

Anticipated Outcomes of OIC meeting in Pakistan

written by Ezba Walayat | March 19, 2022



Overview:

During the past time, Pakistan remarkably has hosted a number of major Organization of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) events. Last year in December 2021, Pakistan held an extraordinary 17th session of OIC exclusively on Afghanistan. This year, Pakistan will again host OIC's 48th session of Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) on 22-23 March, in Islamabad and that is a matter of great honor. For the particular session, Pakistani officials have confirmed the participation of the 48 Muslim countries' foreign ministers until now. The Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi has been invited for the event as a "guest of honor". Apart from that, a high-level Russian delegation would also take part in it. The meeting will be coinciding with the celebrations of Pakistan's 75th Independence anniversary and the ministers will attend the 23rd March Pakistan Day parade.

Theme of the Meeting:

The session will be conducted under the theme of "Building partnerships for Unity, Justice and Development". The General Secretariat will address the implementation of activities, projects and resolutions adopted on different issues in the Islamic world including Kashmir and Palestine. In addition, issues of Islamophobia, terrorism as well as developments in Afghanistan and its humanitarian consequences for the Afghan people will be the important part of meeting's agenda. Cooperation issues with international community, specifically the United States, the Russian federation and the European Union will be discussed while considering the ongoing Russia-Ukraine crisis.

Prospects:

As the host country, Pakistan seeks to foster unity among OIC members, advance the cause of justice for Muslims, and accomplish the mutually reinforcing goals of prosperity and development for all OIC members. Right now, the majority conflicts in the world including Yemen, Libya, Sudan, Somalia, Syria, Palestine and other regions depict that Muslim communities are at high risk, which implies the urgency of OIC's function and position more crucial than ever. Issues such as peace, security, economic development, cultural and scientific collaboration and the role of the OIC will be discussed. Over the last few years, the organization's activities particularly in relation to Kashmir and Palestine have received notable attention. The forthcoming CFM will be a great chance for member states to establish a common ground that will help to build 'partnership' and work as a bridge to address the variety of challenges that Muslim Ummah is facing. In OIC, Pakistan has taken a leadership role for countering Islamophobia which resulted in a good conclusion. On March 15th, United Nations General Assembly approved a resolution that was introduced by Pakistan on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. In the imminent meeting, OIC will focus on Islamophobia and associated aspects such as hate speech, discrimination, intolerance and negative stereotyping against Muslims. This time OIC would be a significant platform and a voice for Muslim countries regarding their concerns that are needed to be heard in the international arena.



Kashmir will be the part of extensive agenda, ahead of the 48th session; Pakistan has drafted a resolution seeking adoption with the goal of directing its anti-India rhetoric at Kashmir. Hurriyat Conference members are also invited at the conference that will highlight the humanitarian challenges and will remind the world to look upon the stance of Kashmiris. The last OIC's summit which held in Pakistan, ended with the establishment of the OIC-led Humanitarian Trust Fund for Afghanistan to channel aid, as well as the designation of the OIC Secretary General's Special Envoy to work alongside the UN in the war-torn country. Moreover, the members will review the previous decisions on Afghanistan in this session.

In the view of contemporary challenges, OIC will be a unified voice not only for member countries but for the Muslims around the world. The world is going through difficult times and experiencing a renewed cold war due to Ukraine crisis. Therefore, the upcoming meeting holds importance for Pakistan along with other members in this regard. The OIC meeting will have the opportunity to examine increasing threats and the options available for the Islamic world to deal with the ongoing issues. Also, it will provide an opportunity to build a common attitude in attaining peace and stability at regional and global level.



Pakistan is looking forward for a productive session and has become a center stage of attention. Its efforts as well as contributions are being acknowledged and appreciated by the member countries. In the following event, brotherhood and unity which are also core Islamic values will be portrayed and this will create an image of cooperation and strong bonding of Muslim states worldwide.

China's Interests in Afghanistan: Post U.S. Military Withdrawal

written by admin | March 19, 2022



By Zara Qurban

Since the withdrawal of the U.S. troops and its European allies after decades of war in April 2021, Afghanistan is entangled in the wickedest kind of security. Afghanistan's commandeering by the Taliban after the U.S. military withdrawal has presented the regional States with many new emerging challenges. An abrupt withdrawal of the U.S. military from Afghanistan has created a huge power vacuum and neighboring States are extending helping hands to avert the possible fall of Afghanistan.

Countries such as Pakistan, Russia, India, Iran and Turkey have their own grounds to intervene but now the global are on China including re-evaluating its persistent 'non-interference' policy. China was against the invasion of the U.S. military and also opposed the abrupt withdrawal stating that it will leave Afghanistan in mayhem. China's Foreign Ministry said "the recent abrupt U.S. announcement of complete withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan has led to a succession of explosive attacks throughout the country, worsening the security situation and threatening peace and stability as well as people's life and safety."

Many spectators are considering the exchange of dialogues between Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and the Taliban leaders an attempt by China to exert more influence in the region. But, China does not look at Afghanistan from the lens of prospects, the Chinese influence and involvement, especially after the U.S. military withdrawal, is all about the management of threats. Another observation entails that Chinese political and economic interest in Afghanistan revolve around the wariness of Afghanistan becoming a safe haven for militant groups targeting China like the last time Taliban were in power.

Though Mullah Baradar and Wang Yi in Tianjin have been in contact for decades, the Taliban's ideological agenda does not fit well with China. Andrew Small, Associate Senior Policy Fellow, states, "China certainly has substantial commercial and economic interests in the wider region, but they are minimal in

Afghanistan itself. Its major investments there, the Aynak copper mine and the Amu Darya energy projects, have been in stasis for many years. There have been numerous discussions about Afghanistan's involvement in the Belt and Road Initiative, including connections to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, but Beijing's view has been that, in Afghanistan, stability has to precede serious new economic commitments." Other than copper, Afghanistan has untouched mines of minerals such as cobalt, iron, mercury and lithium which are estimated to the value of about \$1 trillion.

In order to maintain better political and economic relations with Afghanistan, China offered to rebuild the infrastructure "by funneling funds directly to the group through Pakistan." As a result to continuous exchange of dialogues and China's commitment of support in Afghanistan, the spokesman for the Taliban Political Office in Qatar established that they recognize China "as a friend of Afghanistan", he also stated that Taliban and Afghanistan will no longer provide refuge or safe haven to Muslim Uyghurs. On one occasion the Chinese foreign minister said that Taliban are expected "to play an important role in the progress of peaceful reconciliation and reconstruction in Afghanistan."

China's policy towards Afghanistan is primarily based on the security implications resulting from the U.S. and Taliban peace agreement, which China believes in not going in the right direction. The disturbances, instability and radicalization will eventually seep through the borders into China. As per the researchers based in Afghanistan, "through military assistance, China helped Kabul build its military mountain brigade in the Wakhan Corridor near Afghanistan's northern Badakhshan province with the primary goal of preventing infiltration by the Islamic State into China." It is believed that Beijing will keep close bilateral ties with Afghanistan in order to tightly manage any spill over into China by engaging all its diplomatic energies because it fears that the success of Taliban might encourage militant groups to carry out terror activities. If the security situation becomes better in Afghanistan, China is likely to go forward with more investment plans and programs but it will be very cautious.

Analyzing Persecutions of Muslims in Pseudo Democratic India

written by admin | March 19, 2022



It is not the first time that Hindu mobs carrying pickaxes and iron rods hurled rocks at Muslims and other minorities. Delhi has seen one of the worst violence in the name of religion. The violence sparked in New Delhi after the first visit of President Donald Trump. The sit-ins and the protests started two months back after the Indian Parliament passed the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) changing the Citizen Amendment Act of 1955 that provoked peaceful protests by people from different backgrounds including students from different universities. However, analyzing the response of the Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) it has been very aggressive as the violence has devastating religious overtones destroying mosques and targeting Muslim majority with gasoline bombs. Moreover, India's Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been criticized for not acting on time.

Citizenship Amendment Bill has been passed by Indian parliament which offers amnesty to non-Muslim illegal immigrants from three neighboring countries. The bill provides citizenship to religious minorities from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. The government, led by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), says this will give asylum to people fleeing religious oppression. The CAB amends the 64-year-old Indian Citizenship law, which currently prohibits illegal migrants from becoming Indian citizens. It defines illegal immigrants as foreigners who enter India without a valid passport or travel documents, or stay beyond the permitted time. Illegal immigrants can be deported or jailed. The new bill also amends a provision which says a person must have lived in India or worked for the federal government for at least 11 years before they can apply for citizenship. Opponents of the bill say it is exclusionary and violates the secular principles enshrined in the constitution. They say faith cannot be made a condition of citizenship.

Delhi has become the center of the worst communal violence and the bill is said to be one of the most consequential action of the Modi government. People have seen a big part of Delhi burning and it has been said that what was a completely peaceful protest has been deliberately, in a planned way sought to be converted into a communal issue. The authorities claim that security has been deployed but this seems

unlikely to be the end and the repercussions of what has happened are likely to affect all of India. It is clear that this bill has been passed to delegitimize the Muslim citizenship. It is a state sponsored terrorism as the police kept its silence against the rioters. The government have failed to curb the violence. Moreover, the current situation is a clear depiction of clashes of 2002 Gujrat Riots. The BJP government have been trying to use the religious criteria for the citizenship. However, as per human rights experts and political analysts the CAA was deliberately designed by the government to prevent Muslims from acquiring refugee status in India. Moreover, legal scholar considers this law as unconditional as it breaches article 14 and 15 of the constitution which guarantees equal protection for all and prevents religious discrimination. There is no doubt that the bill has been used as a legal process to discriminate Indian citizenship.

The Nationalist BJP government is pursuing its agenda of constructing a Hindu nation and it has been taking all the possible steps to achieve this mission. This can be clearly seen from the past events like the National Registration of the Citizens in Assam identifying them as illegal immigrants. Then in August the Indian government repealed the autonomous state of Kashmir removing its powers to formulate laws. Following this Hindus were granted permission to establish a temple at the place of Babri mosque devastated in 1992 which further aggravated the situation increasing the sense of insecurity among the Muslims of India. Critics say the bill is part of a BJP agenda to marginalize Muslims.

The International Community including United Nations, representatives of America and different international groups of religious organizations have raised their concerns calling citizenship bill discriminatory. Modi's ideology is clear enough that he is trying to take India away from its democratic and secular roots and wants to convert it into land of Hindus. In short, these waves of communal violence have pushed India to the brink of chaos.

BY [AQSA MUNIR KHAN](#)

Confrontation in Himalayas

written by admin | March 19, 2022



In more than four decades for the first time tensions sparked in the world's most difficult terrain, Himalayas when China and India stumbled in a bloody military confrontation. In early June, clashes resulted in the death of 20 Indian soldiers and an unconfirmed number of Chinese soldiers. The clashes are a result of competing claims of China and India on the demarcation of the border called Line of Actual Control. Neither state has agreed on the exact position of the border that is 3,500 km long. The dispute over Ladakh, that has cultural ties with Tibet, remains unresolved and highly dangerous as the tensions can aggravate between the two nuclear powers, China and India. Since the abrogation of Article 370, putting an end to Jammu and Kashmir's special status, Indian government has been taking measures which are provocative to the neighboring countries. The Chinese authorities were already suspicious of India trying to restore the status quo pre 1962 Sino-India War, in which India faced a humiliating defeat. Thus, when India started constructing a road network in the Union Territory of Ladakh, Chinese suspicions grew, giving rise to tension between both countries.

Indian authorities began constructing roads and bridges in the area of Galwan Valley that lies near to the India China border, Line of Actual Control (LAC). India is building a bridge, in Galwan valley that will give access to another strategically important area Aksai Chin. China is skeptical that Indian construction of bridge are meant to facilitate the fast movement of troops in order to make the recapturing of Aksai Chin easier. China captured Aksai Chin in 1962 and holds great importance because it is required for a national highway between Tibet and Xinjiang NH219. Despite the clashes between two nuclear powers, India has signaled that it will not stop the construction of new infrastructure. India aims to neutralize China's logistical advantage. The Indian government is planning to improve the rail lines in border area with China. On the other hand, China started modernizing the infrastructure in early 1950s and has now developed a fully functional vast road and railway network in Tibet and Yunnan Province. The poor infrastructure of India means it will face difficulties in defending the areas it claims against China. The developed Chinese infrastructure is seen as a threat, because in the latest clashes China was able to move a huge number of troops with few hours along the LAC.

The wariness of China strengthened with the aggressive stance of Indian government in Jammu and Kashmir and her claims on Gilgit Baltistan. Apart from that India has given asylum to Tibetan government in their country and is closely aligned with the US. New Delhi's defense technology cooperation with Washington might play a role in helping India change the geopolitical landscape of Indo-Pacific region. Presently, Indian economy is facing a downturn, while the cases of corona virus are growing. Options for India to direct the territorial shift in her favor remain limited, because China is does not only have a stronger military but also a stronger economy. India has restored to nonmilitary options such as boycotting Chinese products, banning 118 Chinese applications. The economic relationship between China and India came under highlight after 15th June and the Prime Minister launched a campaign of self-reliance encouraging the citizens to buy local products. Apart from this Indian government has also announced to review procedure of investment from the neighboring countries. India has also been engaged in stepping up her partnerships with the like-minded countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

As a result of the growing tensions, both countries have deployed thousands of troops on the border along with a heavy supply of weapons- artillery, tanks, fighter jets and helicopters. The Chinese run state media agency, Global Times said that the country's security forces would "quickly deal a heavy blow to Indian troops, and they will be all annihilated" if a war is provoked from New Delhi. Alternatively, the Indian Defense Minister, Rajnath Singh warned that Chinese should have no doubts about the resolve of India's determination to fight back if the country's territorial sovereignty is challenged. In the aftermath of India unilaterally declaring Ladakh a federal territory, the relations with China became adversarial. These clashes can further exacerbate the relations between China and India, putting the ailing peace at a much greater risk. Consequently, both states will not only look to increase the competition militarily and economically but will also look towards influencing their maritime spheres. The Asian waters can face Sino-Indian rivalry.

On 10th September, a meeting was held in Moscow, between Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi and his Indian counterpart, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar where both states agreed to move toward de-escalation on the border and continue through dialogues to ease the tensions. However, the tensions flared up again when India blamed China for the violence on the border by labelling Chinese President Xi Jinping as the "architect" of the hostilities on the border. Five rounds of military level talks have failed to reach a peaceful conclusion between both countries. Tens of thousands of troops from both countries are still deployed on the disputed border of Himalayas. To defeat each other, states can rely on hard military tactics and increasing their economic dependence in the neighboring countries. To turn events in her favor against China's superiority, India will seek multilateral diplomacy and form alliances with the countries that have a similar agenda. The tensions can become more volatile in future if India does not give up her aggressive stance in the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir and does not surrender to the fact that the problem is not a matter of internal affairs, but external. The clashes between China and India can have grave consequences for the neighboring countries, especially Pakistan.

Jawaharlal Nehru University: Violent attack by ABVP Mob

written by admin | March 19, 2022



Jawaharlal Nehru University named after India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru became a war zone when a mob with their faces covered having sticks and rods thrashed students causing damage to the property inside the campus. The situation around the campus for the past few days was tense because the students were protesting against the increase in the university fees. Initially before this protest minor fights were reported. Moreover, Teachers Association had organized a peace march in Jawaharlal Nehru University. This was the time when they got attacked by a group of people with their faces covered beating people with rods and sticks creating a chaos in the campus. The incident is the latest in the violent crises in India. The police men were present in numbers that day but when some of the teachers and students were under attack they took their time. Being one of the Elitist University to enter inside one must get the clearance from the security guard so the students and the teachers, who are beaten up are raising their concerns that were the security guards just careless or were the administration of the university complicit in the attack that took place.

On the eve of attack around 50 people including women wearing masks holding iron rods in their hands moved from one hostel to another beating and threatening students and teachers. The students who became the victim of this mob target allege that the group that beat them up were not gangsters but were part of Akhil Bharatiya Vidhyarthi Parishad (ABVP) which is a student union affiliated with the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP). The home Minister of the Country who comes from that party has ordered an enquiry and several ministers who have studied in this university have condemned the violence. But the students don't feel safe anymore as many of them have left their hostels and have gone back homes.

The question that people are now asking is, as there is a sense of disbelief and panic that how such an

attack took place. The students are not safe inside their hostels. The students of Jawaharlal Nehru University have been protesting against the controversial citizenship law and also more recently against the proposed fee hike. Amid the violence, on 5th January one picture stands out with a woman in check shirt, blue mask on her face and stick in her hand she was seen standing with a section of mob in a corridor. As the videos of the incident went viral, social media exploded with claims that the girl was Komal Sharma.

The question still remains, who were the masked goons who were responsible for beating JNU students? The left blames the ABVP, the right blames the left. Moreover, JNU student Union President Aishe Ghosh, who got injured in violence alleged that “it was an organized attack as they were singling out people and attacking. There was a clear nexus of JNU security and vandals as they did not intervene to stop the violence.” Congress leader Sanjaya Nirupam also raised his concerns about this attack stating that, “What happened in JNU was like a terror attack. The teachers and students were beaten up by masked goons. The way the student power is being suppressed is not good for the country. Every person in Delhi is feeling unsafe.”

The teachers and students claim that there is no doubt that it was a planned and pre-meditated attack in which the private goons from RSS or ABVP attacked the students and police did nothing as if they provided mob the protection. This depicts that the enmity of Modi government to JNU is well known. There are concerns that youth and the students should not be prosecuted to the point where the entire nation stands against the government. The attack took place on live TV which shows that it was an attack of impunity as it can only happen with the support of the government.

BY [AQSA MUNIR KHAN](#)

Pakistan-Iran Trade: New Dimensions

written by admin | March 19, 2022



The Pakistan-Iran relations have been progressing with the passage of time. Relations between the two States have been shaped bilaterally on the basis of security concerns that shadowed the economic and political engagement. Pakistan having strong ties with Saudi Arabia and Iran's tilted loyalties towards India only made the bad situation worse. Iran has World's fourth largest oil and second largest gas reserves, it is the second largest economy in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region and the 18th largest in the world, only if Pakistan and Iran pursue to have stable ties this immense potential can be utilized for the development of the region. In Pakistan, there is averseness to augment political ties with countries that have strategic and defense partnerships with India because of its national security concerns. Recently, leadership on both sides have shown interest in increasing border security cooperation to maintain peace and possible escalations.

In May 2019 Pakistan Foreign Minister, Shah Mehmood Qureshi, explained that he had four meeting with Iranian leadership and discussed the situation between the two States. Pakistan premier Imran Khan's visit to Iran broke the ice between two countries and that's when they set-off to lay better ties with a clean slate. Both PM Khan and President Rouhani agreed to set up Joint Rapid Reaction Force to deal with terrorism and smuggling in order to promote bilateral relationship and economic activities. The meeting between Khan and Rouhani brought out some fundamental pronouncements; MoU signed for health sector cooperation, Railway line to connect Gwadar and Chabahar ports, Completion of gas pipeline to Pakistan and Iran showed willingness to tenfold electricity export to Pakistan. Leaving all the grumbles and grouses aside, leadership on both sides have decided to make efforts to look ahead for the sake of economic stability.

Pakistan and Iran agreed to promote barter trade at the concluding session of the eighth Iran-Pakistan Trade Committee under the delegation led by Adviser to the Prime Minister for Commerce Abdul Razzak Dawood while the Iranian side was led by Industries Minister Reza Rahmani. Barter trade can help Pakistan to enhance the export of wheat, sugar, rice and fruit to Iran. The entire banking sector is under sanctions, it is not possible to open branches of Iranian banks in Pakistan for which the establishing a mechanism for barter trade will help do the business. Pakistan proposed the removal of various taxation measures such as

road and freight taxes on vehicles/trucks crossing the borders to facilitate trade by establishing an exclusive desk at the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan in Islamabad, whereas, Iran showed interest in importing 500,000 tons of rice from Pakistan and to remove potential bottlenecks so that the trade volume can be enhanced.

Pakistan and Iran talked about opening a “Free Economic Zone” under Iranian Consul General Muhammad Rafiei at Mir Jawa to sell fuel to Pakistan on relatively lower prices. Both the countries have cultural, social and political relations for years and opening a tax-free border markets in Pakistan and Iran will boost political and economic ties. In today’s world, trade is the most pivotal in strengthening and boosting the bilateral relations. Pakistan and Iran agreed to resolve issues including removing barriers which have made Pak-Iran Preferential Trade Agreement (2006) ineffective. States that have rivalry with another also shares a common interest as well. Pakistan and Iran have realized that economic ties and developments will bring prosperity to their own countries and this interest should be harbored to its best. To convert the negative public sentiment towards each other, trade can be the most appropriate way ahead and it will also overcome the communication barrier.

BY [ZARA QURBAN](#)

China India Trade

written by admin | March 19, 2022



From the past years, China and India are engaged into various conflicts and an example of tensions

between them was seen on 21st October 2017 when both the Asian giants were face to face. The tensions escalated to a level where they were in a state of war. The Sino-Indian War of 1962, border conflict, is also an example of the bitter past between China and India. Despite the rivalry the bilateral trade between China and India in post-1962 saw a rapid growth. In 2018, the trade between them touched \$87.6 Billion.

If we talk about 2019, the world's two largest developing economies China and India are negotiating on different dimensions that promote free trade between both the courtiers. China and India both are the competitors in the race of growing economies. A partial equilibrium approach based on highly disaggregated trade data shows that in a scenario where China and India are completely holding the markets, there would be a huge potential to create an impact on trade and welfare in their specific areas, where they enjoy a comparative advantage. Especially, with their annual GDP growth rates standing respectively at 6.2% and 6.1% for 2019, China and India have since come to be recognized as the fastest-growing economies. According to the World Bank estimates and assessments based on purchasing power, China and India have already become the second and fourth-largest economies of the world respectively, surpassing developed countries. Some economists predict that this century will be Asia's Century.

According to the reports India is thinking to cut or eliminate tariffs up to 80% on Chinese products that will be imported in the future, 16 countries are negotiating on a free trade agreement in Vietnam in which China and India are the main players. India plans to cut duties on 86% of imports from Australia and New Zealand, and 90% for products coming in from ASEAN, Japan, and South Korea. India would immediately eliminate customs duties on 28% of goods, while tariffs on other imports from China would be reduced or eliminated over a period of 10-20 years. The trade deficit with China in 2018-19 was a whopping \$53.6 billion.

Recently Xi Jinping visited India and the visit was dominated by trade matters. Mr. Modi wanted to reduce its huge trade deficit with China. The two leaders are concerned about their economies and thus want focus on trade. China and India share major contention even today due to their border issues yet both rivals have found a common ground, where their mutual interest is to strength their respective economies and utilize the economic potentials that this region offers. The relations between China and India are in the process, in terms of strengthening their economic ties. According to Indians, bilateral trade has been increased with China but so has the deficit and this is a serious matter. Indians appreciate the steps that were taken by the Chinese to improve imports from India. These efforts could be the reason for more success of Indian pharmaceutical and IT products in the Chinese market. Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi appreciated Indian concern over the imbalance of trade. He further said that we stand ready to continue providing facilities to Indian exports to China. He further emphasized on expanding cooperation in industrial production, tourism, border trade, and other areas so that we can achieve overall balance in Indo-China Trade relations. This year the bilateral trade will touch \$100 Billion and that is a historic trade figure between two countries. In the financial year that ended in March, Sino-Indian trade stood at \$87 billion, down 3% from a year ago. Indian exports rose by 26% and imports fell by 8%, shrinking the deficit by \$10 billion.

India and China are showing a huge interest in trade agreements not for the sake of other interests, both

countries are self-centric, making their position stronger in the region. China is a big economic threat to the U.S and India is one of the closest allies of the U.S.

Faith Politicized in India

written by admin | March 19, 2022



India in South Asia has been the center stage for using religion for political gains, by exploiting the caste, and religion of people through a huge propaganda which has been carried out by its proponents since the British colonial time. Hindu Nationalism is not a new phenomenon in India's political culture. The ideological foundations of Hindu nationalism were elaborated by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar in his book, "Essentials of Hindutva". Though it began as a social and religious movement, but soon the Hindu nationalists transformed this movement into a political force. This was done in opposition to Congress party and Muslim League.

A 16th century mosque, Babri Masjid, built in Ayodhya by Mughal Emperor Babur was reduced to rubble by group of Hindu extremists, who wore saffron bandanas, within six hours. They believed that this mosque was built on the birthplace of Lord Rama, a deity. The destruction of Babri Masjid was the beginning of one of secular India's biggest problem that it was going to face in coming years. Hindu majoritarianism lied under the debris of Babri Masjid, one approach to use religion for the political benefits. This also signified that Muslims were going to be alienated consciously from the country's social and political sphere.

Since the past two decades, such ideas and agendas had been rising and falling under India's multiparty democracy, but whenever these ideas started gaining prominence, they were checked by the strains imposed by secularism. The people of India voted for a radical regime change in May and two dominant

factors appear for triggering this transition. Firstly, record of Congress's inefficiency, corruption frustrated the Indian electorate and secondly the dysfunctional electoral alliances entrenched with hereditary rule was looking for some new experience. An extravagantly funded campaign began in India under popular Narendra Modi, and BJP seizing the moment promised to bring economic growth and "good days".

The campaign led by BJP showcased Modi as a successful leader who had been able to deliver good governance and high growth as a Chief Minister of Gujarat from 2001-2014. A large section of middle-class Indians was appealed to this especially the ones that belonged to a new or aspiring middle class. The second group which favored Modi was the NRIs, the successful non-resident Indians. The campaign also got full support from elites of corporate and business sector. BJP was successful to gather support of the low caste, poor voters who had little know how of economic and social program or the agenda of Hindutva.

Indian nationalism is so much influenced by religion that one can clearly see the overlapping symbols between Hindu communalism and Indian nationalism. The colonial India under British, fundamentally Christian, not secular or neutral, recognized a close affiliation of nationalism with aggressive Hinduism. Indian nationalism coupled with the religious movements, rejected Congress' appeal of non-violence and understood that Hindu civilization was under threat by British colonialism. Several Hindu leaders, during the Indian nationalist movement, made emotional speeches, literature, music, dramas and other forms of art were produced which has religious connotations.

The Hindu revivalist movements were a part of nationalist movements, which promoted the idea of threat from others i.e. religions other than Hinduism and British Raj. Though their influence was limited but when Hindu Mahsabha was formed in 1915, the idea of "majority religion and dominant caste" flourished and the idea spread to most parts of India. Hindu Mahsabha, at this time was a sub-group of Congress and not a party of its own. It worked as a lobby within Indian National Congress until 1930s when it became a full-fledge party, under the leadership of Savarkar. He was the one to turn Hindu nationalism so radical, that many saw it as communal and fundamentalist. This was for the first time Hindu nationalism appeared in India's political arena, which soon required to be systematized and to be formed into an organizational structure. Keshab Baliram Hedgewar, took up this task and founded Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in 1925, in Nagpur. The ideological position of RSS was known as "Hindutva".

Before becoming prime minister, Modi's election manifesto emphasized on the assurance to development, vikaas; instead of his hidden motives of Hindu Nationalism. However, this was changed when Modi came to power as prime minister of world's largest democracy and he openly pursued two objects, one that of vikaas and the other one of accomplishment of the Hindu State - the Hindu Rashtra. Kanchan Chandran argued, "Modi has always been both a reformer and a Hindu nationalist, and this two-dimensional package is the essence of his appeal."

The history of Modi's rule, whether as a chief minister of Gujrat or as a Prime Minister of India, shows that minorities are under constant fear of losing their homes or becoming a victim of marginalization or oppression carried out by Hindu fanatics.

Before going into depths it's important to mention that can a religious party like BJP, that is committed to

promoting Hindutva, govern a secular and democratic country like India and does it wish to give all citizens of India, without marginalizing them, equal share of rights? This question becomes significant when BJP's mother organization RSS's founding father Savarkar and Golwalkar did not favour Indian secularism or even giving equal citizenship rights to religious minorities, who were considered alien. They envisioned a Hindu nation which would be homogenized, which they defined in terms of holy land, religion, race and language. BJP and RSS, both have been in opposition to India's secularism and profound ambiguity about democracy is visible in the ideologues of Hindutva.

Their ideal has been to preserve the organic solidarity among the social groups in a manner that ideal caste system would have done in Hindu golden age, avoiding social conflicts, Major attraction of democracy among these ideologues was the idea of one person one vote, which would guarantee Hindu majority. Hindu nationalists have deployed the idea of equality under the law as a useful instrument to oppose special provisions for minority rights.

As BJP came to power, other Hindu nationalist groups (the saffron brigade) took initiatives to launch their agenda of Hindutva. These militants and nationalists were supported by Sangh Parivar's leading activists and ministers from Modi's cabinet. They were openly engaged in delivering hate filled speeches against the country's religious minorities. This went to the extent that a recommendation of forced sterilization was passed to control population growth and campaigns such as "Ghar wapsi" which means returning home were organized and aim was reconversion.

India's notion of secularism is seen under threat. A question that most probably comes to mind is that though India claims to be secular and democratic nation which entertains diverse religions, cultures, languages and religions. But do people, other than Hindus really feel safe in India, and does the lower caste of Hindus feel the same? What kind of secular state it is, where people are killed for eating beef or seen as a threat if they practice a religion other than Hinduism. A secular state according to a common man's understanding is the one where religion is a private matter, while politics is a public matter, and both operate in separate spheres. Whether BJP has been in power or Congress, such events where religious minorities especially Muslims are targeted can be seen throughout the history of India.

Identity in idea is shaped on the boundary of us i.e. Hindus, vs them i.e. religious minorities. This idea of others being the enemy has been central to Indian politics now, which is the core agenda of BJP's Hindutva ideology. Caste and religion play a decisive role in the Indian politics and political success of parties depends on these two factors. Since independence 1947, caste dominated the political arena, but after 2014 elections the trends seem to change as religion is now playing a major role in influencing the politics. BJP will keep winning elections, if Hindus keep voting for it. BJP pushes the propaganda of making Hindu India, which is accepted by a larger number of people. BJP mobilizes people against religious minorities through flaming communal and religious riots, such as slaughter of Muslims for eating beef.

One important question about the rise of Hindu nationalism in India is why the idea laid down by the founders of country, Gandhi and Nehru of secular and civic nationalism collapsed and transformed to ethnic nationalism of Hindutva ideology? Two reasons are at the surface for this radicalization of the society. One, in the late 1980s, the Indian National Congress gradually faced its decline, two the erosion of

democratic structures. Both of these reasons explain the rise and ascendance of power of BJP.

Evidence and studies show that, both religion and caste play a very significant role in mobilizing the people and India's nationalism can be expressed through Hindu symbolism. The success and growing popularity of Modi amongst the Indians highlights that Hindu nationalism has not died, and it's becoming stronger than before under BJP. BY [HIRA SHAKEEL](#)

What if India attacks?

written by admin | March 19, 2022



The history of wars between Pakistan and India demonstrates that due to close proximity of borders and militarily active Line of Control (LOC), any attack or violation of Pakistan's airspace and territory has met the very serious military response from Pakistan. Therefore, it is very complex to deconstruct the idea of a full-fledge Indian invasion. However, the current military buildup in IOK has presented serious threats to Kashmiri people and Pakistan's territorial integrity, hence the risk of a war is real.

A country can attack its rival but the major concern is what it can accomplish and is it ready to withstand a counterattack? In the case of India, its supe

riority in conventional weaponry makes sense that it could sustain offensive for a longer period of time.

But Pakistan's posture is primarily defensive. Despite its lesser manpower and resources in a counterattack, it will remain fierce in its defensive offense. Indians will have to pull a lot of effort to penetrate into Pakistani territory.

If India attacks Pakistan unprovoked, it will cost its goodwill at the world stage. One of the technical points for India to attack Pakistan is to lift its curfew from IOK. People will come out to protest against the Indian government. India will target those innocent Kashmiri protestors. There will be a massacre in Kashmir which will create unrest in the region. India will allegedly blame Pakistan just like Pulwama attack. Unfortunately, Pakistan will be left with no choice but to retaliate.

India cannot penetrate through the international borders unless there is a major violation from the Pakistani side. India will have to make a choice to attack the Line of Control (LoC). If India attacks LOC terming it as a surgical strike, Pakistan would definitely retaliate by using all means at its disposal.

Despite the fact that Prime Minister Imran Khan made all kind of overtures, opened the Kartarpur corridor but India using rhetoric to negatively engage Pakistan at diplomatic and military fronts. Pakistan should avoid and avert all Indian traps that may lead to a larger conflict in South Asia. It is assessed that India will escalate the ladder, in order to push Pakistan to a limited war where Pakistan has a disadvantage in terms of the number of forces and conventional weaponry. Conversely, Pakistan has a subtle policy of nuclear threshold and thus India will continue to guess about retaliatory strategy and operationalization of strategic resources by Pakistan. On the other hand, India may also not risk a nuclear confrontation because this scenario will take India back to the stone age, meaning by, losing most of it if not all the industrial progress that she made in the past four decades. Considering the risks of a nuclear war, China, Russia and most importantly the United States supporting a peaceful bilateral dialogue between Pakistan and India.

To conclude, if the UN fails to prevent Indian brutalities against Kashmiri people, a false flag operation in IOK and subsequently a scenario such as 26 Feb, can occur in which India violated Pakistan's airspace, which culminated in destruction of three Indian fighter jets and capturing of a pilot. The question that what if India attacks again can be answered in a simple expression, i.e. Pakistan will respond in coins and the confrontation may expand. It is contented that strategic sense will prevail and India will release 8 million Kashmiris and provide them with the basic human rights and protection of life.

BY [AQSA MUNIR KHAN](#)

Religious Extremism: Lynching against

Minorities

written by admin | March 19, 2022



The minority question has been controversial in India. With the success of Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party and other extremist religious groups, atrocities against minorities in general and Muslims in particular have increased. BJP, Shiv Sena and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) are thriving with an agenda of turning Indian secular state into a Hindu state. India is well known for its political framework and shared historical background. It has operated under the precursor of secularism to deal with its ethnic, cultural and multi-religious diversity. But the conflict between this secular ideology and minority rights remained unresolved.

Article 29 to 30 and 35A to 35B of the Indian constitution, talks about minority rights but the word minority lacks a legally acknowledged definition. Similarly, the word secularism is highly misinterpreted with anti-religion phenomena. Religion-based and under-privileged class minorities of India are marginalized in the socio-economic environment. The ideal of secularism has failed to serve equal opportunities and rights to the Indian minorities.

Current wave of Hindu extremism has shaken the foundations of the secular India. It is becoming difficult for minorities to live in India with their religious and ethnic identities. Animosity of Hindu religious fundamentalists are not only limited to Muslims but other minorities including Sikh and Christian fraternity had also been a subject of majoritarian violence, hatred and anxiety. The contradiction in the secular principles of the state was evident when Muslim community was singled out in 1992 Babri Mosque incident and the state could not protect and control the masses. Similarly, in 2001 Muslims were the victims of hatred in communal riots when fundamentalist groups settled Dalits against them. Moreover, Kandamal

riots in Orissa (2008) members of Christian community became the victim of communal violence and relief administration was stopped by the administration from taking any relief work.

There has been a gradual increase in the number of attacks against Muslims and low-caste Dalits since 2014, by the groups claiming to protect cows, considered sacred by Hindus. The government under PM Narendra Modi has failed to stop these incidents of lynching. Currently a 10 minute video of a 24-year-old Tabrez Ansari from Jharkhand caught the attention of religious minorities all across the globe. Tabrez was tied to a pole and was beaten for 12 hours. He was forced to chant "Jai Sri Ram" (hail Lord Ram) a Hindu hardliner slogan. Similarly, a 15-year-old boy was set on fire for not chanting this slogan.

There has been series of incidents in India where the victims were attacked for allegedly not chanting "Jai Sri Ram". At present it seems that BJP is following soft Hindutva policy and has been ineffective to duly recognize the minority rights and champion their cause.