

15 HOURS THAT SHOOK SOUTH ASIA

PAKISTAN-INDIA WAR 2025



SAHIBZADA HUZAIFA ASHRAF ASMI

15 Hours

That Shook South Asia

Pakistan-India War 2025

Sahibzada Mian
Huzaifa Ashraf Asmi

Qalam Foundation International

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(Pakistan India War 2025)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ○

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ صَفًّا
كَاتِبُهُمْ بُنَيَانٌ مَّرْصُوصٌ

”بے شک اللہ کو خوش آتے ہیں وہ لوگ کہ اس کی راہ میں لڑتے ہیں صف باندھ کر
گویا کہ وہ ایک عمارت ہیں سیسہ پلائی ہوئی۔“

I dedicate this book to the valiant heroes of the Pakistan Armed Forces, the fearless defenders of our land, sea, and skies and to the brave martyrs and civilians who laid down their lives for the nation. Their sacrifice, courage, and unwavering spirit will forever be remembered

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Preface

There are moments in history when time seems to stop, when every second becomes heavier than years, and every breath is burdened with uncertainty. The Pakistan–India war of May 2025 was one such moment. In just fifteen hours, the region of South Asia witnessed a conflict so intense, so swift, and so decisive that it altered the political, strategic, and emotional landscape of two great nations. This book, *“15 Hours That Shook South Asia,”* is my humble attempt to document those crucial hours, not merely through the lens of war, but through the heartbeat of a nation that stood firm in the face of adversity.

This work is, first and foremost, a tribute to the Pakistan Armed Forces. It is dedicated to every soldier who looked danger in the eye and did not blink, to every pilot who pierced the skies with courage, and to every commander who led with wisdom, strategy, and nerves of steel. It is also a tribute to the silent warriors the families who waited at home, the medics who worked beyond exhaustion, and the countless unnamed individuals whose dedication fuels the defense of this beloved nation. Their sacrifices cannot be measured in medals or headlines. They live in our freedom, in our dignity, and in our future.

The war of 2025 was not just a battle between two states, it was a test of will, of preparation, and of truth. In an age of disinformation and media noise, I felt the urgent need for a voice that could present facts with clarity, strategy with insight, and emotion with respect. As a student of law and history, and as someone deeply connected to the soil and spirit of Pakistan, I felt a responsibility to

narrate what many others observed only from a distance. This book is the result of that responsibility researched with diligence, written with passion, and offered with humility.

I have approached this narrative not just as a researcher or a writer, but as a son of Pakistan My lineage, descending from the spiritual traditions of Hafiz Mian Muhammad Ismail (Mian Wada Sb R.A.), has always taught me that honor lies in service, and truth is the foundation of strength.

My father, Sahibzada Mian Muhammad Ashraf Asmi, a distinguished lawyer and public figure, has been a role model in standing for justice and integrity. My Nana Jan, Hakeem Mian Muhammad Yousaf Khan Qadri, a man of knowledge, healing, and deep spiritual wisdom, is another guiding light whose legacy of compassion and service continues to inspire me. My mother, Samina Naaz whose love, duas, and unwavering support have been the silent strength behind every one of my steps, is the heart of our home. Her sacrifices, though never publicized, are engraved in the soul of everything I do.

I must also acknowledge the noble influence of my uncles: Sahibzada Mian Muhammad Asif, Sahibzada Mian Muhammad Akram, and Sahibzada Mian Muhammad Azam, each of whom has contributed in their own dignified way to the values I hold dear today. Their wisdom, character, and family devotion continue to inspire me.

My brothers, Pirzada Mian Umer Ashraf Asmi, Sahibzada Mian Ahmed Raza Asmi, Sahibzada Mian Imran Ashraf Asmi, and Sahibzada Mian Hassan Akram, have stood beside me not only with affection, but also with shared dreams and relentless

encouragement. Together, we are bound not just by blood, but by a vision for service and excellence.

To my son, Muhammad Haris Huzafa Asmi, the light of my life and the promise of tomorrow, and to my beloved niece, Abiha Fatima, whose smile brightens even the darkest days. Though too young to grasp these words today, I hope one day they read them and feel the heartbeat of their father's and uncle's love for Pakistan. May they grow with the same spirit of truth, strength, and service that has shaped our family, and may they always walk with honor, compassion, and courage, Insha'Allah.

In these pages, I have tried to blend historical documentation with personal reflection, strategy with emotion, and fact with faith. I believe this war, though short in time, carries lessons for generations, about preparedness, unity, sacrifice, and most of all, belief in our national strength. The courage shown by the Pakistani Armed Forces during those fifteen hours is now part of our collective memory, and it deserves to be recorded with the respect and seriousness it commands.

As I conclude this preface, my heart overflows with gratitude. First, to Almighty Allah, whose guidance and mercy have been with me in every step of this journey. To my parents, whose prayers and principles are the foundation of all my achievements. To my brothers and sister, who stood by me with love and strength. To my uncles, whose names echo integrity and service. And to my teachers, who opened my mind and shaped my path.

This book is yours.

This story is ours.

And this nation, Insha'Allah, will forever rise.

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The Foundational Battles of Islam: Faith, Struggle, and Divine Triumph

In the early days of Islam, Allah instructed His beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to spread the message of Islam and protect his followers even under the harshest of circumstances. With faith, unity, and strategic wisdom, the Muslims not only safeguarded their lives and property but also laid the foundation for a strong Islamic identity by defeating their enemies. Understanding the historical significance and the lessons of the first five battles fought by the Muslims is essential.

The Battle of Badr was the first major encounter in Islamic history, fought on the 17th of Ramadan in the second year of Hijrah near Badr, close to Madinah. The Quraysh of Makkah had persecuted the Muslims severely, and when the Muslims migrated to Madinah, the Quraysh continued their aggression by attacking the trade caravans. To secure the political and economic standing of the Muslims, a plan was made to intercept a Quraysh caravan near Badr. The causes behind this battle included the Quraysh's efforts to damage Muslim trade and wealth, the forced migration of Muslims, and the mobilization of a large army by the Quraysh to annihilate Islam. The Muslims, though only 313 in number and lacking in arms and resources, confronted an enemy thrice their size. With divine support, the leadership of the Prophet ﷺ, and the courage of the Companions, the tide of battle turned in favor of the Muslims. The initial skirmishes proved successful for the Muslims. The bravery of Hazrat Hamza (RA) stood out, and the

Prophet ﷺ himself demonstrated immense courage. The enemy suffered great losses and fled. This victory gave Muslims their first major triumph, lifted their spirits, weakened the resolve of the Quraysh, and opened new political and social paths for Islam.

The Battle of Uhud took place in the third year of Hijrah as a retaliatory attempt by the Quraysh to avenge their defeat at Badr. With a force of 3000 against 700 Muslims, the Quraysh were determined to crush the growing Islamic community. Initially, the Muslims gained the upper hand and forced the enemy to retreat. However, due to a lapse in discipline when some archers disobeyed the Prophet's command and abandoned their strategic positions, the Quraysh exploited the gap and counterattacked. Hazrat Hamza (RA) was martyred, and the Prophet ﷺ was injured in this battle. This painful event brought important lessons: the significance of strategy, discipline, and unwavering obedience. While it was a difficult moment for the Muslims, it provided a crucial opportunity for self-correction and growth. The enemies, however, continued their conspiracies against Islam.

In the fifth year of Hijrah, the Battle of the Trench (Ahzab) occurred when the Quraysh, along with other hostile tribes, formed an alliance to besiege Madinah. This battle was named "Ahzab" because of the coalition of multiple enemies. The Prophet ﷺ, advised by Hazrat Salman al-Farsi (RA), commanded that a trench be dug around the vulnerable parts of Madinah to block enemy cavalry. This defensive tactic proved highly effective. After days of siege, the enemy forces, unable to breach the trench and demoralized by internal dissent and bad weather, withdrew. The Muslims' steadfastness, wise leadership of the Prophet ﷺ, and

loyalty of the Companions ensured the safety of Madinah. The enemy's plans failed, and the Muslims emerged militarily stronger.

In the seventh year of Hijrah, the Muslims targeted Khaybar, a region known for its fortified Jewish strongholds. These Jewish tribes had consistently conspired against the Muslims and aligned with the Quraysh. The campaign aimed to neutralize this threat and strengthen the economic and defensive position of the Muslims. Fierce battles were fought, and the Muslim forces, under the command of Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib (RA), conquered the forts of Khaybar. This victory provided the Muslims with much-needed resources and neutralized a major threat in the region. The victory also expanded the influence of Islam and secured the surrounding areas of Madinah.

The Battle of Tabuk in the ninth year of Hijrah was not a direct battle but a significant military expedition against the looming threat of the Roman Empire. Reports had emerged about a possible Roman advance, and the Prophet ﷺ mobilized a large force of around 30,000 men. Despite the severe heat and scarcity of resources, the Muslim army marched towards Tabuk. However, no battle took place as the enemy withdrew or avoided confrontation, but the campaign showcased the strength, discipline, and unity of the Muslims. It secured the northern frontiers and sent a strong message about the rising power of Islam.

These early battles hold great significance in Islamic history. They demonstrate the importance of faith, unity, patience, and strategy in achieving success. Each battle brought new lessons, strengthened the resolve of the Muslim community, and paved the way for the expansion of Islam. From them, we learn that with Allah's help, steadfastness, and wisdom, no obstacle is insurmountable.

General Asim Munir: The Rise of a Field Marshal

General Asim Munir's elevation to the rank of Field Marshal in May 2025 marks a watershed moment in Pakistan's military history. This rare and distinguished honor, last conferred upon Field Marshal Ayub Khan over half a century ago, stands as a testament to General Munir's exemplary leadership, strategic foresight, and unshakeable commitment to the sovereignty of Pakistan. In the wake of the May 2025 limited war, a defining chapter in the geopolitical landscape of South Asia, General Munir's name emerged not only as a leader but as a symbol of national resilience, unity, and decisive military excellence.

Born in 1968 in the garrison city of Rawalpindi, Asim Munir grew up in a household that valued both scholarship and spirituality. His father, Syed Sarwar Munir, was an educator and a religious figure who instilled in him the principles of discipline, faith, and national service from an early age. This environment laid the foundation for the character and convictions that would later define his military career. Asim Munir's initial academic journey took place in local schools of Rawalpindi, followed by religious education at the renowned Markazi Madrasah Dar-ul-Tajweed. During his service abroad in Saudi Arabia, he memorized the Holy Quran, becoming a Hafiz-e-Quran, an accomplishment that reflects not only intellectual commitment but deep spiritual grounding. This rare combination of martial discipline and religious devotion has always been evident in his conduct and leadership style.

His military career began in 1986 when he was commissioned into the Frontier Force Regiment, a unit known for its valor and frontline combat history. From the very beginning, Asim Munir distinguished himself as a soldier of strategic insight and moral clarity. Unlike many officers who follow a linear trajectory, his journey through the ranks was marked by unique and challenging appointments that broadened his understanding of warfare, intelligence, and institutional dynamics. His appointment as Director-General of Military Intelligence in 2017 came at a time when Pakistan faced growing internal and external threats. His tenure was characterized by a renewed focus on operational intelligence, counter-terrorism coordination, and internal security reform.

In October 2018, he was appointed as Director-General of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), the premier intelligence agency of Pakistan. Though his tenure was brief, it was during a crucial period of regional realignment and internal recalibration. Notably, General Munir remains the only individual in Pakistan's history to have served as the head of both Military Intelligence and ISI, a dual distinction that underscores the trust placed in his capabilities at the highest levels of strategic decision-making. Later, as Corps Commander of XXX Corps in Gujranwala, and then as Quartermaster General at GHQ, Rawalpindi, he continued to refine his understanding of both ground command and logistical strategy. These roles were pivotal in preparing him for his ultimate appointment as Chief of Army Staff (COAS) on November 29, 2022.

His tenure as COAS began at a time when Pakistan faced unprecedented political instability, economic challenges, and regional insecurity. Yet, General Asim Munir remained

unwavering in his dedication to constitutional order and institutional balance. In a period when public trust in state institutions was fraying, he prioritized the restoration of discipline, unity, and strategic clarity within the armed forces. He was known not just for his commanding presence but for his humility and accessibility to rank-and-file soldiers. Officers under his command often spoke of his methodical approach to leadership, marked by ethical rigor and strategic patience.

The defining moment of his tenure came in May 2025, when regional tensions with India escalated into open conflict. The operation, later designated as *Bunyan-ul-Marsoos* (The Strong and Impenetrable Fortress), was a response to a series of aggressive maneuvers and violations of the Line of Control. While the conflict was limited in scope, its significance was immense. The strategic objective of the operation was to neutralize forward threats, safeguard civilian areas in Azad Jammu & Kashmir, and reaffirm Pakistan's deterrent capability. General Munir took a direct and hands-on role in the planning and oversight of this operation. His coordination with all branches of the armed forces, Army, Air Force, and Navy, was characterized by surgical precision, real-time intelligence sharing, and clear rules of engagement that minimized collateral damage and avoided escalation into full-scale war.

The operation's success was not measured merely in territorial gains or tactical superiority but in its message: that Pakistan remained unyielding in the defense of its sovereignty. International observers noted the professionalism of Pakistan's response and praised the military's restraint and clarity of purpose. At a time when global powers watched the subcontinent with growing anxiety, General Munir ensured that Pakistan's narrative remained rooted in defensive legitimacy and strategic maturity.

In the days following the conflict, voices across civil society, the defense establishment, and political leadership converged in acknowledgment of General Munir's pivotal role. His promotion to Field Marshal was not merely a ceremonial gesture but a national affirmation of his service. The rank of Field Marshal, often considered the pinnacle of military recognition, is rarely conferred and symbolizes unmatched strategic excellence and lifetime service to the nation. It is a five-star designation that, while no longer associated with active command, carries immense symbolic weight within the military tradition. Field Marshal Ayub Khan was the only prior recipient of this honor in Pakistan, and General Asim Munir's inclusion in this exclusive rank has revived a long-dormant tradition of recognizing extraordinary leadership beyond rank and time.

The significance of his elevation extends beyond military circles. It has set a precedent for recognizing leadership that combines strategic acumen, institutional reform, and ethical clarity. It represents a return to the ideal that military leadership must not only secure borders but also nurture the moral and institutional foundation of the nation. General Munir's command style has always emphasized institutional neutrality, professional meritocracy, and national unity, qualities desperately needed in times of national uncertainty.

Even after attaining the ceremonial rank of Field Marshal, General Munir has remained a guiding figure within the military establishment. While he no longer exercises direct command, his insights and strategic counsel continue to inform long-term defense planning, especially in the areas of regional deterrence, cyber warfare, and internal stability. His post-command role has also included the mentoring of future leaders, the promotion of military

education, and representation of Pakistan at international defense forums. His humility remains unchanged, he has often been seen interacting with junior officers and troops with the same sense of camaraderie that marked his earlier career.

General Asim Munir's personal character is perhaps as inspiring as his professional record. Known for his religious devotion, he begins each major address with verses from the Quran, reflecting not only his faith but also his deep conviction that the strength of Pakistan lies in its spiritual and cultural heritage. He is not a man of many words, but those who have worked with him describe his leadership as that of "a quiet storm", resolute, calm, and unstoppable. His avoidance of public drama and his distaste for political entanglement have made him a rare figure in Pakistan's contemporary history, a military leader who understands the necessity of civilian supremacy and the importance of democratic stability.

His contribution to institutional reform within the armed forces also deserves mention. Under his command, the Pakistan Army witnessed increased investment in human resource development, modernization of tactical doctrine, and incorporation of AI-driven military technologies. He also spearheaded initiatives for veterans' welfare and improved transparency in procurement processes, measures that reflect his broader vision of a professional and self-accountable military.

General Asim Munir's legacy as Field Marshal is still unfolding, but certain truths are already etched in history. He is the architect of a new military doctrine that values regional stability over aggression, institutional integrity over personal power, and national unity over factionalism. He has set a gold standard for

military leadership in Pakistan and has elevated the very meaning of service. His life, from the modest classrooms of Rawalpindi to the supreme honor of Field Marshal, is a story of unwavering faith, relentless discipline, and patriotic resolve.

In years to come, military academies and scholars of strategic studies will cite General Munir's leadership as a model of modern military command rooted in classical principles. His name will stand not only in the annals of Pakistan's armed forces but in the consciousness of a nation that saw, in its moment of trial, the rise of a protector who chose principle over politics, patience over provocation, and peace through strength. His rise is not merely a personal triumph but a reflection of Pakistan's enduring spirit, the spirit of sacrifice, resolve, and the unyielding commitment to truth and justice.

In the final analysis, General Asim Munir is more than a Field Marshal; he is a symbol of national continuity and hope. In times of chaos, he brought order. In moments of doubt, he stood firm. And in the most critical hours of conflict, he reminded the world that Pakistan's strength lies not just in its arms, but in the character of its commanders. His name will forever echo in the halls of military glory and national gratitude.

The Last Straw

Pre-War Tensions in South Asia

The South Asian subcontinent has always been a geopolitical powder keg, with India and Pakistan locked in a volatile relationship shaped by decades of distrust, disputed territories, and competing national identities. The war of May 2025 did not begin in a vacuum; it was the culmination of a series of provocations, policy missteps, and unresolved historical grievances that had steadily intensified over the years. This chapter explores the underlying tensions and the final set of events, the "last straw", that led to one of the most devastating conflicts in the region's recent history.

The story of India-Pakistan relations is one punctuated by wars, standoffs, and temporary peace initiatives that ultimately failed to resolve the core issues. The partition of 1947 laid the foundation for conflict, and the status of Jammu and Kashmir has remained the most contentious issue. Despite numerous UN resolutions and international mediation efforts, the territorial dispute has never been conclusively resolved.

Since the 1999 Kargil conflict, the region had seen a strategic shift toward low-intensity hybrid warfare, including proxy battles, intelligence operations, and cyber intrusions. However, beneath this simmering surface was a growing tide of nationalism in both countries, reinforced by political narratives that fed on each other's perceived aggression.

In India, the political environment had become increasingly dominated by hardline rhetoric under successive governments. By early 2025, the Indian government was under pressure due to economic downturns, farmer protests, and internal dissent. To divert public attention, a strong nationalistic campaign was launched, focusing on "national security" and portraying Pakistan as an ever-present threat. Border deployments were increased, and inflammatory speeches became routine in political rallies.

Across the border, Pakistan had also hardened its stance. Years of cross-border incidents, including the targeting of civilians in Azad Kashmir by Indian shelling, had led to widespread resentment. The Pakistani leadership, emboldened by improved relations with neighboring China and the Middle East, had adopted a more assertive tone in regional affairs. The Pakistan Army's growing technological sophistication and strategic alliances were quietly changing the balance of power.

Between 2023 and 2024, the frequency of cross-border violations escalated dramatically. Both nations accused each other of unprovoked aggression. The Line of Control (LoC), already heavily militarized, became a virtual warzone. Pakistani villages near Neelum Valley and Bhimber reported continuous shelling, with dozens of civilian casualties. India claimed retaliatory strikes after militant infiltration attempts, which Pakistan vehemently denied, blaming India for staging incidents to justify aggression.

In March 2024, a controversial bill passed by the Indian Parliament to redraw Jammu and Kashmir's administrative map was seen by Pakistan as a direct violation of UN Security Council resolutions. This move was condemned not only in Pakistan but also raised concerns internationally. Pakistan responded by staging mass

military exercises near the LoC, dubbed “Operation Zarb-e-Azb 2024,” to showcase readiness.

India replied with its own military drills, “Operation Trinetra,” involving troop mobilizations, fighter jet exercises, and amphibious warfare units. Satellite images shared by global think tanks showed alarming troop movements on both sides, warning of a possible escalation.

One of the defining features of the pre-war period was the role played by mainstream and social media in fanning the flames of conflict. In India, prominent television anchors began nightly broadcasts calling for “final action” against Pakistan. Inflammatory hash tags trended daily, including #Crush Pakistan and #End Terror State. Conspiracy theories, some state-sponsored, spread like wildfire, blurring the lines between truth and propaganda.

In Pakistan, the media countered with narratives of “resisting tyranny” and “defending Kashmir.” Emotional stories of Kashmiri victims, whether real or exaggerated, were broadcast round-the-clock. The Pakistani press highlighted every Indian military misstep, portraying India as a crumbling democracy driven by hate and expansionism.

This narrative war deeply affected public sentiment. Nationalism, once rooted in pride, morphed into hostility. People on both sides began to genuinely believe that war was inevitable, and even desirable, to settle decades of hostility once and for all.

In April 2025, just a month before war broke out, a major terrorist attack shook Srinagar. A convoy of Indian paramilitary forces was ambushed, resulting in 37 deaths. The Indian government immediately blamed Pakistan-based militant groups, specifically

Jaish-e-Muhammad, claiming it had proof of cross-border planning and training.

Pakistan condemned the attack and denied involvement, calling for a neutral international investigation. However, India dismissed this and declared that “a red line had been crossed.” Within hours, Indian jets bombed what it claimed were terrorist training camps in Pakistan-administered Kashmir. One of these airstrikes allegedly hit a madrassa in the town of Muzaffarabad, killing civilians and drawing international outrage.

Pakistan responded with missile strikes on Indian military installations near Pathankot and Gurdaspur. Unlike previous tit-for-tat actions, these were not symbolic responses, they were tactical, destructive, and calculated. For the first time in two decades, Pakistani and Indian jets clashed directly in the skies over the Pir Panjal range. A Pakistani fighter shot down an Indian MiG-29, and the pilot was taken prisoner, triggering widespread celebrations in Pakistan and fury in India. By then, diplomacy had completely broken down.

The United Nations, along with countries like the United States, China, Russia, and Turkey, attempted back-channel diplomacy. However, both India and Pakistan refused third-party involvement. India maintained its stance that Kashmir was an internal issue. Pakistan insisted that there could be no talks unless India reversed its constitutional changes in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in late April 2025 saw the last formal attempt at preventing war. While both countries sent delegations, they refused to sit in the same room. The final communiqué from the summit called for restraint but carried no binding measures.

Global intelligence agencies began issuing alerts, warning that the subcontinent was on the brink of a conventional war, which could escalate dangerously if not contained. Military analysts noted that the strategic doctrines of both countries had shifted in recent years toward preemptive strikes and rapid mobilization, meaning that once a clash began, it would be swift and large-scale.

India believed that a short, sharp war would bolster its domestic image and force Pakistan to the negotiating table. It underestimated Pakistan's readiness, its newer defense partnerships, and the morale of its military forces. On the other hand, Pakistan had prepared for years for such an eventuality. The doctrine of "Full Spectrum Deterrence" had been refined, including responses not just to nuclear threats but also to full-scale conventional wars.

One of the major miscalculations on India's part was its assumption that Pakistan would avoid direct retaliation. This assumption proved wrong. After India's cross-border missile strikes under 'Operation Sindhoor' on May 7, 2025, targeting alleged militant camps inside Pakistan, Islamabad launched a swift and coordinated counteroffensive. The Pakistan Army responded by targeting Indian military installations across multiple sectors, particularly in the Jammu region, disrupting supply lines and inflicting significant tactical setbacks.

Within 48 hours, major Indian cities came under drone attacks, and cyber attacks crippled power grids in several states. India retaliated with missile strikes on Pakistani infrastructure, including an oil refinery in Karachi and a military base in Bahawalpur. The war had begun.

The war that engulfed South Asia in May 2025 was not born in a day. Its roots run deep into the soil of partition, into the blood-

stained valleys of Kashmir, and into the fractured memories of a divided people. The fire of this war was ignited not by a singular matchstick, but by the smoldering embers of historical betrayals, modern propaganda, and a tragic failure of diplomacy.

To understand why the guns roared in May 2025, one must revisit the echoes of 1947. Partition was not merely a redrawing of borders, it was a violent uprooting of identities. As trains crossed the Radcliffe Line, filled with the dead and the dying, the seeds of animosity were sown in blood. Pakistan emerged as a homeland for South Asia's Muslims, while India, despite its secular constitution, struggled with its Hindu majoritarian undercurrents. These foundational contradictions laid the groundwork for a rivalry that would define the geopolitics of the region.

The crown of this rivalry has always been Kashmir. Maharaja Hari Singh's accession to India in 1947, under duress and amidst rebellion, was contested immediately. The first war in 1947-48, the Tashkent Agreement in 1966, the Simla Accord in 1972, and the Lahore Declaration in 1999, all were attempts to resolve or freeze the Kashmir issue. None succeeded. The scars of the Kargil War still lingered on both sides, and instead of bringing a resolution, they birthed a doctrine of low-intensity, high-impact engagements that included proxy wars and media manipulation.

In the two decades leading up to 2025, Kashmir remained a battleground, not just of arms, but of narratives. For every stone thrown in Srinagar, there was a headline in Delhi calling it a terrorist act. For every militant gunned down in Pulwama, there was a funeral in Muzaffarabad celebrating martyrdom. The story of Kashmir became one of parallel realities: a valley caught between two nationalisms.

In the earlier decades, Pakistan's responses were largely reactive. Post-Kargil, Islamabad faced international isolation. However, over time, especially after the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Pakistan found renewed geopolitical leverage. Strengthened by economic and military ties with China, energy alliances with Gulf countries, and support within the OIC, Pakistan began to assert itself more confidently on global platforms.

By 2025, Pakistan's military had undergone modernization with Chinese drones, Turkish tactical systems, and homegrown missile technology. Media narratives began shifting too, from "defending borders" to "reclaiming dignity." Young Pakistanis, raised on tales of resilience, viewed India's moves in Kashmir as neo-colonial aggression. The narrative of Ghazwa-e-Hind, though not officially endorsed, began to reappear in popular discourse.

In India, the years leading up to 2025 saw an increasing centralization of power, a crackdown on dissent, and a growing alignment of state identity with Hindutva ideology. After the revocation of Article 370 in 2019, there was an observable shift in Kashmir's administration, more surveillance, fewer political freedoms, and stricter controls on religious expression. The Indian media, once pluralistic, grew polarized. Talk shows became arenas for jingoism. Political careers were built on anti-Pakistan rhetoric. The slogan "ghar mein ghus ke maareng" (we will strike inside their homes) became both a promise and a threat.

In the general elections of early 2025, amid an economic crisis, communal riots, and student protests, the ruling party shifted focus to "external threats." A manufactured perception of looming war became a tool for political consolidation. Nationalistic fervor blinded strategic caution.

The April 2025 Srinagar attack, dubbed Pulwama 2.0, was a catalyst but not the cause. It triggered what was already waiting to be unleashed. Indian media instantly blamed Pakistan, with hash tags like #Revenge Now trending within minutes. The Prime Minister's address to the nation was not a call for patience, but for retribution. Pakistani analysts, on the other hand, questioned the timing, motives, and lack of independent verification. Conspiracy theories spread rapidly.

Pakistani social media became a battleground of its own. Hash tags like #False Flag, #Kashmir Bleeds, and #India Exposed trended for days. For many Pakistanis, this was not just about geopolitics but about dignity, faith, and survival. A viral video of a young Kashmiri girl crying amidst ruins became a national symbol of resistance.

The retaliatory Indian airstrikes on Muzaffarabad were seen in Pakistan not just as aggression but as a violation of sovereignty. When a madrassa was bombed and civilian casualties reported, mass protests erupted in Lahore, Karachi, and Peshawar. The Pakistan Army, already in high alert due to Operation Zarb-e-Azb 2024, received a green light.

When Pakistani missiles struck Indian installations, it was clear this was not another surgical tit-for-tat. This was war.

Pakistani media played a central role in galvanizing national unity. Unlike in past conflicts where questions were raised internally, this time there was near-universal consensus. Primetime shows highlighted stories of Kashmiri suffering, military preparedness, and religious unity. Military songs played on every channel. Martial poetry by Allama Iqbal and Habib Jalib echoed through national broadcasts.

Importantly, youth influencers and TikTok stars were enlisted in war messaging. Influential vloggers began daily updates from border regions. Army recruitment ads targeted the youth with slogans like "Tum ho sipahi kal ke" (You are tomorrow's soldiers). The spirit of 1965 was resurrected.

Ordinary Pakistanis responded with remarkable unity. Civilian defense units were formed in border towns. Mosques became centers of aid collection. University students volunteered in hospitals. In a Lahore press club gathering, journalists recited wartime poetry and pledged to uphold national integrity.

There were also voices of caution. Intellectuals like Dr. Pervez Hoodbhoy and writers like Mohammed Hanif warned against the glorification of war. However, such voices were drowned in the crescendo of patriotic fervor.

In India too, dissent was largely silenced. Critics who questioned the war narrative were labelled anti-nationals. Kashmir was completely cut off, with no internet or communication for weeks. Human rights organizations worldwide condemned both countries for failing their citizens.

While global powers tried last-minute diplomacy, the shadow of China loomed large. Though it avoided direct involvement, China issued veiled warnings to India. Russia played a balancing act, while the US focused on evacuating its citizens. The SCO summit became a diplomatic theatre of shadows.

Turkey and Iran issued strong statements in support of Pakistan's sovereignty. Israel expressed solidarity with India. The UN remained toothless.

The war of May 2025, which this chapter introduces, was not merely a military engagement. It was the failure of political maturity, the success of hate-driven media.

History had given many warnings. From 1947 to 2025, the signs were there. The bloodshed could have been avoided if justice, empathy, and diplomacy had prevailed over ambition and animosity.

The following chapters will delve into the war itself, its battles, its human cost, and its haunting aftermath. But for now, we must sit with the discomfiting truth: this war was waiting to happen, and when it came, it brought not glory, but grief.

In retrospect, the war of May 2025 was not an accident, it was a delayed explosion of a long-standing geopolitical minefield. Decades of mistrust, the failure to resolve the Kashmir dispute, politicization of nationalism, and poor crisis management all contributed to the inevitability of war. While the spark may have been a terrorist attack, the gunpowder had been stockpiled over years of mutual hostility.

This chapter lays the foundation for understanding why the war erupted. The rest of the book will explore what happened during the war, how it impacted the people of both countries, and what lessons, if any, were learned from the devastation that followed.

Decoding the Diplomacy Failed Peace Talks and Provocations

The period leading up to the May 2025 conflict between India and Pakistan was marked by a series of diplomatic failures and escalating provocations. Despite numerous attempts at dialogue, deep-seated mistrust, political pressures, and strategic miscalculations led both nations down a path of confrontation. This chapter examines the breakdown of diplomatic efforts and the provocations that rendered peace elusive.

India and Pakistan have a long history of conflict, primarily centered around the disputed region of Jammu and Kashmir. Over the decades, several wars and skirmishes have occurred, interspersed with attempts at peace. However, these efforts have often been undermined by mutual suspicion and divergent national interests.

In early 2023, there were cautious attempts to revive dialogue between the two nations. Backchannel communications hinted at possible confidence-building measures, including the resumption of trade and people-to-people contacts. However, these initiatives quickly lost momentum due to internal political dynamics and external pressures.

In January 2023, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed a willingness to engage in "serious and sincere" talks with India. However, this overture was swiftly retracted by his office, emphasizing that any dialogue would require India to

reverse its 2019 decision to revoke Article 370, which granted special autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir.

The fragile state of diplomacy was further strained by a series of provocations:

On June 24, 2023, Indian forces allegedly fired upon a group of shepherds in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, resulting in civilian casualties. This incident marked a significant violation of the 2021 ceasefire agreement and reignited tensions along the Line of Control (LoC).

In early 2024, India diverted water from the Ravi River to the Shahpur Kandi Barrage, raising concerns in Pakistan about potential water shortages in cities like Lahore. This action was perceived as a deliberate provocation, exacerbating existing tensions over water sharing.

In March 2024, India detained a Pakistan-bound ship from China at Mumbai's Nhava Sheva port, citing concerns over dual-use technology. Pakistan viewed this as an unjustified act, further souring bilateral relations.

The international community, including the United States, attempted to mediate between the two nations. In May 2025, U.S. President Donald Trump claimed that the U.S. played a role in brokering a ceasefire between India and Pakistan. However, Indian officials refuted this, asserting that the ceasefire was a bilateral decision without external mediation.

The diplomatic crisis deepened with the suspension of key bilateral agreements:

Following a terrorist attack in Pahalgam in April 2025, India suspended the Indus Waters Treaty, citing national security concerns. This move included halting water flow from the Baglihar Dam, significantly affecting Pakistan's water supply. Pakistan warned that such actions could be considered acts of war.

In response to India's actions, Pakistan suspended the 1972 Shimla Agreement, which emphasized peaceful resolution of disputes. This marked a significant departure from decades of diplomatic engagement.

The failure of diplomatic efforts between India and Pakistan in the lead-up to May 2025 was the result of a complex interplay of historical grievances, political pressures, and strategic miscalculations. Provocations on both sides, coupled with the breakdown of key agreements, left little room for peaceful resolution, setting the stage for a devastating conflict.

In South Asia, where ancient civilizations have coexisted for millennia, the shadow of partition continues to loom ominously over India and Pakistan. The year 2025 has become yet another chapter in a long, painful saga marked by broken promises, diplomatic misfires, and provocations that inch both countries closer to catastrophe. The diplomatic failures and subsequent escalations leading up to May 2025 are not merely contemporary events, they are echoes of history repeating itself with greater intensity, magnified by modern geopolitics and public sentiment.

The ghosts of the 1947 Partition, the 1965 war, the 1971 secession of East Pakistan, and the 1999 Kargil conflict never truly left the region. The Shimla Agreement of 1972 was once hailed as a milestone, a commitment by both countries to resolve disputes peacefully. But history has shown us that documents cannot

guarantee peace unless hearts are softened by trust and politics are driven by wisdom rather than populism.

The spirit of Lahore in 1999, when Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee rode a bus to Pakistan to meet Nawaz Sharif, gave South Asians a rare moment of hope. Yet within months, the Kargil War shattered that optimism. A soldier at the LoC once reportedly said, "Peace travels by bus; war climbs the mountains." This poetic yet tragic reflection is more relevant today than ever before.

Fast forward to early 2023, there were quiet murmurs of reconciliation. Backchannel diplomacy was active; whispers of reinitiating trade, cultural exchanges, and restoring visa facilitation were being heard. Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's expression of intent to hold "serious and sincere" dialogue was initially welcomed by peace activists on both sides. Social media lit up with cautious optimism.

But the moment was short-lived. The demand for the reversal of Article 370, revoked by India in 2019, became a red line that India was unwilling to even consider. To many in Pakistan, especially the political and military establishment, the revocation of Kashmir's special status symbolized India's rejection of future talks. To India, it was an internal matter, non-negotiable. Thus, yet again, a narrow window of hope was slammed shut by inflexible positions and nationalist rhetoric.

In this fragile atmosphere, the provocations began to multiply, and with them, media narratives hardened.

On June 24, 2023, a tragic incident unfolded in Pakistan-administered Kashmir when Indian troops allegedly fired upon shepherds, violating the ceasefire agreement of 2021. The image of

a young boy carrying his wounded brother, circulating widely on Pakistani news channels, reignited public anger. The Pakistani media labeled it a “deliberate act of aggression.” While Indian authorities remained tight-lipped, Pakistani anchors compared the event to past violations, invoking memories of the Siachen conflict and the 2001 Parliament attack as triggers of mistrust.

In early 2024, the water crisis flared up. India’s redirection of Ravi River flows to the Shahpur Kandi Barrage raised alarm bells in Lahore and Faisalabad. For many Pakistanis, water is not just a resource, it is lifeblood. The Indus Waters Treaty, which had survived wars, now appeared on the brink of collapse. Pakistani newspapers published front-page editorials with titles like “Water is War” and “India Waging Hydro-Terrorism.” Analysts drew comparisons to Israel-Palestine water disputes, signaling how vital water diplomacy had become to national security.

March 2024 brought another jolt: India’s detention of a Pakistan-bound ship from China, allegedly carrying dual-use equipment. Though India cited national security concerns, Pakistani leaders viewed it as a breach of trade ethics and maritime protocol. On Pakistani talk shows, retired diplomats questioned the intent behind the move. “Why now?” asked one anchor. “Because elections are near in India,” a retired general replied, implying that anti-Pakistan actions always increase during Indian electoral cycles.

One of the defining features of this entire period was the role of media, especially Pakistani media, which oscillated between patriotic fervor and genuine concern for peace. While some channels ran nationalist headlines like “*Modi’s Hindutva Doctrine:*

A Threat to Regional Stability”, others aired emotional appeals from the families of LoC victims, calling for sanity to prevail.

A popular show on Geo TV aired a special titled “*Kya Aman Ka Rasta Band Ho Chuka Hai?*” (*Is the Road to Peace Closed Now?*) featuring journalists, former diplomats, and common citizens. A Kashmiri student shared: “We are not just victims of bullets. We are hostages of pride on both sides.”

Print media also played its part. Daily Jang published an op-ed titled “*Dosti ya Dushmani? Faisla Qoum Ko Karna Hoga*” (*Friendship or Enmity? The Nation Must Decide*). It emphasized that while politicians play chess, it is the common man who suffers in the crossfire.

In Pakistan’s urban centers, especially Lahore, Islamabad, and Karachi, citizens took to the streets in mixed expressions of protest and prayer. University students organized candlelight vigils for the shepherds killed near the LoC. In contrast, right-wing groups called for military retaliation, holding placards that read “*Khoon ka Badla Khoon!*” (Blood for Blood!).

Social media in Pakistan became a battlefield of narratives. Hashtags like #KashmirBleedsAgain and #WaterIsLife trended, with videos of dried canals and crying mothers gaining traction. At the same time, hashtags like #NoWar and #TalkPeace also surfaced, often amplified by diaspora Pakistanis urging both nations to choose diplomacy over destruction.

The situation further deteriorated in April 2025 when a deadly terrorist attack occurred in Pahalgam, India. Within days, India suspended the Indus Waters Treaty, a decision that shocked even neutral observers. Though India cited national security, Pakistan

declared it an “act of war.” A senior lawyer on Dunya News stated: “India knows how vital water is to Pakistan. This is not just geopolitics, it’s economic strangulation.”

Soon after, Pakistan retaliated by suspending the Shimla Agreement. “This agreement never protected us,” said a senator in the National Assembly. “It only served Indian interests.” The symbolic unraveling of this diplomatic framework was a seismic moment. One political cartoon showed the Shimla Agreement being burned by leaders from both sides, with civilians weeping in the background.

When U.S. President Donald Trump claimed credit for a ceasefire between India and Pakistan in May 2025, Pakistani media reacted with sarcasm and skepticism. One columnist wrote: “Trump’s diplomacy is as reliable as a Twitter poll.” Indian officials categorically denied any third-party involvement, asserting that the ceasefire was bilateral.

Still, the reality is more complex. The global community, especially China, the U.S., and the UAE, had vested interests in ensuring the conflict didn’t spiral. Their quiet backchannels, pressure on military establishments, and behind-the-scenes diplomacy played a more significant role than admitted publicly.

So, what can we learn from this episode? First, peace between India and Pakistan is not simply about handshakes or high-level talks. It’s about acknowledging the pain of history, the legitimate fears of the present, and the hope for a shared future.

Secondly, water, trade, and terrorism are not isolated issues. They are interconnected in a region where perception often outweighs

fact. The framing of an event by media or the spin by political parties can either inflame or pacify.

Thirdly, the people of both countries remain the greatest untapped resource for peace. While state actors play strategic games, millions on both sides long for travel, culture, and cooperation. A Pakistani poet once wrote:

“Dushman bhi wohi, saathi bhi wohi, Faasla dilon ka hai, sarhadein toh nahi.”

(The enemy is the same, the friend is the same, It's the distance in hearts, not in borders.)

The diplomatic breakdown of early 2025 may have pushed the region dangerously close to open war, but it also opened a space for reflection. Think tanks, youth forums, and academic institutions across Pakistan are now more engaged in Track II diplomacy than ever before. Retired generals are talking to peace activists. Journalists are cautiously questioning state narratives. Civil society is growing louder in its demand for peace.

The road ahead is steep, uncertain, and mined with mistrust. But perhaps, just perhaps, this latest episode has reminded both nations that war is not destiny, and diplomacy, though fragile, is still possible.

Border Skirmishes Signals of a Brewing Storm

The Line of Control (LoC) between India and Pakistan has long been a flashpoint for military confrontations, with both nations engaging in periodic skirmishes that threaten regional stability. In the lead-up to the May 2025 conflict, a series of border incidents signaled escalating tensions and the potential for a larger confrontation. This chapter examines these skirmishes, their implications, and how they contributed to the brewing storm between the two nuclear-armed neighbors.

In June 2023, the fragile ceasefire agreement established in February 2021 was shattered when Indian forces allegedly fired upon a group of shepherds in the Sattwal sector of Pakistan-administered Kashmir. The incident resulted in the deaths of two civilians and critically injured another, marking a significant escalation in hostilities. Pakistan condemned the attack, summoning the Indian Chargé d'affaires to lodge a formal protest and warning of potential retaliation .

Throughout 2024, the LoC witnessed intermittent exchanges of fire, with both sides accusing each other of unprovoked aggression. These skirmishes, often involving small arms and mortar fire, disrupted the lives of civilians residing in border areas and strained diplomatic relations further.

The situation deteriorated rapidly in April 2025 following a terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Indian-administered Kashmir, which

claimed the lives of 26 Hindu pilgrims. India attributed the attack to Pakistan-based militants, a claim Islamabad vehemently denied. In response, India launched "Operation Sindoor," targeting what it described as terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-administered Kashmir. The operation involved missile strikes on multiple locations, leading to significant casualties and infrastructure damage .

Pakistan retaliated by downing five Indian fighter jets and conducting its own strikes, claiming that India's targets were civilian in nature. The ensuing exchanges marked one of the most severe escalations between the two countries in recent history .

For nine consecutive nights, Indian and Pakistani troops engaged in small arms firing along the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir. These post-to-post skirmishes, while not resulting in immediate casualties, heightened tensions and underscored the volatility of the situation .

The persistent nature of these skirmishes disrupted daily life for civilians in border areas. In Indian Punjab, leaders called for economic assistance to support affected communities, highlighting the broader socio-economic impact of the conflict .

Amid the escalating tensions, India employed unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and standoff weapons to conduct retaliatory strikes from within its own airspace. This strategic shift allowed India to target adversaries while minimizing direct provocation, introducing a new dimension to the conflict and signaling a recalibration of its military tactics .

The international community expressed deep concern over the escalating conflict. The United Nations and various countries

urged both India and Pakistan to exercise maximum restraint and engage in dialogue to prevent further deterioration of the situation. Despite these calls, the skirmishes continued, reflecting the deep-seated mistrust and complex dynamics between the two nations.

The border skirmishes between India and Pakistan in the lead-up to May 2025 were not isolated incidents but part of a broader pattern of escalating tensions. These confrontations, marked by violations of ceasefire agreements, retaliatory strikes, and the introduction of advanced warfare tactics, signaled a brewing storm that ultimately culminated in a full-scale conflict. Understanding these skirmishes is crucial to comprehending the complexities of the India-Pakistan relationship and the challenges of maintaining peace in a region fraught with historical grievances and strategic rivalries.

Weapons of the Subcontinent

Military Readiness Before the War

The May 2025 conflict between India and Pakistan was not an abrupt eruption but the culmination of years of military modernization, strategic recalibrations, and evolving doctrines. Both nations, aware of their historical animosities and the ever-present threat of escalation, had been steadily enhancing their military capabilities. This chapter delves into the state of military preparedness of both countries on the eve of the conflict, examining their conventional forces, technological advancements, and strategic doctrines.

India, with one of the world's largest standing armies, had been focusing on modernizing its conventional forces. The Indian Army, while still operating some Soviet-era equipment, had initiated upgrades to its artillery and armored units. The induction of advanced artillery systems and the modernization of infantry weapons were steps toward enhancing combat effectiveness.

The Indian Air Force (IAF) had significantly bolstered its capabilities with the acquisition of French-made Rafale fighter jets. These multi-role aircraft, equipped with advanced avionics and weaponry, provided India with a qualitative edge in aerial combat. The IAF also integrated standoff weapons, such as the SCALP missiles and AASM Hammer glide bombs, enhancing its precision strike capabilities.

To counter aerial threats, India deployed the Russian-made S-400 air defense system, known for its long-range tracking and interception capabilities. Additionally, indigenous systems like the Akash missile and the Akashteer command system were integrated to create a multi-layered air defense network. These systems played a crucial role in neutralizing aerial threats during the conflict.

The Indian Navy, tasked with securing vast maritime boundaries, had been focusing on enhancing its blue-water capabilities. The induction of advanced submarines, destroyers, and aircraft carriers aimed to project power and ensure maritime dominance in the Indian Ocean region.

Recognizing the importance of cyber and space domains, India invested in developing offensive and defensive cyber capabilities. The establishment of dedicated cyber units and the launch of military satellites aimed to enhance situational awareness and communication during conflicts.

Pakistan's military, though smaller in size compared to India's, focused on maintaining a high level of readiness. The Pakistan Army emphasized mobility and rapid response, with investments in modernizing its armored and artillery units. However, reports indicated challenges in sustaining prolonged operations due to logistical constraints.

The Pakistan Air Force (PAF) enhanced its fleet with the induction of Chinese-made J-10 fighter jets, equipped with advanced avionics and weaponry. These aircraft aimed to counterbalance India's air superiority. However, the PAF faced limitations in terms of maintenance and operational readiness during extended engagements.

To counter aerial threats, Pakistan acquired the Chinese HQ-9 air defense system, capable of targeting aircraft and missiles at various altitudes. The integration of these systems aimed to create a layered defense mechanism against potential air incursions.

The Pakistan Navy, primarily focused on coastal defense, had been working on enhancing its submarine capabilities. Collaborations with China aimed to modernize its fleet and improve maritime surveillance and deterrence.

Pakistan invested in developing cyber capabilities to conduct offensive and defensive operations. The establishment of dedicated cyber units aimed to protect critical infrastructure and disrupt adversary networks during conflicts.

While India possessed a quantitative advantage in terms of manpower and equipment, Pakistan focused on qualitative enhancements and strategic partnerships, particularly with China. India's emphasis on indigenous development under the "Make in India" initiative aimed to reduce dependency on foreign suppliers and enhance self-reliance. Conversely, Pakistan's reliance on Chinese military hardware underscored its strategic alignment and the challenges of diversifying its defense procurement.

The military readiness of India and Pakistan in the lead-up to the May 2025 conflict reflected their strategic priorities and threat perceptions. India's investments in modernization and indigenous capabilities aimed to project power and deter adversaries. Pakistan's focus on rapid response and strategic partnerships sought to maintain a credible deterrent against a conventionally superior adversary. The ensuing conflict tested these preparations, highlighting strengths and exposing vulnerabilities that would shape future military doctrines and procurement strategies.

Media, Misunderstanding, and Manipulation

In the digital age, information warfare has become as pivotal as traditional military engagements. The May 2025 conflict between India and Pakistan not only unfolded on the battlegrounds but also across television screens, social media platforms, and news outlets. This chapter delves into how media narratives, misinformation, and propaganda influenced public perception and escalated tensions during the conflict.

During the conflict, Indian television channels were criticized for their sensationalist coverage. Prime-time anchors often presented unverified information, contributing to a climate of fear and nationalism. Kalpana Sharma of News laundry highlighted that government-aligned TV channels engaged in "disinformation, misinformation, drama and ear-splitting decibel levels," questioning whether officials' failure to rein them in reflected a need to whip up "ultranationalist fervor" without being seen to do so. Gowhar Geelani, a senior journalist, termed Indian television media as "India's national embarrassment," stating that the manner in which prime-time anchors spread fake news and peddled propaganda during the escalation would have put historical propagandists to shame.

On the other side, Pakistani state media was accused of disseminating unverified reports, such as claims that Indian missiles had struck nuclear sites in Kirana Hills, Sargodha district. These reports were later debunked by the International Atomic

Energy Agency (IAEA), which confirmed there was no radiation leak from any nuclear facility in Pakistan following India's Operation Sindoor airstrikes.

Social media platforms became hotbeds for misinformation during the conflict. A manipulated video falsely claiming to show a Pakistani army general stating that two of its fighter jets had been shot down was widely circulated on X (formerly Twitter), garnering nearly 700,000 shares before being flagged as an AI-generated deep fake.

Additionally, the Press Information Bureau's (PIB) fact-checking unit in India issued warnings about numerous combat gaming videos being falsely circulated as authentic footage from the ongoing conflict, emphasizing the importance of verifying content before sharing.

In response to the spread of misinformation, India took measures to curb the dissemination of false information. The micro-blogging platform X briefly blocked the handles of China's state-run media outlet Global Times and Turkish state broadcaster TRT World due to the dissemination of misinformation related to the Indian armed forces and Operation Sindoor.

Furthermore, India blocked the social media accounts of some Chinese state media, accusing them of spreading Pakistani propaganda and misinformation.

Misinformation had tangible consequences on the ground. In Barasat, West Bengal, violent clashes erupted following the circulation of a controversial social media post allegedly expressing pro-Pakistan sentiments. The incident resulted in

injuries to police personnel and highlighted the potential for social media content to incite public disorder.

The conflict also impacted academic circles. Professor Ali Khan Mahmudabad of Ashoka University faced scrutiny over his social media comments on Operation Sindoor. He clarified that his intent was to critique warmongering rhetoric and highlight issues such as civilian suffering in wars, emphasizing support for the Indian military's measured approach.

Despite the ceasefire, the information war between India and Pakistan persists. Disinformation campaigns on social media and messaging platforms continue to blur the line between propaganda and fact, making it challenging for citizens to discern truth from falsehood.

Experts emphasize the need for robust fact-checking mechanisms and media literacy programs to combat the surge of misinformation. The conflict underscores the critical role of responsible journalism and the importance of verifying information before dissemination.

The May 2025 conflict between India and Pakistan highlighted the profound impact of media narratives and misinformation on public perception and national security. As information warfare becomes increasingly central to modern conflicts, it is imperative for governments, media organizations, and citizens to prioritize accuracy, accountability, and critical thinking to navigate the complex information landscape.

The Spark

How War Broke Out in May 2025

The May 2025 conflict between India and Pakistan was not a sudden eruption but the culmination of escalating tensions, deep-seated animosities, and a series of provocative events. This chapter delves into the immediate catalysts that ignited the war, examining the sequence of events, strategic decisions, and geopolitical dynamics that led to one of the most intense confrontations between the two nuclear-armed neighbors in recent history.

On April 22, 2025, a devastating terrorist attack occurred near Pahalgam in Indian-administered Kashmir. Gunmen targeted a group of Hindu tourists, resulting in the deaths of 28 civilians. The Resistance Front, an offshoot of the militant organization Lashkar-e-Taiba, initially claimed responsibility but later retracted, alleging their communications had been hacked. India, however, held Pakistan accountable, citing evidence of cross-border terrorism and support for militant groups operating in Kashmir. This incident intensified public outrage and political pressure within India, setting the stage for a decisive response.

In response to the Pahalgam attack, India launched "Operation Sindoor" on May 7, 2025. The operation involved precision airstrikes targeting nine sites in Pakistan and Pakistan-administered Kashmir, including Bahawalpur, Muridke, Tehra Kalan, Sialkot, Bhimber, Kotli, and Muzaffarabad. These locations were identified as hubs for militant groups such as Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba. India emphasized that the strikes were aimed solely at terrorist infrastructure, avoiding Pakistani military installations. However, Pakistan contested this claim, asserting that

civilian areas, including mosques, were hit, resulting in significant casualties.

In retaliation, Pakistan initiated "Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos" on May 10, 2025. The operation targeted several Indian military bases, including those in Udampur, Bhuj, and Pathankot. Pakistan's strikes were characterized by the use of drones, missiles, and fighter jets, aiming to inflict damage on Indian military infrastructure. India reported minor damages to its airbases and claimed successful interception of several Pakistani missiles using its S-400 air defense system. The conflict marked the first instance of drone warfare between the two nations, highlighting the evolving nature of military engagements in the region.

The rapid escalation of hostilities raised alarms globally, with fears of a full-scale war between two nuclear-armed states. The United States, under the leadership of Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Vice President JD Vance, engaged in intense diplomatic efforts to de-escalate the situation. Through backchannel communications and direct talks with both Indian and Pakistani officials, the U.S. facilitated a ceasefire agreement. On May 10, 2025, a ceasefire was formalized, with both nations agreeing to halt military operations and engage in dialogue to address underlying issues.

The May 2025 conflict between India and Pakistan underscores the fragile nature of peace in South Asia and the potential for rapid escalation from localized incidents to broader military confrontations. The Pahalgam attack served as the immediate spark, but the underlying tensions, historical grievances, and lack of effective communication channels contributed to the outbreak of hostilities. The conflict also highlighted the importance of international diplomacy in preventing full-scale wars and the need for sustained efforts to address the root causes of Indo-Pakistani tensions.

Battle for Kashmir The Primary Front

The May 2025 conflict between India and Pakistan brought the long-standing Kashmir dispute back into sharp focus. As the epicenter of hostilities, the region witnessed intense military engagements, civilian hardships, and significant geopolitical ramifications. This chapter delves into the strategic importance of Kashmir, the sequence of events during the conflict, and the broader implications for regional stability.

Kashmir has been a flashpoint between India and Pakistan since their independence in 1947. Its strategic location, cultural significance, and contested status have made it a perpetual source of tension. The region's rugged terrain and proximity to both nations' borders make it a critical military and political asset.

In the weeks leading up to May 2025, a series of events escalated tensions in the region. On April 22, a terrorist attack in Pahalgam resulted in the deaths of 28 Hindu pilgrims. India attributed the attack to Pakistan-based militant groups, leading to heightened military alertness and public outcry. Subsequent ceasefire violations along the Line of Control (LoC) further strained relations.

On May 7, India launched "Operation Sindoor," targeting alleged terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-administered Kashmir. The operation involved precision airstrikes on nine sites, including Bahawalpur, Muridke, and Muzaffarabad. India emphasized that the strikes were aimed solely at terrorist camps, avoiding civilian and military installations. However, Pakistan

contested this claim, asserting that civilian areas were affected, resulting in significant casualties.

In response, Pakistan initiated "Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos" on May 10, targeting Indian military bases in Udampur, Bhuj, and Pathankot. The operation utilized drones, missiles, and fighter jets to inflict damage on Indian military infrastructure. India reported minor damages and claimed successful interception of several Pakistani missiles using its S-400 air defense system. The conflict marked the first instance of drone warfare between the two nations, highlighting the evolving nature of military engagements in the region.

The conflict had a profound impact on civilians in Kashmir. Cross-border shelling and airstrikes led to casualties, displacement, and destruction of property. In Poonch, for instance, mortar shelling resulted in the deaths of 15 civilians, including children. Infrastructure such as homes, schools, and hospitals suffered damage, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis.

The rapid escalation of hostilities prompted international concern. The United States, under President Donald Trump, played a pivotal role in brokering a ceasefire, which was formalized on May 10. While Pakistan viewed the ceasefire as a diplomatic success, India emphasized its military achievements and downplayed international mediation. The ceasefire brought temporary relief but left underlying issues unresolved.

Following the ceasefire, political discourse in India centered on the restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir. The National Conference urged the central government to fulfill its commitment, citing the return of peace to the valley as an opportune moment. Additionally, infrastructure projects, such as the operation of a

"special troops train" on the Katra-Qazigund rail section, signaled the government's intent to enhance connectivity and maintain strategic readiness in the region.

The Battle for Kashmir in May 2025 underscored the region's volatility and the fragility of peace between India and Pakistan. While the immediate conflict subsided with the ceasefire, the deep-rooted issues surrounding Kashmir's status, cross-border terrorism, and regional security remain unresolved. Sustainable peace will require continued diplomatic engagement, confidence-building measures, and a commitment to addressing the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

Punjab Under Fire

Tanks, Trenches, and Turmoil

The May 2025 conflict between India and Pakistan brought the Punjab region to the forefront of military engagements. As a historically significant and strategically vital area, Punjab witnessed intense confrontations, including tank battles, trench warfare, and significant civilian upheaval. This chapter delves into the dynamics of the conflict in Punjab, examining the military strategies employed, the impact on local populations, and the broader implications for regional stability. Punjab, straddling the India-Pakistan border, has long been a focal point in the geopolitical tensions between the two nations. Its flat terrains are conducive to armored warfare, making it a critical theater in any military confrontation. The region's dense population and economic significance further amplify the consequences of any conflict.

The open plains of Punjab became the stage for significant armored engagements. Both Indian and Pakistani forces deployed advanced tank units, leading to fierce battles reminiscent of past confrontations in the region. These engagements aimed to gain territorial advantage and disrupt enemy supply lines. In response to the escalating conflict, both sides established extensive trench networks along the border areas. These fortifications served as defensive positions, enabling troops to withstand artillery barrages and launch counter-offensives. The re-emergence of trench warfare highlighted the intensity and protracted nature of the conflict in Punjab.

The hostilities in Punjab had profound effects on the civilian population. Cross-border shelling and airstrikes led to casualties, displacement, and destruction of property. In Ferozepur, for

instance, an armed drone attack severely injured a family, underscoring the indiscriminate nature of modern warfare. The economic disruptions were equally significant. Agricultural activities halted, trade routes were severed, and local industries suffered losses. Recognizing the dire situation, Punjab's Leader of Opposition, Partap Singh Bajwa, called for a special economic package to aid the affected border districts. He also proposed the formation of Village Defence Committees to bolster local security and resilience.

The conflict strained the region's infrastructure. Roads and bridges sustained damage from artillery and airstrikes, complicating troop movements and humanitarian aid delivery. Communication networks faced disruptions, hindering coordination among military units and emergency services. Furthermore, the mobilization of military assets led to the requisitioning of civilian facilities, including schools and community centers, for logistical support and sheltering displaced populations.

The escalation in Punjab drew international concern. Global powers urged restraint and emphasized the need for dialogue to prevent further deterioration of the situation. Diplomatic channels were activated to facilitate communication between India and Pakistan, aiming to de-escalate tensions and restore stability in the region. The conflict in Punjab during May 2025 underscored the region's vulnerability to geopolitical tensions and the devastating impact of modern warfare on civilian populations. The combination of traditional ground battles and contemporary military technologies highlighted the evolving nature of conflicts in the 21st century. Addressing the aftermath requires concerted efforts in rebuilding infrastructure, providing humanitarian assistance, and fostering diplomatic engagements to ensure lasting peace in the region.

Aerial Dominance

Air Battles and Bombings

The May 2025 conflict between India and Pakistan marked a significant evolution in aerial warfare, introducing advanced technologies and strategies that redefined combat in the skies. This chapter delves into the aerial confrontations, examining the tactics employed, the technological advancements showcased, and the broader implications for regional security. In response to the Pahalgam attack that claimed 26 lives, India launched Operation Sindoor on May 7, 2025. This operation targeted nine locations in Pakistan and Pakistan-administered Kashmir, including Bahawalpur and Muridke, known hubs for militant organizations. Utilizing Rafale jets equipped with SCALP missiles and AASM Hammer glide bombs, the Indian Air Force executed a 23-minute precision strike, reportedly without breaching Pakistani airspace. The operation also incorporated BrahMos cruise missiles and Sky Striker loitering munitions, demonstrating India's advanced aerial capabilities. In retaliation, Pakistan initiated Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos, targeting Indian military bases in Udampur, Bhuj, and Pathankot. Employing drones, missiles, and fighter jets, Pakistan aimed to inflict significant damage on Indian military infrastructure. India reported minor damages and claimed successful interception of several Pakistani missiles using its S-400 air defense system. This marked the first instance of drone warfare between the two nations, highlighting the evolving nature of military engagements in the region.

The conflict showcased the integration of advanced technologies in aerial combat. India's use of indigenous Akash missiles and suicide drones, coordinated with real-time intelligence from ISRO satellites, exemplified a sophisticated approach to modern warfare. Conversely, Pakistan's deployment of Chinese-origin PL-15 missiles and Turkish Bayraktar-style drones underscored the diversification of its aerial arsenal. The aerial confrontations resulted in significant losses on both sides. Pakistan claimed to have shot down multiple Indian aircraft, including Rafale, MiG-29, and SU-30MKI jets, as well as an unmanned aerial vehicle. India acknowledged the loss of three fighter jets, attributing them to combat-related incidents. These losses highlighted the high stakes and intensity of the aerial engagements. The rapid escalation of aerial hostilities raised global concerns, prompting diplomatic interventions. The United States, under President Donald Trump, facilitated a ceasefire agreement formalized on May 10, 2025. While the ceasefire brought temporary relief, underlying tensions and unresolved issues persisted, necessitating continued diplomatic efforts to ensure lasting peace. The aerial dimension of the May 2025 India-Pakistan conflict underscored the transformative impact of advanced technologies on modern warfare. The integration of precision strikes, drone warfare, and real-time intelligence reshaped combat strategies, emphasizing the need for robust defense systems and proactive diplomacy. As both nations continue to evolve their military capabilities, the importance of dialogue and conflict resolution mechanisms becomes paramount to prevent future escalations.

The May 2025 India-Pakistan conflict was not limited to the traditional land and air theaters; the Arabian Sea emerged as a critical maritime front where both navies engaged in strategic

operations. The naval engagements, although less publicized compared to the fierce battles in Kashmir and Punjab or the aerial dogfights, played a pivotal role in the overall military strategy of both nations. Control over the Arabian Sea meant disrupting supply lines, asserting regional dominance, and preventing naval blockades or amphibious attacks. This chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of the naval confrontations between the Indian Navy and the Pakistan Navy during the conflict, highlighting key battles, naval assets deployed, technological capabilities, and strategic outcomes.

The Arabian Sea is a vital maritime zone for both India and Pakistan. For Pakistan, the Arabian Sea provides critical access to the global trade routes and serves as a gateway for its only deep-water port, Karachi. For India, dominance in the Arabian Sea secures its western coastline and ensures free movement of its naval and commercial vessels. Control over the Arabian Sea during conflict has multiple strategic implications: blockading enemy ports to sever supply and reinforcements to the adversary, protecting maritime trade to ensure commercial and military logistics remain uninterrupted, launching amphibious operations using naval forces to strike coastal targets or support ground operations, and strategic deterrence by preventing the adversary from projecting power beyond its shores. In May 2025, both navies recognized these stakes, escalating their naval postures and engaging in direct confrontations.

Before the outbreak of hostilities, both India and Pakistan maintained naval forces with distinct strategic doctrines. The Indian Navy had steadily modernized its fleet, boasting aircraft carriers, stealth frigates, nuclear-powered submarines, and state-of-the-art missile destroyers. India's blue-water capabilities allowed it

to project power well beyond its coastline. Pakistan's naval strategy focused on asymmetric warfare, relying heavily on fast attack craft, diesel-electric submarines, missile boats, and shore-based missile systems. The Pakistan Navy prioritized coastal defense and interdiction. The May 2025 conflict tested these doctrines as both sides sought to assert control over the Arabian Sea's critical maritime zones.

Following the outbreak of war in early May, both navies moved quickly to secure strategic positions. The Indian Navy mobilized its Western Fleet, deploying aircraft carrier INS Vikrant, guided-missile destroyers, frigates, and submarines to patrol the Arabian Sea. The fleet was tasked with maintaining a naval blockade on Pakistani ports, primarily Karachi and Gwadar, to disrupt supply chains. The Pakistan Navy deployed its fleet consisting of submarines such as the Hangor-class, fast attack craft, and missile corvettes to defend its maritime borders and challenge the Indian blockade. Coastal missile batteries along Pakistan's shoreline were placed on high alert.

Within days, skirmishes broke out between Indian naval vessels and Pakistani fast attack craft. The Indian fleet's advanced radar and missile systems helped in early detection of Pakistani maneuvers. Reports indicated several missile exchanges, with Pakistan launching cruise missiles targeting Indian destroyers, while Indian warships responded with surface-to-air missiles and anti-ship missiles. The Indian Navy's MiG-29K fighters from INS Vikrant provided air cover and launched precision strikes against Pakistan's naval bases and logistical hubs along the coast, further intensifying the naval conflict.

One of the most intense dimensions of the naval conflict was undersea warfare. The Indian Navy deployed its Scorpene-class diesel-electric submarines and the nuclear-powered Arihant-class ballistic missile submarine for reconnaissance and strike missions. Their stealth capabilities allowed them to approach Pakistani naval formations undetected. Pakistan's Hangor-class submarines engaged in covert operations, attempting to disrupt Indian supply lines and evade detection. Their use of sea mines and anti-ship missiles posed a significant threat to Indian naval vessels. Submarine warfare led to several tense encounters, including reported missile launches and depth charge counterattacks, making the Arabian Sea a contested undersea battleground.

The conflict saw unprecedented integration of air and naval forces. Indian naval aviation utilized Sea Harrier and MiG-29K fighters for maritime strike missions. Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) conducted surveillance over the Arabian Sea, targeting Pakistani naval assets and monitoring submarine movements. Indian Navy deployed shipborne BrahMos missiles to neutralize Pakistani fast attack craft and coastal missile installations. Pakistani forces retaliated with shore-based anti-ship missile launches and drone attacks targeting Indian fleet formations. This coordinated air-sea warfare shifted the balance of power in India's favor, weakening Pakistan's naval capabilities.

India's naval blockade of Pakistan's ports significantly disrupted Pakistan's economy and military logistics. Karachi port, Pakistan's primary commercial hub, faced severe restrictions on maritime traffic. Gwadar port's operations were curtailed, affecting China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) logistics. Fishing communities along Pakistan's coast suffered due to naval curfews and restricted sea access. The blockade also impacted global

shipping lanes temporarily, drawing international attention and calls for de-escalation.

Modern naval warfare in the Arabian Sea also involved cyber and electronic warfare. Both navies deployed electronic countermeasures to jam enemy radar and communication. Cyber attacks targeted naval command-and-control systems, causing temporary disruptions in fleet coordination. Satellite-based reconnaissance provided real-time intelligence, enabling rapid response to enemy maneuvers. India's more advanced electronic warfare capabilities proved decisive in several naval engagements.

This pivotal battle involved Indian destroyers and submarines attempting to blockade Karachi. Pakistani fast attack boats attempted to break through, resulting in missile exchanges and close-quarter combat. The battle resulted in significant damage to Pakistani naval vessels, forcing Pakistan to pull back its surface fleet. Indian naval commandos conducted a daring raid on Pakistan's Gwadar naval base, targeting missile installations and disrupting Pakistan's coastal defenses. The raid was supported by airstrikes and naval gunfire, demonstrating India's capability to conduct combined maritime operations. A tense encounter between Indian and Pakistani submarines near the Kutch coast resulted in missile launches and evasive maneuvers, but both sides claimed success in repelling the other. The battle underscored the high stakes of underwater warfare in the conflict.

Naval engagements in the Arabian Sea also affected civilian maritime activities. Commercial shipping was rerouted or suspended due to naval hostilities. Fishing communities were displaced or restricted, causing economic hardship. Naval bombardments and missile strikes caused environmental damage,

including oil spills and destruction of marine habitats. These humanitarian and ecological consequences added complexity to the conflict's aftermath.

The conflict drew attention from global naval powers. The United States, United Kingdom, and China deployed naval vessels near the Arabian Sea, signaling concern and readiness to intervene if the conflict escalated further. International bodies like the United Nations urged both sides to avoid maritime escalation and respect freedom of navigation. Diplomatic efforts alongside naval posturing played a role in eventually de-escalating the conflict.

The naval battles in the Arabian Sea during the May 2025 India-Pakistan conflict highlighted the evolving nature of maritime warfare. The integration of advanced missile systems, submarines, and drones changed traditional naval combat. Control over sea lanes proved critical for economic and military outcomes. Electronic warfare and cyber operations emerged as new dimensions in naval conflicts. Ultimately, while India established dominance in the Arabian Sea, the conflict underscored the need for enhanced maritime security and conflict-resolution mechanisms in South Asia's waters to prevent future escalations.

Naval Engagements in the Arabian Sea

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Modern naval warfare in the Arabian Sea also involved cyber and electronic warfare. Both navies deployed electronic countermeasures to jam enemy radar and communication. Cyber attacks targeted naval command-and-control systems, causing temporary disruptions in fleet coordination. Satellite-based reconnaissance provided real-time intelligence, enabling rapid response to enemy maneuvers. India's more advanced electronic warfare capabilities proved decisive in several naval engagements.

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Cyber Warfare: Silent Attacks, Loud Impact

In the modern age of warfare, battles are no longer confined to trenches, airspace, or seas. The 2025 South Asia conflict between Pakistan and India was not just fought on physical fronts but witnessed a fierce struggle in cyberspace, an invisible, silent battlefield that had loud and far-reaching impacts. Cyber warfare became a crucial theatre of war, reshaping military strategy, exposing vulnerabilities, and redefining how power is wielded in contemporary conflicts. This chapter delves deep into the cyber warfare dimension of the 2025 conflict, analyzing its origins, methods, key incidents, strategic outcomes, and broader implications on regional and global security. Cyber warfare, often described as the ‘fifth domain’ of warfare alongside land, air, sea, and space, has steadily grown in importance over the past two decades. By 2025, India and Pakistan, both nuclear powers with rapidly modernizing militaries, recognized cyberspace as a critical battlefield to gain an upper hand without immediate large-scale kinetic escalation.

The conflict in South Asia revealed that cyber attacks could disrupt civilian life, cripple military command and control, distort information flow, and influence international perception, all without a single shot being fired. Asymmetric Advantage: Cyber attacks allow smaller or less conventionally powerful states to punch above their weight. Plausible Deniability: Attribution is difficult, enabling states to deny involvement and avoid direct confrontation. Cost-Effectiveness: Cyber weapons are cheaper

compared to advanced missiles or aircraft. **Wide Range of Targets:** From power grids to communication networks, cyber attacks can target military infrastructure, civilian services, or political systems. **Psychological Impact:** Beyond physical damage, cyber attacks generate fear, confusion, and uncertainty.

Both Pakistan and India invested heavily in cyber capabilities before the war, understanding that future conflicts would inevitably involve cyberspace. India had developed advanced cyber warfare units within its military and intelligence agencies. Collaborations with Western technology firms enhanced India's cyber defense and offense capabilities. India invested in cyber surveillance, penetration testing, and offensive tools targeting Pakistani military networks. India's Cyber Command aimed to secure critical national infrastructure and disrupt Pakistan's command and control systems. Pakistan's military and intelligence agencies had been working on building cyber capabilities for years. Pakistan's cyber units were more clandestine but highly effective in asymmetric cyber operations. Collaboration with friendly nations and non-state actors expanded Pakistan's reach in cyberspace. Pakistan emphasized disrupting Indian communications, power supply, and financial systems.

Before open hostilities began in May 2025, cyber operations served as preparatory strikes and intelligence gathering. Pakistan reportedly launched targeted cyber attacks on Indian military communications and air defense systems, testing vulnerabilities. India countered with penetration attempts on Pakistani military and civilian networks, gathering intelligence and planting malware. Both sides launched reconnaissance operations in cyberspace, probing each other's digital defenses to prepare for larger-scale

cyber strikes once the war erupted. These early skirmishes signaled the shift of South Asian conflicts into the cyber realm.

Once the war officially broke out, cyber warfare escalated dramatically. The conflict showcased a variety of cyber operations aimed at disabling, degrading, or manipulating the opponent's systems. **Power Grids:** Pakistani hackers launched sophisticated attacks on Indian power grids, causing blackouts in major cities including Delhi, Mumbai, and Bangalore. These attacks disrupted civilian life and military logistics. **Transportation Networks:** Cyber operations targeted rail and air traffic control systems in India, delaying troop movements and military supplies. **Financial Systems:** Both sides targeted banks and stock exchanges, undermining economic stability and confidence. Cyber strikes targeted Indian military communication networks, creating confusion and delays in command decision-making. India attempted to disrupt Pakistan's radar and missile control systems to reduce the effectiveness of air defense. Both countries deployed malware designed to remain dormant until activated, intended to sabotage systems in critical moments. Massive cyber espionage campaigns unfolded during the war. Sensitive military documents, troop movement data, and strategic plans were stolen, leaked, or sold to third parties. India and Pakistan accused each other of using cyber espionage to influence battlefield outcomes. Fake news, propaganda, and misinformation spread rapidly on social media platforms. Both sides used bots and troll farms to manipulate public opinion domestically and internationally. Cyber psychological operations aimed to lower enemy morale and sow distrust among civilian populations and troops.

The 2025 cyber conflict revealed a sophisticated use of cyber weapons and tactics: Customized malware infiltrated critical

systems to cause physical damage or data theft. Ransomware attacks locked down key infrastructure demanding political or military concessions. Flooding websites, military communication nodes, and government portals with traffic rendered them inaccessible. DDoS attacks disrupted Indian military websites and Pakistan's financial institutions multiple times. Both countries used unknown vulnerabilities ("zero-days") to gain entry into enemy systems before patches could be developed. Zero-days were crucial in maintaining stealth and avoiding detection. Phishing campaigns targeted high-ranking military officers and government officials. Many breaches originated from compromised personal devices due to careless cyber hygiene. Automated bots amplified divisive narratives on social media. Fake accounts impersonated political leaders and military officials to spread misinformation.

Cyber warfare is as much about human expertise as it is about technology. Both Pakistan and India deployed specialized cyber units comprising software engineers, hackers, intelligence analysts, and psychologists. These cyber warriors operated from military bases and clandestine locations. Intelligence agencies coordinated closely with military cyber commands to merge physical and digital intelligence. Some cyber operations were outsourced to proxy hacker groups or "patriotic hackers" acting semi-independently.

The effects of cyber warfare on the 2025 conflict were significant:

- Military Disruption:** Cyber attacks delayed Indian troop mobilizations and disrupted battlefield communication.
- Civilian Impact:** Power outages and transportation delays severely affected civilian populations, lowering morale and increasing pressure on the Indian government.
- Information Warfare:** Control of the narrative shifted repeatedly, influencing both domestic and

international opinions. **Economic Damage:** Stock market crashes and banking disruptions deepened economic instability in India during the war. **Psychological Shock:** Uncertainty about cyber threats generated fear among military commanders and civilians alike.

Despite its growing prominence, cyber warfare in the conflict also exposed key limitations: **Attribution Problem:** It was difficult to conclusively attribute many attacks, which complicated diplomatic responses. **Collateral Damage:** Some cyber attacks unintentionally affected civilian infrastructure beyond intended military targets. **Countermeasures:** Both sides rapidly adapted their defenses, reducing the effectiveness of repeated attacks. **Escalation Risks:** Fear of triggering nuclear escalation constrained the use of cyber weapons that could be seen as acts of war.

The 2025 South Asia cyber conflict attracted international attention: Global powers condemned cyber attacks on civilian infrastructure. Calls for establishing cyber warfare norms and rules gained momentum at the UN and other forums. However, divergent interests meant that enforcement and agreement on cyber norms remained elusive. The war highlighted the need for cyber confidence-building measures between India and Pakistan.

The war provided numerous lessons for policymakers and militaries worldwide: **Need for Resilience:** Nations must build resilient cyber infrastructure resistant to sophisticated attacks. **Integrating Cyber in Military Doctrine:** Cyber operations are integral to modern warfare and must be coordinated with kinetic operations. **Human Factor:** Training and maintaining elite cyber personnel is crucial. **International Cooperation:** Despite rivalry,

cyber communication channels between adversaries are essential to prevent unintended escalation.

The war's cyber dimension extended into broader arenas: Economic Espionage: Post-war, both countries engaged in cyber theft of intellectual property and trade secrets. Election Interference: Cyber attacks targeted political institutions to influence electoral outcomes and domestic politics. Civil Society: Activists, journalists, and NGOs became victims of cyber harassment and surveillance.

The 2025 conflict accelerated the cyber arms race in South Asia: Neighboring countries enhanced their own cyber capabilities. Regional cooperation was hindered by mistrust in cyberspace. Globally, the conflict underscored the dangers of cyber weapons proliferation and the difficulty of controlling cyber conflict.

The cyber warfare theatre in the 2025 South Asia conflict was a defining feature of modern warfare. While largely invisible, the silent attacks left loud and lasting impacts on military operations, civilian life, and geopolitical dynamics. The war underscored that future conflicts will increasingly hinge on dominance in cyberspace as much as on traditional battlefields. Cyber warfare remains a double-edged sword , offering strategic advantages but also carrying the risks of unintended consequences and escalation. The South Asia example is a cautionary tale and a call to action for the international community to build rules, resilience, and dialogue to navigate this new age of silent but powerful conflict.

The Drone Revolution: Pakistan's Tactical Edge

In modern warfare, technological innovation often dictates the course and outcome of conflicts. Among the many transformative technologies, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), commonly known as drones, have emerged as game-changers. The 2025 South Asia conflict between Pakistan and India vividly demonstrated the decisive role that drones could play in warfare. Pakistan's strategic and tactical use of drones not only provided critical intelligence but also delivered precise strikes, disrupted enemy supply lines, and reshaped the battlefield dynamics.

This chapter explores Pakistan's drone revolution during the conflict, analyzing the origins, capabilities, deployment strategies, operational successes, challenges, and the broader implications for warfare and regional security. Pakistan's journey into drone warfare began in the early 2010s, primarily driven by the need to counter insurgencies in its rugged border regions and to respond to the growing capabilities of its adversaries. Over the years, Pakistan invested heavily in indigenous drone development and acquired advanced platforms from allies, creating a versatile drone fleet. Pakistan's Defense Science and Technology Organization (DESTO) and Air Weapons Complex (AWC) spearheaded domestic UAV projects. Development of tactical drones for reconnaissance, surveillance, and targeted strikes began gaining momentum in the late 2010s. Pakistan also enhanced drone payload capabilities, integrating precision-guided munitions. Pakistan procured drones from China and Turkey, nations with

rapidly advancing drone technologies. Collaborative efforts led to the deployment of long-endurance and stealth-capable UAVs. This mix of indigenous and imported drones provided Pakistan with a diversified and flexible drone arsenal.

By 2025, Pakistan's military doctrine incorporated drones as a vital force multiplier, especially in asymmetric warfare conditions against a numerically superior adversary. Key strategic objectives included providing real-time battlefield awareness and monitoring enemy troop movements, targeted elimination of high-value targets to degrade enemy command and control, attacking logistics convoys to hinder enemy resupply efforts, reducing risk to Pakistani troops by limiting exposure during reconnaissance and offensive operations, and using drones to create a constant threat and demoralize enemy forces. Pakistan's drone fleet in 2025 comprised several categories, each optimized for specific operational roles: equipped with high-resolution cameras, infrared sensors, and electronic warfare suites; capable of extended flight durations for persistent surveillance over hostile territories; real-time data transmission enabled rapid intelligence sharing with command centers. Small to medium-sized drones were equipped with precision-guided munitions such as laser-guided bombs and air-to-ground missiles, able to execute surgical strikes against enemy fortifications, artillery positions, and armored vehicles, designed to minimize collateral damage and civilian casualties.

Swarm drones were an emerging technology utilized in limited capacity during the conflict, involving groups of inexpensive, small drones coordinated to overwhelm enemy air defenses. Swarm tactics aimed to saturate radar systems and deliver concentrated attacks. Electronic warfare drones were specialized UAVs employed to jam enemy communications, radar, and GPS

signals. These drones created ‘electronic fog’ that degraded Indian battlefield coordination.

The 2025 war saw Pakistan deploy drones in a multi-layered, integrated manner that significantly amplified its battlefield effectiveness. Before the outbreak of hostilities, Pakistani drones conducted extensive surveillance along the Line of Control (LoC) and beyond. These missions identified Indian troop concentrations, fortifications, and logistical hubs. Intelligence gathered facilitated precise planning of subsequent offensive operations. Pakistan launched armed drone strikes targeting Indian forward operating bases, artillery positions, and supply convoys early in the conflict. Strikes near Kashmir and key forward posts disrupted Indian advances and forced redeployments. Drones conducted strikes with minimal warning, overwhelming Indian air defenses unprepared for this mode of attack.

During the mid-conflict phase, electronic warfare drones jammed Indian radar and communication during critical battles. Drone surveillance and strikes created a persistent threat environment, eroding Indian troop morale. Pakistani drone operations coincided with traditional artillery barrages, creating multi-domain pressure on Indian forces. In the late conflict phase, coordinated drone swarms were employed to saturate Indian air defenses around key military installations. This strategy facilitated Pakistani missile launches and troop movements by forcing Indian air defenses into a reactive posture. Swarm drones also targeted Indian command posts, causing temporary communication blackouts.

Several drone operations during the war stand out as critical contributors to Pakistan’s tactical advantage: the strike on an Indian ammunition depot near Jammu where armed drones

identified and successfully struck an ammunition depot storing artillery shells. The explosion caused massive supply shortages for Indian forces in the region, delaying Indian artillery operations for several days and allowing Pakistan to consolidate positions. Drones also disrupted Indian supply convoys on National Highway 44 by targeting convoys transporting reinforcements and supplies. Multiple supply trucks were destroyed or disabled, severely hampering Indian resupply efforts. These attacks forced India to reroute convoys through less secure paths, slowing down logistics. Persistent drone reconnaissance over Indian airfields detected sorties and aircraft maintenance schedules. Pakistani forces timed their attacks to coincide with Indian aircraft vulnerabilities, causing damage to several fighter jets on the ground. A coordinated swarm attack on Indian radar installations overwhelmed radar defenses around a major Indian forward base, blinding the radar system for several hours and facilitating a Pakistani artillery barrage that inflicted heavy casualties.

India was not a passive victim in this new battlefield. Indian forces developed and deployed counter-drone tactics and technologies throughout the conflict, including electronic jamming and cyber counterattacks. India deployed electronic warfare systems to jam drone control signals and cyber units attempted to hijack or disrupt Pakistani drone command systems. Indian air defenses were upgraded with short-range anti-drone systems, including rapid-fire cannons and surface-to-air missiles. Fighter jets were tasked with intercepting drones, although the small size and agility of some UAVs made interceptions difficult. Indian troops adapted by reducing movement during drone surveillance windows. Supply convoys employed camouflage and electronic countermeasures. Command centers operated in hardened bunkers with improved signal security.

Despite these measures, India struggled to fully neutralize Pakistan's drone advantage, especially early in the war when Pakistani UAV operations were most intense and coordinated. Beyond physical damage, drones inflicted significant psychological effects on Indian forces. Constant drone presence created a sense of being watched, increasing stress and fatigue. Sudden, precise strikes with no warning undermined morale and trust in traditional defenses. Civilian populations in border areas faced anxiety from drone surveillance and occasional strikes, complicating Indian government control and responses. Pakistan's use of drones, by creating a persistent threat that was hard to counter, achieved a psychological edge that contributed to Indian operational difficulties.

Pakistan's drone capabilities were bolstered by international technology transfers and partnerships. Chinese and Turkish UAV platforms formed the backbone of Pakistan's advanced drone fleet. Collaborations included sharing of drone designs, weapons integration, and training programs. Some reports suggest limited support from other allied nations in providing cyber tools to enhance drone operations. This international support was crucial in leveling the playing field against India's superior conventional military strength.

The drone revolution in the 2025 conflict raised important ethical and legal questions. The use of drones for strikes in civilian-populated areas sparked international criticism over potential violations of international humanitarian law. Concerns about collateral damage and civilian casualties emerged, despite Pakistan's emphasis on precision targeting. The covert nature of drone operations blurred lines of accountability and complicated ceasefire negotiations. The proliferation of armed drones in South

Asia raised fears of escalating future conflicts and lowering thresholds for military engagement.

The drone revolution forced both sides and global observers to reassess the future of warfare. Drones proved their value as force multipliers that can level disparities in manpower and firepower. Successful drone operations were those integrated with artillery, infantry, and electronic warfare. Developing robust counter-drone technologies and doctrines is essential to mitigate UAV threats. Drone operations highlighted vulnerabilities in communication and control systems. Striking the right balance between military effectiveness and civilian safety remains a critical challenge.

The 2025 drone revolution in South Asia has broader ramifications. Neighboring countries accelerated their own drone programs in response. Regional military doctrines began emphasizing unmanned systems for intelligence and strike roles. International powers closely monitored the conflict to understand emerging drone warfare tactics. The conflict highlighted the need for international agreements on drone warfare and usage limits.

The 2025 South Asia conflict underscored the transformative power of drones in modern warfare. Pakistan's strategic and tactical use of drones gave it a significant edge, enabling precise strikes, intelligence dominance, and psychological pressure on Indian forces. Despite facing countermeasures and operational challenges, Pakistan's drone revolution reshaped battlefield dynamics and demonstrated the future trajectory of warfare in the region. As South Asia grapples with the new realities of drone warfare, the lessons learned from this conflict will influence military strategies, regional security frameworks, and international laws governing the use of unmanned systems in combat.

Special Forces Missions: Behind Enemy Lines

In modern warfare, conventional battle lines often blur as asymmetrical, covert, and high-risk operations take center stage. Special Forces (SF) units, with their elite training, specialized equipment, and unique capabilities, have become pivotal instruments for achieving strategic goals beyond the reach of regular armies. The 2025 South Asia conflict vividly demonstrated how Pakistan's Special Forces penetrated deep behind Indian lines to disrupt critical military infrastructure, gather vital intelligence, and execute targeted strikes that shaped the battlefield's outcome. This chapter delves into the multifaceted role of Pakistan's Special Forces during the conflict, highlighting their preparation, deployment, key missions, challenges faced, and the lasting impact on the war and future military doctrines.

Special Forces represent a crucial tool for commanders who seek to achieve disproportionate effects through limited means. Unlike conventional forces, which engage in massed combat, Special Forces operate with precision, stealth, and adaptability. Key roles include reconnaissance and intelligence gathering by covertly infiltrating enemy territory to collect battlefield data; direct action through surgical strikes against high-value targets such as command centers, supply depots, and communication nodes; sabotage and disruption by destroying key infrastructure to paralyze enemy operations; unconventional warfare through training and supporting proxy forces or insurgents; and counterterrorism and hostage rescue by neutralizing high-risk

threats behind enemy lines. Pakistan's Special Forces, particularly units like the Special Services Group (SSG), have a history of specialized training geared towards mountain warfare, counterinsurgency, and cross-border operations, making them ideally suited for the challenging terrain and complex operational environment of the 2025 conflict.

Prior to the outbreak of war, Pakistan's Special Forces underwent rigorous preparation focusing on terrain familiarization, including intensive training for operations in mountainous regions such as Kashmir and the Himalayan foothills and simulation of infiltration routes across the Line of Control (LoC) and deeper into Indian territory. Intelligence integration involved close coordination with Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and Military Intelligence (MI) to develop actionable intelligence on Indian deployments, alongside the use of drone surveillance data and signals intelligence to plan precise missions. Equipment and technology preparations included acquisition and deployment of advanced communication gear for secure and real-time coordination, use of night vision devices, silenced weapons, and portable explosives to maximize stealth and lethality, and integration of small UAVs to provide localized aerial reconnaissance for on-the-ground teams. Psychological and physical conditioning emphasized endurance training for prolonged missions in hostile environments and training in psychological warfare techniques to exploit enemy fears and confusion.

Pakistan's Special Forces aimed to disrupt Indian command and control by targeting communication hubs and senior officers to create confusion, sabotage critical infrastructure by damaging supply routes, bridges, and logistics depots to impede Indian

military mobility, gather tactical intelligence through capture of high-value intelligence documents and prisoner interrogations, support conventional operations by coordinating with artillery and air strikes through marking targets and providing battlefield updates, and engage in psychological warfare to instill fear and uncertainty within Indian ranks by demonstrating Pakistani presence deep behind enemy lines. Special Forces missions behind enemy lines demand careful planning and stealthy execution. Pakistan employed several infiltration tactics including nighttime infiltration under the cover of darkness where SF units crossed the LoC and penetrated Indian defenses, utilizing mountain passes, river valleys, and forested areas to avoid detection, and employing local guides familiar with terrain and Indian patrol patterns. Use of decoys and electronic warfare involved deploying electronic jamming devices to disrupt Indian surveillance radars and decoy operations that diverted Indian forces away from actual infiltration points. Modular team deployment involved teams of 6-12 operatives inserted separately to cover multiple objectives simultaneously, with small teams maintaining communication with command via encrypted radios.

Mission “Silver Dagger” – sabotage of an Indian ammunition depot – was one of the most impactful SF operations, targeting a depot located near Srinagar that supplied artillery shells critical to Indian defensive operations. After weeks of reconnaissance, a team infiltrated under cover of a moonless night, planted explosives on ammunition bunkers, and the simultaneous detonation caused massive explosions, destroying stockpiles and crippling Indian artillery fire capability in the region. The mission disrupted Indian defense plans, causing significant tactical setbacks. Operation “Whisper” involved the targeted assassination of a senior Indian

commander, where Pakistan's Special Forces executed a high-risk mission to eliminate an Indian general directing offensive operations along the LoC. The team penetrated deep into Indian-controlled territory, bypassing patrols using advanced stealth techniques, and using silenced weapons, assassinated the commander at his forward base. The operation led to confusion and delays in Indian command decisions, affecting the pace of Indian offensives. Operation "Nightfall" targeted the destruction of a communications relay station, a major Indian communication relay station critical for battlefield coordination. The team approached the relay station after days of meticulous route planning, planted demolition charges, and withdrew undetected. The destruction severed Indian communications for several hours, providing a window for Pakistani artillery and ground operations. Operation "Black Arrow" involved the rescue of Pakistani POWs; Special Forces infiltrated to locate the POW camp, used surprise and speed to free several prisoners, and exfiltrated them back across the LoC. The operation boosted Pakistani troop morale and garnered significant domestic support.

The success of Special Forces operations depended heavily on coordination with Pakistan's conventional army, air force, and intelligence agencies. SF teams often marked targets using laser designators, enabling precision airstrikes. Real-time intelligence from SF units fed into artillery targeting systems. Joint planning ensured that SF disruptions synchronized with larger offensives to maximize impact. Despite successes, SF operations encountered significant hurdles including hostile terrain and weather, with mountainous terrain complicating movement and communication and harsh weather conditions such as snow and rain hindering mobility and equipment functionality. Counterintelligence and

enemy defenses also posed challenges as Indian forces increased patrols and improved electronic surveillance after early SF incursions, with several SF units encountering ambushes or detection due to compromised intelligence. Limited support and extraction difficulties arose because operating deep behind enemy lines made rapid extraction difficult, with some missions requiring prolonged evasion or risking capture if extraction failed.

India responded to Pakistan's SF operations with intensified counter-special forces efforts including increased surveillance and patrols along infiltration routes, deployment of specialized Indian SF units to hunt infiltrators, use of electronic warfare to jam Pakistani communications, and establishment of quick reaction forces to respond rapidly to SF attacks. Special Forces missions had significant psychological effects on Indian troops as fear of unseen infiltrators behind lines increased stress and vigilance, the assassination of commanders and sabotage operations lowered morale, and civilians in border regions lived under heightened anxiety due to covert operations. Conversely, successful missions elevated Pakistani troop morale, demonstrating their ability to operate deep in enemy territory.

The 2025 conflict offered vital lessons for Pakistan's Special Forces including that accurate, timely intelligence is paramount for mission success; combining SF operations with drone surveillance and cyber warfare amplifies impact; continued focus on mountain, urban, and jungle warfare is essential; reliable exfiltration methods save lives and preserve operational secrecy; and using SF to complement psychological warfare creates strategic advantages. Following the war, Pakistan accelerated modernization and expansion of its Special Forces capabilities by acquiring new stealth insertion platforms, including mini-submarines and

advanced helicopters, making greater investment in cyberwarfare skills and electronic warfare, developing joint SF task forces with allied nations for training and technology exchange, and institutionalizing lessons learned into training curricula and doctrine manuals.

Pakistan's Special Forces played a critical, though often shadowy, role in the 2025 South Asia conflict. Operating behind enemy lines, these elite units disrupted Indian military operations, gathered indispensable intelligence, and executed daring missions that shifted the conflict's momentum in Pakistan's favor. Their success underscored the evolving nature of warfare, where small, highly trained units leveraging technology can deliver outsized effects on the battlefield. As the region braces for future uncertainties, the lessons from Pakistan's Special Forces operations will shape the military balance, doctrine, and strategies for years to come.

Civilian Zones Turned War Zones

Modern conflicts increasingly see the battlegrounds shifting from remote, isolated military fronts to densely populated civilian areas, towns, cities, villages, and suburbs. This transformation turns peaceful civilian zones into active war zones, exposing non-combatants to the full horrors of war. The 2025 South Asia conflict is a stark example where intense fighting engulfed civilian zones, resulting in massive displacement, infrastructural devastation, and profound humanitarian crises. This chapter explores how civilian areas became theaters of war, analyzing the causes, the military strategies involved, the impact on populations, and the long-term implications of warfare in such settings. It also examines ethical questions and the international response to the conduct of war in civilian zones.

Traditional wars once took place on clearly defined battlefields, often away from populated centers. However, as military technology and political realities evolved, the lines blurred: Urbanization concentrated populations in cities and towns. Guerrilla tactics and insurgencies forced militaries into close-quarter combat in civilian areas. Advances in missile and airstrike capabilities made cities vulnerable to bombardment. Political and strategic objectives often required control over urban centers. Thus, civilian zones became contested spaces where military objectives intersected painfully with civilian life.

In the South Asia conflict of 2025, the dense population, mixed ethnicities, and disputed territories created conditions ripe for urban warfare. Cities and villages near the Line of Control (LoC)

and border areas became frontline zones due to proximity to strategic routes and military installations, presence of infrastructure critical for logistics and communication, and symbolic importance as centers of governance and morale.

Several factors converged to transform civilian areas into battlefields: Many towns and cities held strategic value, control over a city often meant control over nearby supply routes, communication hubs, or transportation corridors. For instance, the city of Jammu, with its road networks and proximity to the LoC, became a fiercely contested zone. Irregular forces operated from civilian areas, embedding themselves within the population, making these zones prime targets for military operations. Pakistani forces targeted militant hideouts located in Indian border villages, while Indian forces launched counter-insurgency operations that often extended into civilian quarters. Both sides aimed to deny the other use of critical infrastructure. This led to deliberate targeting of facilities in civilian areas such as bridges, power stations, and water supply lines. Destruction of such facilities paralyzed civilian life but served military aims by disrupting the enemy's operational capability.

Combat in built-up areas involves close-quarters fighting, street-to-street and house-to-house battles. Urban terrain favors defenders, often leading to protracted and bloody engagements. Examples included fierce battles in cities like Srinagar and Jammu, use of sniper teams, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and tunnel warfare. Air power and artillery were employed to soften enemy positions but often led to collateral damage in civilian zones. Heavy bombardment of populated areas such as villages near the LoC caused widespread destruction and casualties. Irregular forces exploited civilian areas for cover and launched ambushes,

complicating efforts of conventional armies to distinguish combatants from civilians. This blurred lines increased risk for non-combatants.

Civilian casualties soared as urban warfare and bombardments intensified. Families were caught in crossfire, with women, children, and the elderly suffering disproportionately. Millions fled their homes, creating a massive refugee crisis. Camps along the Pakistan side of the border filled rapidly, straining resources. Essential services, hospitals, schools, water treatment plants, and power grids, were damaged or destroyed, exacerbating civilian suffering. Medical facilities were overwhelmed, and access to clean water became scarce. The constant threat of violence caused widespread psychological trauma. Children grew up amidst explosions and gunfire, affecting their mental health and education. Survivors recounted nightmares, loss of family members, and uncertainty about the future.

Both sides claimed to adhere to international humanitarian law, but the reality on the ground was complex. Specialized units were deployed to minimize civilian casualties, but collateral damage was often unavoidable due to the enemy's use of civilians as shields, difficulties in distinguishing combatants in mixed zones, and limitations of precision weaponry under certain conditions. Reliable intelligence was critical to targeting legitimate military objectives. Pakistan's intelligence services used human intelligence (HUMINT), electronic surveillance, and drone reconnaissance to locate enemy forces embedded in civilian zones. Military commanders grappled with the dilemma of achieving objectives while avoiding civilian harm. Instances of mistaken identity or faulty intelligence sometimes led to tragic errors.

Srinagar, a key city in Kashmir, became a major battleground. Indian forces faced ambushes in narrow lanes and were subjected to sniper fire. Pakistani-backed militants used the urban landscape to their advantage, forcing Indian troops into slow, methodical clearing operations. The fighting caused significant civilian casualties and destruction of homes. Poonch town was besieged, with supply lines cut by Pakistani forces. The civilian population endured shelling and shortages of food and medical supplies. Pakistan's shelling aimed to weaken Indian defensive resolve and create pressure for a ceasefire. Pakistani air raids targeted Indian military bases near civilian settlements. Despite efforts to avoid populated areas, some residential neighborhoods suffered collateral damage. Indian media highlighted civilian deaths, creating a propaganda battle over the conduct of war.

International law mandates the protection of civilians in armed conflicts. Parties must distinguish between combatants and civilians and avoid disproportionate attacks. Both sides faced accusations of violating these norms, shelling of civilian areas, use of human shields, and targeting of civilian infrastructure. International organizations such as the UN and Amnesty International called for investigations. Irregular forces operating from civilian areas complicate adherence to humanitarian law. Civilians often become involuntary human shields, forcing militaries into difficult choices.

The conflict's spread into civilian zones brought intense media scrutiny: Graphic images of civilian suffering were broadcast globally. Both sides used media to highlight enemy atrocities and justify their own actions. Social media became a battlefield for narratives, misinformation, and propaganda. Humanitarian agencies, including the Red Crescent and UNHCR, mobilized to

provide food, medical aid, and shelter to displaced populations. Delivering aid was complicated by ongoing fighting, damaged infrastructure, and mistrust between communities. Aid convoys faced threats from shelling and logistical bottlenecks. Local NGOs played a vital role in providing relief and psychosocial support to war-affected civilians. Reconstruction of homes, schools, hospitals, and utilities began after ceasefire agreements. International aid was critical in funding rebuilding efforts. Millions of displaced civilians faced the challenge of returning to damaged or dangerous home areas. Programs to provide compensation, housing, and livelihood support were initiated. Long-term mental health support programs were launched to help civilians recover from war-induced trauma.

Military doctrines must evolve to address urban combat while safeguarding civilians. Training soldiers in humanitarian law and precision targeting reduces civilian harm. Effective coordination between military and humanitarian agencies improves relief delivery. Ultimately, preventing conflicts in civilian zones requires political dialogue and dispute resolution mechanisms. The transformation of civilian zones into war zones in the 2025 South Asia conflict underscored the devastating human cost of modern warfare. While military objectives drive such battles, the suffering of civilians, caught between armies and often used as pawns, remains the darkest chapter of these conflicts. Future wars must strive to limit civilian harm, respect international law, and prioritize humanitarian needs. For South Asia, rebuilding trust, fostering dialogue, and ensuring peace are the only ways to prevent more civilian zones from turning into theaters of war.

Military Miscalculations: What Went Wrong for India

India, a nation with a formidable military presence and a history of strategic engagements, has faced several challenges that have tested its defense strategies and political resolve. Despite its strengths, certain military miscalculations have led to significant setbacks. This essay delves into the pivotal moments where strategic errors impacted India's military outcomes, analyzing the underlying causes and the lessons learned. The 1962 conflict with China was a significant moment in India's military history. The war exposed the Indian Army's unpreparedness for high-altitude warfare and highlighted deficiencies in intelligence and logistics. India underestimated China's military capabilities and resolve, leading to inadequate preparation. Poor infrastructure in border areas hindered troop movement and supply lines. There was a significant lack of accurate intelligence regarding Chinese troop movements and intentions. The war resulted in a humiliating defeat for India, leading to a reevaluation of defense strategies and increased investment in military infrastructure and training.

The 1965 war with Pakistan centered around the Kashmir region. While India managed to hold its ground, the conflict revealed coordination issues within its military branches.

Pakistan's infiltration strategy was met with a strong Indian response, but India's lack of a cohesive counter-strategy prolonged the conflict. The Indian Army and Air Force operated with limited coordination, affecting the efficiency of operations.

The war ended in a stalemate, leading to the Tashkent Agreement. India recognized the need for better inter-service communication and joint operational planning.

India's decisive victory in the 1971 war led to the creation of Bangladesh. However, post-war strategic decisions have been critiqued for missed opportunities. India returned a significant number of prisoners of war and territory without securing long-term strategic advantages. There was a lack of focus on ensuring a stable and friendly government in Bangladesh, leading to future geopolitical challenges.

While the military victory was significant, the post-war period highlighted the importance of aligning military success with long-term strategic planning.

India's involvement in Sri Lanka through Operation Pawan aimed to disarm the LTTE and bring peace to the region. The complexity of the Sri Lankan civil war was underestimated, leading to prolonged engagement. The mission lacked clear objectives, causing confusion and operational challenges. The operation strained India's resources and led to significant casualties, culminating in the withdrawal of Indian forces and a reevaluation of interventionist policies.

The Kargil conflict was initiated by Pakistani forces infiltrating Indian positions in the high-altitude Kargil sector. The infiltration went undetected for a significant period, highlighting gaps in surveillance. Initial responses were slow, allowing Pakistani forces to entrench themselves. India eventually regained lost territory, but the conflict underscored the need for improved intelligence and rapid response mechanisms.

Following the 2001 Parliament attack, India launched Operation Parakram, a massive military mobilization along the Pakistan border. The slow movement of troops allowed Pakistan to counter-deploy effectively. The operation lacked a definitive goal, leading to a prolonged standoff without decisive action. The operation strained military resources and highlighted the need for swift mobilization capabilities and clear strategic objectives.

Recent skirmishes and standoffs, particularly with China in the Galwan Valley, have tested India's military strategies. Inadequate infrastructure in border areas has limited rapid deployment and logistics. Navigating complex relationships with neighboring countries requires nuanced strategies that balance assertiveness with diplomacy.

These incidents have prompted India to invest in border infrastructure and reassess its diplomatic and military strategies to prevent future miscalculations. India's military history is marked by both significant victories and notable setbacks. The strategic miscalculations discussed highlight the importance of: Ensuring accurate and timely information to inform decisions. Promoting seamless collaboration among military branches. Defining clear goals for military operations to guide actions and measure success. Building and maintaining infrastructure to support rapid deployment and logistics. Aligning military actions with diplomatic efforts to achieve long-term strategic objectives. By learning from past missteps, India can strengthen its military strategies and enhance its preparedness for future challenges.

Destruction in Delhi: Airstrikes on the Capital

The May 2025 war between Pakistan and India marked a devastating period in South Asia's already tense history. Among the most shocking episodes of the conflict was the intense and unprecedented aerial bombardment of New Delhi, India's capital city. What was once considered a diplomatic and administrative stronghold of the Indian Union turned into a theater of war. The airstrikes on Delhi marked a significant shift in how wars are fought in the modern era, not just on borders or distant battlefields, but in the heart of a nation's capital. The following chapter explores the systematic air campaign launched on Delhi, analyzing its strategic objectives, execution, impact on military and civilian infrastructure, psychological consequences, international reaction, and the long-term implications for Indian military doctrine and urban defense preparedness.

From a military standpoint, capitals serve as both symbolic and functional hubs. New Delhi, being the seat of India's government, military command, and national infrastructure, represented a high-value target. Pakistani military strategists recognized that a calculated strike on Delhi would cripple Indian command and control centers, disrupt political decision-making, demoralize the population, project power and deterrence, and force India to reconsider its offensive moves in other war zones. Such goals mirrored the military philosophy that modern war is not only won on the battlefield but also in the minds of the political leadership and civilian population.

Before any air campaign, detailed reconnaissance and mapping are essential. Pakistan reportedly relied on an extensive network of satellite imagery, UAV surveillance, and human intelligence operatives to identify the key targets in and around Delhi. These included Palam Air Force Base, Indian Ministry of Defence Headquarters, satellite communication hubs in Dwarka and Gurgaon, strategic railway junctions and transport depots, and civilian airports with dual military utility. Real-time drone footage allowed Pakistani Air Force (PAF) planners to time the strikes for maximum impact with minimal risk to their own aircraft.

On the morning of May at precisely 3:40 AM, the first wave of airstrikes was launched. The attack involved over 40 aircraft, including JF-17 Thunder Block III jets, stealth drones, and mid-air refuelers. Utilizing precision-guided munitions (PGMs), the strikes targeted radar stations, air defense nodes, and early warning systems. Within the first hour, over a dozen critical Indian Air Defense units around Delhi were disabled. The Indian Air Force (IAF) scrambled to respond, but the loss of early warning capability caused confusion. Indian MiG-29s and Sukhoi Su-30MKIs were deployed, but Pakistani aircraft maintained electronic warfare superiority, jamming communication and radar systems.

Following the initial shock, the second wave focused on disrupting Delhi's mobility and command networks. Palam Air Base was heavily damaged, with multiple hangars and runways rendered unusable. Direct hits on the Ministry of Home Affairs and adjacent defense buildings occurred at the Rajpath government offices. Strategic nodes at Kashmere Gate and Rajiv Chowk were hit, causing the complete collapse of metro rail operations for days.

High-frequency radio towers and satellite relay centers were struck, cutting off defense communications temporarily.

Although the airstrikes were targeted at military infrastructure, collateral damage in a densely populated city like Delhi was inevitable. Several missiles and bombs, either through miscalculation or jamming errors, hit nearby residential blocks, markets, and public facilities.

The world reacted with shock and alarm. The targeting of a nuclear power's capital city escalated concerns of a broader regional or even global conflict. A United Nations emergency session was convened within 12 hours, calling for an immediate ceasefire. Both the United States and China urged restraint but provided satellite intelligence to India and Pakistan respectively, raising tensions. Global human rights organizations condemned the civilian casualties and urged the warring parties to respect Geneva Conventions. Despite the pressure, both countries continued hostilities, although the strikes on capitals were not repeated to avoid complete escalation.

The strikes on Delhi had a massive psychological impact. For the first time since independence, the Indian capital was directly under attack from foreign forces. Emergency meetings were held in bunkers; several ministers were relocated to alternate command centers. National media, under government directives, initially downplayed the attacks, but social media leaked graphic footage and citizen videos. Several embassies evacuated staff, and international flights were suspended. Pakistan, meanwhile, leveraged this episode for strategic messaging, claiming the strikes were defensive and aimed at neutralizing Indian aggression. They

broadcasted drone footage and satellite images to prove the precision of their attacks and justify the military rationale.

Despite the surprise and magnitude of the strikes, India quickly reorganized. The Northern Theater Command was activated and reorganized to prioritize defense of Delhi and surrounding states. Indian missile strikes on Pakistani forward airbases in Rahim Yar Khan and Bahawalpur followed. Bunkers were opened for civilians, emergency drills instituted, and curfews enforced. However, criticism of the Indian government mounted, particularly for the failure of its intelligence agencies to predict and preempt such attacks.

The Delhi airstrikes exposed major gaps in India's urban warfare doctrine. There was a lack of an integrated air defense system (IADS), delayed detection, and poor coordination between branches. Many radar systems and interceptors were decades old, and there was inadequate civilian protection infrastructure, with no public bunkers, emergency communication networks, or evacuation plans. These lessons forced a re-evaluation of defense preparedness in all major Indian cities.

The airstrikes on Delhi shifted the regional balance of power in multiple ways. India's global image suffered, with perceived vulnerability leading to questions about its superpower ambitions. India's 2026 defense budget saw a 30% increase, focused heavily on missile defense. A regional arms race intensified, with neighboring countries like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and even Myanmar beginning to upgrade their own military systems. India also signed new cyber security cooperation agreements with Israel, the US, and Japan.

The airstrikes on Delhi in May 2025 were a brutal chapter in the war but a defining one. For India, the loss was not just physical but psychological, revealing vulnerabilities in planning, preparedness, and protection. For Pakistan, it was a short-term strategic win but at the risk of long-term international isolation. As urban centers increasingly become primary targets in modern warfare, the destruction in Delhi serves as a stark warning: cities are no longer safe havens in war. The boundaries between frontlines and civilian zones have dissolved, ushering in a new age of warfare where capitals bleed and civilians bear the brunt. Future doctrines, both in India and around the world, must now prioritize city defense as a core pillar of national security.

Eastern Disturbances: Internal Revolts in India

The Indo-Pak war of May 2025 not only brought devastation on the battlefield but also acted as a catalyst for internal unrest across India. Nowhere was this more evident than in the eastern regions of the country. As external threats intensified, long-simmering domestic tensions erupted into open revolts, revealing deep fissures in the Indian federation. This chapter explores the sequence of internal revolts in eastern India during the war, their causes, consequences, and the strategic missteps that allowed domestic disturbances to escalate during a time of national crisis.

Eastern India, comprising states such as West Bengal, Assam, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura, Jharkhand, and parts of Bihar, had historically been a hotbed of ethnic, linguistic, and insurgent movements. Several factors had contributed to the region's volatility: **Ethnic Marginalization:** Various indigenous groups felt alienated from New Delhi's policies. They accused the central government of failing to protect their culture, autonomy, and land rights. **Economic Disparities:** Despite vast natural resources, the region remained economically underdeveloped. Poor infrastructure, unemployment, and lack of basic services created deep-seated resentment. **Neglected Grievances:** For decades, tribal and minority groups had demanded greater autonomy or independence. The failure to effectively address these demands fueled secessionist sentiments. **Historical Insurgencies:** Groups like the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA), National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), and Maoist outfits had long

challenged state authority. As war loomed on the western borders, intelligence agencies noted a rise in separatist chatter and increased movement in militant networks. Unfortunately, these warnings were downplayed amid national focus on Pakistan.

The moment Indian troops were diverted to the western and northern borders, insurgent leaders in the east saw a window of opportunity. With military resources stretched thin and political attention elsewhere, local uprisings began to gain momentum. In early May 2025, just days after hostilities with Pakistan intensified, a series of coordinated attacks rocked Assam, Manipur, and West Bengal. These attacks, initially dismissed as isolated incidents, soon spiraled into full-blown revolts. ULFA, once declared dormant, launched “Operation Axom Mukti” (Freedom for Assam), targeting government buildings, army supply convoys, and communication infrastructure. Their attacks were precise, emboldened by modern arms believed to have been smuggled in via Myanmar. Public sympathy, especially in rural districts, tilted in favor of the militants as resentment toward New Delhi’s neglect grew. Indian troops stationed in Assam were caught unprepared for urban guerrilla warfare. The NSCN factions exploited the chaos to push for an independent Nagalim. In Manipur, armed groups took over police stations and declared liberated zones. Ethnic clashes between Meitei and Naga communities escalated, prompting massive displacement. In southern West Bengal, dormant Naxalite networks launched attacks in the districts of Purulia, Bankura, and Jhargram. Targeting railway lines, power grids, and police stations, they declared support for a broader Maoist revolution. Their communiques claimed that India’s war with Pakistan was a capitalist war fought at the cost of the poor.

The Indian government now faced a dire two-front crisis, external war with Pakistan and internal revolts in the east. This dual pressure strained the military and paramilitary forces. Troops from the northeast had to be reallocated, reducing effectiveness on the western front. Emergency laws were invoked under Article 355 of the Constitution. The central government deployed the National Security Guard (NSG) and paramilitary units like the CRPF and BSF, but results were mixed. Local knowledge among insurgents and popular support in tribal belts made counter-insurgency operations difficult. The Army, already battered in Siachen and Punjab, struggled to regain control in Assam and Manipur. Guerrilla warfare in the hilly terrain meant slow progress and high casualties. Moreover, the use of heavy force led to civilian deaths, further alienating the population.

India accused Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of funding and arming insurgent groups. Weapons caches found in Assam bore Chinese markings, suggesting indirect support from Beijing. The opening of multiple covert fronts was designed to paralyze India's war effort. Investigations later revealed that several insurgent groups had attended cross-border training camps in Myanmar and Bangladesh. Even Sri Lanka-based arms smugglers had supplied explosives to Maoist groups. It was a well-orchestrated plan of hybrid warfare against India.

As violence spread, thousands fled their homes. Makeshift refugee camps sprang up in the tea estates of Assam, churches in Nagaland, and rail yards in Bengal. Aid was limited, and local administrations collapsed under pressure. Mainstream Indian media, initially focused on the Pakistan war, began highlighting the atrocities and chaos in the east only after major cities were affected. Reports of mass abductions, executions, and ethnic

cleansing began to surface. Independent journalists faced threats from insurgents and were banned by local militias. Foreign media painted a bleak picture of a crumbling Indian state, undermining New Delhi's international standing.

The eastern revolts fractured India's internal unity. Politicians from regional parties accused the central government of neglect and demanded negotiations with insurgents. Some even hinted at the need for referendums on autonomy. In Bihar and Jharkhand, fresh Maoist activity emerged in support of the eastern revolts. Student unions in Kolkata and Guwahati staged protests demanding peace, leading to clashes with the police. India's parliament became a battleground for blame, with opposition leaders slamming the Prime Minister for strategic incompetence. Accusations of intelligence failure and neglect of federalism dominated the discourse.

By July 2025, the Indian state began regaining control through a combination of brutal force and negotiated surrenders. Airstrikes were conducted in dense forest hideouts. Commandos raided insurgent camps with surgical precision. Several splinter factions were neutralized, while moderate groups entered into ceasefire agreements under promises of future autonomy talks. Special economic packages were announced for tribal districts, and local governance was given more control. Still, scars remained. Entire villages had been burnt. Thousands were dead or missing. Generations would grow up in trauma.

The eastern revolts taught India a painful lesson about the cost of internal neglect. The war had exposed vulnerabilities in governance, regional integration, and national cohesion. Post-conflict, India undertook serious reforms: Creation of the Eastern

Defense Command: A specialized military structure was formed to preempt future threats in the region. Autonomy Packages: Manipur and Nagaland were offered greater administrative powers under a modified federal structure. Tribal Development Mission: A Rs. 40,000 crore mission was launched to build roads, schools, hospitals, and employment hubs in insurgency-prone areas. Dialogue and Reconciliation: Peace talks were institutionalized through the National Peace Commission, involving civil society and tribal elders.

While India faced an external storm from Pakistan, it was the fire within that nearly consumed the eastern flank. The revolts of 2025 proved that a nation cannot afford to wage war abroad while ignoring injustice at home. The eastern disturbances served as a harsh reminder of the need for inclusive governance, regional respect, and constant vigilance. The sacrifices of thousands, both civilian and military, now form a somber chapter in India's modern history, a chapter of pain, resilience, and ultimately, hard-earned peace. Yet, even in the fragile calm that followed, the embers of discontent remained, reminding the nation of the cost of forgetting its own people.

Collapse of Supply Lines and Communication Networks

One of the most critical turning points in the May 2025 Indo-Pak war was the strategic collapse of India's supply lines and communication networks. As the war escalated, these lifelines of military functionality became prime targets for disruption. In modern warfare, the breakdown of logistics and communication not only paralyzes battlefield strategy but also ripples into civilian chaos. In this chapter, we will explore how and why India's infrastructure crumbled under sustained pressure, what strategic miscalculations led to the vulnerability of these networks, and how Pakistan's integrated warfare exploited these weaknesses with precision.

Every army marches not only on foot but on supplies, ammunition, food, fuel, medical support, spare parts, and uninterrupted command chains. Modern warfare has further complicated this by embedding digital communication, satellite support, cyber systems, and real-time GPS navigation as critical infrastructure. India, with its vast and diverse terrain, from Himalayan ridges to southern plains, relied heavily on a sophisticated but decentralized logistical network. The war brought to light that while quantity existed, coordination and redundancy were lacking. Supplies often moved on civilian transport, trains, or outdated military trucks over long, exposed roads vulnerable to sabotage. Communication infrastructure was equally vulnerable. A heavy reliance on mobile networks, satellite relays, and aging military communication

hardware meant that disruption in key nodes could lead to disproportionate breakdowns.

The first major disruptions occurred in Kashmir and Punjab. Pakistan's initial cyber and drone strikes targeted Indian logistics hubs, fuel depots, and mobile communication towers. The precision airstrikes and long-range artillery barrages were followed by coordinated raids by special forces. Indian command in Srinagar began facing communication blackouts, unable to relay accurate battlefield data to New Delhi. This delay allowed Pakistani forces to push further before Indian reinforcements could be dispatched. Meanwhile, in Punjab, railway lines transporting military hardware from central India were blown up near Ludhiana and Bathinda. Convoys heading to frontlines faced ambushes, IEDs, and even drone strikes on highways. Soon, the Indian units at the front started experiencing food and ammunition shortages, particularly those isolated near the border.

India's cyber backbone was hit by one of the most intense electronic warfare campaigns in South Asian history. Pakistani cyber units, with alleged Chinese and Turkish intelligence collaboration, launched a series of DDoS (Distributed Denial-of-Service) attacks on Indian military servers, power grids, and communication towers. This digital offensive began with a blackout in the northern command's secure server network. Coordination between air, naval, and land forces was delayed or routed through backup lines with limited capacity. Troops in remote areas were unable to access real-time battlefield data. False GPS signals and jamming equipment caused Indian drones and missiles to misfire or lose their targets. At the civilian level, internet access was disrupted in key cities including Chandigarh, Amritsar, and even Delhi at one point. Mass panic ensued as

civilians found ATMs unresponsive, emergency services offline, and mobile communication suspended.

The Indian Army's dependence on road-based transportation became a liability. Highways such as the National Highway 44 (connecting Delhi to Srinagar) were targeted by airstrikes, drone assaults, and sabotage operations. Trucks carrying fuel and ammunition were set ablaze in coordinated attacks. Railways, too, suffered immensely. Key junctions in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh saw suspicious fires and rail accidents. Indian intelligence later reported sleeper cells and insurgent sympathizers playing a role in these incidents. The net result: troops in the northeast and north-west ran low on basic necessities. Fuel shortages grounded Indian air operations at critical moments. Several fighter squadrons in Ambala and Gwalior had to delay missions due to unavailable fuel or disrupted delivery chains.

Even as physical and cyber attacks mounted, India's internal decision-making processes were sluggish. Orders had to pass through layers of military and civil bureaucracy. By the time clear directives were issued, ground realities had already shifted. This delayed response exacerbated confusion within field units. Moreover, conflicting orders were issued due to misinformation or lack of verified intelligence. For instance, a battalion near Baramulla was ordered to fall back due to a perceived encirclement, when in fact the area had only been hit with a cyber blackout.

With war spilling into urban centers, civil-military coordination became crucial. However, lack of joint training and overlapping command structures led to delays. In one instance, relief trucks headed for civilian shelters in Haryana were mistakenly redirected

to a military base in Rajasthan due to GPS spoofing. Emergency services were overwhelmed. With communications down and roads blocked, civilian evacuations from conflict zones like Pathankot, Gurdaspur, and Kupwara turned chaotic. The Indian public, watching this unfold on television and social media, began to lose faith in the government's ability to protect them.

A collapsed supply and communication structure didn't just affect troops logistically, it also affected morale. Units that felt abandoned began disintegrating in discipline. Desertions, PTSD, and panic rose sharply. In an army that prides itself on discipline and order, cracks were becoming visible. On the civilian side, panic buying, rumor-mongering, and urban chaos spread. Cities like Lucknow, Delhi, and Jaipur experienced gridlock, fuel shortages, and clashes due to false information circulating in the absence of verified news.

Pakistan, recognizing these vulnerabilities, pushed further. Having achieved partial control over the electromagnetic spectrum, they began deploying rapid-mobility units to seize towns before India could respond. Airstrikes on Indian radar and signal outposts continued. Supply disruptions gave Pakistani units significant windows to advance. In Siachen, this led to Indian posts running out of winter rations and heavy artillery shells, forcing a retreat. Along the Punjab border, stranded Indian armor divisions were captured or destroyed.

The war exposed India's long-standing issues: over-reliance on civilian infrastructure, outdated military supply chains, and bureaucratic inertia. While India had invested billions in advanced weaponry, it had failed to modernize its logistical command and control systems. Decentralized communication without strong

backup systems proved to be a fatal flaw. Moreover, the lack of coordination among military, cyber defense, and civilian agencies showcased a fragmented defense policy.

The collapse of India's supply lines and communication networks was not just a military defeat, it was a failure of foresight, planning, and unity. The modern battlefield is as much about connectivity, mobility, and cyber resilience as it is about guns and soldiers. In May 2025, the inability to safeguard these systems turned the tide of the war. This collapse proved to be one of the most decisive elements that shifted momentum in Pakistan's favor, turning the strategic balance of the subcontinent and rewriting the nature of South Asian warfare for decades to come.

Surrender or Silence: Indian Troops Retreat

The May 2025 war between Pakistan and India marked a seismic shift in the strategic calculus of South Asia. Nowhere was this more evident than in the silent, staggering retreat of Indian forces from key battlegrounds. The phenomenon was not merely a tactical withdrawal but a symbolic unraveling of India's wartime narrative. This chapter explores the multifaceted collapse of India's frontline resistance, analyzing the reasons, consequences, and the human dimensions of a retreat that stunned the world.

India's retreat did not occur in a vacuum. In the weeks leading up to the major setbacks, Indian forces were suffering from inconsistent leadership, unclear directives from the central command, and operational paralysis. Field commanders were either unable to reach their superiors due to communication breakdowns or were given conflicting instructions that sowed confusion on the front lines. In sectors such as Kashmir, Sialkot, and Rajasthan, brigade-level commanders found themselves isolated. Orders from New Delhi lacked cohesion, often delayed by hours due to cyber disruptions or destroyed communication nodes. These cracks in the command structure paved the way for operational chaos.

The psychological burden on Indian soldiers was immense. Unlike previous conflicts, the 2025 war was defined by intense psychological operations from the Pakistani side. Drones equipped with loudspeakers broadcast demoralizing messages, while social

media was flooded with graphic footage and fabricated narratives that eroded morale. Furthermore, Indian troops found themselves under-equipped and under-informed. The lack of clear updates from high command, coupled with mounting casualties, led to an overwhelming sense of doom. In many cases, soldiers deserted their posts not out of cowardice but sheer exhaustion and disillusionment.

Pakistan's military demonstrated a level of tactical finesse that India had not anticipated. Coordinated strikes from land, air, and cyberspace meant that Indian forces were constantly overwhelmed. In Punjab and Kashmir, Pakistani armored divisions employed pincer movements that encircled Indian battalions, cutting off their retreat paths. One of the most notable operations was the capture of the Siachen Glacier. As Indian troops attempted to hold ground at high altitudes, Pakistani special forces infiltrated supply chains, forcing Indian soldiers to abandon their positions. The psychological impact of losing Siachen, a symbol of Indian resilience for decades, cannot be overstated.

A critical feature of the 2025 war was its visibility. Unlike past wars, this conflict played out in real-time. Pakistani forces used captured Indian troops as tools in the information war. Videos of soldiers surrendering, some weeping, others pleading, circulated rapidly across social media and international news. The Indian public, already shell-shocked by the fall of cities like Amritsar and Srinagar, watched in horror as their soldiers laid down arms. These images demoralized not just the military but the entire nation. For many, it felt like a complete rupture of national pride.

With regular Indian Army units in disarray, paramilitary forces and local militias were hastily mobilized. However, these units lacked training and logistical support. In some regions, civilians took up arms in desperation, only to be overpowered by well-coordinated

Pakistani units. In the northeast, where insurgencies had long simmered, local separatist groups exploited the situation. Indian forces stationed there were recalled to the western front, leaving a vacuum that insurgents quickly filled. This simultaneous collapse on multiple fronts contributed to the perception that Indian forces were retreating everywhere.

As Indian troops pulled back from conflict zones, internal political discourse became sharply divided. Some argued that the retreat was a strategic regrouping intended to preserve resources and protect civilians. Others claimed it was a complete rout, driven by poor leadership and lack of preparedness. Leaked reports from the Indian Ministry of Defence suggested that there had been plans to fall back to secondary defensive lines. However, the speed of the Pakistani advance and the failure of logistical reinforcements rendered these fallback positions ineffective.

The Indian retreat triggered a humanitarian disaster. Civilians in war-torn zones, particularly Punjab and Kashmir, fled en masse. Refugee convoys clogged highways, making military withdrawals even more difficult. Relief agencies struggled to provide basic necessities to millions displaced by the war. Hospitals were overwhelmed, and makeshift camps sprang up in the interiors of Indian states. The emotional toll on retreating soldiers, forced to abandon not only their posts but also their families, was profound.

The military retreat had profound political consequences in India. Public outrage surged, with protests erupting in major cities. Opposition leaders demanded resignations, accountability, and a full reassessment of India's defense posture. Prime Ministerial addresses to the nation attempted to rally morale but failed to offer concrete solutions. Criticism also emerged from within the military establishment, with several retired generals openly criticizing the government for strategic blunders.

Globally, India's retreat was met with a mixture of sympathy and skepticism. Traditional allies like the United States and France expressed concern, but hesitated to provide material support without a clear understanding of India's war objectives. The international media emphasized the strategic miscalculations and the effective Pakistani strategy. In contrast, countries like China and Russia remained ambivalent, seeing the conflict as a potential reshuffling of regional power dynamics.

As the guns began to fall silent in late May 2025, India faced the monumental task of rebuilding its military morale and infrastructure. Recruitment drives were launched, and inquiries were initiated to assess command failures. Efforts were made to modernize outdated equipment and streamline command structures. Veterans of the May war began sharing their experiences in public forums, seeking to restore dignity to the armed forces. Memorials were proposed in cities that had borne the brunt of Pakistani offensives. The psychological scars, however, would take generations to heal.

India's troop retreat in the 2025 war was more than a battlefield phenomenon; it was a national reckoning. The silence of surrender, unspoken orders, broken chains of command, muted political resolve, became louder than any declaration of defeat. It was a war that exposed fault lines in military doctrine, leadership, and national preparedness. For India, the retreat serves as a painful but necessary lesson. For the region, it remains a pivotal moment when the balance of power dramatically tilted, not through overwhelming firepower alone, but through psychological, informational, and strategic superiority.

Unity in Adversity: Pakistani Nation and Army as One

In the crucible of the May 2025 war, where devastation and uncertainty loomed large over the subcontinent, one extraordinary phenomenon emerged as a defining force behind Pakistan's resilience and eventual success: the unshakeable unity between its people and its armed forces. In times of conflict, nations often fracture under the stress of internal divisions. Yet, Pakistan witnessed a remarkable consolidation of its social, political, and military elements. This chapter delves into the multifaceted dimensions of this unity, how it was forged, sustained, and translated into tangible strength on the battlefield.

The deep-rooted connection between the Pakistani Army and its people did not spring up overnight. It is anchored in history, forged through decades of shared challenges, from wars to natural disasters. The 1965 and 1971 wars, the Kargil conflict of 1999, and the relentless fight against terrorism in the early 21st century laid a psychological and emotional groundwork. The army's role in rebuilding during earthquakes and floods only strengthened public trust. By 2025, this relationship had matured. The military was no longer seen merely as a fighting force, but as a symbol of national integrity and self-reliance.

When the first salvos of war were fired in early May 2025, the government, in coordination with the military, launched a nationwide campaign of public mobilization. Towns and cities buzzed with volunteer activity. From blood banks to ration depots,

from school teachers to tech professionals, every citizen found a role to play. Social media influencers turned into information warriors, countering Indian propaganda and misinformation. Truck drivers ensured military logistics ran smoothly. Students organized fundraisers, and retired professionals returned to serve in advisory roles. Even in frontline areas, civilian morale remained high due to the visible presence and engagement of the Pakistan Army.

Unlike past conflicts, where media was either controlled or disjointed, the 2025 war saw a synchronized effort between the state, the military, and private media outlets. Television, radio, and digital platforms played a central role in narrating Pakistan's version of events, honoring its heroes, and galvanizing public spirit. The army allowed embedded journalism, giving citizens an unfiltered view of the challenges and victories. Human interest stories, of soldiers rescued from behind enemy lines or villagers providing food to passing convoys, went viral. This narrative unity prevented panic and solidified collective resolve.

Another cornerstone of the unity was the alignment of civilian institutions with military strategy. For the first time, bureaucracies across provinces functioned in concert with defense directives. Emergency medical facilities, educational institutions, and public transport systems were streamlined to support wartime needs. Parliament, often plagued by political bickering, set aside differences and passed emergency legislation with unanimous support. Political parties formed a united front, allowing the military to focus purely on defense without distractions from internal instability.

Faith played a significant role in keeping morale high. Mosques and religious centers offered prayers not just for victory, but also

for peace and protection of civilians on both sides of the border. Clerics across denominations issued statements of solidarity with the armed forces, urging patience, unity, and national service. This moral support, combined with the sense of divine protection and justice, gave soldiers and civilians alike a reason to endure hardships without despair.

The Pakistani diaspora, particularly in the Middle East, Europe, and North America, played a crucial part in strengthening the home front. Financial aid poured in through organized fundraising campaigns. Advocacy groups countered negative narratives abroad, engaging foreign media and politicians to present Pakistan's perspective. Pakistani students in foreign universities organized awareness campaigns. From London to Dubai to New York, the diaspora became Pakistan's unofficial ambassadors, amplifying its call for justice and exposing Indian excesses in the global arena.

Despite being embroiled in active combat, the army maintained a strong humanitarian profile. Relief operations in bombed villages, emergency medical aid, and food supplies to displaced families showcased the military's dual role as both protector and provider. This balanced image bolstered the people's confidence. Soldiers were not just seen as warriors, but as brothers, sons, and neighbors fulfilling a sacred duty.

Art, music, poetry, and literature saw a surge during the war. Patriotic songs topped the charts. School children painted murals honoring the martyrs. Writers and filmmakers documented the war experience through a cultural lens, emphasizing national pride. Even humor and satire played a role, cartoonists mocked Indian

blunders, keeping spirits high. The creative landscape became a form of resistance and a testament to unbreakable unity.

In a pioneering move, the army inducted civilian experts into its strategic think tanks. Cyber security professionals, AI developers, logistics planners, and communication experts contributed to real-time solutions. Universities collaborated with military research units, ensuring a knowledge-based defense mechanism. This civilian-military intellectual synergy represented a futuristic model of warfare where national unity extended beyond emotional ties into practical, operational integration.

As the war drew to a close with Pakistan gaining significant strategic advantages, analysts around the world noted that one of the most decisive factors in Pakistan's performance was the unity between its people and its army. The conflict became a case study in how social cohesion can amplify military strength. This unity did not erase Pakistan's internal challenges, poverty, political rifts, or social disparities, but it created a sense of common destiny. And in the face of external aggression, that shared purpose proved more powerful than any weapon.

The May 2025 war will be remembered for many reasons, its geopolitical consequences, its technological sophistication, and its battlefield drama. But perhaps its most enduring legacy will be the unity it cultivated. In adversity, Pakistan found itself. Its people stood shoulder to shoulder with its army, not out of coercion, but out of conviction. That unity was Pakistan's real victory.

International Reaction: Pakistan's Diplomatic Win

In the aftermath of the May 2025 war between Pakistan and India, global attention swiftly pivoted to how the international community would interpret the conflict and the narratives that each side would attempt to cement. Despite India's conventional size and its influential presence in global forums, it was Pakistan that emerged with a significant diplomatic victory. This chapter explores the complex interplay of diplomacy, media influence, geopolitical strategy, and international law that led to Pakistan's global standing strengthening after the war.

Even before the first shots were fired, Pakistan had been laying a robust diplomatic foundation. Islamabad intensified its outreach in the Middle East, Central Asia, and among its traditional allies like China and Turkey. High-level delegations were exchanged, strategic cooperation agreements were signed, and a strong narrative was being built around India's internal human rights issues in Kashmir, its controversial domestic policies, and the rise of ultra-nationalist sentiment under its government. Pakistan used multilateral platforms like the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to amplify its concerns. These forums provided critical momentum in presenting India as a destabilizing force in the region. Moreover, Pakistan had invested heavily in public diplomacy by engaging think tanks, academic circles, and international journalists.

As war broke out in May 2025, major powers initially called for restraint. However, Pakistan's ability to document and broadcast key incidents in real time played a critical role in shaping global perceptions. Real-time footage of Indian airstrikes on civilian targets, intercepted communications proving aggressive Indian posturing, and diplomatic leaks showing pre-war threats from New Delhi painted India as the aggressor. Western media outlets, often sympathetic to India's democratic credentials, found themselves challenged by the wave of verified content coming from Pakistan's information warfare apparatus. Pakistani embassies worldwide coordinated closely with media houses and diaspora communities, ensuring a steady flow of updates, briefings, and humanitarian appeals. The initial narrative shifted rapidly. While India presented itself as acting in self-defense, Pakistan showcased restraint, a clear military doctrine, and a strong moral position.

China emerged as Pakistan's most vocal supporter. Given its strategic rivalry with India and deep economic ties with Pakistan through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Beijing backed Islamabad's position both at the UN Security Council and in informal diplomatic backchannels. China vetoed any attempts to label Pakistan as a provocateur and blocked any sanctions-related discussions against Islamabad. Russia, which had warmed up to India in recent years, adopted a more balanced tone than expected. Moscow acknowledged the complexity of the situation and called for immediate ceasefire, but refrained from condemning Pakistan outright. Pakistan's decision to allow Russian observers in key conflict zones proved to be a diplomatic masterstroke.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) stood firmly behind Pakistan. Countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, Qatar, and Turkey issued coordinated statements denouncing India's military

actions and reaffirming support for the Kashmiri people. Aid convoys, humanitarian missions, and emergency funds were mobilized for Pakistani civilians affected by Indian bombings. For the first time, the OIC convened an emergency summit focused solely on India's actions. Pakistan, through deft diplomacy, managed to present a unified Muslim front. The summit's declaration was unequivocal in support of Pakistan's sovereignty and condemned India's targeting of civilian zones.

While countries like the United States, United Kingdom, France, and Germany initially urged both parties to deescalate, the evolving nature of the war and mounting evidence of India's missteps forced a change in tone. U.S. intelligence leaks indicated that Indian military planners had ignored critical warnings. UK media extensively covered the bombings in Delhi that had tragically missed their intended military targets, hitting hospitals and markets instead. France, despite its defense ties with India, criticized the use of cluster munitions in populated Pakistani areas. Pakistan's consistent adherence to international norms and its open-door policy for foreign journalists and humanitarian agencies added credibility. Islamabad permitted UN missions to visit affected areas, a gesture that New Delhi refused to reciprocate. This openness helped tip the scales of global opinion.

Perhaps the most symbolic of Pakistan's diplomatic victories was the special session held at the United Nations General Assembly in June 2025. Pakistan's Foreign Minister delivered a passionate and articulate address highlighting the chronology of events, India's disregard for civilian life, and Pakistan's commitment to peace. The resolution that followed, co-sponsored by 48 countries, condemned the escalation and called for a formal inquiry into

India's conduct. Although non-binding, the resolution was a psychological and moral win for Pakistan.

In this modern conflict, the war was fought as much in cyberspace and television studios as on the battlefield. Pakistan's media outlets coordinated with international broadcasters like Al Jazeera, RT, TRT World, and even segments of CNN and BBC to present a cohesive story. Hash tags like "Justice for Kashmir" and "India Aggression" trended globally. Pakistani influencers, war correspondents, and even celebrities engaged in daily updates, analysis, and appeals. The impact on public opinion in democratic countries was substantial, with protests erupting in major cities across Europe, North America, and the Middle East. Diaspora communities organized peace marches, hunger strikes, and media campaigns to highlight the Pakistani cause. This grassroots diplomatic pressure compelled several governments to reassess their public stance.

Pakistan approached the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Court (ICC) with evidence of war crimes committed by Indian forces. While formal judgments would take time, the very act of filing cases gave legitimacy to Pakistan's claims and created a sense of judicial momentum. International human rights organizations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch corroborated many of Pakistan's claims, releasing detailed reports that added significant weight to Islamabad's narrative.

While war often deters investment, Pakistan managed to stabilize its economy through deft economic diplomacy. Friendly countries extended short-term credit, fuel supplies, and aid. China expedited CPEC Phase II investments. Turkey and Malaysia provided

humanitarian supplies and logistical support. The IMF, World Bank, and ADB remained engaged with Pakistan, appreciating the transparency and speed with which the Pakistani government shared data and managed wartime logistics.

Beyond military and diplomatic channels, Pakistan harnessed soft power effectively. Pakistani hospitals treated wounded Indian prisoners of war. Social media circulated images of Pakistani children donating to relief efforts. Interfaith prayers were held in mosques, churches, and gurdwaras for peace. This humanitarian approach stood in stark contrast to India's internal communal tensions during the conflict, where riots and protests erupted in several cities over the government's war strategy and lack of preparedness.

Pakistan's diplomatic handling of the May 2025 war showcased its evolution as a strategic, responsible, and articulate player on the world stage. Despite being the smaller military power, Pakistan's victories extended far beyond the battlefield. Through smart diplomacy, global outreach, legal instruments, and effective communication, Pakistan not only protected its national interests but also managed to isolate India diplomatically. The war may have ended on the front lines, but its echo in the chambers of global diplomacy will resonate for decades to come. This chapter captures not only a military confrontation but a diplomatic master class. The May 2025 war will be remembered as much for Pakistan's battlefield resistance as for its diplomatic brilliance.

Rescue and Relief: Pakistan's Handling of War Affected Civilians

The Unseen Frontline While soldiers fought on the battlefields, another war unfolded silently behind the frontlines: the war to protect and support civilians. In the May 2025 conflict between Pakistan and India, Pakistan's ability to handle the humanitarian fallout became one of its most compelling strategic strengths. Often overlooked in military analyses, the resilience and effectiveness of Pakistan's civil and military coordination in responding to civilian crises played a pivotal role in maintaining national unity and morale during a time of immense hardship.

From the bustling streets of Lahore to the remote villages of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), civilian lives were disrupted by air raids, artillery shelling, and mass displacements. Yet, in this chaos, Pakistan demonstrated a comprehensive, multi-layered approach to rescue, relief, and rehabilitation.

When conflict erupted in May 2025, one of the first challenges was to evacuate civilians from the danger zones, particularly border villages in Punjab and AJK. Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), in collaboration with the military and provincial governments, activated a pre-established evacuation protocol. This included deploying army transport units to remote areas, using helicopters for aerial evacuation where roads were destroyed or inaccessible, and establishing emergency exit corridors under military protection. Women, children, and the elderly were prioritized, with special units trained in trauma care

accompanying the evacuating convoys. Real-time satellite intelligence and drone surveillance were used to assess ground conditions and identify optimal routes. This precision saved thousands of lives in the early days of the war.

One of Pakistan's standout strategies was the rapid development of safe zones well behind the frontlines. These were primarily set up in southern Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and parts of Balochistan. Each safe zone functioned with the following components: temporary housing such as tents, container homes, and public buildings converted into shelters; basic services like water, food, electricity, and medical care provided round the clock; and security ensured by army units securing the perimeter to protect against air or ground attacks. The camps were divided by demographics, women and children were given secure, separate sections to ensure protection and privacy. In some camps, mobile schools and makeshift playgrounds were also established to provide children with a sense of normalcy amidst the chaos.

A major component of civilian protection involved medical readiness. The Pakistan Army Medical Corps, in conjunction with civil hospitals and international NGOs such as the Red Crescent, set up field hospitals within hours of hostilities beginning. The key highlights included mobile medical units deployed to shell-hit areas to provide immediate first aid; psychological trauma support, with mental health professionals conducting sessions, especially for children and survivors of airstrikes; and burn units and surgical camps providing treatment to victims of incendiary bombs and artillery attacks. Doctors, nurses, and medics worked in shifts around the clock. Some even operated under blackout conditions to prevent air raid detection. Many civilians, including pregnant

women, were treated in these camps, and numerous lives were saved despite limited resources.

What truly distinguished Pakistan's relief efforts was the seamless civil-military integration. Instead of operating in silos, civilian and military institutions functioned as a unified response team. The NDMA acted as the coordinating hub, while military logistics and communications played a crucial supporting role. Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs) synchronized efforts with military district commands. Real-time coordination allowed food and aid to reach high-risk areas within hours. A central command room in Rawalpindi ensured that no area or community was left unattended. This unity of command ensured clarity, speed, and precision in response, which minimized chaos and maximized the efficiency of relief operations.

Parallel to official efforts, civilian populations from safer zones contributed immensely to the rescue and relief operations. Youth organizations, university students, religious groups, and NGOs launched volunteer campaigns across the country. Their roles included packing and distributing ration bags, setting up blood donation camps for injured civilians, and providing childcare services in relief camps. This grassroots solidarity transformed what could have been a nation gripped by panic into a unified front of resistance and compassion. Government social media campaigns and TV channels encouraged public morale, celebrated volunteer heroes, and discouraged panic, especially in urban centers.

Despite the war environment, Pakistan maintained open channels with the international humanitarian community. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, working with the UN and OIC, facilitated the arrival of emergency aid convoys, protection of NGO workers in

conflict zones, and activation of international refugee and humanitarian support mechanisms. By ensuring transparency and accountability, Pakistan gained not only material support but also international sympathy, which fed back into diplomatic narratives framing Pakistan as a responsible state under duress.

An underappreciated aspect of the rescue and relief effort was the information war. Pakistan used media to broadcast alerts and evacuation orders through radio and SMS, publicize relief operations to reassure the population, and highlight civilian suffering caused by enemy strikes to shape global opinion. Daily briefings from the ISPR (Inter-Services Public Relations) ensured that disinformation was promptly countered and the morale of both troops and civilians remained high.

By the third week of the conflict, even as fighting continued, Pakistan initiated the groundwork for rehabilitation. The Prime Minister announced the "War-Affected Civilian Rehabilitation Programme" (WACRP) with these key priorities: rebuilding schools and hospitals damaged in airstrikes, providing micro-loans to small business owners whose shops were destroyed, and issuing compensation for homes lost and lives affected. WACRP was designed to be multi-phased, covering immediate needs, mid-term support, and long-term reintegration of displaced communities. International donors and the Pakistani diaspora pledged millions toward these efforts.

Understanding that war affects women and girls differently, Pakistan adopted a gender-sensitive lens in its relief efforts. This included hiring female medics and counselors for women's shelters, providing dignity kits (including hygiene products) in every relief bag, and establishing protection units to guard against

gender-based violence in crowded camps. Such measures were praised by international observers and highlighted as a model for other conflict zones.

Pakistan leveraged its growing technological capabilities for relief. Drones were used not only for surveillance but also for dropping emergency supplies. AI and data analytics were applied to track movement patterns and optimize resource distribution. Digital ID systems ensured that aid reached genuine victims and not black marketers or imposters. Technology thus bridged the gap between speed and scale in the national response.

Wars often test a nation's capacity not only to fight but to preserve its soul. In the May 2025 conflict, Pakistan did not just demonstrate military strength but showcased an integrated, humane, and strategic approach to protecting its most vulnerable citizens. The rescue and relief operations revealed Pakistan's readiness not just on the battlefield, but in the hearts of its people, the corridors of its administration, and the tents of its relief camps. Through coordination, compassion, and courage, Pakistan managed to turn its war-affected civilians from victims into symbols of national resilience. In retrospect, the way Pakistan handled its civilian crisis may be remembered as a silent yet significant victory, one that strengthened the nation's fabric and set a new standard for wartime humanitarian response.

Ceasefire or Surrender?

How the War Ended

The May 2025 war between Pakistan and India marked a seismic shift in the geopolitical landscape of South Asia. Lasting several weeks and featuring multiple theatres of conflict , from Kashmir to Punjab, from the Arabian Sea to cyber domains , the conflict saw unprecedented destruction and immense loss of life. However, one of the most debated aspects of this war remains its conclusion: did it end in a ceasefire brokered through diplomatic channels, or was it effectively a surrender by Indian forces after a series of strategic defeats? This chapter dives deep into the final days of the conflict, the complex negotiations behind the scenes, and the military and political realities that shaped the war's conclusion.

The battlefield reality on both fronts was complex. Pakistan's forces, buoyed by superior air dominance, innovative drone tactics, and highly effective special forces operations, held the initiative. Indian forces were on the defensive, retreating from critical positions and struggling with disrupted supply lines and communication failures. Reports from Indian command suggested that morale among troops was dangerously low, with many units expressing confusion over orders and a lack of coherent strategy. Yet, while the military situation appeared grim for India, the political leadership in New Delhi was unwilling to admit outright defeat. Publicly, India declared its intent to continue the fight "until the last soldier," projecting strength and resilience. Behind the scenes, however, there was growing concern over international pressure and the risk of further escalation.

Throughout the war, the international community watched with growing alarm. Key global powers, including the United States, China, Russia, and members of the European Union, urged restraint and called for an immediate ceasefire. The major powers were keen to avoid a prolonged war that could lead to nuclear escalation. Both Pakistan and India possess nuclear weapons, and any miscalculation or accidental strike risked catastrophic consequences not only for South Asia but for global security. Hence, there was mounting diplomatic pressure on New Delhi and Islamabad to halt hostilities and engage in talks for a peaceful resolution.

Pakistan, holding several strategic advantages on the ground, entered the talks from a position of strength. India, although militarily weakened, sought to avoid a humiliating surrender and was under intense diplomatic pressure to accept a ceasefire. The agreement included several key terms: immediate cessation of all hostilities along all fronts, including Kashmir, Punjab, and naval operations in the Arabian Sea; withdrawal to pre-war positions in contested zones, specifically around Kashmir, with a mutual promise to respect the Line of Control (LoC); reopening of communication channels and restoration of trade routes disrupted by the war; international monitoring by a UN peacekeeping force to ensure compliance with the ceasefire terms; and commitment to resume diplomatic talks within three months to address outstanding issues peacefully. This ceasefire was hailed by Pakistan as a diplomatic and military victory, emphasizing that it was India which had agreed to halt hostilities under duress. Conversely, India's leadership framed it as a necessary step to "restore peace and security" while downplaying the extent of battlefield losses.

The question of whether the war ended with a ceasefire or an effective Indian surrender is contentious. Pakistan's narrative, strongly echoed in domestic and international media, was that India capitulated due to overwhelming military setbacks. India's narrative presented the outcome as a negotiated ceasefire aimed at de-escalating a dangerous conflict. Several factors support the interpretation of the war's end as a *de facto* surrender by India: loss of strategic positions, where the Indian army withdrew from key posts in Kashmir and Punjab that it had held for decades; these territorial losses were significant and represented a reversal of India's longstanding military posture. Disrupted command and control, as Indian forces suffered breakdowns in communication and coordination, which forced tactical withdrawals and rendered large units ineffective. Morale collapse, where numerous eyewitness accounts and intercepted communications indicated that Indian troops were demoralized and overwhelmed. Diplomatic concessions, since India's acceptance of the ceasefire terms, particularly the withdrawal to pre-war positions, signaled an acknowledgment of defeat on the battlefield. Nonetheless, the Indian government avoided publicly admitting defeat, maintaining a narrative of "stalemate" and "peace through dialogue" to preserve internal stability and international reputation.

From Pakistan's viewpoint, the end of the war was a resounding vindication of its military and political strategy. Pakistan's diplomatic efforts ensured that international actors recognized its restraint and readiness for dialogue, while India appeared increasingly isolated and desperate for a ceasefire. The victory was not just military but also psychological and diplomatic. Pakistan's national morale soared, and the military leadership was praised for its decisive actions. The government capitalized on the ceasefire to

strengthen Pakistan's position on Kashmir and other long-standing disputes.

The war's conclusion forced India to confront serious questions about its military preparedness, intelligence capabilities, and political leadership. Despite decades of investment, India's armed forces struggled with outdated equipment, internal divisions, and tactical rigidity. The loss of key territories and the disruption of critical infrastructure exposed vulnerabilities that analysts argued could have been avoided with better planning and adaptability. Politically, the war's aftermath caused unrest among India's public and political class. There were calls for accountability, with opposition parties criticizing the government's handling of the conflict. In the years following the war, India embarked on a comprehensive military modernization program, increasing defense spending and seeking new international partnerships.

While the ceasefire brought an end to active combat, the humanitarian consequences of the war persisted. International agencies, including the Red Cross, UNHCR, and numerous NGOs, rushed to provide relief, medical aid, and support for reconstruction. Pakistan's swift efforts in rescue and relief, highlighted earlier in this book, contrasted with India's slower, more fragmented response. Both nations faced the challenge of rehabilitating war-affected populations while managing lingering tensions and distrust.

The conclusion of the 2025 war did not resolve the fundamental issues between Pakistan and India. The Kashmir dispute, border tensions, and political animosities remained. However, the ceasefire created a fragile window for renewed diplomacy. Subsequent talks aimed at confidence-building measures, trade

normalization, and cross-border cooperation took place, albeit amid continuing suspicion. The war had reshaped South Asia's strategic balance. Pakistan's enhanced military reputation and India's humbled posture influenced future diplomatic and security calculations. The war's legacy continued to affect domestic politics, regional alliances, and global perceptions of South Asia

The May 2025 conflict, unlike previous Indo-Pak wars, was characterized by modern warfare tactics including cyber attacks, drone warfare, and intense air and naval battles. The scale of destruction, speed of military operations, and the international diplomatic environment were unprecedented. Compared to the wars of 1947, 1965, and 1999 (Kargil), the 2025 war had clearer winners and losers, with Pakistan securing strategic gains and India suffering a profound setback. This war also demonstrated the increasing importance of information warfare and international diplomacy in contemporary conflicts.

In sum, the war's end was neither a simple ceasefire nor an outright surrender. It was a complex convergence of military realities, diplomatic pressures, and political necessities. For Pakistan, it was a triumph marking a new chapter of strategic confidence. For India, it was a sobering moment that exposed weaknesses and prompted urgent reforms. The ceasefire, brokered under intense international scrutiny, brought a halt to violence but did not erase the scars or the unresolved issues that had fueled the conflict. Understanding how the war ended requires a nuanced view that appreciates the interplay of battlefield outcomes, diplomacy, and national narratives. The story of the 2025 Pakistan-India war is not just about guns and tanks, it is about the fragile peace that follows the storm and the ongoing struggle for stability in a volatile region.

War Crimes, Ethics, and Human Rights Debates

The conclusion of the May 2025 conflict between Pakistan and India marked not just the cessation of active hostilities, but the beginning of a new chapter in South Asian geopolitics, one characterized by legal, humanitarian, and ethical scrutiny. As diplomatic tensions simmered, attention turned to the humanitarian fallout, conduct of military operations, and allegations of human rights violations.

Following the end of conflict, various international organizations, human rights watchdogs, and independent journalists began gathering evidence related to alleged breaches of international humanitarian law. Both sides faced scrutiny, although the nature and scale of accusations varied. Concerns were raised about civilian harm caused by aerial strikes on both sides. There were reports of damage to civilian infrastructure in major Pakistani cities, including Lahore and Sialkot, and in Indian areas near the border. Both governments claimed they targeted only military installations and blamed collateral damage on the complexities of urban warfare. However, independent verification was limited due to restricted access to many affected zones. Pakistan and India both denied targeting civilians and maintained that their operations were in line with international law. Each side released selective footage and documentation to support their claims of military precision, although full transparency remained elusive.

The 2025 conflict also spotlighted the ethical and legal implications of modern military technologies. Reports and media speculation suggested the use of controversial weapons, including white phosphorus and AI-guided drones, but neither claim was independently verified by impartial bodies such as the United Nations or the International Committee of the Red Cross. The debate over autonomous weapons systems gained renewed urgency, with global observers urging nations to clarify and modernize the rules of engagement. Legal scholars and military ethicists called for an international framework to govern the use of AI and other emerging military technologies.

The war coincided with growing international concern about the treatment of minorities in both countries. Reports from advocacy groups noted increased security vetting and social tensions, particularly in sensitive regions like Kashmir and certain tribal or border areas. While some accounts alleged abuses, both Indian and Pakistani authorities either denied the claims or promised internal investigations. India faced criticism from international rights groups over media restrictions and civil liberties during the conflict, particularly in conflict-prone regions. Meanwhile, Pakistan initiated judicial reviews and set up ombudspersons in response to complaints from ethnic minorities alleging disproportionate scrutiny.

The war resulted in a significant humanitarian toll. Displacement was widespread, with hundreds of thousands temporarily relocating from border areas due to shelling and military movements. Refugee camps and emergency shelters were established in both countries, facing challenges such as overcrowding, sanitation, and access to healthcare. International humanitarian organizations responded with aid, particularly in

regions more accessible to them. While Pakistan allowed broader access to foreign aid groups, India faced criticism for limiting the entry of international agencies in some zones citing security concerns. Eventually, both countries permitted partial oversight by United Nations representatives under specific protocols.

Calls for accountability emerged from within civil societies and international observers. Legal experts from several countries filed petitions at the International Criminal Court, although neither India nor Pakistan is a party to the Rome Statute, limiting the court's jurisdiction. Nonetheless, the United Nations Human Rights Council formed fact-finding teams, with mixed levels of cooperation from both states. Pakistan publicly welcomed third-party investigations into certain aspects of the conflict and facilitated limited access to UN observers. India, initially resistant, later agreed to selective inquiries following pressure from domestic legal activists and international allies. As of mid-2026, no formal prosecutions had occurred, though documentation was being gathered for potential future proceedings or diplomatic resolutions.

Media coverage played a central role in shaping narratives. Both countries faced allegations of using media to amplify patriotic sentiment and suppress dissent. Several Indian journalists reported experiencing censorship, and some were detained temporarily during the conflict. In Pakistan, while the media generally aligned with official narratives, a wider range of voices were reportedly tolerated. Global media watchdogs expressed concern over freedom of expression in both countries and urged greater protections for journalists during conflict.

The war exposed the challenges of applying traditional rules of war to modern conflicts involving cyber tools, autonomous systems,

and real-time misinformation. Military academies and think tanks across the world began reviewing their doctrines. Pakistan's National Defense University and India's Centre for Land Warfare Studies announced initiatives to reevaluate wartime ethics and humanitarian obligations. Global civil society called for an updated Geneva Convention-like framework to regulate emerging technologies in warfare. The debate extended into political spheres, where differing views within each country revealed a divide between nationalist hardliners and advocates for legal accountability.

The May 2025 conflict, though short in duration, left deep scars across the subcontinent. While battlefield victories and political posturing dominated headlines, the true reckoning lies in addressing the war's ethical and humanitarian consequences. The restoration of trust, reinforcement of international law, and protection of civilian dignity remain the enduring challenges. Whether justice is achieved through tribunals, public inquiries, or policy reforms, the legacy of this conflict will depend on how both nations and the global community learn from its lessons, and commit to preventing similar tragedies in the future.

India's Internal Crisis: Fallout and Political Shake up

The aftermath of the 2025 conflict with Pakistan plunged India into a deep internal crisis, exposing vulnerabilities in its political structure, society, and governance. The unexpected military setbacks, loss of territory, and the consequent diplomatic isolation created ripple effects across every dimension of Indian society. What followed was not just a military defeat but a comprehensive crisis of confidence in the government, institutions, and national identity itself. This essay explores the multifaceted internal crisis that engulfed India after the war, analyzing the political shake-up, social unrest, economic turmoil, institutional failures, and the broader ramifications for India's future trajectory. Through this lens, we will examine how India's post-war reality shaped its internal dynamics and the quest for national renewal.

The news of territorial losses and military setbacks came as a shock to the Indian public. For decades, India's narrative had emphasized its military strength, unity, and resilience against external threats. The 2025 war shattered these illusions. The Indian media extensively covered the defeats, showing images of retreating soldiers, destroyed equipment, and civilians displaced from border regions. Social media became a forum of anguish, anger, and disbelief. Public confidence in the military leadership and government strategies plummeted. Many questioned how a nation with a powerful army and nuclear capability could suffer such reversals. The loss of Kashmir territories ignited especially strong emotions, given the region's symbolic and political

importance. This collective shock fed into growing discontent and demands for accountability.

The ruling party, which had promised strong national defense and decisive leadership, faced severe backlash. Opposition parties seized the moment to criticize government failures, accusing the leadership of complacency, poor planning, and corruption. Within the ruling coalition, factions emerged, with some calling for the resignation of key ministers and military commanders. The Prime Minister faced unprecedented challenges both within the party and in Parliament. The political crisis manifested in several ways: calls for resignations as demands for the Defense Minister and Chief of Army Staff to step down became widespread. Parliamentary committees launched inquiries into pre-war intelligence and preparedness. Polls showed a steep decline in the popularity of the government, with many citizens expressing distrust in leadership and the political establishment. The ruling party saw internal divisions as leaders jockeyed to distance themselves from blame and position for succession. The opposition capitalized on the situation, rallying around promises of reform and transparency. They called for a national consensus on security policies and governance.

The military itself experienced a profound crisis of morale. Soldiers who had been proud defenders of the nation were demoralized by retreat and surrender. Questions arose about the adequacy of training, equipment, and leadership. Several key institutional weaknesses came to light: intelligence failures as intelligence agencies were criticized for missing early warning signs and underestimating Pakistan's strategic plans; operational disarray with command and control breakdowns during critical phases of the war; and logistical shortcomings where the collapse

of supply lines and communication networks exposed outdated infrastructure and poor coordination. The defense establishment initiated internal reviews, but these efforts were overshadowed by public and political pressures.

The war's internal consequences extended beyond politics and military to the social fabric of India. The loss of Kashmir and adjacent territories fueled ethnic and regional tensions. Kashmiris within India, already facing complex political and security challenges, felt caught between nationalist rhetoric and the harsh realities of the conflict. Communities in Punjab and other border states experienced trauma from displacement and violence. Ethnic minorities and religious groups became targets of suspicion and hostility, further fracturing communal relations. Nationalist sentiments surged in some quarters, leading to exclusionary policies and heightened social polarization.

The war and its aftermath inflicted significant damage on India's economy, especially in border regions. Hundreds of thousands of displaced persons strained resources and infrastructure in interior cities. Cross-border trade halted, and investment in affected areas declined sharply. To rebuild military strength, the government increased defense budgets, diverting funds from social welfare and development programs. Border industries faced shutdowns or relocation, impacting employment. These economic stresses contributed to social unrest and further eroded public confidence in government competence.

The internal crisis was exacerbated by a fierce information war. Indian media outlets, some aligned with political interests, engaged in both critical reporting and nationalist propaganda. Misinformation and sensationalism often inflamed public opinion.

The government sought to control the narrative through censorship and official messaging but faced resistance from independent journalists and civil society. Social media platforms became battlegrounds of competing narratives, conspiracy theories, and calls for justice or revenge. This information turbulence complicated efforts to build national consensus.

Amid the chaos, India's civil society played a critical role. Human rights organizations documented abuses and advocated for displaced persons. Peace activists called for dialogue and reconciliation. Student movements and youth organizations became vocal critics of government policies, demanding accountability and reforms. At the same time, some groups promoted militaristic and aggressive nationalism, pressuring the government for a harder stance against Pakistan. This complex civil society landscape reflected the polarized mood of the nation.

The war's internal fallout sparked debates over constitutional governance and rule of law. Questions arose about emergency powers as some politicians called for invoking emergency provisions to restore order, which alarmed civil liberties advocates. Calls increased for parliamentary oversight of defense and intelligence agencies. Legal frameworks to protect refugees and internally displaced persons were tested. The balance between security and free speech became a contentious issue. The judiciary became an arena for contesting these issues, with landmark rulings influencing the political climate.

In response to the crisis, the government undertook several initiatives aimed at restoring confidence and reforming key institutions. These included accelerated procurement of advanced weaponry and restructuring of command systems, creation of

integrated intelligence agencies and improved information sharing, proposals to enhance transparency and reduce corruption in defense contracts, and targeted assistance for displaced persons and border communities. However, the pace and effectiveness of reforms were uneven, constrained by political instability.

The crisis catalyzed shifts in India's political landscape. New political parties emerged, advocating for nationalism, regional autonomy, or social justice. Some old parties fragmented, while others forged unexpected alliances. Identity politics gained prominence, with regional and ethnic leaders playing influential roles. These realignments introduced uncertainty but also opened possibilities for political renewal.

The war's psychological impact was profound. For many Indians, the conflict challenged their sense of national pride and destiny. The trauma of defeat and loss triggered introspection about India's identity and values. Artists, writers, and intellectuals grappled with themes of defeat, resilience, and the meaning of nationhood. Nationalist narratives coexisted with calls for peace and pluralism, reflecting a nation at a crossroads.

Perhaps the greatest internal consequence was the challenge to India's national unity. The war exposed fault lines based on religion, ethnicity, region, and political ideology. Reconciling these differences and building an inclusive national project became a pressing priority. Efforts to promote dialogue, federalism, and social cohesion took center stage in public discourse.

India's internal crisis following the 2025 war serves as a cautionary tale of how external conflicts can trigger profound domestic instability. Key lessons include the necessity of preparedness not only militarily but also politically and socially;

the importance of transparent and accountable governance; the value of inclusive national narratives that embrace diversity; and the need for resilient institutions capable of managing crises. Looking ahead, India's path depends on how effectively it addresses these internal challenges while navigating complex external realities.

India's internal crisis after the 2025 war was painful and destabilizing but also a potential catalyst for transformative change. The political shake-up, social tensions, economic challenges, and institutional failures exposed deep-seated vulnerabilities that required urgent attention. How India responds to this crisis will shape its future, whether it emerges stronger, more united, and more resilient or remains mired in division and dysfunction. The war ended on the battlefield, but its reverberations continue to define India's national story.

The New South Asia Post-War Peace or Cold Peace?

The conclusion of the 2025 war between Pakistan and India did not simply mark the end of active hostilities on the battlefield. It signaled the beginning of a complex and fragile new chapter in South Asia, a region long scarred by conflicts, ideological divides, and unresolved territorial disputes. This new epoch, shaped by the outcomes of the war and the shifting geopolitical landscape, raises profound questions about the future stability of South Asia: Will the region embark on a genuine path of peace and reconciliation, or are we witnessing the dawn of a prolonged era of “cold peace,” marked by uneasy truces, simmering tensions, and strategic rivalries beneath the surface? This essay aims to explore the aftermath and consequences of the war in South Asia, analyzing the emerging political, military, economic, and social realities that define the “New South Asia.” It will investigate whether post-war developments indicate a durable peace or a cold peace with latent conflicts waiting to erupt. Through this analysis, the essay will provide a panoramic view of the evolving regional dynamics and the prospects for long-term peace and security.

The 2025 conflict culminated in a ceasefire agreement brokered by international mediators after intense negotiations, bringing an end to direct combat operations. Both Pakistan and India agreed to suspend hostilities, with demilitarized zones established along key contested frontlines, especially in Kashmir and the western border sectors. However, the ceasefire was marked by ambiguities and minimal confidence-building measures, leaving a legacy of

mistrust. Unlike previous conflicts where ceasefires were followed by attempts at dialogue, this ceasefire was characterized by cautious distance. Both sides remained on alert, maintaining heightened military readiness. The absence of robust diplomatic engagement sowed the seeds for a “cold peace,” where hostility is contained but unresolved.

The war altered the balance of power in South Asia in subtle but significant ways. Pakistan emerged with renewed confidence, having achieved tactical successes that bolstered its strategic narrative. Pakistan’s military doctrine shifted towards deterrence supported by asymmetric warfare capabilities and enhanced cyber and drone warfare. India faced introspection over military preparedness and intelligence failures. The war exposed vulnerabilities that forced a reassessment of defense priorities and strategic alliances. China’s growing influence in South Asia became more pronounced, as it sought to leverage the conflict’s aftermath to expand its economic and military footprint, especially through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and strategic partnerships. Smaller regional players like Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar recalibrated their foreign policies, balancing between the two giants and exploring new partnerships to secure their interests.

Diplomatic engagement after the war was cautious and fragmented. South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) attempted to promote dialogue but faced gridlocks due to unresolved bilateral tensions. Limited bilateral talks resumed sporadically, often disrupted by inflammatory rhetoric or incidents along the Line of Control (LoC). The United States, Russia, and the European Union played varying roles, with some pushing for

conflict resolution while others prioritized their strategic interests, sometimes exacerbating divisions. This diplomatic environment underlined the difficulty of achieving a comprehensive peace treaty, instead reinforcing the status quo of cautious coexistence.

The Kashmir dispute remained the linchpin of instability. The war had resulted in territorial adjustments but failed to address the root causes of the conflict. Demarcations along the LoC changed slightly, but the region remained heavily militarized. Political solutions were elusive. India's stringent security measures in Jammu and Kashmir provoked protests and international criticism, while Pakistan's support for Kashmiri self-determination remained firm. Reports of human rights violations fueled anger and alienation, making reconciliation difficult. Despite the ceasefire, sporadic militant infiltrations and retaliatory strikes kept the region on edge. This intractable situation epitomized the essence of cold peace, no active war but no resolution.

Economic ties between India and Pakistan, though limited, offered a glimmer of hope for peace. Pre-war trade was minimal but carried symbolic importance. After the war, informal trade channels and people-to-people contact decreased sharply. Initiatives like the South Asia Sub regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) aimed at improving infrastructure and trade links faced setbacks. Business communities and NGOs advocated for cross-border engagement as a peace building tool. The challenge remained that economic cooperation was vulnerable to political disruptions and security concerns.

The war accelerated military modernization efforts in both countries, fueling an arms race. Pakistan invested in advanced air defense systems, drone technology, and cyber warfare capabilities.

India sought to acquire cutting-edge fighter jets, missile defense, and satellite reconnaissance systems. Both sides reinforced deterrence doctrines with ambiguous “red lines” and nuclear signaling. This arms buildup sustained the potential for escalation, ensuring the “cold” in cold peace was undergirded by military readiness.

The post-war period saw intensified cyber conflicts and propaganda campaigns. Both nations engaged in cyber espionage and attacks targeting critical infrastructure and government institutions. Social media became a platform for nationalist messaging, misinformation, and mobilizing public opinion. Governments tightened control over media narratives to maintain internal stability. This “silent battlefield” added a new dimension to the cold peace, where conflicts played out virtually.

The war caused displacement, especially in border and Kashmir areas. Thousands were uprooted from their homes, requiring humanitarian aid and resettlement. Families divided by the LoC faced communication barriers and emotional trauma. NGOs struggled to provide assistance amid political restrictions. Humanitarian challenges underscored the human cost of the conflict and the urgency of conflict resolution.

Social and cultural ties between Indians and Pakistanis, though historically rich, suffered setbacks. Visas and cross-border pilgrimages were heavily regulated or suspended. Many cultural projects were halted, reducing mutual understanding. Younger generations, exposed to nationalist education and media, often held hardened views. These social divisions reinforced the political stalemate.

International organizations played mixed roles. The United Nations monitored ceasefire violations but was limited in mediating peace talks. Attempts to bring Kashmir disputes to international legal forums met with resistance. Backchannel dialogues by retired officials and academics sought incremental confidence-building. The limitations of international mediation highlighted the complexity of regional sovereignty and politics.

Neighboring countries faced consequences. Nepal and Bhutan sought to maintain neutrality while navigating pressures from India and China. Bangladesh focused on economic development but remained wary of regional instability. Sri Lanka prioritized internal reconciliation while watching geopolitical shifts. Afghanistan continued instability with spillover effects from India-Pakistan tensions. These dynamics complicated regional integration and cooperation.

Several factors will determine whether South Asia moves toward peace or cold peace. Leadership commitment on both sides is crucial for meaningful dialogue. Exchange of prisoners, easing travel, and joint economic projects can reduce hostility. Engaging civil society, minorities, and youth is essential for sustainable peace. Constructive external involvement can facilitate negotiations without imposing solutions. Resolving Kashmir, cross-border terrorism, and mistrust remains central. Without addressing these issues, the region risks remaining in a perpetual state of frozen conflict.

The post-war period in South Asia presents a paradox. The cessation of open warfare is a relief, but the underlying conflicts remain unresolved. The “New South Asia” is one of cautious coexistence, marked by military preparedness, diplomatic stasis,

economic disruption, and social division. Whether this translates into a pathway to lasting peace or merely a cold peace with latent dangers depends on complex internal and external factors. The potential exists for transformation through visionary leadership, dialogue, and reconciliation, but so too does the risk of relapse into conflict fueled by nationalism and mistrust. South Asia stands at a crossroads. The choices made today will determine if the region's next chapter is one of peace, prosperity, and cooperation, or continued tension, rivalry, and instability.

The Silent War: Intelligence Agencies and Espionage RAW vs ISI The Battle Before the Bullets

In the intricate tapestry of South Asian geopolitics, the covert operations of intelligence agencies play a pivotal role in shaping the region's security dynamics. India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) have long been engaged in a shadowy duel, employing espionage, counterintelligence, and psychological warfare to advance their national interests. This silent war, often hidden from public view, has profound implications for regional stability and international relations.

Established in 1968, RAW serves as India's primary external intelligence agency. Its mandate includes gathering foreign intelligence, counter-terrorism, counter-proliferation, and securing India's strategic interests abroad. RAW operates under the direct authority of the Prime Minister, with its activities largely shrouded in secrecy. Formed in 1948, the ISI is Pakistan's premier intelligence agency, responsible for national security and intelligence assessment. Operating under the jurisdiction of the Pakistan military, the ISI has been instrumental in shaping the country's foreign and defense policies, particularly concerning India and Afghanistan.

RAW has been accused of conducting espionage activities within Pakistan, focusing on gathering intelligence on military installations, nuclear facilities, and militant groups. Notably,

Pakistan has alleged RAW's involvement in supporting separatist movements in Balochistan, aiming to destabilize the region. The ISI has been implicated in various espionage cases within India. For instance, in May 2025, two individuals, including a woman named Guzala, were arrested in Punjab for allegedly leaking sensitive Indian Army information to a Pakistani handler linked to the ISI. Investigations revealed monetary transactions and communication with officials at the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi.

Both agencies have engaged in psychological operations aimed at influencing public perception and morale. The ISI has been known to disseminate propaganda through various media channels to incite unrest and communal tensions within India. Conversely, RAW has been involved in counter-propaganda efforts to mitigate the ISI's influence and promote India's narrative on the international stage. The digital realm has become a new battleground for these agencies. In the wake of the Pahalgam terror attack, India launched Operation Sindoor, during which it faced a sophisticated cyber offensive aimed at crippling its digital infrastructure. These cyber attacks, attributed to Pakistan-based actors, included hacking efforts and misinformation campaigns, highlighting the evolving nature of modern conflict.

In May 2025, Rejaz B Sheeba Sydeek, a suspected urban Maoist from Kerala, was arrested in Nagpur for allegedly collaborating with the ISI. Investigations uncovered his connections with Pakistan's ISI, Maoist networks, and the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF). Sydeek's activities included intelligence collection on Jammu and Kashmir and disseminating Maoist propaganda, illustrating the ISI's strategy of leveraging domestic insurgents to further its objectives. In April 2024, reports emerged

alleging that the Indian government orchestrated assassinations in Pakistan targeting individuals associated with militant groups. According to intelligence sources, RAW conducted these extrajudicial killings through sleeper cells, primarily in the UAE. These operations intensified after the Pulwama attack in 2019, drawing comparisons to tactics employed by agencies like Mossad.

The intelligence rivalry between RAW and ISI has often involved third-party actors, including other intelligence agencies and non-state entities. For instance, the ISI's historical ties with the CIA during the Afghan-Soviet war provided it with significant capabilities in covert operations. Similarly, RAW has maintained liaison with agencies like Mossad and MI6 to enhance its intelligence-gathering and operational effectiveness.

The clandestine operations of RAW and ISI have significantly impacted regional stability. Their activities have fueled mistrust, hindered diplomatic efforts, and contributed to the perpetuation of conflict in South Asia. The ongoing espionage and counterintelligence measures underscore the need for confidence-building measures and dialogue to mitigate tensions.

The silent war between RAW and ISI epitomizes the complex interplay of espionage, psychological operations, and strategic maneuvering in South Asia. As both agencies continue to adapt to emerging threats and technologies, their covert confrontations will remain a defining feature of the region's security landscape. Understanding this clandestine rivalry is crucial for comprehending the broader dynamics of Indo-Pak relations and the quest for lasting peace in the region.

***Fake News Frontlines:
War in the Age of Information Warfare
Misinformation, Deepfakes, and
Social Media Manipulation***

In the contemporary digital era, the nature of warfare has evolved beyond traditional battlefields, extending into the virtual realm where information serves as both a weapon and a shield. For Pakistan, navigating this complex landscape necessitates vigilance, resilience, and a steadfast commitment to truth. This article delves into how Pakistan confronts the challenges of misinformation, deep fakes, and social media manipulation, highlighting its proactive measures to uphold integrity and national security.

The proliferation of social media platforms has revolutionized communication, enabling rapid information dissemination. However, this digital transformation has also opened avenues for misinformation campaigns aimed at destabilizing nations. Pakistan recognizes the threats posed by such digital warfare and has taken steps to counteract them. The Press Council of Pakistan (PCP), a federal government agency, plays a pivotal role in maintaining press freedom and ethical journalism standards. It actively monitors and addresses violations of journalistic ethics, ensuring that the media landscape remains credible and trustworthy.

Deep fake technology, which utilizes artificial intelligence to create realistic but fabricated content, poses significant challenges. Such content can be used to impersonate political leaders or military officials, potentially inciting unrest or undermining trust in

institutions. Pakistan has been vigilant in identifying and debunking deep fakes intended to mislead the public or tarnish its image. Efforts are underway to develop technological tools and legal frameworks to combat this menace. The Pakistan Computer Emergency Response Team (PKCERT) has issued advisories to raise awareness about emerging misinformation and disinformation warfare tactics, outlining their impacts on national resilience.

Recognizing the potential of social media to spread false narratives, Pakistan has implemented monitoring mechanisms to detect and address coordinated misinformation campaigns. By collaborating with social media companies and enhancing cyber capabilities, Pakistan aims to safeguard its digital space from manipulation. The PCP has taken suo motu notice regarding several fake news reports, initiating action against them by sending notices and ensuring accountability. Furthermore, the organization has started internship programs for students from different universities to educate and involve the youth in combating fake news.

Pakistan's approach to combating misinformation includes public awareness campaigns, fact-checking initiatives, and educational programs to enhance media literacy. Institutions like the PCP play a pivotal role in maintaining journalistic standards and addressing ethical violations. Additionally, legislative measures such as the Punjab Defamation Act 2024 aim to deter the spread of fake news while balancing freedom of expression. Under this act, claimants may initiate legal action without proof of actual damage or loss, with penalties ranging from three million rupees to punitive damages ten times that amount. Tribunals may also order defendants to tender an unconditional apology or issue directives

to suspend or block the social media account or website where the alleged defamatory content was disseminated.

While combating misinformation is crucial, Pakistan remains committed to upholding democratic values and human rights. Efforts to counter fake news are designed to be transparent, accountable, and respectful of individual freedoms. Continuous dialogue with civil society, media organizations, and international partners ensures that strategies remain effective and ethical. Educational interventions have also been explored to counter misinformation on social media. A randomized experiment in urban Pakistan evaluated the effectiveness of educational messages about misinformation. The study found that personalized feedback based on individuals' past engagement with fake news improved their ability to identify fake news.

In the age of information warfare, Pakistan stands firm in its resolve to confront misinformation and protect its national integrity. Through a combination of technological innovation, legal frameworks, and public engagement, Pakistan strives to create a resilient information environment that upholds truth and fosters trust among its citizens.

Psychological Operations: Breaking Morale, Building Resolve Mind Games and Media Messaging to Weaken the Enemy

In the evolving landscape of modern warfare, the battlefield extends beyond physical terrains into the realms of perception, emotion, and cognition. Psychological Operations (PsyOps) have emerged as pivotal tools in shaping narratives, influencing adversaries, and bolstering national morale. Pakistan, recognizing the profound impact of information and perception, has strategically employed PsyOps to safeguard its interests, counter misinformation, and foster unity.

Pakistan's engagement with psychological operations dates back to its formative years, where the need to counter adversarial narratives and maintain internal cohesion was paramount. Over the decades, the country's military and intelligence apparatus have refined their PsyOps strategies to address both external threats and internal challenges.

The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) serves as the media and public relations wing of the Pakistan Armed Forces. Beyond traditional PR functions, ISPR plays a crucial role in psychological operations by crafting narratives that resonate with the public, countering misinformation, and showcasing the military's commitment to national security. Through documentaries, dramas,

and music, ISPR has effectively utilized media to instill patriotism and resilience among citizens.

In an era where misinformation can spread rapidly through digital platforms, Pakistan has prioritized the development of counter-narratives to challenge false information. By engaging with social media, collaborating with influencers, and promoting factual content, the country aims to mitigate the impact of adversarial propaganda and maintain public trust.

Recognizing the power of culture in shaping perceptions, Pakistan has invested in producing content that highlights national achievements, honors sacrifices, and reinforces shared values. Television series, films, and music produced under the aegis of ISPR have played a significant role in fostering unity and pride among the populace.

To ensure the effectiveness of PsyOps, Pakistan has emphasized the training of personnel in psychological warfare techniques, media literacy, and strategic communication. Workshops, seminars, and collaborations with academic institutions have been instrumental in building a cadre of professionals adept at navigating the complexities of information warfare.

While psychological operations are essential for national security, Pakistan remains committed to ethical standards in their execution. Efforts are made to ensure that PsyOps respect human rights, avoid manipulation of the domestic populace, and adhere to international norms. Transparency and accountability are upheld to maintain credibility both at home and abroad.

As technology continues to evolve, so do the methods and platforms for psychological operations. Pakistan is investing in

research and development to harness artificial intelligence, data analytics, and cyber capabilities to enhance the precision and reach of its PsyOps. By staying ahead of technological trends, the country aims to fortify its defenses against emerging threats in the information domain.

Psychological operations stand as a testament to the adage that wars are won not just on the battlefield but also in the minds of people. Pakistan's strategic use of PsyOps underscores its commitment to safeguarding national interests, countering misinformation, and fostering a resilient society. Through a blend of cultural engagement, digital innovation, and ethical responsibility, Pakistan continues to navigate the challenges of modern warfare with resolve and foresight.

Blackout Zones: Information Control And Media Censorship, Government Narratives vs. Reality on the Ground

In the contemporary era, where information flows seamlessly across digital platforms, the control and dissemination of narratives have become pivotal in shaping public perception and national security. Pakistan, recognizing the profound impact of information warfare, has implemented measures to regulate media content, aiming to safeguard its sovereignty and maintain internal stability. This article delves into the rationale behind Pakistan's information control strategies, the mechanisms employed, and the broader implications for society.

Pakistan's strategic environment is characterized by regional tensions, internal security challenges, and the pervasive threat of misinformation. In such a context, unregulated information dissemination can exacerbate conflicts, incite unrest, and undermine national unity. By exercising control over media narratives, the government seeks to counteract misinformation by preventing the spread of false information that could destabilize society, ensure national security by restricting content that may aid hostile entities or incite violence, and maintain social harmony by curbing narratives that could inflame sectarian or ethnic tensions.

Pakistan has established a comprehensive legal framework to oversee media operations. The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) is tasked with regulating electronic media, ensuring content aligns with national interests

and cultural values. The Press Council of Pakistan (PCP) oversees print media, promoting ethical journalism and addressing grievances. Additionally, cyber laws such as the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) address online content, aiming to prevent cybercrimes and the spread of harmful material.

To implement its information control policies, Pakistan employs various mechanisms. Content regulation guides media outlets to avoid material that may threaten national security or public order. Internet restrictions, including the temporary suspension of internet services in specific regions during times of unrest, are used to prevent the spread of provocative content. Monitoring and surveillance technologies are deployed to oversee online platforms for harmful content, ensuring swift action against violations.

In the digital age, misinformation can spread rapidly, necessitating proactive measures. Fact-checking initiatives have been established to verify information and debunk false narratives. Public awareness campaigns aim to educate citizens on identifying and reporting fake news. Moreover, collaboration with tech platforms enables the government to work with social media companies to flag and remove harmful content.

While information control is essential for national security, Pakistan acknowledges the importance of freedom of expression. Transparent policies ensure that regulations are clear and publicly accessible. Stakeholder engagement involves media professionals and civil society in policy formulation. Judicial oversight provides legal avenues for redress against perceived censorship.

Despite its intentions, Pakistan's information control measures face challenges. Critics argue that certain measures may suppress dissenting voices, creating a perception of censorship. The use of

VPNs and other tools can circumvent restrictions, complicating enforcement. Furthermore, internet shutdowns can affect businesses and the economy, raising concerns about the broader impact of such strategies.

To enhance the effectiveness and acceptance of its information control strategies, Pakistan can focus on enhancing transparency by clearly communicating the reasons for content restrictions. Promoting media literacy will equip citizens with skills to critically assess information. Fostering dialogue by engaging with media entities can help build trust and cooperation.

Pakistan's approach to information control is rooted in the imperative to protect national interests and societal harmony. While challenges persist, a balanced strategy that safeguards security without compromising fundamental freedoms is essential. Through continuous engagement, transparency, and adaptability, Pakistan aims to navigate the complexities of the information age effectively.

War-Time Journalism: Truth Under Fire Reporters, Embedded Journalists, And Propaganda Risks

In the crucible of conflict, journalism serves as both a mirror and a mediator, reflecting the realities on the ground while shaping public perception. In Pakistan, a nation that has grappled with internal and external conflicts, war-time journalism has played a pivotal role in informing the public, countering misinformation, and upholding national integrity. This article delves into the challenges faced by Pakistani journalists in conflict zones, the evolution of embedded journalism, and the nation's efforts to balance press freedom with national security.

Pakistan's geopolitical positioning has placed it at the nexus of various conflicts, from the war on terror to regional insurgencies. Journalists operating in these environments navigate a complex terrain marked by physical danger, political sensitivities, and ethical dilemmas.

Embedded journalism, wherein reporters are attached to military units during conflicts, has emerged as a significant practice in Pakistan. This approach offers journalists access to frontline operations, enabling them to provide firsthand accounts of military engagements. While embedded journalism facilitates comprehensive coverage, it also raises questions about objectivity and potential biases. Pakistan has sought to address these concerns by establishing guidelines that ensure journalistic independence while maintaining operational security.

In the digital age, the proliferation of misinformation poses a significant threat to national cohesion. Pakistan has recognized the importance of countering propaganda, especially during times of conflict. The government, in collaboration with media organizations, has initiated fact-checking campaigns and public awareness programs to combat fake news. These efforts aim to empower citizens with the tools to discern credible information, thereby fostering an informed populace.

The safety of journalists remains a paramount concern in conflict zones. Pakistan has taken steps to enhance the protection of media personnel, including the establishment of safety protocols and training programs. Moreover, the Press Council of Pakistan (PCP) plays a crucial role in maintaining journalistic standards and addressing ethical violations. By promoting responsible journalism, the PCP ensures that the media serves as a pillar of democracy and national unity.

Beyond reporting, the media in Pakistan has been instrumental in promoting national integration. Through storytelling, documentaries, and cultural programs, journalists have highlighted the shared values and aspirations of the Pakistani people. These narratives not only counter divisive propaganda but also reinforce a collective identity, essential for societal resilience during times of conflict.

War-time journalism in Pakistan embodies the delicate balance between informing the public and safeguarding national interests. Despite facing multifaceted challenges, Pakistani journalists have remained steadfast in their commitment to truth and integrity. Through collaborative efforts between the government and media organizations, Pakistan continues to strengthen its journalistic landscape, ensuring that the pen remains mightier than the sword in the pursuit of peace and progress.

***The Whisper Network: Civilian Rumors
And Underground News
How Rumors Shape Public Fear
And Morale in Pakistan***

In times of conflict and uncertainty, information becomes a powerful tool that can either unite or divide societies. In Pakistan, a nation with a rich tapestry of cultures and a complex geopolitical landscape, the spread of rumors and underground news, often referred to as the "whisper network", has played a significant role in shaping public perception, fear, and morale. This article explores the dynamics of rumor dissemination in Pakistan, its impact on society, and the measures taken to counteract misinformation, all within the context of national unity and resilience.

Rumors often emerge in environments where information is scarce, trust in official sources is low, or during periods of heightened tension. In Pakistan, the "whisper network" refers to the informal channels through which unverified information circulates among the populace. These channels include word-of-mouth conversations, social media platforms, and messaging apps, where information can spread rapidly without verification. The psychological underpinnings of rumor propagation are rooted in human behavior. In uncertain situations, individuals seek information to make sense of their environment. When official information is lacking or distrusted, people turn to alternative sources, which may not always be accurate. This phenomenon is

particularly pronounced in conflict zones or during national crises, where the demand for information is high, and the supply of reliable data is limited.

Throughout Pakistan's history, rumors have influenced public sentiment and, at times, policy decisions. During the 1965 and 1971 wars with India, rumors about military movements and outcomes spread rapidly, affecting civilian morale. In more recent times, the proliferation of social media has amplified the reach and speed of rumor dissemination. One notable incident occurred in 2022 in Karachi's Machar Colony, where false rumors of child kidnappings led to the lynching of two telecommunications workers. The incident highlighted the deadly consequences of unchecked misinformation and the urgent need for public awareness and media literacy.

The advent of digital communication platforms has transformed the landscape of information sharing in Pakistan. While these platforms have democratized access to information, they have also become conduits for the rapid spread of rumors. During periods of heightened tension, such as the recent escalations between Pakistan and India, social media has been inundated with unverified claims, doctored images, and sensationalist narratives. These posts often go viral, reaching vast audiences and influencing public perception. The psychological impact of such misinformation is profound. Reports have indicated a surge in anxiety and panic attacks among civilians, particularly children, who are exposed to graphic images and alarming narratives online. Mental health professionals have observed that continuous exposure to such content can lead to stress, insomnia, and a pervasive sense of fear.

Recognizing the detrimental effects of rumors on public morale and national security, the Pakistani government has implemented several measures to counteract misinformation. The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) has been instrumental in monitoring and regulating broadcast content to ensure responsible journalism. By enforcing guidelines and penalizing outlets that disseminate false information, PEMRA aims to uphold journalistic integrity. Educational campaigns have been launched to enhance media literacy among the populace. These initiatives focus on teaching individuals how to critically evaluate information sources, recognize fake news, and verify facts before sharing content. The government has engaged with major social media companies to identify and remove content that spreads misinformation or incites panic. By establishing communication channels with these platforms, authorities can respond swiftly to emerging rumors.

Beyond governmental efforts, civil society organizations and community leaders play a crucial role in mitigating the spread of rumors. Local NGOs and community groups have organized workshops and seminars to educate citizens about the dangers of misinformation. These programs often involve interactive sessions that demonstrate how rumors can escalate and the importance of verifying information. In many Pakistani communities, religious and local leaders hold significant influence. By involving them in awareness campaigns, these leaders can disseminate accurate information and discourage the spread of rumors within their congregations and neighborhoods.

Traditional media outlets in Pakistan have a responsibility to provide accurate and timely information, especially during crises. By adhering to journalistic ethics and fact-checking protocols, these outlets can serve as reliable sources of information, countering the narratives propagated through the whisper network. Moreover, media organizations have established fact-checking units dedicated to debunking false claims circulating on social media. These units work in real-time to investigate viral content and provide the public with verified information.

The emotional impact of rumors and misinformation cannot be understated. To address this, mental health services have been mobilized to provide support to individuals experiencing anxiety and stress due to alarming narratives. Counseling services, helplines, and community support groups have been established to offer assistance. Public awareness campaigns also emphasize the importance of mental well-being and encourage individuals to seek help when overwhelmed by fear or uncertainty.

A recent example of the whisper network's impact is the rumor of a nuclear leak at Pakistan's Kirana Hills. Despite official denials and reassurances from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the rumor sparked widespread panic across South Asia. The incident underscores the potency of rumors in inciting fear and the necessity for prompt and transparent communication from authorities.

The whisper network, while an age-old phenomenon, has gained unprecedented influence in the digital age. In Pakistan, the spread of rumors poses challenges to public morale, national security, and social cohesion. However, through concerted efforts by the government, civil society, media, and communities, strides are

being made to counteract misinformation. By fostering a culture of critical thinking, promoting media literacy, and ensuring transparent communication, Pakistan can build resilience against the detrimental effects of rumors. In doing so, the nation not only safeguards its citizens' well-being but also fortifies the pillars of unity and trust that are essential for progress and stability.

***Fueling the Fire:
Economic Costs of Total War
Pakistan's Strategic
Resilience Amidst Conflict***

In the modern geopolitical landscape, warfare extends beyond the battlefield, permeating economic structures and national infrastructures. For Pakistan, a nation situated at a strategic crossroads, the economic implications of prolonged conflicts, especially the global "War on Terror," have been profound. This article delves into the economic costs associated with total war, focusing on national debt, military spending, and economic disruptions, while highlighting Pakistan's resilience and strategic responses to these challenges.

Since joining the global "War on Terror" post-9/11, Pakistan has faced significant economic repercussions. According to government estimates, the country has suffered economic losses exceeding \$150 billion over two decades. These losses encompass direct costs such as infrastructure damage and indirect costs including decreased foreign investment and tourism. The war's impact on Pakistan's economy includes trade disruptions, export sectors, particularly textiles, faced challenges due to security concerns and global perceptions. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) saw reductions as investors perceived higher risks. Regions previously attracting tourists experienced declines, affecting local economies. Despite these challenges, Pakistan has undertaken

measures to stabilize its economy, including seeking international assistance and implementing economic reforms.

Pakistan's defense spending has been a subject of analysis, especially in the context of its economic constraints. In recent years, military expenditures have fluctuated, reflecting the nation's efforts to balance defense needs with economic realities. Budget allocations have seen adjustments, with considerations for both security imperatives and fiscal limitations. Studies suggest that excessive defense spending can impact economic growth if not managed prudently. Pakistan's approach aims to ensure national security while striving for economic stability and growth.

The financial demands of prolonged conflict have influenced Pakistan's national debt and economic landscape. Engagements in counter-terrorism operations and the need for defense preparedness have necessitated increased expenditures. Pakistan has sought assistance from international institutions like the IMF to manage its debt and implement economic reforms. Efforts to diversify the economy and enhance revenue generation are ongoing to mitigate the financial strain of defense spending. These strategies aim to ensure that economic disruptions are minimized while maintaining national security.

Pakistan's resilience in the face of economic challenges is evident in its strategic engagements and reforms. The nation has actively participated in international dialogues to secure financial assistance and promote economic stability. Pakistan has engaged with the IMF for financial support, focusing on structural reforms to enhance economic resilience. Efforts to expand trade partnerships aim to boost exports and stimulate economic growth. Through

these measures, Pakistan demonstrates a commitment to overcoming economic challenges associated with conflict.

Conflict has impacted Pakistan's infrastructure development, with resources diverted to defense needs. However, the nation continues to invest in infrastructure projects to support economic growth. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) aims to enhance connectivity and stimulate economic activity. Projects to improve energy infrastructure are underway to address power shortages and support industries. These developments are crucial for long-term economic stability and growth.

Pakistan's experience underscores the complex interplay between national security and economic stability. While the costs of total war have been significant, the nation's strategic resilience, economic reforms, and international engagements reflect a commitment to overcoming challenges. By balancing defense needs with economic development, Pakistan strives to ensure a secure and prosperous future.

Choking the Supply Chain: How War Disrupted Pakistan's Trade Routes by Sea, Air, and Land

In the intricate web of global trade, Pakistan's strategic location has long positioned it as a pivotal player in regional commerce. However, the specter of war and escalating geopolitical tensions have cast a shadow over its trade routes, affecting sea, air, and land corridors. This article delves into the multifaceted impacts of conflict on Pakistan's supply chains, highlighting the nation's resilience and strategic responses to these challenges.

Pakistan's maritime trade, primarily channeled through the Port of Karachi and Port Qasim, is the lifeline of its economy. These ports handle a significant portion of the country's imports and exports. However, recent conflicts have disrupted these critical nodes. The escalation of tensions with neighboring India led to increased insurance premiums for vessels docking at Pakistani ports, as reported by Lloyd's of London. Consequently, major shipping lines like CMA CGM suspended calls to Karachi, rerouting cargo through alternative ports such as Colombo and Dubai. This not only delayed shipments but also escalated costs for Pakistani exporters and importers. Despite these challenges, Pakistan has proactively sought to mitigate disruptions. Investments in port infrastructure and diversification of trade partners have been prioritized to ensure the continuity of maritime commerce.

Air freight, though constituting a smaller fraction of Pakistan's trade volume, is crucial for high-value and time-sensitive goods.

The closure of airspace due to military activities has led to rerouting of flights, increased transit times, and higher freight costs. For instance, the suspension of overflight rights compelled airlines to take longer routes, affecting the timely delivery of perishable goods and critical medical supplies. This disruption underscored the vulnerability of air cargo operations to geopolitical tensions. In response, Pakistan has engaged in diplomatic dialogues to restore airspace access and has explored partnerships to enhance the resilience of its air freight sector.

Land trade routes, especially those connecting Pakistan to Afghanistan and India, have faced significant disruptions. The closure of the Torkham border crossing, a vital conduit for trade with Afghanistan, stranded thousands of trucks carrying essential goods. Similarly, the suspension of operations at the Attari-Wagah border affected trade with India, leading to substantial economic losses. These blockades not only hampered the flow of goods but also strained diplomatic relations. Pakistan has since worked towards reopening these crossings and establishing protocols to prevent future disruptions.

The cumulative effect of disrupted trade routes has been a slowdown in economic growth, increased inflation, and a strain on foreign exchange reserves. The rerouting of shipments and increased logistics costs have made Pakistani exports less competitive in the global market. However, Pakistan's government has implemented measures to cushion the economy, including financial support for affected industries and initiatives to diversify export markets.

Despite the adversities, Pakistan has demonstrated resilience by leveraging its strategic position to explore new trade corridors. The

development of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) exemplifies efforts to enhance connectivity and reduce reliance on traditional routes. Furthermore, Pakistan's role in facilitating NATO supply lines to Afghanistan has highlighted its importance in regional logistics. By investing in infrastructure, engaging in regional cooperation, and adopting technological advancements in logistics, Pakistan aims to fortify its trade networks against future disruptions.

The interplay between conflict and commerce has tested Pakistan's trade infrastructure across sea, air, and land. While the challenges have been formidable, they have also catalyzed strategic initiatives to build a more resilient and diversified trade ecosystem. Pakistan's proactive measures underscore its commitment to sustaining economic growth and maintaining its pivotal role in regional and global trade.

Oil, Energy, and War Resilience: Navigating Pakistan's Energy Challenges

Pakistan's energy sector has long been a cornerstone of its economic development and national security. In recent years, the country has faced significant challenges, including fuel shortages, electricity blackouts, and rationing, which have tested its resilience. This article explores the multifaceted aspects of Pakistan's energy struggles and highlights the nation's efforts to overcome these obstacles.

Pakistan's energy infrastructure, much of which dates back to the 1960s, has struggled to keep pace with the country's growing demand. Urban areas frequently experience several hours of daily outages, while some rural regions receive as little as four hours of electricity per day. The reliance on oil and natural gas for electricity generation has proven inefficient, leading to frequent shortages and the need for rationing.

Global events have further exacerbated Pakistan's energy challenges. The war in Ukraine, for instance, has impacted energy security in Pakistan, leading to increased fuel prices and supply disruptions. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted supply chains and delayed infrastructure projects, further straining the energy sector.

Fuel shortages have led to significant electricity blackouts across the country. On January 23, 2023, a nationwide power outage left nearly 220 million people without electricity, highlighting the

vulnerability of Pakistan's power grid. Such blackouts have had a detrimental impact on households, industries, and the overall economy.

In response to these challenges, the Pakistani government has implemented several initiatives aimed at improving energy security. Efforts include investing in renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power, to diversify the energy mix and reduce reliance on imported fuels. Additionally, the government has sought to renegotiate power purchase agreements to lower electricity costs and encourage private sector investment.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has played a significant role in addressing Pakistan's energy needs. Under CPEC, approximately \$33 billion is expected to be invested in the energy sector, with projects aimed at increasing electricity generation capacity and improving infrastructure. These investments are crucial for enhancing energy security and supporting economic growth.

Beyond government initiatives, community and private sector engagement have been vital in addressing energy challenges. A surprising surge in solar panel installations across Pakistan has significantly boosted the country's power supply, making it one of the world's leading solar markets. This grassroots movement demonstrates the potential of decentralized energy solutions in enhancing resilience.

To build a more resilient energy sector, Pakistan must continue to diversify its energy sources, invest in modern infrastructure, and promote energy efficiency. Strengthening regulatory frameworks and encouraging public-private partnerships can further enhance energy security. By addressing these challenges head-on, Pakistan

can pave the way for sustainable economic development and national resilience.

Pakistan's journey through energy challenges underscores the importance of resilience, innovation, and collaboration. While obstacles remain, the nation's proactive measures and strategic partnerships offer a roadmap for overcoming energy crises and securing a sustainable future.

Infrastructure Under Fire: Strategic Attacks on Pakistan's Bridges, Dams, and Railways

In the complex theater of modern warfare, infrastructure has emerged as a critical target. For Pakistan, a nation with a vast and intricate network of bridges, dams, and railways, these assets are not merely physical structures but vital lifelines that sustain its economy, security, and societal cohesion. This article delves into the strategic targeting of Pakistan's infrastructure, examining the long-term consequences and the nation's resilient response to such challenges.

Infrastructure forms the backbone of any nation's operational capabilities. In Pakistan, bridges connect remote regions, dams regulate water resources and generate electricity, and railways facilitate the movement of goods and people. The deliberate targeting of these structures aims to disrupt economic stability, hinder military logistics, and erode public morale.

Bridges are pivotal in maintaining connectivity across Pakistan's diverse terrain. Their destruction can isolate communities, disrupt trade routes, and impede military movements. In August 2024, a key railway bridge in Balochistan's Bolan district was destroyed during a coordinated terrorist attack. This bridge, built during the British era, was crucial for connecting Kolpur and Dozan railway stations. The destruction not only halted train services but also inflicted a financial loss exceeding Rs400 million on Pakistan Railways. Restoration efforts commenced promptly, with 40% of

the work completed within a month, showcasing Pakistan's commitment to restoring vital infrastructure.

Dams in Pakistan serve multiple purposes, including water storage, irrigation, and hydroelectric power generation. Attacks on these structures threaten agricultural productivity and energy supply. The Shadi Kaur Dam in Balochistan, constructed in 2003, suffered a catastrophic failure in 2005 due to heavy flooding. The breach resulted in the loss of approximately 70 lives and displaced numerous communities. The incident underscored the vulnerability of critical infrastructure to both natural disasters and potential sabotage. Reconstruction efforts were initiated, emphasizing the importance of resilient design and maintenance.

Pakistan's railway network is integral to its economy, facilitating the transport of goods and passengers across vast distances. Disruptions to this network can have cascading effects on trade and daily life. In November 2024, a suicide bombing at Quetta's train station, claimed by the Baloch Liberation Army, resulted in 26 fatalities and injured 62 others. The attack led to the suspension of train services in the region, highlighting the impact of targeted violence on critical transportation hubs.

The strategic targeting of infrastructure has far-reaching implications. Damage to transportation and energy infrastructure hampers trade, increases operational costs, and deters investment. Communities reliant on these infrastructures face challenges in accessing essential services, leading to displacement and social unrest. Compromised infrastructure can hinder military logistics and response capabilities, affecting national security.

Despite these challenges, Pakistan has demonstrated resilience through rapid restoration efforts. Swift action to repair damaged

infrastructure minimizes long-term disruptions. Increased surveillance and protection of critical infrastructure deter future attacks. Investments in modern, resilient infrastructure designs aim to withstand both natural and man-made threats.

The strategic targeting of Pakistan's bridges, dams, and railways underscores the multifaceted challenges the nation faces. However, through concerted efforts in restoration, security enhancement, and infrastructure modernization, Pakistan continues to fortify its resilience, ensuring the continuity of its economic and social fabric in the face of adversity.

The Rafale vs JF17 Thunder: A Tale of Technology, Skill, and the Indian Setback

In the world of modern aerial warfare, few fighter jets have captured international attention like France's Dassault Rafale. Designed as a multi-role, fourth-plus-generation combat aircraft, the Rafale was widely regarded as one of the most sophisticated war machines ever built. It was praised across NATO countries and considered the crown jewel of French aerospace engineering, boasting state-of-the-art avionics, stealth capabilities, and unmatched versatility. When India signed a multi-billion-dollar deal to acquire 36 Rafale jets, it was seen not only as a strategic upgrade for the Indian Air Force (IAF) but also as a significant move to counterbalance Pakistan's evolving air power, especially the JF-17 Thunder, a joint venture between Pakistan and China. However, what unfolded in the years following the deal, particularly after Pakistan's military response in Operation Swift Retort in 2019 and subsequent confrontations, painted a different picture, one where the Rafale's reputation took a surprising hit, not because of its technology, but due to tactical missteps by its operators and brilliant maneuvering by Pakistan Air Force (PAF) pilots. This article explores the technical excellence of the Rafale, its market appeal, the high expectations tied to India's acquisition, and how the skill and discipline of Pakistani pilots, flying the comparatively modest JF-17 Thunder, challenged a dominant military narrative and reshaped global perceptions.

The Dassault Rafale is a twin-engine, canard delta wing, multi-role fighter aircraft designed and built by Dassault Aviation. Introduced

in the early 2000s, Rafale was France's answer to the growing need for a versatile, agile, and lethal fighter jet capable of handling air superiority, ground support, reconnaissance, and nuclear deterrence missions. Rafale is equipped with the RBE2-AA AESA radar, Spectra electronic warfare suite, and a glass cockpit for superior situational awareness. Its shape, materials, and coatings reduce radar cross-section. It has super cruise capability, allowing the aircraft to fly at supersonic speeds without afterburners. It carries a wide range of weapons including Meteor BVR missiles, MICA, Scalp EG cruise missiles, AASM guided bombs, and Exocet anti-ship missiles. Air-to-air, air-to-ground, and reconnaissance missions can be handled in a single sortie. Before India acquired Rafale, the aircraft had already seen combat in Afghanistan, Libya, Mali, Iraq, and Syria with successful precision strikes and impressive mission completion rates. It was favored for its durability, combat versatility, and the edge it offered over older fourth-generation jets.

India signed the Rafale deal in 2016, worth nearly \$8.7 billion for 36 jets. The move was a response to Pakistan's growing fleet of JF-17s and China's advances with the J-10C. The Indian government and media celebrated the deal, portraying Rafale as a game-changer that would shift the air balance in South Asia. There were high expectations: superior air dominance over PAF, long-range engagement capability using Meteor BVR missiles, improved strike precision with Scalp and Hammer missiles, and deterrence against Chinese and Pakistani threats. However, the narrative began to falter in the aftermath of India's Balakot airstrike in February 2019 and the retaliatory Pakistani operation known as Swift Retort.

In response to the Balakot airstrike, the Pakistan Air Force launched Operation Swift Retort on February 27, 2019. This was a calculated and calibrated response to demonstrate resolve, deterrence, and superiority. In the dogfight that ensued, Pakistan Air Force successfully shot down an Indian MiG-21, capturing Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman. Indian jets reportedly failed to lock or strike any targets effectively. Although Rafales were not operational in the IAF at that time, this event set the tone for future aerial engagements and the way global military analysts viewed South Asian air combat capabilities. When Rafales were finally inducted and deployed, there was intense anticipation. However, it was in subsequent exercises, skirmishes, and radar-detected encounters, especially near the Line of Control (LoC), that Rafale's myth of invincibility began to show cracks, not because of the aircraft itself, but because superior Pakistani strategy, radar jamming, and pilot skills consistently outperformed Indian tactics.

A fighter jet, no matter how advanced, is only as effective as the pilot who flies it and the strategy under which it operates. Despite Rafale's technological edge, it was the Pakistani pilots flying JF-17s, lighter, less expensive, but highly agile aircraft, who consistently held their ground, often neutralizing Indian advantages through tactical superiority. The JF-17 Thunder offers advantages like low radar cross-section, highly integrated EW systems, Chinese-built Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) radar, PL-15 and PL-10 BVR Missiles, and home-grown weapon systems with customization. But beyond machinery, it was Pakistan's fighter pilots who became the true heroes: highly trained under real combat conditions, experience in mountainous terrain warfare, and superior tactics in beyond visual range (BVR) and within visual

range (WVR) engagements. Reports emerged from multiple military observers suggesting that even with Rafale's Meteor missiles, Indian pilots hesitated to engage due to electronic countermeasures deployed by PAF, and JF-17s consistently maintained positional advantage through smart flying and battlefield awareness.

Following the lackluster performance by India, Rafale's reputation took a dent in the defense procurement markets. Countries started re-evaluating whether the Rafale's high price tag justified its actual performance. Shares of Dassault Aviation saw fluctuations, especially in defense stock circles in Asia. Several nations began exploring cheaper alternatives, including Gripen, F-16V, Su-35, and even the JF-17 Block III. Although no Rafale was physically shot down, the failure to dominate the airspace, despite possessing one of the most advanced aircraft in the region, led many to believe that Rafale was not the silver bullet it was marketed to be.

It's important to clarify: Rafale itself is not a failure. In fact, the aircraft continues to perform excellently in French and Egyptian air forces. The problem lay in operational integration failures. India failed to create a synchronized strategy to integrate Rafale into its doctrine with complementary systems like AWACS, ECMs, and ground radar units. Training gaps also played a role. PAF pilots regularly train with Chinese and Turkish forces, simulate dogfights with NATO techniques, and prepare for asymmetric warfare. The IAF, on the other hand, appears to be struggling to transition its pilots effectively from older aircraft to Rafale's advanced interface. Excessive media and political hype created unrealistic expectations. When reality didn't meet rhetoric, the aircraft's credibility took collateral damage. There was also an over-reliance on technology. The belief that Rafale's high-tech

systems would dominate regardless of the human element proved misguided. Wars are won by strategy, not specs.

Pakistan's ability to counter Indian air superiority with limited but effectively used assets became a case study in modern asymmetric air combat. While Indian Rafales carried Meteor missiles with a range of 150+ km, Pakistani pilots engaged without fear, using radar jamming, terrain masking, and tactical maneuvering. The world took notice. Aviation think tanks began studying PAF tactics. Middle Eastern countries began reviewing JF-17's success story. Pakistan's defense export profile rose, and interest in JF-17 Block III increased worldwide.

The story of Rafale in South Asia is not about technological failure. It is about overestimation and underperformance. Rafale remains a superb fighter aircraft, but it was mishandled, overhyped, and underutilized by the Indian Air Force. On the other hand, Pakistan's JF-17 Thunder, supported by world-class pilots, proper planning, and disciplined execution, demonstrated that even modest tools in the right hands can achieve greatness. This entire episode is a reminder to global militaries: it's not about what you fly, but how you fly it.

Dassault Aviation will likely recover from the temporary dip in perception. The aircraft still holds great potential. But the message is clear: advanced aircraft alone cannot substitute for cohesive strategy, proper training, and real-time battlefield decision-making. As for the Pakistan Air Force, their rising profile is not built on flashy purchases but on precision, discipline, and relentless professionalism, an example that many modern militaries would do well to study.

India after the Conflict: Socioeconomic and Psychological Repercussions

The recent military confrontation between India and Pakistan has left indelible marks on India's socio-political fabric, economy, and the collective psyche of its populace. While both nations have declared strategic victories, the underlying consequences for India are profound, encompassing economic downturns, political turbulence, media suppression, and psychological distress among its citizens.

The aftermath of the conflict has seen a surge in nationalistic fervor, but beneath this veneer lies a populace grappling with anxiety, disillusionment, and a crisis of confidence. The initial rally-around-the-flag effect has waned, giving way to skepticism about the government's handling of the conflict and its narratives. Reports indicate a rise in stress-related disorders, particularly among families of military personnel and residents in border areas. The proliferation of state-endorsed narratives and suppression of dissenting voices have created an environment where citizens struggle to discern truth from propaganda, exacerbating feelings of confusion and mistrust.

The conflict has inflicted significant economic damage, disrupting markets, deterring investment, and straining public finances. Moody's has revised India's GDP growth forecast for 2025 downward to 6.3%, citing geopolitical tensions as a drag on investor confidence. Heightened risk perceptions have led to capital flight, with foreign investors pulling out billions from

Indian markets. The suspension of trade with Pakistan and the closure of airspaces have resulted in substantial losses for industries reliant on cross-border commerce. The war has necessitated increased defense spending, diverting resources from critical sectors like health and education.

The conflict has intensified political rivalries and exposed fissures within India's democratic institutions. Leaders from opposition parties have questioned the government's transparency regarding the conflict's outcomes and its impact on national security. The ruling party has dismissed criticisms as unpatriotic, further polarizing the political discourse. The government's response to dissent, including arrests of critics and suppression of media, has raised alarms about the erosion of democratic norms.

In the wake of the conflict, India has witnessed an unprecedented clampdown on media and digital platforms. The government ordered the blocking of over 8,000 social media accounts, including those of journalists and human rights organizations, citing national security concerns. Individuals expressing dissenting views have faced legal action, with charges ranging from sedition to promoting enmity between groups. Organizations like Reporters Without Borders have condemned these actions as violations of press freedom and democratic principles.

The conflict's ramifications extend beyond politics and economics, permeating the social and cultural fabric of the nation. There has been a noticeable surge in nationalist sentiments, sometimes manifesting in xenophobic attitudes and intolerance towards dissent. Minority communities have reported increased instances of discrimination and marginalization in the conflict's aftermath. Universities and colleges have become battlegrounds for

ideological clashes, with debates over patriotism and freedom of expression taking center stage.

In response to the heightened tensions, India conducted a nationwide civil defense mock drill, code-named Operation Abhyaas, to bolster emergency preparedness. Conducted on 7 May 2025 across 244 districts, the drill included air-raid siren tests, blackout simulations, evacuation drills, and public training sessions. Major cities like Delhi, Mumbai, and Hyderabad participated, aiming to enhance civilian readiness against potential hostile threats.

The international community's response to the conflict has been mixed, affecting India's global standing. The U.S.-brokered ceasefire, announced by former President Donald Trump, reintroduced the contentious Kashmir dispute to international discourse, countering India's long-standing position that it is an internal issue. India's media censorship and suppression of dissent have drawn criticism from global human rights organizations, potentially impacting diplomatic relations and foreign aid.

The recent conflict with Pakistan has left India at a crossroads, confronting challenges that test the resilience of its democratic institutions, economic stability, and social cohesion. Addressing these multifaceted issues requires a commitment to transparency, inclusivity, and adherence to democratic principles. Only through introspection and reform can India navigate the complexities of the post-conflict era and emerge stronger on the global stage.

Aftermath of Pakistan's Victory Over India (Post-May 2025)

Many Muslim-majority countries and their populations might feel a strong sense of pride that an Islamic country, especially the only Muslim nuclear power, stood its ground against a larger rival and won. A victory would likely be seen as a symbol of strength and unity in the broader Islamic world, particularly among youth in the Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa. Pakistan's success may be viewed as a symbol of defiance against global powers that often criticize or pressure Muslim nations.

Pakistan would be seen not only as a military power but also as a potential political and strategic leader in the Muslim world, challenging the traditional influence of Saudi Arabia, Turkey, or Iran. Pakistan may use this opportunity to call for greater Muslim unity via OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) or even propose a Muslim defense alliance. Countries like Turkey, Azerbaijan, Qatar, and Indonesia might seek closer military cooperation with Pakistan. There may be increased demand for Pakistani defense training, technology sharing, and nuclear diplomacy consultation. Victory over India would challenge the West's narrative of global power balance, especially if the U.S. or EU remained neutral or underestimated Pakistan. Muslim intellectuals and media would likely use the event to counter Islamophobic stereotypes, showing that a Muslim nation can be modern, strategic, and successful on the battlefield.

Pakistan's military success would become a case study in asymmetric warfare, deterrence, and defense of sovereignty, influencing countries like Iran, Syria, and even non-Muslim nations like North Korea. Pakistan would push for international recognition of the Kashmir issue with new energy. The Islamic world might unite more vocally behind this cause. Saudi Arabia and Iran may have mixed feelings. While supportive in public, they might be concerned about Pakistan's rising influence, especially if it overshadows their regional dominance. Turkey may see Pakistan as a natural partner in Muslim geopolitics, leading to a stronger Ankara-Islamabad axis.

Islamic countries might offer new investments, trade routes, and economic partnerships to Pakistan. The idea of an "Islamic Economic Bloc" might get renewed attention, with Pakistan at the center. EU and US may try to re-engage with Pakistan diplomatically to ensure it doesn't shift entirely into a China-Turkey-Qatar alliance. They might also try to stabilize India or work on damage control in the region.

There may be renewed calls for unity of the Ummah (Muslim community), driven by Pakistani public diplomacy. A stronger Pan-Islamic identity may emerge among younger generations across the Muslim world. Cultural exchange, educational alliances, and increased reverence for Pakistan's military strategy in Islamic think tanks and seminaries may take root. This scenario, though fictional, reflects deep aspirations among many in the Islamic world, for unity, strength, and dignity on the global stage. If such a major event were to occur, Pakistan's role would shift dramatically from a regional power to a central pillar in the Islamic world. But it would also bring new responsibilities, global scrutiny, and internal challenges.

May 2025 , Pakistan Rises: Pride, Strength, and the Spirit of a Glorious Nation

May 2025 has become a symbol of triumph, resilience, and rebirth for the Pakistani nation. After facing one of the most defining periods in its history, Pakistan stands proud, confident, and united. This was not merely a victory in battle, it was a collective awakening of a nation that refused to bow, refused to break, and chose instead to rise.

What the world sees today is a Pakistan that has discovered its real strength, not just in weapons or strategies, but in the unity of its people, the brilliance of its youth, the courage of its defenders, and the purity of its purpose.

In every village and city, across mountains and deserts, the flag of Pakistan waves high with unmatched pride. The people of Pakistan have proven that their loyalty to the nation is unwavering. Unity has become the foundation of our strength, Sindhi, Punjabi, Baloch, Pashtun, Kashmiri, and Gilgiti, all are one under the green and white flag. This war became the great equalizer, reminding everyone that Pakistan is not a collection of provinces, it is a powerful, united soul.

The Pakistan Army, Air Force, and Navy have been hailed globally for their tactical brilliance and unmatched discipline. With their exceptional coordination, bravery, and patriotism, they secured peace not only for Pakistan but set a regional example of honor and sovereignty. In every household, the names of our brave defenders

are spoken with pride. The people trust their armed forces not just as protectors but as partners in nation-building.

The streets of Pakistan are filled with the sounds of national songs, poetry, and slogans of unity. From schoolchildren waving flags to elders narrating tales of courage, there is a celebration of identity everywhere. People have taken ownership of their future. Teachers teach with purpose. Farmers grow with pride. Entrepreneurs build with ambition. Every Pakistani now walks with a head held high, proud of the past, confident in the present, and excited for the future.

Volunteerism has flourished. Whether it's rebuilding homes, teaching displaced children, or organizing local defense and support units, ordinary citizens have stepped up. There's a new wave of patriotism that doesn't depend on orders, it comes from the heart.

Where others expected delays, Pakistan delivered development. Roads are being rebuilt. Markets are reopening. Technology parks are emerging. From Karachi's ports to Khyber's valleys, the engines of progress are roaring again. Pakistanis have shown the world that even after disruption, they can rise higher than before. The business community, industrial sector, and especially the youth-led startups are becoming global case studies of resilience and innovation.

Young entrepreneurs are inventing new technologies, in agriculture, energy, health, and defense. Universities are buzzing with research. Freelancers are breaking income records. Export industries are reviving. Pakistan's new economy is digital, green, and patriotic.

The new political landscape of Pakistan is one of accountability and vision. People have chosen leaders based on merit, not slogans. There's now a shared goal, a strong, just, and prosperous Pakistan. Policies are people-centered. Institutions are transparent. Governance is responsive. The country is witnessing true democracy with unity at its core.

Post-war nationalism in Pakistan is not divisive or emotional. It is wise, inclusive, and rooted in values. Every citizen, regardless of background, is seen as part of Pakistan's glorious future.

In 2025, Pakistan has achieved something rare in the world, a harmonious partnership between civil institutions and military leadership. From disaster management to infrastructure, both are working side-by-side with respect and shared vision. Joint initiatives in education, public health, and national security have created a model of governance based on collaboration, not conflict.

Pakistan now speaks with clarity and strength on international platforms. The world is listening. Regional powers recognize Pakistan as a stabilizing force. Global allies seek deeper relations based on mutual respect. From the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to the United Nations, Pakistan's voice is one of wisdom, peace, and dignity.

Pakistan is building strategic partnerships based on technology, trade, and trust. From Central Asia to Africa, from the Middle East to East Asia, Pakistan is seen as a partner of progress.

Post-war Pakistan is witnessing a cultural revival. National dresses are back in fashion. Traditional food, music, and art are being celebrated. Pakistanis are embracing their identity with confidence.

Festivals are more colorful. Literature is booming. National media is producing content that reflects pride, values, and beauty.

Mosques, madrasahs, and communities are focusing on values like unity, tolerance, justice, and discipline, the very principles that guided the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and our founding father Quaid-e-Azam. There is a beautiful blend of spirituality and progress that now defines Pakistani society.

Television channels, newspapers, and digital platforms have taken on a new role: nation-building. Instead of sensationalism, the focus is now on stories of success, innovation, and integrity. Journalism has matured. Anchors speak with responsibility. Documentaries highlight real heroes. Podcasts discuss national ideas. The media is now a bridge between the people and progress.

Pakistan's youth are now the authors of the national story. They are writing code, building apps, leading NGOs, organizing clean-up drives, running YouTube channels that educate and inspire. Young Pakistanis are the new ambassadors of hope. They don't wait for change, they are the change.

Pakistani women are leading in every field, in defense, medicine, education, media, science, and governance. Their confidence, creativity, and commitment are transforming communities. Post-war Pakistan celebrates women not just as mothers and daughters, but as leaders and nation-builders. They are symbols of the balance between tradition and progress.

Pakistan's rebuilding is not about fixing damage, it's about redesigning the future. Smart cities are being developed. Highways are connecting provinces. Dams, railways, energy grids, all are being built with modern technology and local expertise.

Environmental awareness has skyrocketed. Afforestation campaigns are in full swing. Clean energy projects are booming. From solar panels in Thar to wind farms in Sindh, Pakistan is becoming a green model for the region.

Post-war Pakistan has placed education at the center of its vision. Schools are being modernized. Curriculum is being updated to include patriotism, ethics, science, and critical thinking. University enrollment is rising. Technical training is spreading. Education is no longer a privilege, it's a national right and priority.

Pakistan in May 2025 is not just healing, it is thriving. The people are not just recovering, they are rebuilding with pride. There is a national mission, to become self-reliant, just, compassionate, innovative, and strong. The mission is not imposed by the state, it lives in the hearts of every Pakistani.

In May 2025, the world sees a new Pakistan. One that has faced fire and emerged with golden determination. A Pakistan that does not beg for peace, it secures it. A Pakistan that does not wait for aid, it builds its future with its own hands. A Pakistan that doesn't seek validation, it stands with self-respect.

We are no longer the nation that others pity or underestimate. We are the nation that inspires. Our story is not of loss, it is of leadership.

As we look ahead, one thing is certain: Pakistan's best days have just begun.

“There is no power on Earth that can undo Pakistan.” – Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah

And today, the world knows that truth, loud and clear.

May 2025: War, Resolve, And the Spirit of Pakistan

The relationship between Pakistan and India has always been complex and tense. The limited war that broke out in May 2025 once again ignited this tension in the region but also breathed new life into the Pakistani nation. This article explores the causes and effects of this war, and how it sparked a remarkable sense of national unity among the people of Pakistan.

The conflict intensified when Indian forces launched aggressive operations along the Line of Control, accusing Pakistan of involvement in an alleged terrorist incident. In response, Pakistan not only took defensive measures but also strongly presented its stance on diplomatic fronts. This incident was a continuation of longstanding mistrust and India's consistent aggressive policies, which brought both nations once again to the brink of confrontation.

Since the partition in 1947, the history of Pakistan-India relations has been marked by persistent tensions. Issues like Kashmir, water disputes, and border conflicts have formed the basis of this strained relationship. The wars of 1965, 1971, and 1999 failed to improve matters. The May 2025 war was a manifestation of these deep-rooted complications, where lack of trust and the unresolved Kashmir dispute remained central issues.

As the war began, the Pakistani nation, regardless of ethnicity, sect, or region, stood united in support of its armed forces. From

youth to elders, women to children, everyone expressed love and loyalty to their homeland in their own way. People demonstrated solidarity with the military through social media, rallies, donations, and patriotic events. In educational institutions, students organized programs focusing on national pride, while religious scholars, in their sermons, emphasized patience, unity, and sacrifice.

Socially, the war brought Pakistanis together as one nation. People from different provinces, languages, and even ideological backgrounds united with a shared purpose. The war fostered societal harmony, with individuals supporting each other regardless of differences. This collective spirit was evident in the work of welfare organizations that actively provided food, medicines, and other essentials to affected regions.

Religious and educational institutions also played a significant role in raising awareness. Mosques, seminaries, universities, and schools joined hands to educate the masses during the wartime atmosphere. Scholars spread messages of peace, brotherhood, and sacrifice, while teachers involved students in programs highlighting national issues. This effort contributed to a renewed sense of social cohesion.

The political response was marked by maturity. Both the government and opposition set aside their differences and prioritized the national interest. Joint resolutions were passed in parliament, and leaders held unified press conferences to send a strong message of unity to the world. Opposition parties pledged full cooperation with the government and paid tribute to the martyrs during their public addresses.

The media played a crucial role in this period. National media demonstrated responsibility, providing accurate information to the

public. Social media amplified a positive narrative that helped strengthen national unity. Anchors, analysts, and journalists displayed patriotism and promoted peace and solidarity. At the same time, a strong counter-narrative was developed to challenge misinformation and propaganda from irresponsible media outlets.

In the digital space, Pakistani youth also showed patriotism. Volunteers countered fake news, exposed hostile propaganda, and spread the national narrative globally. Hash tags, video messages, blogs, and online seminars highlighted Pakistan's perspective across international platforms.

On the international front, Pakistan's position received notable appreciation. The United Nations and other global organizations urged India to avoid escalation. Islamic countries, China, and Turkey extended their support to Pakistan and increased diplomatic efforts for a ceasefire. The United States and European Union also pushed both nations toward dialogue and emphasized peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue in the UN Security Council.

The Pakistani armed forces displayed exceptional professionalism and bravery during the limited conflict. The nation wholeheartedly stood behind them, honoring their sacrifices through various events. The families of the martyrs were provided full support, and tributes poured in across the country. Social media trends like "Salute to Martyrs" reflected the public's deep appreciation, and many donated blood as a gesture of solidarity.

While the war brought economic challenges, the nation remained resilient. The government announced an emergency budget, and financial institutions set up special defense funds. Citizens purchased war bonds to support the national treasury, and business

communities volunteered to increase tax contributions. These measures reflected the financial dimension of national unity.

Many ordinary citizens made personal sacrifices, those who couldn't serve on the frontlines donated blood, while women prepared food for the troops at home. These individual acts formed the emotional and moral foundation of the collective national spirit.

This war prompted Pakistan to become more vigilant on defense and diplomatic fronts. The government reviewed its national security policy and adopted new strategies to promote peace in the region. The defense budget was increased to modernize the armed forces, and efforts were intensified to raise the Kashmir issue on international forums. Lessons on patriotism were added to educational curricula to prepare the youth for future national challenges.

Ultimately, the May 2025 limited war ignited a wave of unity in Pakistan that had been missing for years. It was not just a military confrontation, it was an emotional, social, and ideological awakening. This conflict proved that when a nation stands united, no adversary can defeat it. The newfound unity became a pillar of national confidence.

While the damages of limited warfare cannot be denied, if such conflicts lead to awareness, unity, and purpose, they can pave the way for a stronger future. The May 2025 escalation between Pakistan and India has written a new chapter of collective resilience, which will serve as a beacon for future generations. It reminds us that unity, sacrifice, and national harmony are our true strengths, and sustaining this spirit is essential for a prosperous Pakistan.

Sindh Taas Agreement

India, which claims to be the world's largest democracy, has announced its withdrawal from the Indus Waters Treaty. This decision has sparked serious concerns among international organizations. The Indus Waters Treaty, signed between India and Pakistan under the auspices of the World Bank, has long been considered a model treaty between two rival nations. This agreement, established in 1960, allowed India control over the three eastern rivers, Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej, while Pakistan retained rights over the western rivers, Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab.

Despite numerous wars and hostilities, this treaty remained intact. However, by announcing its withdrawal, India has shown its aggressive and hostile intentions, once again proving that it cannot be trusted. This act not only violates the treaty but is also a threat to regional peace. Such steps could plunge South Asia into severe water conflicts. Water, which is already a critical issue in the region, might become the cause of future wars. India has repeatedly violated the treaty by building dams and barrages on the rivers allocated to Pakistan. Despite Pakistan's objections and raising the matter at international forums, India has continued its construction projects.

Recently, India has begun working on controversial projects like the Kishanganga and Ratle dams. Pakistan's objections were dismissed, and even the neutral experts appointed under the treaty failed to reach a fair solution. Eventually, Pakistan had to approach the International Court of Arbitration. The World Bank, which was

the guarantor of the treaty, also took notice, and a tribunal was formed. However, India refused to cooperate.

The roots of this conflict go back to the time of partition when India stopped Pakistan's water supply on April 1, 1948. Later, through intense efforts of the World Bank, the Indus Waters Treaty was signed in 1960. Under the treaty, India received unrestricted use of the three eastern rivers, while Pakistan was allowed to use the western rivers. Additionally, India contributed 62 crore rupees to help Pakistan construct dams and canals to replace water from the eastern rivers.

Following the treaty, Pakistan began the construction of large projects like Mangla Dam, Tarbela Dam, and a vast canal system to ensure water supply. Yet, India has continued to build new hydropower projects upstream, reducing water flow to Pakistan. The latest project, Kishanganga, was started in 1992 and completed in 2018 despite Pakistan's objections.

India has been violating the treaty by initiating new projects unilaterally. In 2005, it completed the Baglihar Dam. Though Pakistan raised objections, a neutral expert from the World Bank decided in India's favor. This led to even more aggressive steps from India, including the construction of 35 hydropower projects on western rivers.

The current situation is alarming. If India formally exits the treaty, Pakistan could face an extreme water crisis, especially affecting agriculture in Punjab and Sindh. Without water, food production could decrease drastically, leading to economic instability. Analysts warn that this water conflict could turn into a full-fledged war.

Pakistan must urgently take up this issue at international forums, including the UN and the International Court of Justice. It must build diplomatic pressure and inform the world of India's violations. Also, Pakistan should adopt modern water management techniques, build new reservoirs, and fix its irrigation system.

Water is the lifeline of any country. A country like Pakistan, which depends heavily on agriculture, cannot afford to lose its water. The government must act promptly to protect its water rights and ensure future sustainability. The withdrawal from the treaty by India should not go unnoticed, it is time for Pakistan to adopt a decisive and proactive stance.

India-Pakistan War INCIDENT REPORT

2025 Fake News during India Pakistan

War May 7-10, 2025

Executive Summary

This report investigates the extensive disinformation campaign that accompanied the military escalation between India and Pakistan from May 7 to 10, 2025, following the April 22 Pahalgam attack. While the kinetic operations, India's Operation Sindoor and Pakistan's Operation Bunyan-ul-Marsoos, unfolded across contested regions, a parallel and highly disruptive information war played out across television networks, social media platforms, and messaging apps.

Through detailed documentation and verification, the report analyzes 31 verified instances of misinformation that emerged between May 7 and May 14, 2025, including doctored media and misleading narratives that circulated during and immediately after the conflict. These include recycled footage from unrelated global events (such as the 2020 Beirut explosion and 2021 Israel-Gaza airstrikes), AI-generated deep fake videos, false claims of pilot captures, fabricated satellite images, and fictitious foreign media endorsements. Several mainstream media outlets and verified political accounts were found complicit in disseminating unverified or manipulated content, sometimes without correction.

The report adopts a structured format, Claim, Reality, and Conclusion / Explanation, to analyze each case and evaluate the intent, reach, and impact of the disinformation. It reveals that much of the content was crafted to:

- Boost domestic morale,
- Undermine enemy credibility,
- Exaggerate battlefield victories,
- And inflame nationalist sentiment.

Notably, the rapid spread of such misinformation risked strategic miscalculations, civilian panic, erosion of media trust, and diplomatic fallout. The use of AI and recycled war imagery also highlights a dangerous new phase in modern hybrid warfare, where truth becomes a casualty of speed, virality, and propaganda.

This report concludes with an urgent call for cross-border media accountability, responsible journalism, digital literacy, and real-time fact-checking protocols. It emphasizes that in an age where information travels faster than missiles, truth must be defended as rigorously as territory.

Introduction

The brief but high-stakes confrontation between India and Pakistan from May 7 to 10, 2025, now widely referred to as the May Conflict, marked one of the most volatile military escalations in South Asia since the Kargil War of 1999. Triggered by the April 22 Pahalgam attack, which targeted Indian civilians and was attributed by Indian authorities to cross-border militant groups, the situation rapidly escalated from diplomatic protest to military retaliation.

In the early hours of May 7, India launched Operation Sindoor, a series of coordinated strikes within Pakistani territory. These strikes were positioned as part of India's right to self-defense and were executed under high-level coordination involving India's top political and military leadership. In response, Pakistan launched Operation Bunyan-ul-Marsoos, targeting Indian military installations in Jammu, Pathankot, and Udhampur, declaring its right to defend national sovereignty. Over the course of four tense days, both nations engaged in air operations, cyber allegations, and

intense military posturing, bringing the nuclear-armed neighbors to the brink of broader war.

However, what distinguished the May Conflict from previous military episodes was not merely the scale of armed engagement, but the parallel war that unfolded in the digital domain. This conflict was arguably the first in the region's history where information warfare played an equal, if not greater, role than conventional military action. While airstrikes and retaliatory fire were reported and speculated upon, the battle to control public perception, domestic morale, and international narratives surged across newsrooms, smart phones, and social media timelines.

An unprecedented barrage of misinformation, fake news, AI-generated deep fake videos, manipulated images, doctored satellite visuals, recycled foreign conflict footage, and false casualty reports overwhelmed traditional media outlets and digital platforms alike. Claims of destroyed airbases, captured pilots, cyber blackouts, and even a coup in Pakistan circulated widely, many of them later proven false, outdated, or deliberately fabricated. The virality and volume of disinformation created confusion not just among the public, but also among policymakers and international observers, who struggled to distinguish fact from fiction in real time.

Crucially, both mainstream media organizations and verified social media accounts were complicit in this disinformation ecosystem. Television channels aired animated battle sequences without disclaimers, falsely passing them off as real combat footage. Politicians and influencers recycled old videos from unrelated conflicts, labeling them as live war events. Some platforms falsely attributed fabricated visuals to credible international outlets like CNN and The Daily Telegraph to give fake news an appearance of legitimacy. In the absence of timely corrections or ethical gate keeping, many of these falsehoods became embedded in the public consciousness.

This report provides a structured examination of the disinformation landscape during the May 2025 India-Pakistan conflict. Focusing exclusively on verifiable instances of media and digital manipulation, this report compiles 31 key cases, each documented using a three-tier structure. The findings are based on data collected between May 7 and May 14, 2025, covering both the period of direct military confrontation (May 7–10) and the following days, during which widespread disinformation continued to circulate across media platforms.

- Claim – What was reported or circulated;
- Reality – What independent verification or official sources revealed;
- Conclusion / Explanation – Contextual analysis of why the claim was false or misleading.

Drawing from fact-checking organizations, reverse image and video searches, satellite image authentication tools, and official government statements, this report seeks to clarify the scale, nature, and strategic use of disinformation during the conflict. The findings reveal not only a deliberate attempt by multiple actors to shape perceptions through falsehoods, but also a broader failure of media ethics, platform governance, and wartime information protocols.

Beyond chronicling the specific instances of fake news, this report serves a broader purpose: to underscore the strategic, political, and societal dangers posed by unverified information in times of war. In the digital age, where synthetic content can travel faster than traditional journalism and where perception can rapidly outpace reality, the weaponization of information has become a critical axis of modern warfare.

Therefore, this report calls for urgent reflection and reform across several dimensions:

- Media responsibility and editorial oversight;

- Platform accountability in content moderation;
- Cross-border collaboration on fact-checking;
- Public awareness and digital literacy in conflict zones.

In presenting this detailed record of media manipulation, the report does not seek to cast blame on one side or the other. Instead, it highlights the shared vulnerabilities, systemic failures, and ethical lapses that enabled falsehoods to flourish unchecked during a moment of extreme geopolitical tension.

In doing so, it aspires to contribute toward a future where truth, accountability, and responsible information practices are not casualties of war, but tools for preserving peace.

Timeline of Evnts: May 7–10, 2025

April 27, 2025

- Trigger Incident:

A terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, kills 26 Indians. India blames Pakistan instantly without any solid evidence, and signals imminent retaliation.

May 7, 2025 – Day 1

- India Launches Operation Sindoor:

India conducts precision air and missile strikes on alleged terror camps and military infrastructure inside Pakistan.

- Official Indian Briefings Begin:

- Press conference held by India's Ministry of External Affairs.
- A misidentified CCTV video from 2007 Iraq is wrongly presented as footage from the 2019 Pulwama attack.

- Misinformation Begins to Surge:

- Fake videos and misattributed explosions flood social media.
- 2020 Beirut explosion shown as Pakistani target destroyed.
- 2023 Gaza night airstrike misrepresented as Indian assault.
- Ukrainian drone crash video falsely labeled as Lahore strike.

May 8, 2025 – Day 2

- Pakistan Responds with Operation Bunyan-ul-Marsoos:

Pakistan launches retaliatory airstrikes targeting Indian military infrastructure in Jammu, Udhampur, and Pathankot. Claims of damage and jet losses emerge from both sides, though most remain unverified or contradicted.

- Parallel Misinformation Campaigns Intensify:
 - Mumbai truck fire video posed as Sialkot bombing.
 - Wildfire footage from Chile misused as bombing visuals.
 - Deepfake video of PM Shehbaz Sharif falsely admitting defeat goes viral.
 - Misleading captions spread false claims of pilot captures and massive losses.

May 9, 2025 – Day 3

- Peak Media Manipulation:
 - Major Indian news outlets air 2021 Iron Dome footage from Israel, falsely presenting it as Indian air defense during the war.
 - India Today shows animated missile strikes as real footage.
 - BJP-aligned accounts and Zee News recycle a 2016 Turkish military rescue photo, claiming it shows a captured Pakistani pilot.
- Claims of Foreign Intervention:

- Social media posts allege US and Israeli military aircraft landings in Jaipur to assist India. These claims are false; a diverted US cargo plane is taken out of context.

May 10, 2025 – Day 4

- Widening Disinformation Campaigns:
 - False reports of India downing Fateh-II missiles and Pakistani jets shared widely, using a doctored image stitched from Russian conflict footage.
 - Fabricated “Daily Telegraph” cover falsely praises PAF as “King of the Skies.”
 - Deepfake AI video of Pakistan’s Prime Minister adds to psychological warfare tactics.
- Cyber Attack Claims Debunked:
 - Pakistani media allege that a cyber attack disabled 70% of India’s power grid, Indian authorities deny any such attack occurred.

Impact Analysis

1. Emergence of Dual-Front Information Warfare

- With India’s Operation Sindoor and in response, Pakistan's Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos, both nations launched military and digital counter-offensives.
- The information environment became a second battlefield, used to shape perception, morale, and international sympathy.

2. Propaganda as Parallel Doctrine

- Official narratives were accompanied or even replaced by fabricated battlefield visuals, fake casualty counts, and doctored videos.

- The parallel operation names (Sindoor and Bunyan-un-Marsoos) became hashtags fueling digital nationalism and public emotionalism.

3. Blurring of Fact and Fiction

- The crossfire of state-backed and independent media disinformation made real-time understanding nearly impossible.
- Public discourse was flooded with conflicting claims: pilot captures, base destructions, coup rumors, and exaggerated kill counts, all mostly unverified or refuted.

4. Weaponized Deepfakes and Foreign Media Fabrication

- A fake Daily Telegraph front page and doctored CNN visuals represent an alarming escalation, misusing credible global outlets to boost local morale or shame opponents.

5. These cases highlight a transnational manipulation strategy, not just local media failure.

6. Risks to Diplomacy and Miscalculation

- Misinformation about the nature, success, or scale of retaliatory operations may have skewed leadership decisions on both sides.
- Public calls for escalation were intensified by viral but false narratives of victory or victimhood.

7. Institutional Media Credibility Damaged

- Indian and Pakistani mainstream media outlets aired unverified or fictional content, often with no retractions or disclaimers.

- Both governments were complicit, either directly producing or failing to correct state-aligned disinformation.

8. Urgent Recommendations for Media

- These developments make it clear that conflict-zone journalism needs new standards, including:
 - Mandatory disclaimers for simulations or animations.
 - Real-time cross-border fact-checking collaborations.
 - AI-generated content detection mandates.
 - Penalties for knowingly airing disinformation.

Methodology

This report was compiled using a rigorous and multi-source data collection and verification process to identify, document, and analyze fake news disseminated during the India-Pakistan conflict from May 7 to May 10, 2025. The methodology involved the following steps:

1. Data Collection

- **Media Monitoring:** Continuous monitoring of major Indian and Pakistani news channels (e.g., Republic TV, Zee News, Times Now, Aaj Tak, News 18 India, PTV News, ARY News, Geo News) was conducted to capture breaking news, tickers, debates, and expert commentary.
- **Social Media Scraping:** Relevant content was extracted from social media platforms such as Twitter/X, Facebook, and YouTube using hashtags like #IndiaPakistan, #PAF, #IAF, #BreakingNews, #CoupinPakistan, and #CyberAttackIndia. This included posts from both verified and unverified accounts.
- **Official Statements:** Verified statements were sourced from the official social media accounts and websites of:
 - Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) – Pakistan

- Indian Ministry of Defence
- Indian and Pakistani political leaders\
- International agencies and fact-checking bodies
- OSINT and Archival Tools: Open Source Intelligence tools (e.g., reverse image search, metadata checks, video frame verification) and archival platforms (e.g., Internet Archive's Wayback Machine, InVID) were used to assess the authenticity of images, videos, and documents.
- Crowdsourced and Local Inputs: Tip-offs and field insights were also considered from local journalists, researchers, and fact-checking volunteers operating in conflict-sensitive areas.

2. Verification and Classification

- Cross-Verification: Each claim was checked against multiple independent sources. In cases where official denial was issued, such denials were prioritized as the basis for reality status.
- Content Categorization: Fake news items were grouped into the following categories for clarity:
 - Fabricated Military Claims
 - Doctored or Misleading Visuals
 - Fake Political Statements or Attacks
 - Exaggerated or Unsupported Casualty Figures
- Misinformation on Infrastructure Attacks (e.g., cyberattacks)
- Evaluation Criteria: To determine whether a news item qualified as “fake,” it had to meet at least one of the following conditions:
 - Lack of credible source or attribution
 - Contradiction with verified facts or official statements
 - Proven use of altered, outdated, or irrelevant media

- Intentional distortion or misrepresentation of facts

3. Documentation

- Each fake news item was recorded with three components:
 - Fake Claim: What was falsely reported or circulated
 - Reality: What actually happened, based on verified data
 - Conclusion: Why the claim is fake and its likely intent or impact
- Screenshots, links, timestamps, and channel names were preserved as part of a digital evidence archive.

4. Limitations

- While extensive, the data may not capture all fake news disseminated during the period due to platform algorithm limitations and rapidly deleted content.
- Language barriers and regional variations in news coverage may have limited full access to vernacular media reports.
- This methodological framework ensures that each reported fake news instance in this report is verifiable, documented, and contextually accurate to the extent possible.

Data Analysis: Fake News vs Reality

The following section presents a systematic comparison between widely circulated fake news items and the verified realities behind them. Drawing from credible fact-checking sources, official statements, and reverse image/video searches, each entry illustrates how misinformation was crafted, disseminated, and consumed during the May 2025 India-Pakistan conflict. This analysis reveals not only the scale of media manipulation but also the patterns and methods through which disinformation was weaponized to influence public perception, inflame tensions, and distort the narrative of war. The data presented below was gathered and verified from May 7 to May 14, 2025, capturing both the height of

the India-Pakistan military escalation and the post-conflict media fallout

1- Iron Dome Footage Passed Off as Indian S-400 Success

Claim:

A verified X user, Tathvam -asi (@ssaratht), wrote on May 8: "India's S-400 taking good care of Amritsar. At least two JF-17 and one J-10C went down last night. #OperationSindoor #Sialkot #IndiaPakistanWar"

Reality:

The video attached to the claim is not from the 2025 India-Pakistan war. It has been online since August 2024 and actually shows Israel's Iron Dome intercepting rockets fired from Lebanon.

Conclusion / Explanation:

The circulating claim uses an unrelated and outdated video to support a false narrative.

The video referenced in the post is not from the 2025 India-Pakistan war. It has been circulating online since August 2024 as footage of Israel's Iron Dome defense system, and was misattributed to falsely depict Indian military action. This is a clear case of misinformation through recycled footage, aimed at exaggerating battlefield outcomes.

2. False Claim of Indian Army Entering Pakistan

Claim:

An Indian news anchor and program host reported that the Indian Army had crossed the border and entered Pakistani territory during the May 2025 conflict.

Reality:

There was no official confirmation or independent evidence supporting this claim. The Indian Army made no such announcement, and no credible sources verified the anchor's statement.

Conclusion / Explanation:

This was a case of unverified and sensational reporting, likely aimed at generating viewer engagement during a time of heightened public interest. Such claims can dangerously escalate tensions, mislead the public, and create confusion in an already volatile geopolitical environment. It reflects the urgent need for editorial restraint and fact-based reporting, especially in conflict scenarios.

3. A false claim of Cyberattack that disabled 70% of India's electricity grid

Claim:

"Pakistan conducted a cyberattack that disabled 70% of India's electricity grid."

Reality:

Indian authorities categorically denied any such incident.

Conclusion / Explanation:

Pakistani media and commentators claimed that 70% of India's electricity grid had been rendered non-functional due to a cyberattack. Indian officials strongly denied any such breach. This story, though entirely baseless, gained traction on social platforms, reflecting the use of cyberwar narratives to amplify psychological pressure during conflict.

4. Fictitious Fidayeen Attack in Rajouri

Claim:

“A fidayeen (suicide) attack occurred at the Indian Army base in Rajouri.”

Reality:

The Indian Army officially stated that no suicide attack occurred at the Rajouri base, dismissing false claims made in an Indian social media post as misinformation.

Conclusion / Explanation:

A claim surfaced alleging a suicide attack on an Indian Army base in Rajouri. The Indian military promptly dismissed the report, stating no such incident occurred. Despite the denial, the rumor circulated widely, showing how fake news about direct attacks is used to foster anxiety and portray vulnerability.

5. Rumors of a Coup Against General Asim Munir

Claim:

“Coup against Pakistan Army Chief General Asim Munir.”

Reality:

No credible source confirmed any coup; the claim was aired by Times Now and other Indian channels without evidence.

Conclusion / Explanation:

Times Now and other outlets reported an unverified claim that Pakistani Army Chief General Asim Munir had been dislodged in a coup. There was no confirmation from credible sources, and the story faded without follow-up. This episode highlights how coup

rumors can be used as destabilization tools in wartime media narratives.

6. Official Claims of 100 Terrorists Killed

Claim:

“The Indian strike killed 100 hardcore terrorists on May 8.”

Reality:

Official narrative by Indian Defense Minister Rajnath Singh, although exact details of casualties are unverified independently.

Conclusion / Explanation:

Former President of BJP and current Minister of Defense Mr. Rajnath Singh claims that 100 terrorists killed in Indian strikes on May 8, 2025. At the same time the ministry of defense says “As per the plan, the targets were destroyed and no civilian population was harmed.

7. Wrong Image Attributed to the CNN

Wrongly attributed to CNN, it was widely circulated in social media and is false in nature.

Drug Allegations Against Bilawal Bhutto Zardari

Claim:

“Bilawal Bhutto taking cocaine” , claimed by Arnab Goswami.

Reality:

No evidence provided.

Conclusion / Explanation:

Republic TV anchor Arnab Goswami alleged that Pakistani politician Bilawal Bhutto Zardari was using cocaine, without presenting any evidence. Such personal attacks are emblematic of wartime character assassination tactics aimed at undermining political credibility.

8. Attack on Islamabad**Claim:**

“Attack on Islamabad aired by Zee TV.”

Reality:

No such attack was confirmed or acknowledged by credible sources.

Conclusion / Explanation:

Zee TV aired what it described as a strike on Islamabad. No such event was reported or confirmed by Pakistani or independent sources. This false reporting reflects how wartime propaganda can be presented as breaking news without editorial restraint.

9. Faked Satellite Image of Sargodha Air Base**Claim:**

“Sargodha Air Base destroyed , satellite image proof.”

Reality:

Image used was tinted, lacking source or attribution.

Conclusion / Explanation:

India claimed that the Sargodha Air Base was destroyed, using a tinted satellite image without providing source attribution or image

credits, raising questions about the credibility and authenticity of the evidence presented.

10. Madrasa Teacher Mislabelled as Terrorist

Claim:

A madrasa teacher killed in Poonch shelling was labelled a 'terrorist' by some Indian media outlets.

Reality:

Fact-check investigations confirmed that Qari Mohammad Iqbal was not linked to any terror activity. He was a religious teacher who lost his life in cross-border shelling.

Conclusion / Explanation:

Verified reports clarified that Qari Mohammad Iqbal was an innocent victim. This case underscores the dangers of media misreporting and highlights the need for responsible journalism, especially in conflict-sensitive regions.

11. False Damage to Rahim Yar Khan Runway

Claim:

“Rahim Yar Khan runway damaged , viral video.”

Reality:

No credible source confirmed the incident; video authenticity is questionable.

Conclusion / Explanation:

A video claiming to show destruction at Rahim Yar Khan airport was widely shared. However, no official confirmation supported it,

and the footage's authenticity was in question. This is an example of how fabricated content is used to simulate strategic victories.

12. Unverified Claims of PAF Jets Downed Near Srinagar

Claim:

“PAF jets downed near Srinagar.”

Reality:

Unconfirmed by independent or military sources.

Conclusion / Explanation:

Some Indian sources claimed Pakistani Air Force jets were shot down near Srinagar, yet no credible confirmations were available. The report likely served propaganda purposes, playing on public desire for quick retribution and success.

13. Fake Composite Image of Downed PAF Fighters

Claim:

“Fateh II destroyed, and two PAF jets downed” , May 10.

Reality:

Image used was a fake composite of an earlier Russian plane being downed + AI-generated clouds.

Conclusion / Explanation:

On May 10, 2025 Indian channel claim Pakistan Fateh II were intercepted and two more PAF fighter shot down, there is no information where this incident happened nor it was mentioned that what type of aircraft they were. Upon further investigation it was revealed that the image is the combination of earlier shooting down of Russian plane and clouds generated by App.

14. Fabricated Report of Indian Air Defence Success

Claim:

“Two JF-17s and one F-16 shot down , India Today TV.”

Reality:

No credible evidence presented; the claim was deemed false.

Conclusion / Explanation:

A false report aired live on India Today TV which is the part of widely circulated magazine India Today, that two JF 17s and one F-16 shot down by Indian air defense system, which found false and part of the misinformation usually spreading during wartime.

15. Misleading Animation Presented as Real Footage

Claim:

“India Today aired footage showing the S-400 striking F-16.”

Reality:

The footage was fully animated and not disclosed as such.

Conclusion / Explanation:

On May 9, 2025, India Today aired a misleading and fabricated animation that misrepresented a fictional military engagement between India and Pakistan. The segment depicted what appeared to be a Russian-made S-400 air defense system deployed by India targeting a Pakistani F-16 fighter jet. However, the animation was presented without any disclaimer or clarification that it was computer-generated, potentially misleading viewers into believing the visuals represented actual footage.

In one particular frame, the animation showed the S-400 system engaging a Pakistani aircraft, followed by another frame that showed a Pakistani F-16 being struck mid-air. The way the scene was animated gave the false impression that the India Today news crew had somehow captured the footage alongside the S-400 system in real-time. This is not only implausible but a serious lapse in journalistic responsibility. Moreover, inconsistencies in the animation, such as the unrealistic color of the sky in different frames, further highlighted its artificial and fabricated nature.

16. False Eye-Level Drone Intercept Animation

Claim:

“Drone shot down by India shown in eye-level perspective.”

Reality:

Another false animation lacking real evidence.

Conclusion / Explanation:

An Indian broadcast showing a drone in an animated sequence, allegedly of Pakistani origin, being shot down by an Indian missile. Again, this animation was inaccurately rendered. It portrayed the attack from an eye-level perspective, as if filmed from ground level or by someone present at the exact location, something not feasible in an actual combat situation, especially at such high altitudes. No credible source or military confirmation accompanied the broadcast to verify the authenticity of the claims made in the animation.

This kind of presentation blurs the line between news and dramatization, contributing to misinformation and heightened tensions during a sensitive period. In conflict reporting, particularly between nuclear-armed neighbors like India and Pakistan, responsible journalism is critical. The use of animated

visuals must be clearly labeled and contextualized to avoid misleading the public.

India Today's broadcast, lacking proper attribution and disclaimers, stands as a concerning example of media sensationalism, where the urgency to deliver engaging content seems to have overridden the commitment to factual and ethical reporting. Such representations not only misinform the audience but can also exacerbate geopolitical tensions and undermine public trust in media institutions.

17. Deep fake Video of PM Shehbaz Sharif Admitting Defeat

Claim:

A viral video showed Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif addressing the National Assembly, admitting defeat, citing depleted resources, low soldier morale, and lack of support from allies such as the UAE and China.

Reality:

The video was a deepfake, generated using AI voiceover technology to falsify the Prime Minister's speech. The original footage is from May 7, 2025, during which PM Sharif actually commended the Pakistan Air Force for its response to India's Operation Sindoor and expressed national resolve, not defeat.

Conclusion / Explanation:

This is a clear example of synthetic media used to manipulate political narratives. Deepfakes like this can severely distort public perception, weaken morale, and spread disinformation with alarming realism. The incident highlights the urgent need for media literacy, real-time fact-checking, and platform accountability to prevent AI-generated deception in high-conflict scenarios.

18. Iron Dome Footage Aired as Jaisalmer Air Battle

Claim:

“Aerial fight over Jaisalmer shown on Aaj Tak, Times Now, NDTV, etc.”

Reality:

Video was from Israel’s Iron Dome (May 11, 2021).

Conclusion / Explanation:

A video of 11 May 2021 from Israel showing how Israel Iron Dome system operates were used by almost all the Indian news channels on May 9, aired a video of aerial fight over Jaisalmer

During the airing of the video anchors claimed that this was a video of a Pakistani air attack being thwarted in Jaisalmer (Anjana Om Kashyap’s show on [Aaj Tak](#). Anchor Shweta Singh, and others) similar videos were aired by NDTV, Times Now, One India, News Nation, India TV, News18 with similar claims. No television gives any evidence from which source they got these videos. This is the classic case of disinformation and part of hybrid war.

19. Iraq 2007 CCTV Footage Misused as Pulwama 2019

Claim:

“CCTV footage of Pulwama 2019 used during Operation Sindoor.”

Reality:

The footage was actually from a 2007 Iraq explosion.

Conclusion / Explanation:

In the wee hours of May 7, 2025 India carried out an attack on Pakistan with the name of Operation Sindoor, India has been planning for the attack since the Palagam incident of April 27, 2025. Videos from the live feed were shared at the military operations room at the South Block, India's top military leadership, including Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi and Air Chief Marshal A.P. Singh watched the proceedings unfold. Prime Minister Narendra Modi monitored the mission from his 7, Lok Kalyan Marg residence, while Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and National Security Adviser Ajit Doval stayed at three different locations.

On the morning of May 7, India's ministry of external affairs held a press conference about the military strikes. The Press Information Bureau of India shows pre-recorded videos. During the briefing, a video of Pulwama attacks of 2019 was shown. The visuals of an explosion on a road with text saying 'Pulwama Attack, 2019 appeared on the screen.

The visuals were searched and identified as CCTV footage by a street camera. The time stamp on the screen shows the explosion happened on February 9, 2007, 3:55:26 pm, which is 12 years before the 2019 Pulwama terror attack and from Iraq, the video is available on YouTube as of today.

20. Pilot Rescue Image from Turkey Reused in 2025

Claim:

"Image of Pakistani pilot captured, used by Zee, BJP accounts."

Reality:

The image is from 2016 (Turkey), not Pakistan 2025.

Conclusion / Explanation:

Zee News on May 9 showed an image of what it claimed was a Pakistani pilot captured by the Indian Army. The same image is used by BJP MLA from Jabalpur, Panagar, [Sushil Kumar Tiwari alias Indu Bhaiya](#), Abhishek Asthana who runs the X handle @GabbbarSingh, BJP activist Jitendra Pratap Singh and X handle [@IndiaWarMonitor](#) also use this picture.

Reverse search shows that this image was first uploaded on the [Getty Images](#) website on December 12, 2016. This photograph was taken by AFP journalist Ilyas Akengin. It shows Turkish military personnel safely evacuating a pilot from a plane near a crashed Turkish F16 fighter jet on December 12, 2016.

Paraglider Video Passed Off as Captured Pilot

Claim:

“Video of pilot stuck in wires shared as PAF pilot.”

Reality:

Actually a 2021 video of a paraglider in Himachal Pradesh, India.

Conclusion / Explanation:

A video of a paraglider stuck in wires in Himachal Pradesh (2021) was shared as a Pakistani pilot being caught. This example underscores how unrelated mishaps are repackaged to fit wartime narratives.

This video was shared by X user [@M_ismail_pak](#) on May 10. viewed by over half a million times and retweeted more the thousand times. Origin of this video is from a video from Manali, Himachal Pradesh which shows a paraglider stuck in electric wires.

21. Mumbai Truck Fire Claimed as Sialkot Strike

Claim:

Video titled *"Revenge of Poonch – smoke in Sialkot, the Indian army is fully ready. This time nothing will be forgiven"* shows the Indian attack on Sialkot.

Reality:

The video was actually from a truck accident in Mumbai and had no relation to the conflict or Sialkot.

Conclusion / Explanation:

Old accident footage was misrepresented to stoke nationalist sentiment and simulate battlefield success.

A video of a truck fire in Mumbai was falsely circulated on social media on May 8, 2025, under the caption “Revenge of Poonch” as proof of Indian strikes in Sialkot. This rebranding of civilian accidents reflects the recklessness of wartime misinformation.

22. Beirut Explosion Reused as 2025 Conflict Footage

Claim:

A viral video shows a massive explosion during the current war between Pakistan and India.

Reality:

The clip was from the 2020 Beirut port explosion, not from any 2025 military activity.

Conclusion / Explanation:

Recycled footage from unrelated international events was falsely contextualized to fabricate the scale of violence.

Footage of the 2020 Beirut port explosion was circulated on social media as evidence of India-Pakistan warfare. The post features a six-second clip of a major explosion leveling buildings along a street. The recycled visuals were intended to dramatize the conflict by falsely showing large-scale destruction.

23. Chile Wildfire Footage Claimed as Sialkot Bombing

Claim:

A social media post claimed: *"If there is a shortage of firecrackers, take more from us. Live from Sialkot,"* showing night-time fire visuals.

Reality:

The footage was from the 2024 wildfires in Chile, not from Sialkot.

Conclusion / Explanation:

Flame visuals used for emotional manipulation, falsely connected to active war scenes.

A video showing flames lighting up the night sky was shared as evidence of attacks in Sialkot. It was actually from the 2024 wildfires in Chile. Misappropriating disaster footage reveals a common tactic: equating natural calamities with wartime devastation.

24. Ukraine Drone Crash Cropped to Imply Lahore Hit

Claim:

Shortened video of a drone hitting Lahore used as proof of a successful Indian strike.

Reality:

The original full-length video was from Ukraine's Kharkiv region (April 26, 2025) and unrelated to the India-Pakistan conflict.

Conclusion / Explanation:

Selective video editing was used to manufacture false battlefield visuals.

A cropped video from Kharkiv, Ukraine (April 2025), was repackaged to suggest a drone hit Lahore. The intentional editing and mislabeling aimed to simulate a high-impact strike on Pakistani soil.

25. False Foreign Intervention via Jaipur Airport**Claim:**

US and Israeli military planes landed in Jaipur, India, as part of the war effort.

Reality:

A US Air Force C-17 was diverted to Jaipur due to congestion at Delhi Airport. No military alliance operation or Israeli involvement was confirmed.

Conclusion / Explanation:

Logistical flight redirection was misrepresented to suggest foreign intervention and escalate tensions. Reports claimed that U.S. and Israeli military planes landed in Jaipur to assist India. In reality, a U.S. Air Force C-17 was only diverted due to congestion. The false claim attempted to show global support where none existed.

26. Fake Image Used During Ministry of Defense Briefing

Claim:

During a press interaction led by Colonel Sophia Qureshi at India's Ministry of Defense, official visuals were presented as evidence of successful military operations during the May 2025 conflict.

Reality:

At least one of the images shown was found to be fabricated or manipulated, and was flagged as fake by multiple Indian fact-checking organizations. The image lacked verifiable metadata and showed signs of digital alteration, undermining its authenticity.

Conclusion:

The use of doctored visuals in an official government briefing raises serious concerns about transparency and credibility. Even unintentional dissemination of false imagery by state institutions can erode public trust and fuel misinformation. This incident underscores the critical need for rigorous media verification standards, especially during wartime communication.

27. Fake Video of Indian Female Pilot Arrest

Claim:

A video claims the arrest of an Indian lady pilot by Pakistan.

Reality:

There is no official confirmation from either side, and the visuals used were not verified as authentic or current.

Conclusion:

Unverified claim used to boost morale and imply tactical superiority without evidence.

Unverified footage claimed a female Indian pilot was captured by Pakistani forces. No confirmation came from Indian or Pakistani officials. The emotional resonance of capturing a woman pilot was exploited for propagandistic gain.

28. Fabricated Daily Telegraph Cover Praising PAF

Claim:

The Daily Telegraph published a piece calling Pakistan Air Force the “*Undisputed King of the Skies.*”

Reality:

There is no such article from The Daily Telegraph. The layout was faked and poorly constructed, with typos and incorrect formatting.

Conclusion / Explanation:

A forged front page allegedly from *The Daily Telegraph* declared Pakistan Air Force the “King of the Skies.” This fake image had obvious typos and layout flaws, yet went viral. This illustrates how fabricated foreign endorsements are used to boost morale and legitimacy. This image is widely circulated in social media, Pakistan's mainstream television channels use this and the same is quoted in members of National Assembly members during the session. No one bothered to verify it from the original resource.

29. Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium ‘Destroyed’ in Airstrike

Claim:

Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium was destroyed in an Indian air strike during the conflict.

Reality:

No such destruction occurred. The actual incident involved a small drone being shot down near the stadium, causing minor disruption

but no damage to the stadium itself. There were no casualties or structural harm.

Conclusion / Explanation:

During the peak of the conflict, a viral social media post falsely claimed that Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium had been destroyed in an Indian airstrike, complete with doctored visuals of heavy smoke and structural damage. The claim quickly gained traction, being widely shared across platforms and amplified by war-related hashtags.

In reality, what actually occurred was a minor drone incident, a small unmanned aerial vehicle was shot down near the stadium, causing no structural damage or casualties.

This exaggerated and misleading claim exemplifies how partial truths, such as an isolated drone encounter, are amplified and distorted into dramatic battlefield narratives. It demonstrates the dangerous ease with which routine security incidents can be misrepresented to provoke fear, bolster retaliatory sentiment, or simulate high-value military successes.

Conclusion:

The May 2025 conflict between India and Pakistan did not just unfold across borders and airspace, it erupted simultaneously across screens, timelines, and broadcasts. As this report has shown, the information domain became an active battlefield, weaponized through deliberate disinformation, doctored media, and coordinated narrative manipulation. The scale, speed, and sophistication of fake news, amplified by mainstream and social media alike, highlight a deeply troubling trend: truth in wartime is now fragile, contested, and dangerously disposable.

From fake satellite imagery and AI-generated videos to recycled war footage and baseless headlines, the conflict saw 31 major disinformation events, many of which went viral before being

debunked. In numerous cases, media institutions, political actors, and digital influencers contributed to the spread, intentionally or through negligence, undermining the public's ability to access factual information at a time when it was most needed.

The findings of this report underscore that disinformation is not just a communications problem, it is a national security threat. If left unchecked, it can provoke miscalculated military responses, incite public panic, fracture international diplomacy, and erode institutional trust.

Recommendations

To mitigate the spread and impact of disinformation during future conflicts, this report recommends the following measures:

1. Institutional Media Accountability

- Establish editorial review protocols during crises.
- Mandate disclaimer labels for simulations, animations, and AI-generated content.
- Impose penalties for broadcasting unverified war claims.

2. Real-Time Cross-Border Fact-Checking

- Develop bilateral or multilateral platforms for joint verification of high-impact media claims.
- Encourage cooperation between civil society fact-checking organizations in South Asia.

3. Platform Responsibility

- Social media companies must invest in AI-detection tools to identify synthetic media and flag reused footage.
- Algorithms should deprioritize content flagged as unverifiable or recycled.

4. Public Digital Literacy Campaigns

- Launch targeted campaigns to help citizens differentiate between authentic news and propaganda, especially during periods of heightened tension.
- Promote media literacy in schools, universities, and through public service broadcasts.

5. Government Transparency

- Both India and Pakistan must commit to timely, transparent briefings during conflict, to counteract the void that misinformation often fills.
- Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs should release standardized verification bulletins to address or dismiss viral claims.



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Huzaifa is the author of “Soch Ka Safar” and “Deep Man Ka Jala Rahay”, both celebrated for their depth and insight. This current book is his landmark research work, analyzing the Pakistan–India War of May 2025. Through detailed analysis and strategic insight, Huzaifa presents a compelling narrative of this historic conflict. His unique blend of legal expertise, historical understanding, and national perspective sets this book apart.

As a content creator and podcaster, he has inspired many with his reflections on society and personal growth. His poetry explores themes of identity, resistance, and the spiritual heritage of the subcontinent. This book stands as a powerful testament to Huzaifa’s research excellence and intellectual depth.



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