a separate homeland. These militant groups are also accused of having links with Indian and Afghan intelligence agencies to destabilize Pakistan by carrying out terrorist attacks in its territory.

Political Insurgency

MQM is the only mainstream political party whose activists are often arrested with allegations of having links with the Indian intelligence agency – RAW. In 2015, the intelligence agency made a stunning revelation where it found over 200 RAW sleeper cells operating in different municipal organisations of the city, as reported by officials. So far, the data of more than 200 ghost employees of Karachi Water and Sewerage Board and over 100 of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation has been gathered⁵. We hope to get similar data from the Karachi Development Authority soon. Prior to this finding, the law enforcement agencies had arrested some activists of MQM who were suspected to have had links with RAW^{6,7,8,9}.

Current Scenario of Pak-India Conflict

On 14 February 2019, a suicide bomber drove his explosive-laden vehicle into a bus of Indian paramilitary convoy near Lethpora village of Pulwama district, killing 44 Indian troops and wounding many. A spokesman of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) claimed responsibility for the attack and informed that the “suicide attack” was carried out by Aadil Ahmad, alias Waqas Commando, a known freedom fighter from the area. The Indian press reported that Adil Ahmad Dar was recorded as a category C militant who, after joining militancy in 2018, was seen with members of terror groups, Jaish-e-Mohammad, Hizbul Mujahideen and Lashkar-e-Taiba, according to officials. “He was not any top gun; he was just like any other militant of Pulwama, and went missing in 2018,” said a police officer posted in South Kashmir on the condition of anonymity¹⁰. Although Adil was a native Kashmiri, JeM’s claim for the attack provided a good reason for the Indian government to allege Pakistan for involvement in this incident.

This was one of the most daring terror attacks on the Indian paramilitary forces that was bound to generate a fierce reaction from the Indian government. Reacting to the incident, the Indian

⁵ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1218392/police-get-data-of-300-ghost-employees-to-look-into-possible-links-with-raw>

⁶ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1181982/remand-of-two-raw-agents-extended>

⁷ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-4-339679-Remand-of-four-RAW-agents-extended-for-a-week>

⁸ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/961103/ctd-arrests-two-suspects-linked-with-foreign-spy-agencies/>

⁹ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-41023-RAW-agent-Charge-sheet-submitted-in-Karachi-ATC>

¹⁰ <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/pulwama-suicide-bomber-had-joined-jaish-just-a-year-ago/story-eQYKtpWiSbRw8NPsFMWFHN.html>

Prime Minister said, "Pulwama shows the time for talks is over, need to take firm steps now." Indian officials began making harsh statements against Pakistan. "Enough is enough. The time for talking peace is over and I think it is time to teach them (Pakistan) a lesson, and I hope the Government of India will understand this," Amarinder Singh, CM of East Punjab said. Communal riots between Hindus and Muslims also broke out in Jammu and Kashmir that targeted people and their properties. Pakistan, on the other hand, continued expressing the desire of having a peace dialogue between both the countries.

Amid these sentiments, India claimed that it carried out a surgical operation inside Pakistani territory, targeting a camp of Jaish-e-Mohammad and leaving about 200-300 militants dead. Pakistan rejected this claim and showed photos of the area where no huge destruction was visible. On the next day of this claim, Pakistan reported the downing of an Indian military aircraft, MiG21, and capturing its pilot, Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman, into its custody. While India lacked any solid evidence to prove its claim of blowing up a Jaish camp in Pakistani territory, the downing of Indian aircraft and the capture of the Indian pilot in Pakistan's custody elicited a reaction in the Indian people whose opinion turned against their government's claim. Shortly, Pakistan announced its decision to return the IAF pilot. This resulted in causing some embarrassment for the Indian government while a feeling of joy and gratitude resonated throughout India where its people and the media applauded the decision with words of accolades in favor of Pakistan's Prime Minister.

Although, cross-border firings are still ongoing and casualties continue to be reported from both sides of the border, the current gesture of good will extended by Pakistan by returning the IAF pilot shows that the way to a positive bilateral relationship is through gestures of peace and reconciliation, and not by using guns or terror attacks.