

**PATTERNS OF INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS PAKISTAN UNDER
MODI REGIME (2014-2022): A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

By

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Table of Contents

THESIS/DISSERTATION AND DEFENCE APPROVAL FORM	ii
CANDIDATE DECLARATION FORM	iii
Acknowledgement	vii
Dedication.....	viii
List of Abbreviations	ix
Abstract	xi
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	5
Objectives of study	5
Literature Review and Research Gap	5
Research Questions	11
Hypothesis/Core Argument	12
Theoretical Framework.....	12
Theory Relevance:	13
Research Methodology	16
Significance of the Study.....	17
Delimitation.....	17
Organizational Structure	17
CHAPTER 1:	20
INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS PAKISTAN: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW .	20
1.1. Early Tensions and Conflicts.....	21
1.2. Attempts at Dialogue and Cooperation	22
1.3. India and Pakistan Through the Prism of the Cold War.....	23
1.4. Nuclear Rivalry and Security Dilemma	24
1.5. Post-Cold War Dynamics and Nuclear Tests	25
1.6. Renewal of Dialogues and Peace Process.....	27
1.7. The Kargil Conflict and its Implications.....	28
1.8. The Agra Summit.....	29
1.9. The SAARC Summit and the Islamabad Declaration (2004).....	29

1.10. The Mumbai Attacks (2008)	30
1.11. Developments under Narendra Modi Government	30
CHAPTER 2:	35
BJP'S NATIONALIST POLITICS UNDER MODI REGIME AND INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY PATTERNS TOWARDS PAKISTAN	35
2.1. BJP's Hindutva Ideology	35
2.2. Formation of BJP and Early Politics	37
2.3. From Jana Singh to BJP	39
2.4. BJP and Hindu Nationalism	43
2.5. BJP Manifesto	45
2.6. An Overview of Modi's Foreign Policy towards Pakistan	46
CHAPTER 3:	49
SHIFT IN INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS PAKISTAN UNDER MODI REGIME (2014-2022)	49
3.1. Indian Foreign Policy towards Pakistan under Modi Regime (2014-2016)	49
3.1.1. Ufa Declaration (2015)	51
3.1.2. Pathankot Air Strike (2016)	52
3.1.3. Uri Attack	54
3.2. Indian Foreign Policy towards Pakistan (2017-2020)	56
3.2.1. BJP's Manifesto in 2019 Elections	57
3.2.2. Pulwama attack (2019)	58
3.2.3. Balakot Air strike (2019)	60
3.2.4. The Pilot diplomacy	61
3.2.5. Revoking article 370 and 370A and Strained Bilateral Relations	62
3.3. Indian Foreign Policy towards Pakistan (2021-2022)	64
3.4. International Structural Factors Shaping India's Foreign Policy Towards Pakistan	66
3.4.1. FATF and International Pressure on Pakistan	66
3.4.2. Strategic Rivalry Over CPEC and the BRI	67
CHAPTER 4:	69
DOMINANT THEMES AND NARRATIVES OF INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS PAKISTAN UNDER MODI REGIME: A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS	69

4.1. Dominant themes of Indian foreign policy towards Pakistan under Modi regime	69
4.1.1. Cooperation and Peace Process	70
4.1.2. Security and Counter Terrorism	74
4.1.3. Strategic Autonomy	80
CHAPTER 5:	85
IMPLICATIONS OF MODI'S FOREIGN POLICY ON PAKISTAN: ANALYSIS AND THE WAY FORWARD	85
5.1. Implications of Modi's Foreign Policy on Pakistan	85
5.1.1. Political Implications.....	86
5.1.2. Economic Implications.....	87
5.1.3. Security Implications	88
5.1.4. Social Implications.....	88
5.2. Way Forward for Pakistan: Navigating Modi's Foreign Policy Discourse.....	89
5.2.1. Rebuilding Diplomatic Channels	89
5.2.2. Addressing Core Issues	90
5.2.3. Strengthening Regional and International Alliances	91
5.2.3. Promoting Internal Stability and Unity	91
CONCLUSION	93
Findings.....	95
Recommendations.....	95
BIBLIOGRAPHY	i

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Dedication

To the Memory of My Beloved Mother,

In loving memory of a guiding light whose unwavering support, wisdom, and love have shaped who I am today. This dedication is a tribute to the profound impact you had on my successful completion of my MPhil degree. From my earliest memories, you were my first teacher, nurturing my love for learning and encouraging my dreams. Your support and wisdom guided me through every success, setback, and challenge in my academic journey.

When I decided to pursue an MPhil degree, your faith in my potential motivated me to take on this ambitious goal. The journey was not easy, but your memory provided the inspiration I needed to persevere. Throughout my MPhil journey, I encountered many challenges that tested my resolve. In those moments, I felt your presence beside me, guiding me with your wisdom.

The completion of my MPhil degree is a testament to your influence as much as it is to my efforts. It reflects the love and guidance you provided throughout my life. Though you are not here to witness this milestone, I carry your spirit with me in every step I take.

As I move forward in my career and life, I am committed to honoring your memory by embodying the values you instilled in me. Your dedication has shaped the person I am today, and I will continue to strive for excellence in everything I do, just as you taught me.

With infinite love and gratitude,

Mehar-un-nisa

List of Abbreviations

AJK	Azad Jammu and Kashmir
BJP	Bhartiya Janata Party
BJS	Bharatiya Jana Sangh
CAA	Citizenship Amendment Act
CRPF	Central Reserve Police Force
CPEC	China Pakistan Economic Corridor
DA	Discourse Analysis
FATF	Financial Action Task Force
IAF	Indian Air Force
IAK	Indian Administrated Kashmir
IaJK	Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir
IORA	Indian Ocean Rim Association
JeM	Jaish-e-Mohammad
LOC	Line of Control
MFN	Most Favored Nations
MEA	Ministry of External Affairs
NDA	National Democratic Alliance
NSAs	National Security Advisors
QUAD	Quadrilateral Security Dialogue
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization

SIT	Special Investigation Team
UPA	United Progressive Alliance
UN	United Nations
VHP	Vishwa Hindu Parishad

Abstract

This research study examines the Indian foreign policy approach towards Pakistan under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's regime and highlights how strategically dominant Indian foreign policy has been in securing India's national interests and strengthening its regional supremacy. The study aims to identify patterns in India's foreign policy discourse towards Pakistan during Modi's tenure, analyze how it has changed over the time. Applying a qualitative, analytical and descriptive methodology, the research uses discourse analysis to examine official documents, speeches and reports, uncovering the complex interplay of themes such as cooperation, security and strategic autonomy that shape India's diplomatic engagement and public perceptions. The study is grounded in the theoretical framework of neo-classical realism, which explains how India's foreign policy decisions towards Pakistan are shaped by both systemic international pressures and domestic political dynamics. The findings suggest that India's foreign policy has evolved into a mix of assertiveness and commitment to maintaining peaceful bilateral relations, driven by a competitive international environment in which security threats are managed and a balance of power is sought. The Indian foreign policy towards Pakistan under Modi has gone through three phases: non-alignment and peaceful coexistence, consistent diplomatic isolation of Pakistan, and a reorientation toward broader regional and global goals. The study concludes that PM Modi's foreign policy has posed significant challenges to Pakistan and impacted its security dynamics, diplomatic relations and economic interactions.

INTRODUCTION

India and Pakistan, two South Asian neighbors, share a complex and frequently hostile relationship.¹ Their interactions have been impacted over time by a variety of circumstances, including historical disputes, territorial wars, ideological divisions, and security concerns. Since 1947, the relation between both the states had been defined by territorial disputes, primarily over the territories of Jammu and Kashmir.² These disagreements have exacerbated a cycle of distrust, violent conflict, and tensions.

India and Pakistan had a few conflicts throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, which culminated in a momentous turning point. Kashmir remains a point of contention for both sides during the wars.³ There have been a great number of refugees and internally displaced people as a result of this conflict, and both countries suffered significant economic challenges. The Tashkent Agreement, which was signed in 1966, and a cease-fire marked the conclusion of the Indo-Pak conflict that began in 1965, mostly over Kashmir.⁴ The agreement called for the withdrawal of soldiers from Kashmir, the restoration of diplomatic ties between two nations, and the formation of a bilateral commission to negotiate further resolution of the dispute.⁵ However, the agreement was never completely implemented, and the conflicts continued. India backed the Bangladesh independence struggle, which resulted in a clear win against Pakistan.⁶ In 1972, the Simla Agreement signed by the then PM of India Indira Gandhi and President of Pakistan Zulfikar Ali Bhutto which aimed to restore ties and settle territorial disputes.⁷ However, the Simla Agreement did not end the dispute in Kashmir, and it remained to be a point of contention between both the countries.

¹ Kunal Mukherjee, "Indo-Pak Relations and the Kashmir Problem: From 1947 to the Present Day," *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 31, no. 4 (2016): 497–520.

² Sumit Ganguly and Kanti Bajpai, "India and the Crisis in Kashmir," *Asian Survey* 34, no. 5 (1994): 401–16, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2645054>.

³ Sheen Rajmaira, "Indo-Pakistani Relations: Reciprocity in Long-Term Perspective," *International Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (September 1997): 547–60.

⁴ Altaf Gauhar, "THE TASHKENT DECLARATION," *Pakistan Institute of International Affairs* 19, no. 1 (1966): 13–25.

⁵ Farzana Shakoor, "UN and Kashmir," *Pakistan Horizon* 51, no. 2 (April 1998): 53–69.

⁶ Feroz Ahmed, Aijaz Ahmad and Eqbal Ahmad, "Pakistan, Bangladesh, India: 1970-73," *Middle East Research and Information Project, Inc. (MERIP)*, no. 16 (1973): 6–11.

⁷ G. S. Bhargava, "The Simla Agreement—An Overview," *India Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (1973): 26–31.

During the 1970s and 1980s, India and Pakistan pursued diverse foreign policy agendas, influenced primarily by the global Cold War situation.⁸ Pakistan aimed to establish closer ties with the US and other Western states, whereas India aimed to preserve and enhance its non-aligned position.⁹ India kept its non-alignment during this time, but it depended more on the Soviet Union for support and strategic aid.¹⁰ While the Pakistani government felt that a tighter alliance with the West would result in more military and economic backing, the Indian government felt that closer connections with the Soviet Union would guarantee its security and economic interests. There was intense hostility between the two nations because of their divergent foreign policy objectives.¹¹ During the Soviet Afghan War (1979–1989), Pakistan emerged as a crucial ally of the US.¹² The relations between India and Pakistan were further strained when the US gave Pakistan financial and military support. India believed that Pakistan's assistance to US was damaging India's regional interests, and so, India opposed Pakistan's engagement in the Soviet Afghan war.¹³ As a result, there was an increase in tensions between India and Pakistan, with India beginning to view Pakistan as a hostile neighbor.

The end of the Cold War brought about a shift in global politics that refocused attention on the regional stability of South Asia. In the Jammu and Kashmir district of Kargil, the Kargil Conflict began in 1999 between India and Pakistan.¹⁴ There was a great deal of violence after militants and Pakistani military entered Indian Territory. India launched Operation Vijay to reclaim the area. India was victorious in the fight, but the conflict also caused tensions and international concerns since Pakistani forces had infiltrated Indian Administrated Kashmir (IAK).¹⁵

⁸ S. Paul Kapur, "India and Pakistan's Unstable Peace: Why Nuclear South Asia Is Not Like Cold War Europe," *International Security* 30, no. 2 (2005): 127–52, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1162/016228805775124570>.

⁹ Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, *Foreign Policy of Pakistan* (Karachi: Pakistan Institute of International Affairs, 1964).

¹⁰ William A.T. Logan, "India and the Cold War," in *A Technological History of Cold-War India, 1947–1969* (Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2021), 43–72.

¹¹ Vernon Hewitt, *The New International Politics of South Asia: Second Edition* (Manchester University Press, 1997).

¹² A.Z. HILALI, "The Costs and Benefits of the Afghan War for Pakistan," *Contemporary South Asia* 11, no. 3 (July 2, 2010): 291–310, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0958493032000057717>.

¹³ STEPHEN P. COHEN, "Pakistan and the Cold War," in *Superpower Rivalry and Conflict* (2009), 96–108.

¹⁴ DEVIN T. HAGERTY, "The Kargil War: An Optimistic Assessment," in *Nuclear Proliferation in South Asia* (Routledge, 2008), 112–28, <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780203892862-12/kargil-war-optimistic-assessment-devin-hagerty>.

¹⁵ Marcus P. Acosta, "The Kargil Conflict: Waging War in the Himalayas," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 18, no. 3 (January 2008): 397–415.

In the late 1990s, there was an attempt by both nations to reestablish diplomatic ties. Both the Lahore Declaration and the Agra Summit aimed to resolve important issues, including Kashmir, but neither was successful. A turning point for India and Pakistan was the Kargil battle, which brought to light the dangers of a military clash between the two nations.¹⁶ The Lahore Declaration and Agra Summit were attempts to de-escalate tensions and reestablish diplomatic relations but were unsuccessful due to disagreements over the status of Kashmir. Despite periodic attempts to reconcile, mistrust and hostility persisted.¹⁷

India maintained its commitment to peace and initiated the Composite Dialogue initiative with Pakistan when Manmohan Singh won office in 2004.¹⁸ The dialogue incorporated a wide range of issues, such as trade, cooperation, terrorism, and Kashmir. Confidence-building measures were undertaken, and high-level visits between leaders of both nations were frequent. However, progress was gradual and hampered by random acts of violence, such as the 2008 Mumbai attacks.¹⁹ India took a more confrontational stance after the Mumbai attacks, accusing Pakistan of providing shelter and assistance to terrorist groups. The focus switched to putting pressure on Pakistan to act decisively against terrorism. In order to bolster its position, India concentrated on enhancing its diplomatic connections with powerful states, such as the US.²⁰ This period witnessed a cautious balancing act between dialogue and pressure.

Under the leadership of Narendra Modi, Indian foreign policy with Pakistan had been defined by a combination of aggressiveness and occasional efforts at engagement. While past governments had their own plans and objectives, the Modi government's approach differs in certain aspects. During the Modi administration, Indian foreign policy discourse towards Pakistan had been dominated by narratives that combined pragmatism, assertiveness, and a

¹⁶ Mushtaq Ahmad Mir, Nisar Ahmad Sheikh, "India -Pakistan; the Process of Conflict Resolution," *International Journal of Innovative Research and Development* Vol 4 (2015).

¹⁷ RIAZ AHMAD KHAN, HASHMAT ULLAH KHAN, and SAJID ALI, "A Historical Overview of Indo-Pak Conflicts and Its Impacts on Their Relations," *EUROPEAN ACADEMIC RESEARCH* 7, no. 8 (2019).

¹⁸ Subhash Shukla, "INDO-PAK RELATIONS : Gujral to Manmohan Singh," *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 69, no. 4 (2008): 897–910.

¹⁹ C. Christine Fair, "The 2008 Mumbai Attack," in *The Evolution of the Global Terrorist Threat: From 9/11 to Osama Bin Laden's Death* (West Sussex: Columbia University Press, 2014), 571–99, <https://doi.org/10.7312/hoff16898-024>.

²⁰ Åshild Kolås, "The 2008 Mumbai Terror Attacks: (Re-)Constructing Indian (Counter-)Terrorism," *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 3, no. 1 (2010): 83–98.

national security focus.²¹ These themes and narratives reflected the evolving dynamics between the two nuclear neighbors and the challenges India faced in managing its relationship with Pakistan.

Modi's administration had sought to balance pressure and diplomatic efforts with economic cooperation as part of its foreign policy discourse towards Pakistan. India did efforts to strengthen economic connections and people-to-people interactions between the two nations while keeping a firm stance against terrorism. In order to strengthen economic cooperation between India and Pakistan, initiatives had been made to establish trade channels and improve commercial contacts, such as the opening of Integrated Check Post at the Attari-Wagah border.²² Moreover, initiatives like the Kartarpur Corridor, which allowed Sikh pilgrims from India to visit their sacred gurdwara in Pakistan, had been designed specifically to promote interpersonal relationships.²³

The Modi administration also focused on internationalizing the Kashmir issue and highlighting Pakistan's alleged role in fomenting unrest in the region. India had insisted that the issue is bilateral and refused external mediation. India tried to negate Pakistan's engagement in Kashmir and portray itself as a victim of international terrorism.²⁴ By highlighting Pakistan's own human rights breaches and providing proof of Pakistan's involvement in regional terrorism, India hoped to internationalize the Kashmir dispute. This narrative aimed at garnering international support for India's position on Kashmir while painting Pakistan as an aggressor. Thus, the Indian foreign policy stance towards Pakistan under PM Modi had significant implications for Pakistan.

This study mainly focuses on, how Indian foreign policy discourse towards Pakistan had been constructed under Modi administrations within the theoretical framework of neo-classical

²¹ Ian Hall, "Is a 'Modi Doctrine' Emerging in Indian Foreign Policy?," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 69, no. 3 (February 2015): 247–52.

²² Sarabjit Pandher, "Attari Integrated Check Post to Open for Trade on Friday," *The Hindu*, 2021, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/attari-integrated-check-post-to-open-for-trade-on-friday/article3304431.ece>.

²³ Inayat Kalim, "Kartarpur Corridor and Its Socio-Economic Impact on Indo-Pak Relations," *Journal of Indian Studies* 8 (2019): 7–18.

²⁴ Khurshid Khan, Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, "Modi's Kashmir Policy: The Probable Consequence for the Security of South Asia," *Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad*, no. 3 (2017), https://issi.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/1-SS_Khurshid_Khan_and_Pervez_Iqbal_Cheema_No-3_2017.pdf.

realism. Moreover, it analyzes the dominant themes and narratives of Indian foreign policy towards Pakistan under Modi's leadership. The study also examines the potential implications of PM Modi's Foreign Policy on Pakistan.

Statement of the Problem

Under Prime Minister Modi's leadership, Indian foreign policy towards Pakistan has taken on a confrontational and exclusionary stance, which has had adverse implications for Pakistan. This research examines how Indian foreign policy has become increasingly assertive and hostile, particularly through an increased emphasis on security and counterterrorism narratives that intensified regional tensions. Moreover, India's diplomatic efforts to isolate Pakistan at regional platforms reflects a deliberate strategy to undermine Pakistan's role in regional cooperation. The alignment of the Modi regime with Hindutva ideology and anti-Pakistan narratives and trends further intensifies the Indian aggressive posture, shaping a foreign policy that marginalizes Pakistan. This study aims to critically analyse the dynamics of Indian foreign policy under Modi's nationalistic regime and its implications for Pakistan.

Objectives of study

- To identify the patterns of Indian foreign policy discourse towards Pakistan under Modi regime.
- To assess the narratives, themes and stances India used for its foreign policy towards Pakistan under Modi era.
- To examine the potential implications of Modi's foreign policy towards Pakistan.

Literature Review and Research Gap

"Tone Shift: India's Dominant Foreign Policy Aims Under PM Modi" is a research article written by Chris Ogden who is an Associate Professor in Asian Security, School of International Relations, University of St. Andrews. The article focuses on the current Indian government's foreign policy objectives, which are headed by Prime Minister Narendra PM Modi. The three main strategic objectives that are essential to the PM Modi regime are identified by the study using a constructivist-centered and discourse-oriented methodology. These objectives include implementing the "Act East" strategy, becoming recognized as a major power, and creating a

multipolar international system. It goes on to say that while there is not a clear-cut "PM Modi Doctrine," the three goals listed are noticeably recurring and constant in official statements and academic analyses of the foreign policy inclinations of the present administration since it came to office in 2014. The aims have been reaffirmed and repeated in official discourse, which is indicative of an apparent acceleration and change in tone in the way Indian foreign policy has been conceptualized and implemented in recent years. The study highlights that gaining great power recognition is a key strategic goal for India, as it seeks to become a prominent player in global affairs and expand its international influence. Also, that India's emphasis on a multipolar world order is reflected in its efforts to deepen ties with other emerging powers and its focus on regional integration initiatives. The latter section of the article discusses the "Act East" policy, which attempts to strengthen India's ties with Southeast and East Asia. Overall, the article provides a comprehensive analysis of the goals of the PM Modi administration's foreign policy and highlights the recurring themes that shape India's relations with other nations during PM Modi's tenure.²⁵

Narendra PM Modi's Pakistan Policy: A Case of Old Wine in Old Bottles" by Arijit Mazumdar. This article looks at India's foreign policy towards Pakistan since Narendra Modi took office as Prime Minister. The author draws attention to the ambiguities in India's approach to Pakistan, which alternates between periods of tough diplomacy and discussions on a range of bilateral matters. The goal of the paper is to provide answers to some of the points that have been raised about PM Modi's harsh stance and why he has not shown the same flexibility in his past diplomatic contacts with Pakistan. The author argues that India's reconciliation with Pakistan is a continuous process due to persistent issues that negatively affect the two countries' relations, such as the Pakistan army's dominance of the country's foreign policy and the limited bilateral economic ties. According to the article, there is little chance of a breakthrough in India-Pakistan ties given the current situation. The author notes that the PM Modi administration's pragmatic approach and commitment to a firm stance strike a balance between dialogue and the actions taken by Islamabad against cross-border terrorism, which appear to be the most logical course of action. The article clarifies India's stance toward Pakistan and the challenges it has in

²⁵ Chris Ogden, "Tone Shift : India's Dominant Foreign Policy Aims under Modi," *Indian Politics and Policy* 1, no. 1 (2018): 3–23.

rebuilding its relationship with its neighbor. The article concludes with a thorough examination of India's stance toward Pakistan and the difficulties in establishing better bilateral ties between the two nations. The paper suggests that India's approach to Pakistan is likely to remain cautious and pragmatic in the short term, given the persistent issues that adversely affect ties between the two countries.²⁶

“Pragmatism in Indian foreign policy: how ideas constrain PM Modi” is authored by Manjari Chatterjee Miller and Kate Sullivan De Estrada. The article in question examines the concept of pragmatism in Indian foreign policy, highlighting the leadership of PM Modi. The article highlights the world-changing ideals that defined Indian foreign policy during the Nehruvian era. Under Modi leadership, there has been a change toward a more realistic and pragmatic foreign policy, free of Nehruvianism's moral and ideational restrictions. The article argues that PM Modi's pragmatism is of the procedural kind, which involves navigating between Hindutva and existing ideational frameworks. Despite being predominantly based on being Hindu, Hindutva has not hindered PM Modi's approach to resolving a complex post-colonial border dispute with predominantly Muslim Bangladesh. The article concludes that PM Modi's pragmatic approach to foreign policy may be viewed as a creative method of developing action plans that are predicated on already-established political and ideational institutions.²⁷

“Kartarpur Corridor and Its Socio-Economic Impact on IndoPak Relations” is authored by Inayat Kalim, Saif ur Rehman Malik, and Areeja Syed. This study examines the relationship between India and Pakistan, underlining the historical animosity between the two countries that has hindered peace efforts and the process of normalization. The paper acknowledges the opening of the Kartarpur Corridor as a small step that could potentially bring about positive changes if effectively utilized by policymakers from both sides. The authors of the paper aim to analyze the significance and possibilities of cooperation between India and Pakistan through the Kartarpur Corridor. They acknowledge the history of tension and hostility between the two nations, which has often hindered peace and normalization efforts. However, they also emphasize the shared history of togetherness and cultural similarities that exist between the two

²⁶ Arijit Mazumdar, “Narendra Modi’s Pakistan Policy: A Case of Old Wine in Old Bottles,” *The Round Table* 106, no. 1 (January 2017): 37–46.

²⁷ Manjari Chatterjee Miller and Kate Sullivan de Estrada, “Pragmatism in Indian Foreign Policy: How Ideas Constrain Modi,” *International Affairs* 93, no. 1 (January 2017): 27–49.

countries. The Kartarpur Corridor offers a unique opportunity for both countries, enables Sikhs from India to go to the Kartarpur Sahib gurdwara in Pakistan. It serves as a symbolic gesture of goodwill and has the potential to act as a soft power tool. By facilitating people-to-people contact and religious tourism, it can help in building bridges and promoting understanding between the two nations. The authors suggest that for this initiative to be successful, policymakers from both India and Pakistan must utilize the corridor effectively. They emphasize the need for a cooperative approach and constructive engagement to maximize the benefits of this endeavor. By doing so, the corridor can become a steppingstone towards more substantial peace-building measures and bilateral cooperation.²⁸

Rajesh Basrur is the author of “PM Modi’s foreign policy fundamentals: a trajectory unchanged” published in the *International Affairs* journal in 2017. This article provides a broad overview of India's foreign policy during the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, highlighting the importance of strategic hedging, creating new allies, and avoiding reliance and entanglement. The article focuses on the expectations that were raised when Prime Minister Modi took office in 2014, considering his affiliation with Hindutva philosophy. But the PM Modi administration remains committed to its non-deployed approach and rejected nuclear warfighting in favor of the no first use policy. The article makes the case that the BJP's "muscular resolve" toward China and Pakistan characterizes its foreign policy. This article examines India's practice of strategic hedging in its foreign policy, which aims to maintain its relationships with major nations like the US, Russia, and Japan under balance while staying clear of their conflicts. This is considered a continuation of India's Cold War-era strategy of constructing a different international order based on worldwide disarmament and just economic ties between states. The article highlights India's inclination to maximize its strategic independence and steer clear of reliance on any one nation, as seen by the nature of military collaboration. The article concludes that, with an emphasis on forming new alliances, exercising strategic hedging, eschewing reliance, and avoiding entanglement, PM Modi's foreign policy has shown a high degree of continuity with the past. The article also makes the case that India's strategic alliances have given it political backing and strategic independence, and that India's desire for maintaining a balance

²⁸ Kalim, “Kartarpur Corridor and Its Socio-Economic Impact on Indo-Pak Relations.”

in its interactions with big nations has allowed it to pursue its own goals without being embroiled in their conflicts.²⁹

“India under PM Modi’s second term: Democratic resilience amidst illiberal impulses” is written by Shalendra Sharma. The article being reviewed examines Prime Minister Narendra Modi's unexpected electoral victory and its consequences for India's representational democratic political framework. The author disputes the popular assumption that PM Modi will be reinstated with a larger legislative majority following the 2019 general election, rather than a hung parliament and coalition government. According to the author, India's democracy is considerably more durable than most outsiders realize, with built-in safeguards against future strongmen seizing control and converting the country into a Hindu majoritarian state. The article presents a critical and insightful analysis of the factors that contributed to PM Modi's electoral victory, including his populist appeal, his nationalist and Hindu majoritarian ideology, and his success in projecting himself as a decisive and charismatic leader. The author also examines the implications of PM Modi's victory for India's democracy, including the potential for illiberalism and majoritarianism, as well as the challenges facing India's democratic institutions and civil society. Overall, the article provides a nuanced and balanced assessment of PM Modi's electoral victory and its implications for India's democratic political order. It highlights the strengths and weaknesses of India's democracy and argues that while there are reasons for concern, India's democracy is ultimately resilient and capable of weathering the challenges posed by populist and illiberal leaders.³⁰

“Kashmir in India and Pakistan Politics” is a book written by Agnieszka Kuszewska. In this book, the author examined the complex historical, political, and geographical roots of the ongoing conflict between India and Pakistan. This book looks at the mechanics of violence in the twenty-first century, with a particular emphasis on the years following 9/11. The chapter focuses on the ways in which the 9/11 terrorist attacks have shifted the nature of the conflict between India and Pakistan. It describes how ties between the two countries temporarily recovered post-2001. But the terrorist assault in Mumbai in 2008 blocked the advancement,

²⁹ Rajesh Basrur, “Modi’s Foreign Policy Fundamentals: A Trajectory Unchanged,” *International Affairs* 93, no. 1 (January 2017): 7–26.

³⁰ Shalendra Sharma, “India under Modi’s Second Term: Democratic Resilience amidst Illiberal Impulses,” *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics* 7, no. 1 (March 2022): 162–71.

resulting in an ongoing cycle of conflict and collaboration. The literature focuses on how the new administrations in both republics took advantage of nationalisms driven by religion to further exacerbate mistrust and escalate hostilities. The book talks about how the Valley saw widespread uprisings, especially in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir (IaJK). Indian authorities were accused of violating human rights and committing injustices, which sparked these protests. The book also includes a chapter on the Indian government's unilateral division of Jammu and Kashmir, which increased tensions and further strained ties between the two countries. It examines how India has handled the situation in IaJK with iron fists. The book also explores how the new leadership in Pakistan and India attempted to use nationalisms driven by religious beliefs as instruments in their antagonistic relations. These politicians exploited historical grievances and nationalist feelings by highlighting religious identities, which exacerbated mistrust and heightened tensions. It draws attention to the negative effects of this strategy on the resolution of disputes and the likelihood of amicable bilateral ties. The book clarifies the negative consequences of India and Pakistan's expensive weapons competition. The prioritization of military expenditure and geopolitical maneuvering impeded attempts to promote socio-economic cooperation between the two nations. The author highlights how the possibilities of peaceful interactions and conflict resolution have been hampered by an emphasis on historically inherited geopolitics rather than fostering more socioeconomic cooperation.³¹

Existing literature on India's foreign policy under Prime Minister Narendra Modi primarily focuses on its strategic objectives, pragmatic shifts, and key policy decisions concerning Pakistan. While studies have examined episodic events such as the revocation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status, the Kartarpur Corridor, and broader patterns of India's diplomatic engagement, they do not provide a structured, phase-wise analysis of the evolution of Modi's Pakistan policy. Furthermore, although scholars have explored Modi's strategic pragmatism and the influence of Hindutva ideology in domestic politics, its direct impact on India's foreign policy posture toward Pakistan remains insufficiently examined. The rhetorical

³¹ Agnieszka Kuszewska-Bohnert, *Kashmir in India and Pakistan Policies* - Piotr Balcerowicz, Agnieszka Kuszewska - Google Books (2022).

shifts and policy transformations under Modi, particularly in the context of Pakistan, have not been systematically analyzed using discourse analysis, leaving a gap in understanding how official narratives shape foreign policy decisions.

Moreover, much of the existing scholars relies on traditional realist or constructivist perspectives, which do not fully capture the complex interplay between domestic political imperatives, leadership perceptions, and systemic pressures in shaping India's foreign policy. The absence of a neoclassical realist framework in analyzing Modi's approach toward Pakistan limits the explanatory power of current studies, as they do not account for how internal political dynamics influence external strategic behaviors. Additionally, the existing literature lacks a comprehensive analysis of how the broader international structure shapes foreign policy decision-making, particularly in the context of India's strategic considerations toward Pakistan. This research seeks to address these gaps by offering a structured, phase-wise analysis of Modi's Pakistan policy, integrating discourse analysis to assess official rhetoric, and applying neoclassical realism to explain the interaction between domestic, systemic, and international factors. By doing so, this study provides a more comprehensive and theoretically grounded understanding of the shifts in India's foreign policy towards Pakistan under Modi's leadership.

Research Questions

1. How has India's foreign policy towards Pakistan changed under Prime Minister Modi's leadership, and what factors have driven this evolution?
2. What are the patterns of Indian foreign policy towards Pakistan under Modi era?
3. What are the implications of Indian foreign policy for Pakistan under Modi administration?

Hypothesis/Core Argument

Under Prime Minister Modi's leadership, Indian foreign policy towards Pakistan has undergone a significant shift marked by assertiveness, driven by geopolitical imperatives and ideological influences, aimed at diplomatically isolating Pakistan and reinforcing India's regional dominance in South Asia. This study argues that the shift in Indian foreign policy is influenced by the rise of nationalistic Hindutva ideology, shaped by domestic political narratives and India's evolving global aspirations, which have together prompted a more hardline stance toward Pakistan.

Theoretical Framework

Within the theory of international relations, neo-classical realism is an expansion of both structural and classical realism.³² Neo-classical realism, a theory coined by Gideon Rose in a 1998 *World Politics* review article, provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing the interplay between systemic and domestic factors in shaping a state's foreign policy. Neo-classical realism incorporates the ideas of structural realism and classical realism, focusing on the anarchic structure of the international system and the significance of human nature, by highlighting the role of both domestic and international factors in determining a state's foreign policy.³³ Neo-classical realism's main argument is that states function in anarchic international systems where behavior is primarily determined by the distribution of power.³⁴ However, in contrast to neorealism, it recognizes that domestic factors are also essential for determining how states perceive and respond to external pressures.³⁵ A state's foreign policy decisions are determined by a variety of domestic factors, such as internal political processes, leadership, regime type, and social dynamics, which filter the structural forces the state experiences.³⁶ Neo-classical realism's fundamental beliefs include the anarchic nature of the international system,

³² Jalal Dehghani Firoozabadi and Mojtaba Zare Ashkezari, "Neo-Classical Realism in International Relations," *Asian Social Science*, May 20, 2016.

³³ Ekaterine Lomia, "Political Realism in International Relations: Classical Realism, Neo-Realism, and Neo-Classical Realism," *International Journal of Social, Political and Economic Research* 7, no. 3 (2020): 591–600.

³⁴ SE Lobell, NM Ripsman, and JW Taliaferro, *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy* (Cambridge University Press, 2009).

³⁵ "The Tradition of Neoclassical Realism," in *Neoclassical Realism in European Politics* (Manchester University Press, 2024), 30–60.

³⁶ Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," *World Politics* 51, no. 1 (1998): 144–72.

the importance of domestic forces in determining foreign policy, and the emphasis on maximizing state power.³⁷ States pursue security and power, but domestic conditions can facilitate or hinder their efforts. The unique historical and cultural contexts of states, as well as the perspectives of different leaders and the effect of domestic political processes, all influence the foreign policy approaches of the state.³⁸

Neo-classical realism provides a framework for understanding how domestic politics are influenced by, and in turn, shape responses to the international system.³⁹ Public opinion, national identity, and societal pressures often push leaders to adopt certain foreign policy stances.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the nature of the domestic political regime is critical. In democracies, where leaders are subject to electoral pressures, foreign policy may be shaped by political competition and the need to appease public opinion.⁴¹ In more centralized or authoritarian regimes, leaders may have more autonomy to pursue aggressive foreign policies, unconstrained by domestic checks and balances. Additionally, historical experiences and cultural beliefs shape how states view their role in the world. States with a history of conflict or competition may develop more aggressive or security-conscious foreign policies.⁴² The leaders' perspective plays a crucial role as they interpret international pressures through their own personal lenses, and their beliefs, ambitions, and political survival strategies greatly influence foreign policy choices.⁴³

Theory Relevance:

Based on neo-classical realism, the Indian foreign policy decisions towards Pakistan under the PM Modi regime can be explained by both international and domestic factors. Neo-classical realism recognizes the international distribution of power as a primary factor in shaping

³⁷ Dr. Shahid Hameed, "Dissecting Neo-Classical Realism and Foreign Policy Behavior: An Analysis," *Journal of Development and Social Sciences* 4, no. 3 (2023): 756–67.

³⁸ Gustav Meibauer, "Interests, Ideas, and the Study of State Behaviour in Neoclassical Realism," *Review of International Studies* 46, no. 1 (2020): 20–36.

³⁹ Md Mahmudur Rahman, "A Review of Neo-Classical Realism and Its Assessment of Independent and Intervening Variables in Foreign Policy Analysis," *International Journal of Politics and Security* 3, no. 2 (2021): 24–47.

⁴⁰ Barbara Kunz and Ilai Z. Saltzman, "External and Domestic Determinants of State Behaviour," in *Neoclassical Realism in European Politics* (Manchester University Press, 2009).

⁴¹ NM Ripsman, JW Taliaferro, and SE Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics* (Oxford University Press, 2016).

⁴² MENTOR BEQA, "Neoclassical Realism: Its Promises and Limits as a Theory of Foreign Policy," *European Academic Research* 5, no. 1 (2017): 316–30.

⁴³ Stephen Benedict Dyson, "Neoclassical Realism and Leader Psychology: A Theory of Foreign Policy," in *The Blair Identity* (Manchester University Press, 2013), 10–24.

a state's foreign policy. India's rise as an economic and military power under Modi has influenced its foreign policy approach, particularly towards Pakistan. India's positioning as a regional hegemon, and its increasing partnerships with global powers like the U.S., Russia, and Western allies, has strengthened its confidence in taking a more assertive stance. The changing global order and power dynamics in Asia, particularly the rise of China, have forced India to reassess its regional relationships. As India strengthens its ties with the Quad (Australia, Japan, and the U.S.), its strategic posture towards Pakistan becomes more rigid, viewing Pakistan's alliance with China as a challenge to its security.

Prime Minister Modi and the BJP's leadership embrace a strong nationalist narrative, which is reflected in their foreign policy. Neo-classical realism emphasizes that domestic leadership influences foreign policy, and Modi's personal political beliefs and the BJP's Hindutva ideology advocate for a tougher stance on Pakistan.⁴⁴ This has resulted in a shift away from traditional diplomacy and engagement towards more assertive measures like surgical strikes and diplomatic isolation. Moreover, domestic support for a hard-liner approach towards Pakistan is high among Indian citizens, particularly after events like the Uri attack and the Pulwama attack. These incidents have allowed the Modi government to capitalize on nationalist sentiments, leading to popular domestic backing for more aggressive policies towards Pakistan. Neo-classical realism highlights that public opinion is a significant domestic constraint on foreign policy decisions. Modi's administration has utilized the state's capacity to execute a calculated foreign policy, leveraging international alliances and building India's diplomatic influence.

Between 2014 and 2022, the global order underwent significant shifts, directly impacting India's foreign policy approach toward Pakistan. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India responded to systemic pressures by adjusting its strategic priorities, diplomatic engagements, and security policies to maintain its regional dominance while countering perceived threats from Pakistan. One of the most significant international structural changes during this period was the gradual shift from a unipolar world, dominated by the United States, to a multipolar global order. The decline of U.S. hegemony and the rise of China as a global power created a more competitive

⁴⁴ Jagannath P. Panda, "Narendra Modi and His Mode of Governance," *Journal of Asian Public Policy* 9, no. 2 (2016): 95–97.

and uncertain international environment. India, as an emerging power, sought to strengthen its strategic position in this shifting order. With China deepening its strategic and economic ties with Pakistan, particularly through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), India viewed this as a systemic challenge to its regional influence. Consequently, India adopted a more assertive policy, opposing CPEC and expanding its own regional partnerships with the United States, Japan, and Australia through the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD).⁴⁵ This global power realignment reinforced India's foreign policy of diplomatically sidelining Pakistan while strengthening its own strategic alliances.

Another major systemic factor influencing India's foreign policy was the intensifying U.S.-China rivalry. As tensions between the two major powers escalated, India found itself strategically aligned with the United States in counterbalancing China's growing influence.⁴⁶ This rivalry had direct implications for India-Pakistan relations, as China's support for Pakistan increased, particularly in military cooperation, economic aid, and diplomatic backing in global forums like the United Nations (UN) and Financial Action Task Force (FATF). India responded by leveraging its growing partnership with the U.S. and other Western powers to isolate Pakistan diplomatically and economically. Notably, India played a key role in lobbying for Pakistan's placement on the FATF grey list, which restricted Pakistan's access to international financial systems and loans.⁴⁷ Additionally, India intensified its diplomatic efforts to frame Pakistan as a sponsor of terrorism, particularly after major terrorist incidents such as the 2016 Uri attack and the 2019 Pulwama attack. This approach aligned with the systemic pressures of the international order, where states sought to maximize their security by limiting the influence of their regional adversaries.

Neoclassical realism acknowledges that foreign policy is not determined solely by the balance of power but also by how state actors perceive threats and opportunities. These perceptions are often embedded in political discourse, especially in democracies where leaders seek to build legitimacy through public narratives. In this context, discourse analysis serves as a

⁴⁵ Dr. Duryodhan Nahak, "India's G-20 Presidency and Changing World Order," *International Journal of Professional Development* 12, no. 1 (2023).

⁴⁶ Abdur Rehman Shah, "India and Pakistan at the Financial Action Task Force: Finding the Middle Ground between Two Competing Perspectives," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 75, no. 2 (2020): 136–41.

⁴⁷ Abdur Rehman Shah.

methodological bridge that captures the interpretive processes at the domestic level, making it well-suited to examine how India's assertive foreign policy towards Pakistan is framed in terms of nationalism, security, and strategic autonomy under the Modi administration.

Research Methodology

This study used a qualitative method of research to understand the patterns of Indian foreign policy towards Pakistan under Modi regime. This research is analytical and descriptive in nature. The method used for this research is Discourse analysis (DA). The purpose of DA is to explore the dominant themes and narratives in the Indian foreign policy discourse towards Pakistan under Modi regime. It also describes the recurring patterns in the Indian foreign policy that are constructed towards Pakistan under Modi's leadership.

This research has used both primary and secondary data collection resources. Primary sources included official statements and policy documents of Indian government, Indian foreign ministers, and briefings of the Ministry of External Affairs. Furthermore, Ministry of External Affairs Annual Reports from 2014-2022 and other relevant official documents have been used as a major primary source while the official speeches and statements have been accessed through the official website of the Ministry of External Affairs of India. The secondary sources have included relevant research and journal articles, working papers, books and news reports.

To analyze the data, this research has incorporated discourse analysis as a data analysis method. Discourse analysis plays a crucial role in exploring the dominant themes and narratives of India's foreign policy towards Pakistan under Prime Minister Modi's regime. This method provides a structured approach to examining the language and rhetoric used in political discourse and provides insights into the ways in which these elements influence and reflect politics and international relations. In this context, the methodology of discourse analysis includes both thematic and contextual analyses. Thematic analysis involves identifying and examining recurring themes or patterns in discourse. This approach helps uncover the core ideas and underlying meanings that permeate the language used by policymakers and officials. By highlighting these recurring themes, the thematic analysis provides insights into the underlying narratives and policy positions prevalent in India's foreign policy towards Pakistan. On the other hand, contextual analysis emphasizes the importance of a broader set of contextual factors such

as social, political and historical, to interpret language and discourse. This aspect of analysis examines how these contextual factors influence the construction and interpretation of discourse.

Significance of the Study

This research study has helped to understand the key themes and patterns in Indian foreign policy discourse under Modi regime. By analyzing Indian foreign policy towards Pakistan under Modi regime, this paper has contributed more knowledge to the existing literature and provides more knowledge through discourse analysis. To fill the gap in the literature, the purpose of the research has been to identify the dominant recurring patterns and their implication on regional peace and stability, which have not been addressed in the literature previously.

Furthermore, this research has been helpful to students, researchers, and scholars in the field of International Relations, particularly those who specialize in South Asian Affairs and Indo-Pak Affairs. The findings of the study have been beneficial to research and policy institutes, governmental policy-making institutions as well as academicians.

Delimitation

The delimitation of the study focuses on dominant themes and narratives in Indian foreign policy discourse towards Pakistan under PM Modi administrations. This study identifies the recurring patterns of policy toward Pakistan and its implications for regional peace and stability. This study closely focuses on Indian foreign policy discourse towards Pakistan under Modi's leadership. Furthermore, this research is longitudinal in its temporal nature and is limited to Indian foreign policy discourse towards Pakistan from 2014-2022.

Organizational Structure

This research thesis has the following chapters:

Chapter 1: Indian Foreign Policy towards Pakistan: A Historical Overview

This chapter examines Indian foreign policy towards Pakistan. This chapter offers a thorough examination of how Indian foreign policy has changed over time, with an emphasis on how it has dealt with Pakistan in particular. It offers a comprehensive examination of key events

that have shaped Indian foreign policy, contributing to a deeper understanding of these developments. Moreover, this chapter provides valuable insights into the complex dynamics between the two countries, as well as the impact of policy decisions taken along the way.

Chapter 2: BJP's Nationalist Politics under Modi Regime and Indian Foreign Policy Patterns towards Pakistan

In this chapter, we examine the nationalist politics of BJP under Modi regime and its foreign policy toward Pakistan. There are three main sections in this chapter. The BJP's development as a political party in India over the years is covered in the first section. As a reflection of its ideological orientation, the second part of this chapter critically analyzes the ideology of BJP and its manifesto. The final part analyzes Modi as a leader, critically analyzing both his personality traits and his leadership attributes to provide an overview of his foreign policy particularly towards Pakistan.

Chapter 3: Shift in Indian Foreign Policy towards Pakistan under Modi Regime (2014-2022)

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of PM Modi's foreign policy towards Pakistan, which is divided into three phases to help better understand PM Modi's approach to Pakistan. In this chapter, we analyze India's foreign policy since PM Modi took office in 2014. In the first phase, from 2014 to 2016, bilateral cooperation and peaceful negotiations characterized the agenda. However, between 2016 and 2019, tensions between India and Pakistan increased, and Modi shifted aggressively in his policy towards Pakistan. Modi's third phase saw him shift focus away from Pakistan towards regional and global goals.

Chapter 4: Dominant Themes and Narratives of Indian Foreign Policy Towards Pakistan under Modi Regime: A Discourse Analysis

The fourth chapter has discussed the dominant themes and narratives of Indian foreign policy towards Pakistan under the PM Modi regime which have been centered on peace and cooperation, security and countering cross-border terrorism, strategic autonomy and diplomatic isolation. Through an in-depth analysis of language and rhetoric, the chapter highlights how discourse is strategically employed to shape public perception, justify policy decisions, and

construct national identity. It explains how these themes are integral to understanding the socio-political dynamics of both India and Pakistan, while also illustrating India's commitment to maintaining strategic autonomy and addressing security concerns.

Chapter 5: Implications of Modi's Foreign Policy on Pakistan: Analysis and the Way Forward

The last chapter presents the potential implications of PM Modi's foreign policy on Pakistan and how it will impact Pakistan's future conduct with India. It analyzed the heightened military tensions, the diplomatic isolation strategies, and the economic constraints imposed by Modi's assertive and strategic approach. Moreover, the chapter also explored how Pakistan might navigate its future conduct with India.

At the end, there is a comprehensive conclusion.

CHAPTER 1:

INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS PAKISTAN: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The aim of this chapter is to offer a historical overview of Indian foreign policy toward Pakistan. The discussion revolves around how Indian foreign policy has evolved towards Pakistan in the past. Throughout this chapter, you will find a detailed discussion of the major events in Indian foreign policy concerning Pakistan which have directed to the development of an understanding of those events. To understand the current developments in the PM Modi era, it discusses the events including partitions and conflict in the early years, the dynamics of the Cold War, and rivalry between the two nations after the Cold War in detail to get a better understanding of the historical patterns leading to these developments.

Following the 1947 partition of British India, India and Pakistan gained their independence. To achieve this division, the subcontinent was segregated along communal lines, with Muslim-majority regions being designated as Pakistan, and Hindu-majority regions being designated as India.⁴⁸ The partition process, however, was fraught with complexities and challenges, as numerous regions of the country and communities were unable to fit neatly into this binary division. The Indian subcontinent's princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, which was ruled by the Hindu Maharaja Hari Singh and had a predominately Muslim population, was one of the most disputable regions all along the conflict.⁴⁹ Furthermore, millions of people fled across the newly drawn boundaries in a chaotic and huge movement that was triggered by the split, which was also marked by sectarian bloodshed and horrific killings that claimed the lives of about a hundred of thousands of civilians. The domestic dimension amplified the anarchic pressures of the international system, leading both nations to prioritize strategic interests in disputed territories as a core aspect of their foreign policy.

⁴⁸ Prashant Bharadwaj, Asim Ijaz Khwaja, Atif R. Mian, "The Partition of India: Demographic Consequences," *SSRN*, June 2009, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1294846.

⁴⁹ Shahla Hussain, "ARTIFICIAL 'BORDERS': KASHMIRI MUSLIM BELONGING IN THE AFTERMATH OF PARTITION," *Asian Affairs*, July 22, 2022, 395–415.

1.1.Early Tensions and Conflicts

In the aftermath of the historic partition, India forged a complex and strained relationship with Pakistan, which was greatly influenced by the subsequent historical and political events, most notably the protracted Kashmir conflict. The conflict between these two countries has served as the primary catalyst for three major wars and several minor conflicts and skirmishes between them, perpetuating persistent friction and mutual distrust between both nations. The main source of conflict between India and Pakistan is their dispute over the delineation of Kashmir following the partition. Even though India claims Kashmir as an integral part of its union, Pakistan asserts that the Muslim- majority regions of Kashmir belong to them as a matter of right. To sway the situation in their favor, the two nations have used various means, including military interventions, diplomatic pressure and political support, as well as covert operations, to influence the situation in their favor. India's and Pakistan's actions in the Kashmir conflict reflect how domestic political pressures and historical animosities shape their foreign policies, influencing their responses to external pressures in ways that prioritize national identity and territorial integrity.

India-Pakistan relations' initial phase (1947–1960) was characterized by a number of conflicts and crises centered on the Kashmir problem, as well as disagreements over the distribution of water from the Indus River system and refugee status.⁵⁰ A first armed conflict began in 1947 as Pakistan dispatched tribal insurgents and regular troops in order to annex Kashmir.⁵¹ In response, India intervened to defend Kashmir, which ultimately resulted in the Maharaja acceding to India. With Kashmir's accession to India, India gained the authority to impose constitutional and legal governance over the region. The conflict ended in 1949 with a truce mediated by the United Nations that established a Line of Control (LOC) between India and Pakistan.⁵² Nevertheless, the UN resolution that demanded a referendum to determine

⁵⁰ KN Pandey and AK Shukla, “Indo-Pak Relations: Historic Perspective to New Curvature,” *INDO-PAK TENSION*, 2016, 264.

⁵¹ Gowher Rizvi, “India, Pakistan, and the Kashmir Problem, 1947-1972,” in *Perspectives On Kashmir* (Routledge, 1992), 47–79, <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780429301483-2/india-pakistan-kashmir-problem-1947-1972-gowher-rizvi>.

⁵² Taraknath Das, “The Kashmir Issue and the United Nations,” *Oxford University Press* 65, no. 2 (June 1950): 264–82.

Kashmir's ultimate status never materialized since India and Pakistan could not agree on the requirements and procedures for holding one.

1.2. Attempts at Dialogue and Cooperation

Despite these tensions, in the early years of the India-Pakistan relationship there were attempts at dialogue and cooperation, such as the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty, which provided an example of such attempts.⁵³ Notwithstanding the continuous hostilities between the two countries, the Indus River Treaty is seen as a significant achievement since it established a framework for dispute resolution and allocated water resources from the river system between them. In 1959, the Composite Dialogue Process was established to address outstanding issues in a comprehensive manner.⁵⁴ Due to political reluctance, lack of trust, and incidents of violence and provocations, this process, however, experienced interruptions and delays for a variety of reasons.

The Kashmir issue, combined with aspects of conflict and collaboration, shaped the trajectory and tenor of the India-Pakistan relationship throughout this period. The legacy of animosity and bitterness from the partition continues to negatively affect bilateral relations to this day.⁵⁵ During this period, India's desire to safeguard its national interests, sovereignty, and territorial integrity motivated its foreign policy toward Pakistan. It also aimed to engage with Pakistan and promote peaceful coexistence between the two nations. However, the divergent perceptions and positions on core issues, such as Kashmir, created substantial challenges following the complex and conflicting realities and aspirations of both nations since 1947, reflecting the complex and conflicting realities and aspirations of both nations.⁵⁶

⁵³ Asit K. Biswas, "Indus Water Treaty: The Negotiating Process," *Water International* 17, no. 4 (1992): 201–9.

⁵⁴ Suddepto Adhikari and Mukul Kamle, "The Kashmir: An Unresolved Dispute Between India and Pakistan," *Geopolitics Quarterly* 6, no. 4 (2010): 58–107.

⁵⁵ Stephen Philip Cohen, "India, Pakistan and Kashmir," in *India as an Emerging Power* (n.d.), 30–57, <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780203009888-3/india-pakistan-kashmir-stephen-philip-cohen>.

⁵⁶ Stuti Bhatnagar, Priya Chacko, "Peacebuilding Think Tanks, Indian Foreign Policy and the Kashmir Conflict," in *Rising Powers and State Transformation* (Routledge, 2020), 100–119, <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781003020042-6/peacebuilding-think-tanks-indian-foreign-policy-kashmir-conflict-stuti-bhatnagar-priya-chacko>.

1.3. India and Pakistan Through the Prism of the Cold War

The complex dynamics of Indian foreign policy after 1960 resulted from a number of factors.⁵⁷ The Cold War's ideological divisions, China's rise, the emergence of regional blocs, and the growth in nationalism intertwined with decolonization movements were some of these elements.⁵⁸ In order to navigate this unpredictable climate, Indian foreign policy had to strike a balance between alliances, national interests, value systems, and its special status as a leader in the non-aligned movement and a supporter of the Third World. India's response to Cold War dynamics, threats from China and Pakistan, and regional crises reveal a pragmatism rooted in national interest, tempered by domestic political priorities, and reinforced by selective international alignments.

The unresolved Kashmir dispute played a major part in this period, which resulted in the 1965 conflict between India and Pakistan.⁵⁹ Pakistan's secret Operation Gibraltar, which aimed at encouraging a rebellion in Indian-controlled Kashmir, resulted in hostilities. In response to this attack, the Indian army launched a full-scale offensive, which resulted in a 17-day conflict that saw significant losses and deaths on both sides.⁶⁰ Following the fighting, the Tashkent peace accord aimed to promote a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir dispute and return the situation to what it was before the war. Considering this confrontation, it has become evident that there are vulnerabilities in regional security, emphasizing the imperative for a more proactive Indian foreign policy that combines both credible military capabilities and effective diplomatic deterrence against external aggression. Moreover, it highlighted the limitations of non-aligned movements in resolving regional conflicts, and the importance of Third World solidarity for resolving regional conflicts, consequently having a significant impact on how Indian foreign policy develops in the years to come. To preserve its regional influence, strengthen its sovereignty, and protect its national security, India shifts between strategic alliances and non-alignment.

⁵⁷ Sanjeet Kumar, "Indo-Pak Relations in Twenty First Century," *PhD Dissertation*, 2014.

⁵⁸ James Chiriyankandath, "Realigning India: Indian Foreign Policy after the Cold War," *The Round Table* 93, no. 374 (2004): 199–211.

⁵⁹ Kenneth L. Hill, "India: War with Pakistan, 1965," in *Encyclopedia of Conflicts since World War II*, 1st Edition (Routledge, 2012), 720–26.

⁶⁰ Sumit Ganguly, Manjeet S. Pardesi, "Explaining Sixty Years of India's Foreign Policy," *Indian Review*, 2009, 4–19.

The crucial 1971 battle broke out amid a humanitarian crisis and genocide in East Pakistan when the Pakistani military committed major crimes against Bengalis, leading to an extensive flight to India.⁶¹ India's support played a crucial role in aiding the freedom struggle that led to the establishment of Bangladesh. The Soviet Union, at the same time, signed a friendship treaty with India, which secured diplomatic and military support for that country. After Pakistan finally gave up, Bangladesh was established and the Simla Agreement was signed, defining the Line of Control (LOC) in Kashmir and recognizing Bangladesh's independence.⁶² Significant progress has not yet been made, despite the agreement's emphasis on bilateral discussions as the solution to the Kashmir issue.

1.4. Nuclear Rivalry and Security Dilemma

In 1974, in reaction to anticipated nuclear threats from China and Pakistan, India carried out a nuclear test under the codename Smiling Buddha.⁶³ Even though India maintained that the explosion was a non-combative nuclear test, many people worldwide saw it as a demonstration of India's nuclear capabilities, which led to international criticism and sanctions. Following this nuclear test, there was a threat to regional stability and peace as the nuclear competition and security dilemma between Pakistan and India grew more intense. During the era of Indira Gandhi, attempts were made to promote dialogue, most notably through the Indus Waters Treaty that was signed in 1960, which marked the beginning of a watershed agreement that delineated between the two countries the water resources of the Indus River system.⁶⁴

During the subsequent Rajiv Gandhi phase, there were periods of optimism and periods of confrontation. By holding talks with President Zia-ul-Haq, efforts were made to improve ties between India and Pakistan during Rajiv Gandhi's term in office. The two sides agreed on a variety of confidence-building measures, including non-aggression treaties, a pledge not to target nuclear installations, and efforts to prevent cross-border terrorism. The sudden passing of Zia-

⁶¹ Guru Saday Batabyal, "Politics in Pakistan and the Bangladesh Liberation War, 1971," *Journal of Defence Studies* 15, no. 4 (2021): 35–57.

⁶² Zubeida Mustafa, "THE KASHMIR DISPUTE AND THE SIMLA AGREEMENT," *Pakistan Institute of International Affairs* 25, no. 3 (1972): 38–52.

⁶³ Stephen P. Cohen, "Why Did India 'Go Nuclear'?", in *Indias Nuclear Security* (Indias Nuclear Security, 2000), 13–36, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781626373631-002>.

⁶⁴ Shrikant Paranjpe, "INDIA AND PAKISTAN: Beyond the No-War Pact," *Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad* 8, no. 4 (1985): 58–63.

ul-Haq cruelly destroyed the chances for peace, and Pakistan's political structure collapsed as a result. It was under that leadership that Pakistan developed an antagonistic stance towards India, accusing India of interfering with Pakistan's internal affairs as well as supporting separatist movements in Baluchistan and Sindh.⁶⁵ Following the 1989 insurgency that broke out in Indian-controlled Kashmir, tensions between the two nations increased, leading to allegations that Pakistan was funding low-intensity conflicts and proxy wars.⁶⁶ The Kashmir dispute thus overshadowed other aspects of India and Pakistan's bilateral relationship, escalating tensions between the two nations.

Throughout this period, India's foreign policy landscape has been defined by a series of sophisticated diplomatic maneuvers, conflict resolutions, and persistent regional tensions, marking the emergence of both successes and challenges as it navigated a turbulent international stage.

1.5. Post-Cold War Dynamics and Nuclear Tests

The post-Cold War period was marked by a series of conflicts and exchanges between India and Pakistan as well as the creation of new organizations and forces in the region. Both India and Pakistan faced a number of changes when the Cold War ended and the Soviet Union collapsed, which changed the regional and international scene and gave both countries new opportunities as well as difficulties.⁶⁷ India attempted to adapt its foreign policy to the changing global environment to achieve its strategic and economic objectives.⁶⁸ The emergence of the United States as the primary global hegemon pushed India to adapt by aligning its policies to engage with the U.S. and other Western countries. India's strategy to improve relations with powerful Western nations served to bolster its strategic position vis-à-vis Pakistan and increase its influence in global and regional affairs. On the other hand, Pakistan's relative significance was diminished by the structural shift, and its capacity to take benefit of the global system was reduced on an internal level by economic difficulties and instability. Moreover, Pakistan had to

⁶⁵ Shahid Javed Burki, Craig Baxter, and Robert La_Porte, *Pakistan under the Military: Eleven Years of Zia Ul-Haq* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991).

⁶⁶ Edward Desmond, "The Insurgency in Kashmir (1989–1991)," *Contemporary South Asia* 4, no. 1 (April 2007): 5–16.

⁶⁷ Sumit Ganguly, "South Asia after the Cold War," *The Washington Quarterly* 15, no. 4 (January 2010): 173–84.

⁶⁸ S. D. Muni, "India and the Post-Cold War World: Opportunities and Challenges," *University of California Press* 31, no. 9 (1991): 862–74.

deal with the aftermath of the war in Afghanistan, which created a hub for militancy, extremism, and terrorism in the region.⁶⁹ The internal issues, such as unstable politics and uncertain economy, made Pakistan's situation worse and limited its capacity to form alliances with powerful nations to offset India's expanding influence.

Furthermore, India and Pakistan's nuclear rivalry intensified during the period following the Cold War and achieved a turning point in 1998 when the two countries conducted nuclear tests. India conducted a number of nuclear tests as part of the Shakti nuclear testing program to demonstrate its power and improve the Indian government's standing internationally, as well as to solidify its position as a nuclear-armed state and a deterrent.⁷⁰ In an attempt to balance power in the region and match India's nuclear capability, Pakistan conducted its own nuclear tests, code-named Chagai. The nuclear tests provoked international condemnation and sanctions, as well as an increased risk of an escalation of the conflict through unchecked security dilemma situation created by the nuclear tussle between the two.⁷¹ In addition, the nuclear tests marked the end of the Cold War and the beginning of a new chapter in India-Pakistan history. The Kashmir dispute was the main unsolved factor that influenced the dynamics and trajectory of the relationship, and it was marked by a mix of cooperation and hostility.

India and Pakistan's nuclear ages was marked by high-profile summits and talks as well as low-intensity conflicts and crises. Both governments sought to control the nuclear threats and to continue the conversation process, but they also faced obstacles including infiltration and cross-border terrorism, as well as outside pressures and actions that threatened to sabotage the talks. Along with investigating the potential for trade and economic cooperation, people-to-people exchanges, and confidence-building measures, the two nations also faced challenges from hardliners who attempted to obstruct their advancement as well as from domestic politics, public opinion, spoilers, and others. In both India and Pakistan, political leaders faced pressure from domestic hardliners, and each government's ability to pursue a peaceful resolution was

⁶⁹ A. K. M. Abdus Sabur, "South Asian Security in the post-Cold War Era: Issues and Outlook," *Contemporary South Asia* 3, no. 2 (April 2007): 95–110.

⁷⁰ Raja Sekhar Reddy Lekkala, "Nuclear Test's In India: A Review And Comparative Analysis," *Think India Journal* 22, no. 35 (2019): 1159–68.

⁷¹ Masooma Zehra, Prof. Dr. Syed Wasim Uddin, "THE NUCLEAR EVOLUTION OF PAKISTAN & INDIA: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW," *Pakistan Journal of International Affairs* 5, no. 2 (2022).

constrained by internal political dynamics, especially as public sentiment and nationalist rhetoric intensified during periods of tension.

1.6. Renewal of Dialogues and Peace Process

The Lahore Declaration was signed in 1999 by the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan, pledging both nations to renew efforts for peace and cooperation moving forward.⁷² This event took place during Vajpayee's historic bus journey to Lahore. According to the declaration, "*both nations are dedicated to the Simla Agreement and the values of the UN Charter, as well as to resolving all unresolved issues, including Kashmir, peacefully and in line with the UN Charter*".⁷³ Moreover, the proclamation outlined other initiatives aimed at fostering confidence, including the sharing of nuclear doctrine and capacity data, the creation of a hotline connecting the foreign secretary, and the encouragement of commerce and cultural contacts between the two nations.⁷⁴ Domestically, the Lahore Declaration was shaped by internal political factors in both countries. In India, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's decision to pursue peace with Pakistan can be understood as part of the BJP's broader agenda to solidify India's position as a responsible regional power. For Pakistan, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was under domestic pressure to stabilize the economy and maintain legitimacy by pursuing peace with India, which would allow Pakistan to shift focus from defense expenditure to economic development. The declaration was regarded as a watershed moment in India-Pakistan ties, raising hopes for peace and collaboration in both nations.

⁷² Amjad Abbas Maggsi, "Lahore Declaration February, 1999 A Major Initiative for Peace in South Asia," *Pakistan Vision* 14, no. 1 (2013).

⁷³ "February 1999 Lahore Declaration," *United States Institute of Peace*, February 21, 1999.

⁷⁴ K M Seethi, "Unlocking the India-Pakistan Dilemma : Twenty Years of 'Lahore Declaration' and Missed Opportunities," *COUNTER CURRENTS.ORG*, 2019.

1.7.The Kargil Conflict and its Implications

Nevertheless, the hopes of peace and cooperation were destroyed by the Kargil war of 1999, which was caused by the Pakistani army's covert operation to occupy the strategic heights of Kargil in Indian- controlled Kashmir.⁷⁵ The covert operation to occupy strategic positions in Kargil was orchestrated by the Pakistani military without broad consultation with civilian leadership, reflecting the military's autonomy in decision-making. It was aimed at cutting off the Indian supply lines to the Siachen glacier, as well as internationalizing the Kashmir issue. The operation was a strategic miscalculation and a diplomatic blunder, as it provoked a strong Indian military response and a global diplomatic isolation of Pakistan.⁷⁶ The Pakistani military assumed that the conflict could be limited and that international actors might support or at least tolerate the move to internationalize the Kashmir dispute. This strategic miscalculation underlines how domestic perceptions of opportunity can conflict with broader geopolitical realities, leading to foreign policy failures.

The fight lasted two months, and both sides suffered tremendous casualties and losses. With the involvement of the United States, the war concluded when Pakistan was compelled to observe the Line of Control and withdraw its troops.⁷⁷ Meanwhile, in Pakistan, a military coup led to the overthrow of Nawaz Sharif, bringing General Pervez Musharraf to power. Pakistan's aggressive move in Kargil was rooted in internal strategic ambitions but ultimately clashed with the systemic structure dominated by an international order that prioritized stability. This misalignment led to increased pressure on Pakistan, culminating in both the withdrawal of Pakistani forces and the political consequences within Pakistan, notably the ousting of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

⁷⁵ Shaukat Qadir, "An Analysis of the Kargil Conflict 1999," *The RUSI Journal* 142, no. 2 (2002): 24–30.

⁷⁶ Saeed Shafqat, "The Kargil Conflict's Impact on Pakistani Politics and Society," *Research Gate*, 2010.

⁷⁷ Samina Ahmed, "Nuclear Weapons and the Kargil Crisis: How and What Have Pakistanis Learned?," in *South Asia's Nuclear Security Dilemma* (Routledge, 2005).

1.8. The Agra Summit

Afterwards, Vajpayee and Musharraf held a summit in Agra, to revive the dialogue process and resolve the Kashmir dispute, which was aimed at reviving the dialogue process.⁷⁸ High expectations and media hype were both prominent features of the summit, but there was also a deep mistrust and divergent agendas at the event. Even though both sides were unable to agree on the language and framework for the Kashmir issue during the summit, the summit failed to result in either a joint statement or a concrete outcome. The leaders of both nations faced domestic pressures, including nationalist sentiments and security concerns, which impacted their ability to compromise on Kashmir.

Following the summit, there were several violent incidents and provocations that were linked to terrorist organizations based in Pakistan. Attacks against the Indian parliament in December 2001 and the army base at Kaluchak in May 2002 were among these incidents.⁷⁹ These incidents were perceived as existential threats by India, leading to a military standoff with Pakistan. A near-war situation that lasted for almost a year resulted from a military standoff between India and Pakistan at the time of those incidents. The international community urged the two nations to solve the issue by de-escalating the situation and resuming the discussion process by interfering in it.

1.9. The SAARC Summit and the Islamabad Declaration (2004)

While attending the SAARC summit in Islamabad in 2004, Vajpayee and Musharraf signed the Islamabad statement. The declaration reaffirmed both countries' commitment to the principles of the Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration, as well as their goal of peacefully resolving all remaining issues, including Kashmir, through negotiation. The declaration announced the resumption of eight issues, including terrorism and drug trafficking, Siachen, Sir Creek, Wullar Barrage, peace and security, Kashmir, and economic and commercial cooperation,

⁷⁸ Muhammad Sajjad Malik, Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema*, "Agra Summit and Media Coverage: An Analysis," *Journal of Political Studies* 24, no. 1 (2017): 227:243.

⁷⁹ Srinath Raghavan, "A Coercive Triangle: India, Pakistan, the United States, and the Crisis of 2001–2002," *Defense Studies* 9, no. 2 (2009): 242–60.

in addition to the composite dialogue process.⁸⁰ The declaration was a constructive and pragmatic step forward in India-Pakistan ties, laying the groundwork for future organized and sustained dialogues.

1.10. The Mumbai Attacks (2008)

During this time, the 2008 Mumbai attacks, which were carried out by the Pakistani militant organization Lashkar-e-Taiba, were among the most important incidents. Over 300 people were injured and 166 people killed as a consequence of the assaults, which were targeted at numerous locations throughout Mumbai.⁸¹ Indian citizens and international community members were shocked and outraged by these attacks, as they were the most deadly and audacious terrorist attacks in Indian history. Furthermore, the attacks demonstrated the dialogue process's weakness and fragility as well as the long-standing lack of mutual trust and collaboration between the two nations. India and Pakistan suffered a diplomatic stalemate for almost two years because of the attacks that led to the suspension of the dialogue process. As of 2010, there has been no significant breakthrough or outcome from the dialogue process, but it has resumed in a limited scope and at a slow pace.⁸²

1.11. Developments under Narendra Modi Government

With the beginning of the Narendra Modi phase in 2014, this phase has been characterized by a shift in strategy from one that is reactive and defensive to one that is proactive and offensive.⁸³ A number of internal, regional, and international factors, including the rise of Hindu nationalism, the China-Pakistan nexus, the US-India partnership, and the evolving nature of warfare, have led to India taking the bold step of readjusting its strategic relationship with Pakistan. The Indian government has also used coercive diplomacy and surgical strikes to discourage and punish Pakistan for its support for terrorism and cross-border infiltration. Aside

⁸⁰ Media Center, "Islamabad Declaration," Ministry of External Affairs, January 6, 2004, <https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/7398/Islamabad%2BDecla>.

⁸¹ Shanthie Mariet D'Souza, "Mumbai Terrorist Attacks of 2008," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, July 22, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Mumbai-terrorist-attacks-of-2008>.

⁸² Umbreen Javaid, Marium Kamal, "The Mumbai Terror '2008' and Its Impact on the IndoPak Relations," *South Asian Studies* 28, no. 1 (2013), <https://sasj.pu.edu.pk/9/article/view/738>.

⁸³ Vikash Chandra, "Modi Government and Changing Patterns in Indian Foreign Policy," *Jadavpur Journal of International Relations* 21, no. 2 (2017): 98–117, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0973598417731241>.

from downgrading the dialogue process and suspending the composite dialogue, India has also focused on bilateral and multilateral forums in order to isolate and pressure Pakistan.⁸⁴

During the 2015 SCO conference in Ufa (Russia), the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan released the Ufa statement.⁸⁵ The two prime ministers stated in a joint statement that they both share the goal of advancing improved bilateral ties as well as regional peace and prosperity. The declaration also announced several actions meant to address the issues that both nations find concerning. These included the release of prisoners and fishermen, the opening of religious tourism, a meeting of national security advisers, and a discussion of all unresolved issues.⁸⁶ The statement portrayed the India-Pakistan relationship as friendly and constructive, raising the potential of a formal discussion. However, the cancelation of the meeting between the national security advisers over differences over the subject and the involvement of the separatist leaders in Kashmir hindered the prospects of a formal dialogue process. The 2016 Pathankot incident, which was carried out by the extremist organization Jaish-e-Mohammed, seriously restricted the engagement effort.⁸⁷ Seven security personnel were killed, and 37 others were injured in the attack that targeted the Indian Air Force facility in Pathankot.⁸⁸ It was another setback for both countries' dialogue process, and a challenge for their cooperation and coordination. Foreign secretary-level talks scheduled for January 2016 were also postponed due to the attack.

In addition to several low-key discussions and interactions between the two countries, the Modi administration has witnessed high-profile conflicts and crises between India and Pakistan. Both sides have suffered lives and losses because of the two countries' many air and surgical strikes, ceasefire violations, and border confrontations along the international boundary and the

⁸⁴ Radhey Sham Sharma, Dr. Shakshi Mehta, "Foreign Policy of India under Modi Government," *International Journal of Political Science and Governance*, no. 2 (2020): 123–28, doi: <https://www.journalofpoliticalscience.com/uploads/archives/2-2-35-829.pdf>.

⁸⁵ Hashmi and Muhammad Uzair, "Building Peace between India and Pakistan; the Role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization," *Master's Thesis, Middle East Technical University*, 2015.

⁸⁶ "Full Text of India-Pakistan Joint Statement on PM Narendra Modi-Nawaz Sharif Talks in Russia," *The Hindu*, July 10, 2015, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/resources/full-text-of-the-joint-statement-by-the-foreign-secretaries-of-india-and-pakistan-in-russia/article61470688.ece>.

⁸⁷ C. Christine Fair, "Bringing Back the Dead: Why Pakistan Used the Jaish-e-Mohammad to Attack an Indian Airbase," *Huffington Post*, 2016.

⁸⁸ Shashank Joshi, "Pathankot Attack: India-Pakistan Peace Talks Derailed?," *BBC*, January 7, 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-35240272>.

Line of Control. It has also been a challenging year for these two countries since the Uri attack of 2016, the Pulwama attack of 2019, and the Balakot airstrike of 2019, all of which have led to them coming close to war and escalation of tensions.⁸⁹ The Balakot Airstrikes were a direct response by India to the Pulwama terror attack, a ghastly incident that claimed the lives of numerous Indian security personnel. India's decision to conduct airstrikes in Balakot, Pakistan, targeting a terrorist training camp associated with Jaish-e-Mohammed, signified a shift in India's strategy. It was a departure from the usual diplomatic efforts or limited military responses following cross-border incidents.⁹⁰ This move carried immense risks, given the longstanding tensions between the nuclear-armed neighbors. India's decision to conduct airstrikes in Balakot, Pakistan, targeting a terrorist training camp associated with Jaish-e-Mohammed, signified a shift in India's strategy.⁹¹ It was a departure from the usual diplomatic efforts or limited military responses following cross-border incidents. This move carried immense risks, given the longstanding tensions between the nuclear-armed neighbors. The Pakistani military responded by launching its own airstrikes in the border regions. An Indian aircraft was shot down, and its pilot was apprehended by Pakistan as the situation quickly turned into a combat between Indian and Pakistani fighter fighters.⁹² Meanwhile, India took a historic step by abolishing the special status of Jammu and Kashmir by repealing Article 370 of its constitution. Under Article 370, the region was granted a large measure of autonomy, including the right to have its own flag, constitution, and decision-making power outside of the foreign policy, defense, finance, and communications sectors.⁹³ The abrogation of Article 370 triggered a massive security clampdown in Jammu and Kashmir, with the deployment of additional troops, internet shutdowns, curfews, and restrictions on movement and communication.⁹⁴ The region

⁸⁹ Vinay Kaura, "India's Pakistan Policy: From 2016 'Surgical Strike' to 2019 Balakot 'Airstrike,'" *The Round Table* 109, no. 3 (June 2020): 277–87.

⁹⁰ "Viewpoint: Balakot Air Strikes Raise Stakes in India-Pakistan Stand-Off," *BBC*, February 26, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-47370608>.

⁹¹ Dr. Mansoor Ahmed and Maimuna Ashraf, "The Pulwama-Balakot Crisis: A Strategic Assessment," *A Journal of Strategic Studies* 7, no. 1 (2019): 1–24.

⁹² Drazen Jorgic, Aditya Kalra, "Saved from Pakistani Mob, Downed Indian Pilot Becomes Face of Kashmir Crisis," *Reuters*, February 27, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/world/saved-from-pakistani-mob-downed-indian-pilot-becomes-face-of-kashmir-crisis-idUSKCN1QG2CY/>.

⁹³ "Article 370: What Happened with Kashmir and Why It Matters," *BBC*, August 6, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-49234708>.

⁹⁴ "India Imposes Curfew in Parts of Occupied Kashmir Ahead of Article 370 Revocation Anniversary," *Dawn News*, August 4, 2020, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1572566>.

experienced a period of heightened tension, with protests, clashes, and concerns over human rights violations surfacing in various reports.

Pakistan vehemently condemned India's move, calling it illegal, unilateral, and a violation of international law. The withdrawal of Article 370 was seen by the Pakistani government as a violation of several accords and decisions, such as the Simla Agreement and UN Security Council resolutions concerning the Kashmir conflict.⁹⁵ The Pakistani government intensively pursued diplomatic measures to internationalize the issue, gaining support from a various countries and international forums. They emphasized the humanitarian challenges in Kashmir and the alleged human rights abuses brought on by the security crackdown. The international community closely observed these events, expressing worry about the situation in Kashmir and encouraging both India and Pakistan to display moderation and emphasize dialogue to address the region's long-standing difficulties.⁹⁶ The two countries have also engaged in a series of backchannel talks and secret meetings, all of which have been aimed at reducing tensions and reestablishing the ceasefire and dialogue between them. In order to improve the two countries' goodwill and interactions with one another, there has also been investigation into the potential for humanitarian actions, such as the release of prisoners and the opening of the Kartarpur passage.⁹⁷ Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic's effects and the ongoing standoff between China and India have defined Modi phase and presented new prospects and challenges for the India-Pakistan relationship at this time.⁹⁸ The pandemic has highlighted both nations' vulnerabilities and interdependencies as well as the necessity of working together on the fronts of health and the economy. Additionally, the two issues have provided the opportunity and the space for third parties to participate in and to influence the Indian Pakistani relationship. The

⁹⁵ Dalbir Ahlawat and M. Raymond Izaralib, "India's Revocation of Article 370: Security Dilemmas and Options for Pakistan," *The Round Table* 109, no. 6 (forthcoming), <https://doi.org/10.1080/00358533.2020.1849495>.

⁹⁶ Irfan Mahar, "Imran Khan Speech in UN General Assembly and Kashmir Conundrum," *Modern Diplomacy*, April 10, 2020, <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/04/10/imran-khan-speech-in-un-general-assembly-and-kashmir-conundrum/>.

⁹⁷ "Narendra Modi to Inaugurate Kartarpur Corridor Checkpost on November 9," *The Hindu*, November 8, 2019, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/narendra-modi-to-inaugurate-kartarpur-corridor-checkpost-on-november-9/article61621976.ece>.

⁹⁸ Smruti S. Pattanaik, "COVID-19 Pandemic and India's Regional Diplomacy," *SAGE Journals* 28, no. 1 (2021): 92–110.

relationship between the two nations has been facilitated and mediated by these third parties, which include the United States, China, Russia, and the United Arab Emirates.⁹⁹

During the Modi phase, therefore, there has been a shift from a dialogue-based and cooperative approach to one that is coerce-based and confrontational, with sporadic attempts at communication and cooperation, but not often. Because of its rising power and ambition, as well as its frustration and dissatisfaction with Pakistan, India has adopted an assertive and aggressive approach to Pakistan. Despite the declining power and stability of Pakistan, as well as its resentment and defiance towards India, Pakistan has adopted a more defensive and reactive policy towards the country. The two nations have been living in a cycle of violence and catastrophe in the absence of a long-term and satisfying resolution to the Kashmir conflict and other unresolved issues, endangering regional and global peace and stability.

To conclude, the historical overview of the Indian foreign policy towards Pakistan has been greatly influenced by a lot of historical and political events in the past. Understanding the complexity of India's past is essential for comprehending the complex procedures that influence its current foreign policy with Pakistan. Due to this, it is essential to be informed on the ever-evolving dynamics of Indian foreign policy and its relationship with Pakistan. For this purpose, we need to critically understand the BJP's nationalist politics and Modi's political inclination that shapes the Indian foreign policy discourse.

⁹⁹ Dost Muhammad Barrech, "Post -COVID-19: Indo-Pak Relations," *Modern Diplomacy*, April 18, 2020, <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/04/18/post-covid-19-indo-pak-relations/>.

CHAPTER 2:

BJP'S NATIONALIST POLITICS UNDER MODI REGIME AND INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY PATTERNS TOWARDS PAKISTAN

This chapter looks at the BJP's foreign policy against Pakistan and its nationalist policies during the Modi administration. This chapter has been divided into three parts. The first part discusses how the BJP has developed over the years as a political party in India and the prominent personalities in the party, including Atal Bihar Vajpayee. It examines the BJP's nationalist rhetoric and domestic policies, focusing on the BJP's attempts to use nationalist sentiment to achieve its political objectives. The second part of this chapter critically analyzes the ideology of the BJP and its political manifesto as they reflect its ideological orientation. The final part discusses Modi as a leader, critically analyzing his personality aspects as well as his leadership attributes, so that an overview of Modi's foreign policy will be given.

2.1. BJP's Hindutva Ideology

A Hindu-oriented political party in India, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) enjoys significant support in northern India and among higher castes. Its origins may be found in the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS), which was founded in 1951 as the RSS's political branch.¹⁰⁰ The BJS sought a strong unified Indian state, which advocated rebuilding India per Hindu culture. The BJS took hold in northern India's Hindi-speaking regions in 1967.¹⁰¹ After a decade, the party merged with the Janata Party, which Atal Bihari Vajpayee and three other parties founded. However, the administration disintegrated in July 1979 because of factionalism and internal conflicts. After the Janata alliance dissolved, the BJP was legally established in 1980. Its leaders sought to prevent elected BJS representatives from joining the RSS.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Rishi Kumar, *Understanding the Rise of Bharatiya Janata Party and Its Affinity to Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (2024).

¹⁰¹ Milan Vaishnav, "The BJP in Power: Indian Democracy and Religious Nationalism," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, April 4, 2019, <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2019/04/the-bjp-in-power-indian-democracy-and-religious-nationalism?lang=en>.

¹⁰² Paul R. Brass, "The Rise of the BJP and the Future of Party Politics in Uttar Pradesh," in *India Votes*, 1st Edition (2019), 255–92.

In the BJP's view, Hindutva ("Hindu-ness") defines, "Indian culture in terms of Hindu values, and is very critical of the secular policies and practices of the Indian National Congress (Congress)".¹⁰³ By taking advantage of anti-Muslim sentiment and supporting the building of a Hindu temple at Ayodhya, a Hindu holy site, the party gained parliamentary support in 1989.¹⁰⁴ After BJP-affiliated extremists destroyed the Babri Masjid in December 1992, there was an enormous protest that led to violent attacks all throughout the nation, killing more than 1,000 people.¹⁰⁵ The secularist movement in contemporary India viewed the party with skepticism and suspicion.

When the BJP surpassed all other parties in the Lok Sabha in 1996, the Indian President invited them to form a government. However, the party's term was brief since it failed to gain the requisite majority to lead the lower chamber, which has a total of 545 members.¹⁰⁶ In 1998, the BJP and its partners succeeded in forming a majority government, headed by Prime Minister Vajpayee. After the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) of the Congress Party defeated the coalition in the 2004 parliamentary elections, Vajpayee resigned as prime minister.¹⁰⁷ After the 2009 parliamentary elections, UPA ruled the nation until 2014, when Narendra Modi became prime minister, and the BJP took back control.¹⁰⁸

A major factor in the BJP's 2014 comeback was growing public dissatisfaction with Narendra Modi, Gujarat's longstanding leader and the state's chief minister (head of government) for the previous 28 years.¹⁰⁹ The BJP pushed a Hindu nationalist agenda under Prime Minister Modi that included discriminatory policies that alienated minorities, particularly Muslims. The

¹⁰³ Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia, "Bharatiya Janata Party," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, August 16, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Bharatiya-Janata-Party>.

¹⁰⁴ CJ WERLEMAN, "Rising Violence against Muslims in India Under Modi and BJP Rule," *Insight Turkey* 23, no. 2 (2021): 39–50.

¹⁰⁵ Randeep Rames, "Former Indian Prime Minister Blamed over 1992 Babri Mosque Violence," *The Guardian*, November 24, 2009, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/nov/24/india-babri-mosque-violence-report>.

¹⁰⁶ Sudha Pai, "Transformation of the Indian Party System: The 1996 Lok Sabha Elections," *University of California Press* 36, no. 12 (December 1996): 1170–83.

¹⁰⁷ Steven Wilkinson, "Elections in India: Behind the Congress Comeback," *Journal of Democracy* 16, no. 1 (2005): 153–67.

¹⁰⁸ Anoop Sadanandan, *The Parliamentary Election in India, April–May 2009*, 28, no. 4 (2009): 658–62.

¹⁰⁹ Pradeep Chhibber and Rahul Verma, "The BJP's 2014 Resurgence," in *Electoral Politics in India*, 1st Edition (Routledge India, 2017), 15–33.

Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), a law passed by the BJP in India, allows citizenship to non-Muslim immigrants from nearby nations but refusing citizenship to Muslims.¹¹⁰

2.2. Formation of BJP and Early Politics

In 1951, Syama Prasad Mukherjee founded the Bharatiya Jana Sangh to challenge the established Congress party.¹¹¹ The Jana Sangh is commonly referred to as the Jana Sangh since it was founded as a reaction against the dominant Congress party in 1951.¹¹² The political wing of the organization is the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a voluntary Hindu nationalism-supporting group.¹¹³ The Jana Sangh's objectives included opposing Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's attempts to bring Pakistan and India together and protecting India's Hindu cultural identity.¹¹⁴ To aid in the Jana Sangh's launch, the RSS provided the party with pracharaks, or full-time staff. Only three seats in the Lok Sabha were won by the Jana Sangh in 1952.¹¹⁵ It remained a marginal political party until 1967.¹¹⁶

The Jana Sangh promoted the incorporation of Jammu and Kashmir into India during its first significant campaign, which began in early 1953.¹¹⁷ After disobeying state government directives prohibiting him from entering Kashmir, Mukherjee was taken into custody in May 1953. The next month, he passed away after a heart attack. Mauli Chandra Sharma was chosen to be his successor.¹¹⁸ Nonetheless, RSS activists forced Mauli Chandra Sharma out of power, and Upadhyaya took over the party. To construct a grassroots movement equivalent to the RSS,

¹¹⁰ Md Jahid Hossain Bhuiyan, "Muslim Religious Minorities in India and the Citizenship Amendment Act," in *Freedom of Religion and Religious Diversity*, 1st (Routledge, 2024), 299–314, <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781003458128-18/muslim-religious-minorities-india-citizenship-amendment-act-md-jahid-hossain-bhuiyan>.

¹¹¹ Rekha Datta, "Hindu Nationalism or Pragmatic Party Politics? A Study of India's Hindu Party," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 12, no. 4 (1999): 573–88.

¹¹² Craig Baxter, *The Jana Sangh: A Biography of an Indian Political Party* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

¹¹³ Walter Andersen, "The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh: IV: Jan Sangh and Other Organisations," *Economic and Political Weekly* 7, no. 14 (1972): 724–27.

¹¹⁴ K. Raman Pillai, "Jan Sangh—A Rightist Opposition to the Congress Party," *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 27, no. 2 (1996): 67–81.

¹¹⁵ Koushiki Dasgupta, "The Bharatiya Jana Sangh and the First General Election in West Bengal: The Enigma of Hindu Politics in Early 1950s," *Studies in Indian Politics* 8, no. 1 (2020): 58–68.

¹¹⁶ Electoral Politics and Hindu Nationalism in India: The Bharatiya Jana Sangh, 1951–1971, *Electoral Politics and Hindu Nationalism in India: The Bharatiya Jana Sangh, 1951–1971*, 1st Edition (182: Routledge, 2019).

¹¹⁷ ANDERSEN, WALTER KORFITZ, "The Jana Sangh: Ideology and Organization in Party Behavior.," *The University of Chicago ProQuest Dissertations & Theses*, 1975.

¹¹⁸ Paul R. Brass, *The Politics of India since Independence*, vol. 1 (Cambridge University Press., 1994).

Upadhyaya prioritized creating a network of propagandists beyond communicating with the people. Upadhyaya was General Secretary till 1967.¹¹⁹ In addition to his philosophy of integral humanism, Upadhyaya articulated the humanism theory, which became the official party doctrine at the time. The party had both Lal Krishna Advani and Atal Bihari Vajpayee in leadership roles. Vajpayee replaced Upadhyaya as president in 1968, and he implemented a unified civil code, prohibited cow slaughter, and removed Jammu and Kashmir's special status.¹²⁰ The party formed an alliance with many parties, especially socialists and the Swatantra Party, following the 1967 assembly elections.¹²¹ For the first time, the Jana Sangh gained political power while being a part of a coalition, shifting the party's platform to one that was more progressive.¹²²

In 1975, Indira Gandhi proclaimed a national state of emergency.¹²³ A wide range of protests were held by the Jana Sangh. After the emergency was lifted, thousands of Jana Sangh members, along with other agitators across the country, were imprisoned. Following the end of the emergency, general elections were conducted in 1977.¹²⁴ In order to create the Janata Party, which defeated Indira Gandhi in her first term in government, the Jana Sangh brought together the Socialist Party, Congress, and Bharatiya Lok Dal. In 1977, the former Jana Sangh party accounted for 93 of the Janata Party's seats, which was the largest contribution.¹²⁵ Following the 1977 general election, Morarji Desai received many votes in the Janata Party. Asa Behari Vajpayee, a former leader of the Jana Sangh, was chosen by him as Minister of External Affairs.¹²⁶

¹¹⁹ Ananth V. Krishna, *India Since Independence: Making Sense Of Indian Politics* (Pearson Education India, 2011).

¹²⁰ Atique Rahman, "The Political Transformation in India," *Selçuk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, no. 33 (2015): 107–12.

¹²¹ Iqbal Narain and Mohan Lal Sharma, "The Fifth State Assembly Elections in India," *Asian Survey* 13, no. 3 (1973): 318–35.

¹²² DAVEY JR and HAMPTON THOMPSON, *THE TRANSFORMATION OF AN IDEOLOGICAL MOVEMENT INTO AN AGGREGATIVE PARTY: A CASE STUDY OF THE BHARATIYA JANA SANGH* (University of California, Los Angeles, 1969).

¹²³ Shubhangi Mukherjee et al., *Proclamation of National Emergency in India in 1975*, no. 2 (2023): 40–47.

¹²⁴ Myron Weiner, "The 1977 Parliamentary Elections in India," *University of California Press* 17, no. 7 (1977): 619–26.

¹²⁵ B.D. Graham, "The Jana Sangh and Bloc Politics, 1967–80," *The Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 1987, 248–66.

¹²⁶ A. G. Noorani, "The Crisis of India's Party System," *Asian Affairs: An American Review* 7, no. 4 (1980): 233–47.

They gave up their identity and integrated into the Janata Party's political culture, which was inspired by Gandhian and Hindu traditionalism, when they were leading the Jana Sangh. The moderate center-right members of the Jana Sangh were not amused by the party's continued strong ties to RSS and relative stability at the state and local levels. In 1979, riots involving former Janata Sangha members under the Janata Party's reign occurred in Aligarh and Jamshedpur due to a substantial increase in violence between Hindus and Muslims.¹²⁷ After some important Janata Party members demanded that former Jana Sangh members leave the RSS, the Janata Party eventually split into the Janata Party (Secular). After the 1980 general elections and the short coalition government, Desai submitted his resignation as Speaker of the House.¹²⁸ Only 31 seats were won by the Janata Party in the 1980 general elections.¹²⁹ The Janata Party's National Executive Council determined after the elections in April 1980 that party members could not be members of the RSS and the Janata Party at the same time. Former Jana Sangh members founded the Bharatiya Janata Party, their own political party, when the Jana Sangh left.¹³⁰

2.3.From Jana Singh to BJP

By the early 1980s, the newly formed BJP had officially split from the Jana Sangh, but its first president, Vajpayee, was the same as his predecessor even though the two parties were established by the same person.¹³¹ The BJP first moderated the Hindu nationalist stance of the Jana Sangh, during the 1984 elections by emphasizing its affiliation with the Janata Party and Gandhian Socialism. Thus, the BJP was only able to win two seats in the Lok Sabha. The Congress achieved a record 403 seats after Indira Gandhi was murdered, making it difficult for the BJP to challenge them.¹³²

¹²⁷ Violette Graff, "Hindu-Muslim Communal Riots in India I (1947–1986)," *Paris: SciencesPo*, 2013.

¹²⁸ Harold A. Gould, "The Second Coming: The 1980 Elections in India's Hindi Belt," *University of California Press* 20, no. 6 (1980): 595–616.

¹²⁹ M. L. Ahuja, "Electoral Politics and General Elections in India, 1952-1998," *Mittal Publications.*, 1998.

¹³⁰ Nalin Mehta, "Roots of the BJP: The Jan Sangh Story," in *The New BJP*, 1st Edition (Routledge, 2024), 221–67, <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781003474470-12/roots-bjp-nalin-mehta>.

¹³¹ Alistair McMillan, "The BJP Coalition: Partisanship and Power-Sharing in Government," in *Coalition Politics and Hindu Nationalism* (2005), 13–35.

¹³² Vijay Kumar Malhotra and J. C. Jaitli, *EVOLUTIONS OF BJP (1980-2005)*, 2006.

Advani took over as the Party's president in 1984 when Vajpayee's moderate policies failed.¹³³ Under his guidance, the Party expanded into a national instrument of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement and became its political voice. In the 1980s, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) began an effort to build a temple honoring Rama on the site of the Babri Mosque, which was under dispute.¹³⁴ It was reported that Rama's birthplace was demolished to construct a mosque, which led to a dispute about whether there used to be a temple there in the past.¹³⁵ The BJP backed the campaign in 1989 and included it in its program. The party gained 86 Lok Sabha seats, making its support critical to V. P. Singh's administration.¹³⁶

During the Ram temple movement in 1990, Advani took part in a rath yatra (chariot journey) organized by the Bihar chief minister.¹³⁷ Advani was placed in preventative detention for his protests. There was, however, a large gathering of religious volunteers in Ayodhya, many of whom attacked the mosque. Several kar sevaks died in the fighting between the paramilitary forces and the kar sevaks over the course of three days.¹³⁸ The Hindu population in Uttar Pradesh was encouraged to "revenge" for the murders, which resulted in rioting targeting Muslims.¹³⁹ Thereafter, the BJP stopped backing the Singh administration, calling for fresh general elections. As a result, the BJP secured 120 of the 120 seats in the state legislature.¹⁴⁰

A rally organized by the RSS and its affiliates took place at the mosque site on 6 December 1992, which attracted over 100,000 VHP and BJP activists.¹⁴¹ As a result, a violent attack led to the mosque's demolition. As Hindus and Muslims clashed in the weeks following the violence, over 2,000 people died, provoking the demolition after he made provocative remarks that led to

¹³³ David Taylor, *The 1984 Lok Sabha Elections*, 5, no. 1 (1985): 73–86.

¹³⁴ Paola Bacchetta, "Sacred Space in Conflict in India: The Babri Masjid Affair," *Growth and Change* 31, no. 2 (2002): 255–84.

¹³⁵ Farzana Shakoor, "Babri Mosque and India's Secularism," *Pakistan Institute of International Affairs* 46, no. 2 (1993): 43–54 (12 pages).

¹³⁶ M. V. Pylee, "General Elections in India, 1989," in *India's Development and Public Policy* (Routledge, 2017).

¹³⁷ Arshad Islam, "Babri Mosque: A Historic Bone of Contention," *The Muslim World* 97, no. 2 (2007): 259–286.

¹³⁸ S. P. Udayakumar, "Historicizing Myth and Mythologizing History: The 'Ram Temple' Drama," *Social Scientist* 25, no. 7/8 (1997): 11–26.

¹³⁹ Syed Serajul Islam, "The Tragedy of the Babri Masjid: An Expression of Militant Hindu Fundamentalism in India," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 17, no. 2 (1997): 345–51.

¹⁴⁰ Saddam Hosen, "Hindu Nationalism and the Rise of BJP in India: A Critical," *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science* 25, no. 2 (2020): 55–61.

¹⁴¹ "1990: Lal Krishna Advani Embarks on Rath Yatra," *Frontline Magazine*, August 15, 2022.

the VHP movement's ban.¹⁴² After Advani made provocative remarks, the demolition was triggered. Due to the religious split caused by the demolition, the BJP, the nation's largest party, gained a significant number of Lok Sabha seats in 1996. After 13 days, the administration was forced to resign, despite Vajpayee's best efforts to secure a majority in the Lok Sabha.¹⁴³

In 1996, a government was formed by a coalition of regional parties; however, the alliance did not last, leading to midterm elections in 1998. In order to secure an electoral college majority and re-elect Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee for a second term, the BJP then had to establish the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) outside of the coalition with the Telugu Desam Party's (TDP) backing.¹⁴⁴ The Samata Party, Shiv Sena, and the AIADMK had to be part of the alliance in addition to the Biju Janata Dal and the AIADMK.¹⁴⁵ The only regional party that shared the BJP's ideology was the Samata Party. Jayalalitha's withdrawal of support from the AIADMK caused the alliance to collapse, and new elections were called. As a result of this election, the NDA gained 303 seats in the Lok Sabha without the AIADMK, giving it an absolute majority.¹⁴⁶ Vajpayee secured a third term as prime minister, while Advani was named deputy prime minister. During its five-year tenure, the NDA government adopted neoliberal economic policies and took a more assertive stand on terror and defense. The BJP received their highest-ever popular vote total of 183 votes.¹⁴⁷

On February 27, 2002, a Hindu pilgrim train was set on fire outside of Godhra, killing 59 people; 2000 more were wounded; and 150,000 more escaped, many of whom were beaten, raped, and mutilated.¹⁴⁸ Though it was perceived as an assault on Hindus, it also led to an increase of anti-Muslim violence. In order to speed up the investigation and prosecution of

¹⁴² Zeenath Kausar, "Communal Riots in India: Hindu-Muslim Conflict and Resolution," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, April 16, 2007, 353–70, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602000601141323>.

¹⁴³ Aditya Nigam, "India after the 1996 Elections: Nation, Locality, and Representation," *University of California Press* 36, no. 12 (1996): 1157–69.

¹⁴⁴ John McGuire, "The 1998 Indian Election and Its Aftermath," *Arena Journal*, no. 11 (January 1998): 23–32.

¹⁴⁵ Sudha Pai, "The Indian Party System under Transformation: Lok Sabha Elections 1998," *University of California Press* 38, no. 9 (1998): 836–52.

¹⁴⁶ Shriram Yerankar, "COALITION POLITICS IN INDIA," *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 76, no. 3 (2015): 402–6.

¹⁴⁷ Michael Gillan, "BJP in 1998 Lok Sabha Elections in West Bengal: Transformation of Opposition Politics," *Economic and Political Weekly* 33, no. 36 (1998): 2391–95.

¹⁴⁸ "What Is the 2002 Godhra Train Burning Case?," *The Indian Express*, October 9, 2017, <https://indianexpress.com/article/what-is/what-is-godhra-case-gujarat-riots-sabarmati-express-narendra-modi-4881537/>.

offenses connected to the 2009 Gujarat riots; the Supreme Court formed the Special Investigation Team (SIT) in April 2009.¹⁴⁹ Following the SIT's investigation, Mr. Modi has been cleared of any role in the violence in 2012.¹⁵⁰ Maya Kodnani, a BJP MLA in the Modi administration from 2002 to 2013, was allegedly found guilty of instigating one of these riots and given a 28-year prison term.¹⁵¹ It has been argued that the government had a considerable influence on these incidents.

Vajpayee called early elections six months earlier than expected during the 2004 elections.¹⁵² In his slogan "India Shining", he attempted to show that the NDA was responsible for the rapid economic transformation that took place in India.¹⁵³ Therefore, the NDA lost the Lok Sabha by 186 seats, beating the Congress with 222 seats.¹⁵⁴ Following Vajpayee's retirement from the prime minister's post, Sir Manmohan Singh led the UPA and attempted to claim that the NDA's failure was due to its divisive policies and inability to connect with rural Indians.

The Karnataka state elections in May 2008 was the first time in South India's political history that the BJP had won. However, the BJP lost the Karnataka assembly elections in 2013 and had its majority in the Lok Sabha reduced to 116 members in 2009.¹⁵⁵ In India's 2014 general election, the BJP won 282 seats and the NDA 336.¹⁵⁶ The BJP's 31% vote share victory is regarded as a low proportion when compared to the number of seats it obtained altogether.¹⁵⁷ A

¹⁴⁹ India Today's Author, "Gujarat Riots: SIT Submits Report to Supreme Court," *India Today*, March 2, 2009, <https://www.indiatoday.in/latest-headlines/story/gujarat-riots-sit-submits-report-to-supreme-court-40929-2009-03-01>.

¹⁵⁰ "India Gujarat Chief Minister Modi Cleared in Riots Case," *BBC*, April 10, 2012.

¹⁵¹ "Gujarat Riots: BJP's Maya Kodnani Jailed for 28 Years," *BBC*, August 31, 2012, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-19432982>.

¹⁵² Anoop Sadanandan, "The Parliamentary Election in India, April–May 2009," *Electoral Studies* 28, no. 4 (2009): 658–62.

¹⁵³ Zoya Hasan, *INDIAN ELECTIONS 2004: A Setback FOR BJP'S EXCLUSIVIST AGENDA*, 2004.

¹⁵⁴ Prabhu Chawla, "Elections 2004: BJP Pays Heavy Price for Arrogance, Haste and Strategic Blunders," *India Today*, May 16, 2012, <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/cover-story/story/20040524-elections-2004-bjp-pays-heavy-price-for-arrogance-haste-and-strategic-blunders-789954-2004-05-23>.

¹⁵⁵ Muzaffar Assadi, "Karnataka Assembly Elections: Return of the AHINDA," *Economic and Political Weekly* 48, no. 35 (2013): 15–16.

¹⁵⁶ Sagarika Dutt, "India's 2014 Elections: The BJP's Victory," *New Zealand Institute of International Affairs* 39, no. 5 (2014): 16–19.

¹⁵⁷ Richa Taneja, "A Recap Of 2014 Election Results When BJP-Led NDA Formed Government," *NDTV*, May 16, 2019, <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/2014-election-results-a-look-at-poll-outcome-of-last-general-election-2038714>.

single party has maintained an absolute majority in the Lok Sabha without the backing of a coalition of parties for the first time since 1984.

2.4. BJP and Hindu Nationalism

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) embodies a multifaceted ideological stance that encapsulates two primary schools of thought: Hindutva nationalism and Pragmatism. These contrasting ideologies have evolved over time, shaping the party's identity and policy priorities.

The BJP's core ideology is Hindutva, an idea that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has promoted.¹⁵⁸ The Hindutva movement emphasizes the cultural and religious supremacy of Hinduism in India and promotes the preservation of Hindu symbols, customs, and values in a variety of public concerns. The movement also seeks to create a unified Indian identity based on shared culture and religion, and to foster a sense of solidarity among the Hindu people. It also seeks to promote Hindu interests, often at the expense of religious and ethnic minorities.

The BJP party incorporates Hindutva into its policies and actions as a political organization. In order to unify Hindus, the BJP spread cultural practices that have a common historical background. They lay much stress on traditional Hindu practices and beliefs, with issues that most affect the majority being their main agenda points. Such issues include promotion of the Hindi language, protection of Hindi religious sites and resistance against what they perceive as a pro-other-religion policy.

The Hindutva school of thought believes that a Ram temple has to be constructed in the contentious location of Ayodhya, where Hindu mythology claims, Lord Ram is said to have been born.¹⁵⁹ As a symbol of Hindu identity and pride, Hindu pride and identity are viewed as symbols of Hindu identity by the BJP, which is actively advocating its construction. In addition, the Hindutva nationalist movement supports the creation of a single civil code to replace the current legal systems that are based on many religious conventions.

¹⁵⁸ Suhas Palshikar, "The BJP and Hindu Nationalism: Centrist Politics and Majoritarian Impulses," *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 38, no. 4 (2015): 719–35.

¹⁵⁹ S. P. Udayakumar, "Historicizing Myth and Mythologizing History: The 'Ram Temple' Drama," *Social Scientist* 25, no. 7 (n.d.): 11–26.

In Hinduism, cows are considered sacred, and as such they are protected as part of Hindutva nationalism.¹⁶⁰ The BJP has supported legislation that forbids the killing of cows and has advocated for laws that protect cows as a symbol of its dedication to Hindu cultural values. However, a few critics contend that cattle-related industries contribute significantly to the livelihoods of religious minorities, particularly Muslims and Dalits. The goal of the BJP's concept of Hindutva is to uphold Hindu principles while also giving all Hindus a feeling of shared identity.¹⁶¹

In contrast to Hindutva nationalism, pragmatism is a way of thinking in politics that focuses on the usefulness, workability, and practicality of ideas. It values action over strict rules and regulations. When the BJP came to power, it emphasized pragmatism in Indian politics.¹⁶² They implemented economic reforms in the regions they governed and won major elections in 2002 and 2014. Pragmatism within the BJP places a high priority on economic development, infrastructure development, and good governance. Various leaders, including Narendra Modi, have pushed this ideology, which seeks to modernize India and assist it in becoming a global powerhouse.¹⁶³

To stimulate economic growth and address social welfare concerns, the BJP has launched many flagship initiatives under the banner of pragmatism. It is a "Make in India" initiative that creates jobs and spurs economic growth by boosting domestic manufacturing and attracting foreign investment.¹⁶⁴ By using technology, "Digital India" also aims to improve governance, promote digital literacy, and close the digital gap between urban and rural areas. It additionally covers social welfare initiatives aimed at underprivileged groups such as farmers, women, and the impoverished.¹⁶⁵ The initiatives which offer free LPG connections to women from low-income

¹⁶⁰ C. Ram-Prasad, "Hindutva Ideology: Extracting the Fundamentals," *Contemporary South Asia* 2, no. 3 (1993): 285–309.

¹⁶¹ Gurharpal Singh, "Hindu Nationalism in Power: Making Sense of Modi and the BJP-Led National Democratic Alliance Government, 2014–19," *Sikh Formations* 15, nos. 3–4 (2019): 314–31.

¹⁶² Kallimullah and Dr. Amna Mahmood, "Role of Hindutva and Pragmatism in Modi's Foreign Policy towards Pakistan," *Journal of Contemporary Studies* 8, no. 2 (n.d.): 69–82.

¹⁶³ Paul Staniland, "The BJP and Indian Foreign Policy," *Asia Policy* 15, no. 2 (April 2020): 172–75.

¹⁶⁴ "MAKE IN INDIA INITIATIVE," Ministry of External Affairs, 2014, https://www.mea.gov.in/Images/attach/Make_in_India_Initiative.pdf.

¹⁶⁵ John McGuire, "The BJP and Governance in India: An Overview," *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 25, no. 3 (2002): 1–15.

homes, and financial inclusion for the unbanked population, both reflect the BJP's dedication to inclusive development.¹⁶⁶

2.5. BJP Manifesto

The BJP's manifesto comprehensively articulates its policy priorities and governance agendas, emphasizing national security, economic development, social welfare, and cultural nationalism. The manifesto incorporates elements of Hindutva nationalism and pragmatism, highlighting a robust defense posture and a strict approach to terrorism.¹⁶⁷ It pledges to strengthen border security, modernize India's armed forces, and counter cross-border terrorism effectively. Additionally, the BJP promises to safeguard India's strategic interests through a proactive foreign policy. The manifesto emphasizes economic growth, job creation, and infrastructure improvement. It aims to foster entrepreneurship, encourage innovation, and revitalize key sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and services.¹⁶⁸

The BJP's approach to economic development is based on self-reliance, sustainability, and inclusive growth. Social welfare commitments include expanding health insurance coverage, strengthening the social security net, and enhancing education and skills development. The BJP reiterates its commitment to empowering women, safeguarding minorities' rights, and promoting societal cohesion. Cultural nationalism is another key focus, with promises to preserve India's cultural heritage, promote traditional art forms, and enhance Indian soft power through yoga, Ayurveda, and other cultural elements. The manifesto reflects the BJP's ideological orientation, merging Hindutva nationalism with pragmatism to create a roadmap for governance and future vision for India.¹⁶⁹

Using the lens of neo-classical realism, we can explore how the BJP's manifesto is shaped by collective identities, beliefs, and norms. The BJP's manifesto reflects the party's effort to

¹⁶⁶ McCoy, Dinesh, "'Inclusive Development': The Secular Framing Efforts of the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Role of Neoliberal Rhetoric," 2015.

¹⁶⁷ "BJP Manifesto 2019: Top 10 Promises for next 5 Years," *India Today*, April 8, 2019, <https://www.indiatoday.in/elections/lok-sabha-2019/story/bjp-top-promises-1496617-2019-04-08>.

¹⁶⁸ Ashok Sharma, "A Shift from Identity Politics in the 2014 India Election: The BJP towards Moderation," *Electon*, 2015, 15.

¹⁶⁹ K. Deepalakshmi, "A Comparison of BJP, Congress Manifestoes," *The Hindu*, April 17, 2024, <https://www.thehindu.com/elections/lok-sabha-2019/a-comparison-of-bjp-congress-manifestoes/article61645122.ece>.

construct and reinforce specific identities and norms within Indian society. The BJP prioritizes national security, economic growth, social welfare, and cultural nationalism to construct a shared national identity aligned with its ideological stance. The focus on national security, including a robust defense posture and zero-tolerance towards terrorism, is intended to construct the identity of a strong, sovereign nation that can defend its borders and citizens. As a nation-state, India seeks to be resilient and secure by modernizing its armed forces and combating cross-border terrorism. Furthermore, this approach cultivates a sense of unity and patriotism among the populace, as well as a sense of collective identity that prioritizes the integrity and security of the country.

2.6.An Overview of Modi's Foreign Policy towards Pakistan

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India's foreign policy with Pakistan has changed significantly, shifting from a traditional diplomatic strategy to a more aggressive approach. In India, Modi has changed the strategic outlook significantly, primarily because of his devotion to Hindu nationalism along with his unwavering commitment to national security.¹⁷⁰ Both of these factors have influenced the way India has viewed the world. Due to India's priority of its neighboring country as its top foreign policy agenda, relations with Pakistan have been fraught with tension and political standoffs for a long time Modi has made it clear through his attitude to Pakistan that he takes the perceived threats from militant organizations like Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) extremely seriously.¹⁷¹ The Modi government has faced persistent challenges, but articulating its vision of normal neighborly relations with Pakistan has proved to be challenging. Modi wants to establish an atmosphere of peace and non-hostility with no threat of terror, hostility, or violence between the two countries. There is a long history in Indian history of peacefully resolving bilateral disputes, as evidenced by the Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration, which are documents that emphasize the diplomatic efforts of the Indian government. Nevertheless, despite external challenges, the Modi administration has demonstrated its will to safeguard India's security and territorial integrity.¹⁷² The surgical strikes

¹⁷⁰ Kanti Bajpai, "Narendra Modi's Pakistan and China Policy: Assertive Bilateral Diplomacy, Active Coalition Diplomacy," *International Affairs* 93, no. 1 (January 2017): 69–91.

¹⁷¹ Rory Medcalf, *Narendra Modi: A Transformative Leader in India's Relation with World*, 2015.

¹⁷² Frederic Grare, "India–Pakistan Relations: Does Modi Matter," *The Washington Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (January 21, 2014): 101–14, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2014.1002158>.

that were carried out in response to perceived provocations were a clear indication of this resolve and marked a change from India's initial reactive strategy to a proactive one that aimed to deter aggression.¹⁷³ The surgical strikes also showed India's determination to protect its territorial integrity.

Under PM Narendra Modi's leadership, Indian foreign policy towards Pakistan has exhibited a marked departure from the approaches of previous leaders. While earlier Indian administrations, including those led by leaders such as Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh, pursued a strategy that combined diplomacy with efforts to resolve longstanding issues, PM Modi has adopted a more assertive and rigid stance, particularly in matters related to terrorism and national security. Modi's leadership emphasizes India's pursuit of hard power, focusing on securing India's interests through a combination of military posturing, diplomatic isolation of Pakistan, and promoting India's image as a global power. His leadership has shifted away from the emphasis on dialogue seen under his predecessors, aligning instead with a more assertive nationalism that prioritizes national security over bilateral diplomacy.¹⁷⁴

What sets Modi apart is his ideological inclination toward Hindutva, which influences not only domestic politics but also foreign policy. His government has been less inclined to make concessions or engage in dialogue with Pakistan unless clear gains for India's national security are guaranteed.¹⁷⁵ This contrasts with the leadership of Manmohan Singh, who, despite tensions, engaged in back-channel diplomacy to de-escalate conflicts and sought cooperative frameworks like SAARC for regional peace. Modi's leadership, on the other hand, has focused on sidelining Pakistan in international forums and strengthening India's strategic ties with countries that view Pakistan with suspicion, such as the United States and Israel. His approach reflects a shift toward *realpolitik*, using both international alliances and military power to reinforce India's regional dominance, signaling a significant change in India's foreign policy direction under his leadership.

¹⁷³ Govind Gaurav, "'Modi'fications in Indian Foreign Policy," *Asian Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities* 5, no. 4 (n.d.): 146–53.

¹⁷⁴ George Perkovich and Toby Dalton, "Modi's Strategic Choice: How to Respond to Terrorism from Pakistan," *The Washington Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (May 2015): 23–45.

¹⁷⁵ Adeela Azam, "Indian Foreign Policy towards Pakistan during Modi Era: Assessing the Role of Ideology-Hindu Nationalism," *BTTN Journal* 1, no. 1 (2022): 17–35.

To conclusion, it is evident that BJP nationalist politics and ideology is reflected through Modi's leadership. The Indian foreign policy towards Pakistan has evolved under the leadership of Modi into a blend of assertiveness, as well as a steadfast commitment to maintaining peaceful relations with Pakistan. The desire to balance power in a competitive and anarchic global context and handle security risks motivates India's foreign policy toward Pakistan. The emphasis on military preparedness, proactive defense measures, and diplomatic efforts are all seen as strategies to navigate the challenges posed by the lack of central authority in the international system. Therefore, Modi assertive outlook towards Pakistan is, hence, depicted in his foreign policy towards Pakistan.

CHAPTER 3:

SHIFT IN INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS PAKISTAN UNDER MODI REGIME (2014-2022)

This chapter provides an extensive analysis of Modi's foreign policy options towards Pakistan, which is further divided into three phases to help better comprehend Modi's approach towards Pakistan. The first phase spanning from the beginning of 2014 to the middle of 2016 is characterized by a bilateral approach towards cooperation and peaceful negotiations. On contrary, during the second phase from the end of 2016 to the end of 2019, there has been an increasing tension between India and Pakistan and an aggressive shift in Modi's policy regarding Pakistan that has resulted from the beginning of this period. The third phase of Modi's policy saw the focus of his policy shift away from Pakistan and towards higher regional and global objectives.

3.1. Indian Foreign Policy towards Pakistan under Modi Regime (2014-2016)

In the 2014 manifesto of the BJP, the decade was described as “*the ‘Decade of Decay’, as India suffered from a free fall in governance, economy, diplomacy, foreign policy, or border safety*”.¹⁷⁶ In addition to taking immediate and decisive action on Kashmir, terrorism, and India's nuclear policy, the BJP promised to “*take immediate and decisive action*”.¹⁷⁷ Despite this assertive posture, Prime Minister Narendra Modi initiates a conciliatory approach, signaling India's interest in improving ties and beginning a peaceful dialogue with Pakistan. He invited Pakistan's then-prime minister, Nawaz Sharif, to his swearing-in ceremony and tried to have a friendly relationship with Pakistan. During his 2014 inaugural ceremony, Modi discussed terrorism with PM Nawaz Sharif at a summit he held with him.¹⁷⁸ It was decided by that their foreign secretaries would meet. The Pakistani High Commissioner met with the Hurriyat Group, a separatist group from Kashmir, and India viewed this as a breach of protocol and consequently

¹⁷⁶ Bharatiya Janata Party, B. J. P, *BJP MANIFESTO 2014*, 2014, <https://www.bjp.org/bjp-manifesto-2014>.

¹⁷⁷ Christophe Jaffrelot, “The Modi-Centric BJP 2014 Election Campaign: New Techniques and Old Tactics,” *Contemporary South Asia* 23, no. 2 (2015): 151–66.

¹⁷⁸ “Indian PM Modi Holds Talks with Sharif,” *Aljazeera*, May 27, 2014, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2014/5/27/indian-pm-modi-holds-talks-with-sharif>.

suspended the proposed talks.¹⁷⁹ However, the topics of discussion were the Prime Minister's attendance at the SAARC Summit in Islamabad and the gathering of national security advisors at the SCO Summit in Ufa in July 2015.¹⁸⁰ But following the terrorist strikes in Gurdaspur and Udhampur, the national security advisers' meeting was called off.¹⁸¹ The decision reflected India's firm stance on national sovereignty, particularly on Kashmir, and maintaining preconditions for dialogue.

Additionally, Prime Minister Modi made an unannounced visit to Lahore in December 2015, an act widely viewed as a diplomatic breakthrough. However, the goodwill generated was short-lived due to the Pathankot and Uri terrorist attacks. The Pathankot incident and the Uri attack caused a downturn in Indo-Pak ties. By 2016, there has been a noticeable increase in the frequency of ceasefire breaches and gunfire along the LoC.¹⁸² In March 2016, India resisted retaliation and invited a Pakistani joint investigative team to visit Pathankot to investigate.¹⁸³ However, several analysts critiqued the move as potentially one-sided, aimed at international image-building rather than sincere cooperation.¹⁸⁴ At the UN in February 2016, PM Modi promoted international collaboration and a convention against terrorism. When he met with President Barack Obama in June, the US decided to collaborate with India at the UN to take aim at three terror groups based in Pakistan that are responsible for the Mumbai and Pathankot attacks.¹⁸⁵ Although India maintained a commitment to counterterrorism cooperation at

¹⁷⁹ Dawn News, *Pakistani High Commissioner Meets Hurriyat Leader Geelani*, March 9, 2015, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1168445>.

¹⁸⁰ India.Com, *India-Pakistan Talks: The Complete Ufa Statement India and Pakistan Signed in 2015*, August 22, 2015, <https://www.india.com/news/india/india-pakistan-talks-the-complete-ufa-statement-india-and-pakistan-signed-in-2015-514724/>.

¹⁸¹ "A Temporary Hiccup: NSA Talks Scrapped, but Efforts to Revive Stalled India-Pakistan Dialogue," *Times of India*, August 27, 2015, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/toi-editorials/a-temporary-hiccup-nsa-talks-scrapped-but-efforts-to-revive-stalled-india-pakistan-dialogue-must-continue/>.

¹⁸² Sudha Ramachandran, "Can the India-Pakistan Ceasefire Survive?" *The Diplomat*, November 11, 2016.

¹⁸³ Ankit Panda, "Post-Pathankot Attack, Pakistani Investigative Team Arrives in India," *The Diplomat*, March 29, 2016, <https://thediplomat.com/2016/03/post-pathankot-attack-pakistani-investigative-team-arrives-in-india/>.

¹⁸⁴ Dr. Maryam Azam, "Pakistan – India Security Paradox: Between Deterrence and Coercive Diplomacy," *JSSA* VIII, no. 1 (forthcoming), <https://thesvi.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/dr-marayam-azam.pdf>.

¹⁸⁵ "JOINT STATEMENT: The United States and India: Enduring Global Partners in the 21st Century," *The White House: Office of the Press Secretary*, June 7, 2016.

international forums, Pakistan's official narrative increasingly viewed these moves as part of a broader Indian strategy to isolate Islamabad diplomatically.¹⁸⁶

During his first three years in power, Modi's foreign policy toward Pakistan was marked by gestures of reconciliation, the subsequent phase leaned heavily toward securitization and regional competition. It was in early 2016 that PM Modi's policy was shifted towards isolating Pakistan diplomatically following events such as the Pathankot air strike and the Uri attack.

3.1.1. Ufa Declaration (2015)

The Prime Minister of India and Pakistan met outside the SCO summit in Ufa, Russia, on July 10, 2015.¹⁸⁷ During the meeting in Ufa, both parties issued a joint declaration expressing a commitment at fostering a peaceful and cooperative relationship between the two nuclear-armed neighbors. When Modi came into power the relation between India and Pakistan were deteriorated significantly. The incidents of cross-border terrorism, the dispute over Kashmir, and political interests have obstructed peaceful relations despite several attempts at conciliation and cooperation.

In the Ufa Declaration, India and Pakistan addressed some of their most pressing issues. Prime Minister Modi also indicated his intention that he will visit Islamabad in 2019 to attend the 19th SAARC summit was one of the most important pronouncements to come out of the Ufa meeting with Sharif.¹⁸⁸ The announcement of Modi's visit to Pakistan was accompanied by a joint statement from the two leaders. The two sides decided to take five actions as part of the joint statement. These actions include meeting their national security advisers in New Delhi to talk about terrorism, and meeting with the directors general of military operations for both nations. It was specifically stated in the declaration that all forms of terrorism must be addressed, and perpetrators of terror attacks must be brought to justice. It reinforces India's strategy of

¹⁸⁶ Milad Elharathi, Sadia Mahmood Falki, and Aisha Shahzad, "STRATEGIC AUTONOMY OR ISOLATION: AN ANALYSIS OF MAJOR DYNAMICS OF PAKISTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY," *Margalla Papers*, no. 1 (2020): 112–21.

¹⁸⁷ "Ufa Statement Has Put Nawaz Sharif on the Mat in Pakistan," *Hindustan Times*, July 16, 2015, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/analysis/ufa-statement-has-put-nawaz-sharif-on-the-mat-in-pakistan/story-2gKqO90ZipHGPF9AtxsaDI.html>.

¹⁸⁸ Shyam Balasubramanian, "India-Pakistan Joint Statement on PM Narendra Modi-Nawaz Sharif Talks: Full Text," *NDTV*, July 10, 2015, <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/read-the-full-text-of-the-joint-statement-by-the-foreign-secretaries-of-india-and-pakistan-in-russia-780059>.

engagement but with strict parameters, focusing on counterterrorism and security. During their meeting, the region's leaders expressed a desire to promote peace and development. This included expanding people-to-people contact, promoting trade, and enhancing cultural exchanges. In addition, as a common goodwill gesture, Modi and Sharif decided to free fishermen who had been detained in connection with the Mumbai terror attack. However, no additional details were provided. As a final step, both leaders agreed that a trial for the Mumbai terror attack should be conducted as soon as possible.¹⁸⁹

However, following the Ufa Declaration, the initial optimism also faded. The declaration was met with criticism and backlash in both countries. Indian politicians questioned Pakistan's dedication to fighting terrorism. Pakistani opposition parties and hardliners criticized the perceived omission of the Kashmir issue from the dialogue agenda.¹⁹⁰ The process of dialogue was further stalled by subsequent events, including the attacks on Pathankot Airbase and Uri military base in 2016. Despite the fragile peace efforts, renewed hostilities have led to diplomatic stalemates and deepening mistrust. There is no doubt that the Ufa Declaration of 2015 was an important attempt at reviving the dialogue between India and Pakistan. It offered a framework for dialogue and cooperation that stressed the importance of continued efforts towards peace between both states.

3.1.2. Pathankot Air Strike (2016)

In January 2016, heavily armed militants launched an attack on the Pathankot Air Force base in India.¹⁹¹ The prolonged encounter lasted approximately 17 hours and resulted in the deaths of five Indian security personnel and several others.¹⁹² The incident further strained India-Pakistan relations and dealt a serious blow to the ongoing peace process. The bombing was intended to endanger the fragile peace between them. Indian authorities alleged that the attackers had links to militant groups based in Pakistan and urged Islamabad to act on the intelligence provided.

¹⁸⁹ *The Hindu*, "Full Text of India-Pakistan Joint Statement on PM Narendra Modi-Nawaz Sharif Talks in Russia."

¹⁹⁰ Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, "The Ufa Goof-Up," *Dawn News*, July 14, 2015, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1194294>.

¹⁹¹ "Pathankot Air Base Attack," *The Indian Express*, 2016, <https://indianexpress.com/about/pathankot-air-base-attack/>.

¹⁹² "Why India's Response to Pathankot Attack Was 'a Debacle,'" *BBC*, January 6, 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-35232599>.

Pakistan strongly denied any involvement and reiterated its commitment to regional peace and cooperation.¹⁹³

Indian media cited evidence that allegedly linked the attackers to Pakistan-based groups. In the wake of tension escalation, bilateral relations have worsened. It is believed that on January 2, 2016, militants with ties to Pakistan broke through the Indian Air Force's (AIF) protective ring at the Pathankot station.¹⁹⁴ Following the incident, Prime Minister Modi contacted Nawaz Sharif, urging swift action based on what Indian intelligence agencies described as “specific information.”¹⁹⁵ Pakistan has been asked to act immediately against the assailants by Indian officials. Despite Modi not directly accusing Pakistan of this attack, Sharif expressed condolences, condemned the attack, and assured a serious investigation based on the shared information. Sharif expressed his sympathies to the victims and criticized the act. He promised to prosecute those responsible. He also called for more cooperation between the two countries in the fight against terrorism.¹⁹⁶

Later that month, national security advisers from both countries met to discuss ways to stabilize the situation between India and Pakistan in the wake of this significant incident.¹⁹⁷ India considered Pakistan's willingness to send a Joint Investigation Team (JIT) a rare gesture of cooperation. It was clear that Pakistan had adopted a cooperative approach to the attack and that reciprocal measures should be taken if Pakistani nationals were involved.¹⁹⁸ Both sides expressed intent to continue dialogue and share information to pursue justice and regional stability. They also agreed to cooperate to ensure that any perpetrators of the attack were brought to justice. Despite initial cooperation, Indian leadership later expressed dissatisfaction with the pace of Pakistan's investigation, while Pakistani officials criticized India's reluctance to resume talks.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹³ S K Chatterji, “What India Needs to Learn from the Pathankot Air Base Attack,” *Reuters*, February 16, 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/opinion/what-india-needs-to-learn-from-the-pathankot-air-base-attack-idUS2415251767/>.

¹⁹⁴ “Pathankot Attack: ‘All Terrorists Dead,’” *The Hindu*, November 17, 2021.

¹⁹⁵ Fahad Ahmed Misson, “Pakistan-India Relations: A Critical Appraisal of Power Politics,” *Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad*. 42, no. Winter Issue no. 2 (2022): 54–71.

¹⁹⁶ Mateen Haider, *Six IAF Men Killed as Gunmen Storm Indian Air Force Base, Pakistan Condemns Attack*, 2016, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1230278>.

¹⁹⁷ Ankit Panda, “The Pathankot Attack and India-Pakistan Ties in 2016,” *The Diplomat*, January 5, 2016, <https://thediplomat.com/2016/01/the-pathankot-attack-and-india-pakistan-ties-in-2016/>.

¹⁹⁸ Sumit Kumar, *The Pathankot Airbase Attack and the Future of India-Pakistan Relations*, January 12, 2016.

¹⁹⁹ Muhammad Daim Fazil, “India-Pakistan Peace: Hijacked Again,” *The Diplomat*, 2016, <https://thediplomat.com/2016/04/india-pakistan-peace-hijacked-again/>.

Tensions between the two countries remained high and it remained unlikely that progress would be made in resolving the conflict soon.

3.1.3. Uri Attack

In September 2016, an attack on Jammu and Kashmir claimed the lives of seventeen Indian soldiers, almost eight months after the Pathankot incident in January 2016.²⁰⁰ According to Indian media reports, the attack was carried out by four militants allegedly linked to Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM). This incident further deteriorated the already tense relations between India and Pakistan.

In the Jammu and Kashmir area of Baramulla, on September 18, 2016, an attack occurred on the Indian Army's Brigade Headquarters in Uri, close to the Line of Control with Pakistan.²⁰¹ Around 5:30 AM, four heavily armed militants infiltrated the camp.²⁰² The militants set the camp on fire with 17 grenades in three minutes.²⁰³ The blaze caused severe casualties due to the destruction of tents and temporary shelters housing soldiers. It proved to be one of the bloodiest attacks on the Indian Army in recent history, with over thirty troops wounded and seventeen killed.²⁰⁴ All four of the insurgents were killed in the retaliatory attack carried out by the Indian forces. While the Indian government and military officials swiftly blamed JeM, Pakistan categorically denied any involvement, citing a lack of concrete evidence and calling for an impartial investigation. Pakistani officials argued that India was using such incidents to deflect attention from alleged human rights violations in Indian-administered Kashmir.²⁰⁵

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other cabinet members strongly condemned the attack, emphasizing accountability for the perpetrators. Additionally, he guarantees that those responsible for this heinous assault will face consequences. As a result of the Uri attack, many

²⁰⁰ Mukhtar Ahmad, Rich Phillips, and Joshua Berlinger, "Soldiers Killed in Army Base Attack in Indian-Administered Kashmir," *CNN*, September 19, 2016, <https://edition.cnn.com/2016/09/18/asia/india-kashmir-attack/index.html>.

²⁰¹ "Militants Attack Indian Army Base in Kashmir 'Killing 17,'" *BBC*, September 18, 2016, <https://bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-37399969>.

²⁰² "Uri Attack," *Times of India*, 2016, <https://thediplotmat.com/tag/uri-attack/>.

²⁰³ "17 Indian Soldiers Killed in Attack on Kashmir Base," *Aljazeera*, September 18, 2016, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/9/18/17-indian-soldiers-killed-in-attack-on-kashmir-base>.

²⁰⁴ *BBC*, "Militants Attack Indian Army Base in Kashmir 'Killing 17.'"

²⁰⁵ Arjun Sreekumar, "Uri and Pathankot: Defending India's Defense Establishments," *The Diplomat*, 2016.

Indian leaders and policymakers framed it as a surgical strike with framed their response as a “surgical strike”—a term widely used in Indian media and political discourse.²⁰⁶ The Pakistani foreign minister refuted claims Pakistan that was involved in the attack and no such strikes took place and accused India of fabricating the narrative for political gain.²⁰⁷

In retaliation, the Indian Army launched surgical strikes on terrorist launch sites across the Line of Control on September 29, 2016.²⁰⁸ In the course of these strikes, India claimed that a significant number of terrorists were killed. The two countries' military presence and alertness along the Line of Control increased. There was a sharp decline in diplomatic contacts because of the attack. Dialogues and peace negotiations were stalled, and a climate of distrust prevailed. While other countries have backed India's anti-terrorism posture, the international community has also urged restraint and dialogue between the two nations. The regional stability of South Asia has been put at risk by the intensifying hostilities between India and Pakistan. International worry arose about the possibility of further escalation or perhaps full-scale conflict between two nuclear power states.²⁰⁹

As per the Pakistani military leadership, India deliberated to create a false impression by associating the surgical strike with terrorists.²¹⁰ Pakistani soldiers lost their lives in cross-border firing, escalating tensions in the region. Pakistan accused India of violating the ceasefire agreement between the two countries. India denied all accusations by saying Pakistani forces had initiated the firing.²¹¹ The incident brought attention to the ongoing problem of terrorism in the area and further exacerbated the already tense ties between the two nations. Although India took a strong stance against cross-border terrorism, Pakistan denied involvement, which increased diplomatic and military tensions in India. Uri attack marked a shift toward a more

²⁰⁶ Dr. Asma Shakir Khawaja and Shumaila Zahoor, “INDIAN MEDIA: FEEDING THE WAR HYSTERIA OR A PEACE DIVIDEND?,” *NDU Journal*, n.d., 147–63.

²⁰⁷ “Pulwama Attack: Pakistan Warns India against Military Action,” *BBC*, February 19, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-47290107>.

²⁰⁸ “India’s ‘surgical Strikes’ in Kashmir: Truth or Illusion?,” *BBC*, October 23, 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-37702790>.

²⁰⁹ Toby Dalton and George Perkovich, “Is a Pakistan-India War Just One Terrorist Attack Away?,” *Herald*, January 24, 2017, <https://carnegieendowment.org/posts/2017/01/is-a-pakistan-india-war-just-one-terrorist-attack-away?lang=en>.

²¹⁰ Rishi Iyengar, “Uri Attack: India, Pakistan’s Kashmir Dispute Flares Again,” *Time Magazine*, 2016, <https://time.com/4498891/kashmir-uri-attack-india-pakistan-military-conflict/>.

²¹¹ Kunwar Khuldune Shahid, *Uri Attack: Why Pakistan Needs to Denounce Armed Jihad*, September 21, 2016.

aggressive, security-focused policy; aligns with India's strategic goal of countering cross-border terrorism.

India's foreign policy toward Pakistan under Modi's leadership from 2014 to 2016 focused on establishing a framework to govern the two countries' relationship based on dialogue, mutual trust, and understanding. India sought to strengthen its economic ties with Pakistan through friendly engagement, while also working to reduce tensions between the two nations. It also hoped to resolve unresolved issues through peaceful dialogue. In the beginning, Modi's foreign policy showed a commitment to resolving disputes through negotiations and diplomatic efforts. A number of events during this phase highlight India and Pakistan's efforts towards peace and cooperation. These events include the invitation to Pakistan to take part in Modi's oath ceremony in 2014, the Ufa declaration, and Modi's visit to Pakistan. It is evident that India and Pakistan are making committed efforts to build structured bilateral relations through these regular meetings and agreements. However, Modi's policy of cooperation with Pakistan shifted towards diplomatically isolating Pakistan. It reflects India's dual-track foreign policy approach with initial diplomatic engagement followed by a shift toward securitization and regional dominance. Modi's shift from outreach to isolating Pakistan diplomatically aligns with the broader Indian objectives of securing national interests, countering terrorism, and enhancing India's international image as a responsible power.

3.2. Indian Foreign Policy towards Pakistan (2017-2020)

Since 2016, tensions between India and Pakistan have escalated, marked by a series of tit-for-tat cross-border incidents, reflecting a more assertive stance under Modi's foreign policy. The BJP's 2019 election manifesto reiterated a hardline position on Pakistan, supporting the Modi government's policy of granting Indian security forces operational autonomy.²¹² During his re-election campaign, Modi emphasized a strong nationalist agenda, appealing to domestic sentiments on security and sovereignty. Furthermore, it promotes coalition diplomacy as a means of combating global terrorism. The Pulwama attack in Indian-administered Kashmir in February 2019, followed by an Indian airstrike on Balakot, was portrayed by Indian leadership as evidence

²¹² "India's BJP Releases Manifesto before Elections," *Aljazeera*, April 8, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/4/8/indias-bjp-releases-manifesto-before-elections>.

of its resolve to combat terrorism.²¹³ As a result of this airstrike, the two sides engaged in a cycle of retaliation against one another.

At the outset of Modi's second term, his administration adopted a more confrontational policy on the Kashmir issue. India suspended dialogue on Kashmir and implemented economic measures against Pakistan, including the withdrawal of Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status, which further strained ties. The Modi government also hinted at reviewing provisions of the Indus Waters Treaty, adding pressure to bilateral tensions. In addition, the Abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A weakened Kashmiris' fundamental rights and intensified hostilities with Pakistan.²¹⁴

3.2.1. BJP's Manifesto in 2019 Elections

Between 2016 and 2017, a notable shift occurred in India's foreign policy toward Pakistan, influenced by rising cross-border tensions and the perceived ineffectiveness of bilateral dialogue. Following terrorist incidents like those in Uri and Pathankot, India adopted a more assertive and confrontational diplomatic approach, aiming to isolate Pakistan on the global stage. The BJP took a more hard-line posture toward Pakistan at the start of the polls, according to its platform for the 2019 general elections. During the elections, the party pledged strong measures against terrorism and assured the public of enhanced national security. It reiterated its "zero-tolerance" policy against terrorism, vowing to empower security forces in counterterror operations.²¹⁵

Consequently, this hardline approach coincided with the BJP's electoral success, suggesting a strategic alignment between foreign policy and domestic political gains. During the 2019 Indian general elections, a terrorist group attacked soldiers in Pulwama, resulting in a significant vote in favor of Modi's government.²¹⁶ Indian media and officials attributed the attack to a Pakistan-based militant group, which ignited nationalist sentiments and bolstered support for the government. Modi's emphasis on national security and counterterrorism was perceived as

²¹³ Muhsin Puthan Purayil, "India and the Balakot Airstrike: Reflections beyond Hard Power," *Comparative Strategy* 41, no. 1 (2022): 46–59.

²¹⁴ Dalbir Ahlawat and M. Raymond Izarali, "India's Revocation of Article 370: Security Dilemmas and Options for Pakistan," *The Round Table* 109, no. 6 (2020): 663–83.

²¹⁵ "Manifesto 2019 - English Final-For Web.Cdr," Manifesto 2019 - English Final-For Web.cdr Bharatiya Janata Party, 2019, <https://www.bjp.org/files/2019-10/BJP-Election-english-2019.pdf>.

²¹⁶ Mohammed Sinan Siyech, "The Pulwama Attack," *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* 11, no. 4 (2019): 6–10.

instrumental in rallying electoral support during the 2019 campaign.²¹⁷ This marked a broader shift in India's foreign policy, characterized by increased assertiveness in regional and international diplomacy.

According to polls and social media posts, the BJP shifted its campaign narrative from economic issues to national security and terrorism. The Pulwama attack amplified nationalistic rhetoric, reinforcing public perceptions of Modi as a strong leader capable of defending national security. Critics argue that the focus on terrorism and national security was also a political strategy to divert attention from economic challenges such as job scarcity and slow growth.²¹⁸ At the time, India was experiencing economic difficulties, including sluggish GDP growth, high unemployment, and income inequality. Despite the BJP's promises to address these issues, job creation had remained low, leaving many Indians disillusioned and frustrated. The party's attempt to redirect attention from these financial difficulties and toward a topic that is popular with the public may be observed in its move toward security and terrorism during the election. Opposition parties further criticized the BJP for allegedly prioritizing tensions with Pakistan over resolving pressing domestic concerns.

3.2.2. Pulwama attack (2019)

The dreadful terrorist assaults that occurred in Pulwama in the early hours of February 14, 2019, escalated the already intense conflict between India and Pakistan.²¹⁹ Forty officers from the Central Reserve Police Force were killed in the Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir, which contributed to the circumstances that nearly led to a nuclear-armed conflict between the two neighbors.²²⁰ On February 14, 2019, a suicide bomber in Pulwama rammed his explosives-laden vehicle into a CRPF car.²²¹ The suspect was identified as Pulwama resident Adil Ahmad

²¹⁷ "BJP Used Pulwama Attack, Balakot Air Strike to Win 2019 LS Polls: Ex-Tripura CM Manik Sarkar," *The Hindu*, April 23, 2023, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/bjp-used-pulwama-attack-balakot-air-strike-to-win-2019-ls-polls-ex-tripura-cm-manik-sarkar/article66770170.ece>.

²¹⁸ Yogesh Joshi, Nishant Rajeev, and Wini Fred Gurung, "INDIA AND THE WORLD IN MODI'S SECOND TERM," *Institute of South Asian Studies* 11 (forthcoming), <https://www.isas.nus.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/India-and-the-World-in-Modis-Second-Term-Full.pdf>.

²¹⁹ Moeed W. Yusuf, "The Pulwama Crisis," *Arms Control Association* 49, no. 4 (May 2019): 6–11.

²²⁰ Muhammad Feyyaz, "Contextualizing the Pulwama Attack in Kashmir – A Perspective from Pakistan," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 13, no. 2 (2019): 69–74.

²²¹ Mohammed Sinan Siyech, "The Pulwama Attack: Significance, Implications and the Way Forward," *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* 11, no. 4 (April 2019): 6–10.

Dar, a member of the Pakistani extremist organization Jaish-e-Mohammed.²²² One of the bloodiest attacks on Indian security forces in the past 20 years, the explosion sent shockwaves across the nation amid widespread condemnation and spontaneous demands for prompt and harsh action.

India blamed Pakistan once more, stating that Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) was responsible for the attack. India tried to project an image of greater assertiveness and claimed that Pakistan was involved in the Pulwama incident.²²³ Indian government officials promised harsh punishment for terrorists in the case of an attack. India asserts that there is a clear connection between Pakistan and the actions of the terrorist organization Jaish-e-Muhammad (JEM), and that the JEM group was founded in Pakistan. Following the Pulwama tragedy, Indian Finance Minister Arun Jaitley declared he will cut out Pakistan from the diplomatic community.²²⁴ Following the Pulwama incident, both India and Pakistan withdrew their ambassadors, further escalating tensions between the two nations.

Despite the Indian allegation regarding the Pulwama attack and delegitimization of Pakistan, Pakistan condemned the attack and affirmed that it would take strict action to combat terrorism. Pakistan also stated that it was ready to cooperate with India in any investigation into the attack. Pakistan said that it was dedicated to regional stability and peace. It would take all necessary steps to guarantee regional peace and stability.

²²² Mohammed Sinan Siyech.

²²³ Lowy Institute, "Pulwama Terrorist Attack: Modi under Pressure," *Ian Hall*, February 21, 2019, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/pulwama-terrorist-attack-modi-under-pressure>.

²²⁴ Moeed W. Yusuf, "The Pulwama Crisis."

3.2.3. Balakot Air strike (2019)

The Indian Air Force (IAF) airstrike on Balakot on February 26, 2019, marked a significant escalation in the conflict dynamics between India and Pakistan.²²⁵ The Balakot airstrike was carried out in response to the Pulwama attack of February 14, 2019.²²⁶ The Pulwama attack resulted in the deaths of forty Indian paramilitary personnel, following a suicide bombing targeting their convoy.²²⁷ The incident sparked widespread public outrage in India and demands for strong retaliatory action. In the early hours of February 26, 2019, the IAF conducted an airstrike targeting what it identified as a Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) training camp in Balakot, located in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.²²⁸ Indian fighter jets crossed the Line of Control (LoC), a move seen as a breach of territorial boundaries by Pakistan and projection of regional military strength. IAF Mirage 2000 jets, equipped with precision-guided munitions, carried out the strike.²²⁹ Indian officials claimed the strike inflicted significant militant casualties; however, Pakistan denied any major damage or casualties and condemned the action as a violation of its sovereignty. On February 27, 2019, Pakistan conducted retaliatory airstrikes across the LoC, targeting what it described as non-military installations.²³⁰ Pakistan launched an aircraft strike on Indian military sites on February 27, 2019, in retaliation.²³¹ An Indian pilot, Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman, was captured by Pakistan after his aircraft was shot down; in a de-escalatory gesture, Pakistan returned him on March 1, 2019.²³²

Diplomatic channels were promptly engaged to prevent further escalation, as the situation had brought the two nuclear-armed neighbors perilously close to open conflict. The airstrike underscored the fragile nature of peace in the South Asian region. Both countries escalated

²²⁵ "The Pulwama-Balakot Crisis," *BBC*, February 26, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-asia-47379558>.

²²⁶ Muhsin Puthan Purayil, "India and the Balakot Airstrike: Reflections beyond Hard Power."

²²⁷ Vinay Kaura, "India's Pakistan Policy: From 2016 'surgical Strike' to 2019 Balakot 'Airstrike,'" *The Round Table* 109, no. 3 (2020): 277–87.

²²⁸ Rauf Shahzad, "STRATEGIC DETERRENCE IN SOUTH ASIA FROM THE PRISM OF BALAKOT AND BEYOND," *NDU Journal*, 2019.

²²⁹ Dr. Nasir Mehmood and Usman Haider, "Understanding India's 'Surgical Strike' Special Operations and Pakistan's Response," *Journal of Security & Strategic Analyses* 8, no. 1 (2022): 49–70.

²³⁰ Asad Hashim, "India Bombs Targets inside Pakistan," *Aljazeera*, February 26, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/2/26/india-bombs-targets-inside-pakistan>.

²³¹ NDTV, *PM Narendra Modi, 2019 Balakot Strikes*, 2024, <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/pm-narendra-modi-2019-balakot-strikes-informed-pakistan-before-disclosing-to-world-pms-reveal-on-balakot-strikes-5554226>.

²³² "Abhinandan: Captured Indian Pilot Handed Back by Pakistan," *BBC*, March 2, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-47412884>.

military preparedness along the LoC, leading to heightened tension and a climate of uncertainty.²³³ In India, the airstrike was leveraged politically to project the ruling party's firm stance on terrorism. In contrast, Pakistan's leadership emphasized national unity and defense of sovereignty in its response.

The crisis highlighted not only the risk of war but also the destabilizing potential of military posturing between the two countries. It underscored the region's volatility and the ever-present threat of nuclear escalation in South Asia. Although the immediate crisis de-escalated, the Balakot incident left a lasting imprint on Indo-Pakistan relations. The strike set a precedent for cross-border military action against perceived terrorist threats and raised critical questions about thresholds for engagement and rules of deterrence. The episode emphasized the urgent need for robust conflict-resolution frameworks and strengthened confidence-building measures to avoid future escalations.²³⁴

3.2.4. The Pilot diplomacy

Following the Balakot airstrike, Pakistan claimed to have shot down two Indian fighter jets, with one confirmed to be a MiG-21 piloted by Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman.²³⁵ The pilot was captured after his aircraft crashed in Pakistani-administered territory. Footage released by Pakistani authorities showed military personnel rescuing the Indian pilot from local civilians and administering initial medical aid. The visuals depicted the pilot receiving medical attention and being treated respectfully by Pakistani military personnel.²³⁶ However, India strongly objected to the public dissemination of the videos, viewing it as the politicization of a sensitive incident. Indian government tried to maintain international credibility while appearing firm

²³³ Muhsin Puthan Purayil, "India and the Balakot Airstrike: Reflections beyond Hard Power."

²³⁴ BBC, "Viewpoint: Balakot Air Strikes Raise Stakes in India-Pakistan Stand-Off."

²³⁵ Lt. Gen. Deependra Singh Hooda, "Three Years After Balakot: Reckoning with Two Claims of Victory," *Stimson.Org*, 2022, <https://www.stimson.org/2022/three-years-after-balakot-reckoning-with-two-claims-of-victory/>.

²³⁶ Abhijnan Rej, "Dogfight and Football: How the 2019 Balakot Airstrike Still Fuels Political Bickering in India and Pakistan," *The Diplomat*, 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/10/dogfight-and-football-how-the-2019-balakot-airstrike-still-fuels-political-bickering-in-india-and-pakistan/>.

domestically. Indian authorities emphasized their concern for the safety and well-being of the pilot and called for his immediate repatriation.²³⁷

In a strategic diplomatic gesture, Pakistan assured that the captured pilot would be treated in accordance with international norms and with full respect for his dignity. This culminated in his release and return to Indian authorities at the Wagah-Attari border on March 1, 2019.²³⁸ The repatriation of Wing Commander Abhinandan played a significant role in de-escalating tensions between the two nuclear-armed states and opened a brief diplomatic window. His release was interpreted by many as a goodwill gesture by Pakistan, contributing to a temporary reduction in tensions and facilitating the possibility of renewed dialogue. The episode reflected a momentary willingness by both sides to prioritize diplomatic engagement over military escalation. While rooted in intense conflict, the incident ultimately highlighted the potential for peaceful resolution and the vital role of diplomacy in addressing bilateral disputes.

3.2.5. Revoking article 370 and 370A and Strained Bilateral Relations

On August 5, 2019, the Indian government's revocation of Articles 370 and 35A significantly reshaped the political status of Jammu and Kashmir, with far-reaching implications at both domestic and international levels.²³⁹ In 1949, Article 370 was added to the Indian Constitution, granting Jammu and Kashmir special autonomous status.²⁴⁰ The article permitted Jammu and Kashmir to have its own constitution and autonomy over internal matters, excluding foreign affairs, defense, and communications.²⁴¹ Article 35A further extended this autonomy by empowering the state legislature to define permanent residents and regulate their rights

²³⁷ “Coming Home: On the Release of Wg. Cdr. Abhinandan,” *The Hindu*, November 28, 2021, <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/coming-home/article59780128.ece>.

²³⁸ Zaheer Babar, “Pakistan Returns Captured Indian Pilot,” *The Diplomat*, March 2, 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/03/pakistan-returns-captured-indian-pilot/>.

²³⁹ Muhammad Qasim Ali et al., “Implications of Pak-India Relations in Pre & Post Revocation of Article 370 And 35a in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir,” *GUMAN* 7, no. 2 (2024): 267–81.

²⁴⁰ Pallash Pamnani, “History and Revocation of Article 35A and Article 370,” *Legal Lock J.* 1 (2021): 61.

²⁴¹ Rida Asad and Kifayat Ullah, “The Revocation of Article 35-A and 370, and the State of Human Rights in Indian-Occupied Kashmir,” *Regional Lens* 1, no. 1 (2022): 40–48.

concerning employment, property, and education.²⁴² The provision also addressed residency rights, particularly affecting women's rights in the context of marriage to non-residents.²⁴³

The repeal of Articles 370 and 35A was a long-standing goal of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and was part of its 2014 election manifesto, prompting substantial debate following its electoral victory. The BJP argued that these provisions fostered separatism, hindered economic development, and contributed to a sense of alienation within the region. The party highlighted the historical significance of repealing Articles 370 and 35A in its 2019 Lok Sabha election manifesto, which further highlighted this goal. The President of India issued a constitutional order on August 5, 2019, repealing Article 35A and replacing the 1954 directive. Furthermore, the government divided the state into Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh and revoked the state's special status under Article 370 asserting sovereignty over Kashmir. Prime Minister Modi justified the revocation by arguing that Article 35A lacked parliamentary ratification and was therefore unconstitutional.

Following the abrogation, a security lockdown was imposed in Kashmir, involving the deployment of additional troops, suspension of communication networks, and detention of political leaders.²⁴⁴ In addition to the concerns about human rights infringement and civil liberties suppression raised by the region, far-reaching lockdowns have been unleashed in the region. Internationally, the move drew criticism from several governments and human rights organizations, which raised concerns regarding civil liberties and due process in Kashmir, thereby intensifying global scrutiny of India's policies.²⁴⁵ The withdrawal of these articles has far-reaching consequences for India and Pakistan's already strained ties, exacerbating

²⁴² Abdul Waheed, Dr. Adil Khan, and Muhammad Ejaz, "Revocation of Article 370 Of Indian Constitution Implications for Regional Peace," *Pakistan Journal of International Affairs* 5, no. 2 (2022).

²⁴³ Aijaz Ashraf Wani, Imran Ahmad Khan, and Tabzeer Yaseen, "Article 370 and 35A: Origin, Provisions, and the Politics of Contestation," in *Society and Politics of Jammu and Kashmir* (2020), 53–77.

²⁴⁴ Robina Khan, Muhammad Zubair Khan, and Zafar Abbas, "Moving towards Human Catastrophe: The Abrogation of Article 370 in Kashmir Valley," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 41, no. 1 (2021): 78–85.

²⁴⁵ Tariq Rather, "Abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution of India: Socio-Economic and Political Implications on Jammu and Kashmir," *International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews* 7, no. 3 (September 2020): 7.

tensions.²⁴⁶ In response, Pakistan intensified efforts to internationalize the Kashmir dispute, raising the issue at multiple international forums, including the United Nations.

Between 2016 and 2020, Prime Minister Modi's foreign policy towards Pakistan was characterized by a strategy of diplomatic isolation. During this period, India adopted a more aggressive stance on Kashmir and refused to negotiate with Pakistan. Following the Pulwama incident, several significant steps were taken to shift the regional power dynamics, including the repeal of Articles 35A and 370, and the bombing of Balakot. The Balakot airstrike underscored India's willingness to employ military force to protect its interests, while the constitutional changes in Kashmir were framed by the Indian government as efforts to consolidate national integration. The actions taken by Prime Minister Modi's government might be seen as an effort to safeguard India's interests and marginalization of Pakistan's influence on Kashmir narrative. In the aftermath of these developments, Pakistan appeared to recede from the central focus of India's foreign policy discourse, as New Delhi increasingly prioritized global strategic partnerships over regional engagement. This shift marked a reorientation in India's foreign policy, with reduced emphasis on bilateral engagement with Pakistan.

3.3. Indian Foreign Policy towards Pakistan (2021-2022)

Since 2020, India's foreign policy with Pakistan has been characterized by a diplomatic disengagement and a robust military posture under Modi. The geopolitical moves in the area, the state of Kashmir, and persistent challenges like cross-border terrorism have all contributed to the difficult relationship between the two nations. However, India's foreign policy moved away from isolating Pakistan and toward looking outside of the region, making Pakistan irrelevant. Diplomatic engagement between India and Pakistan has been limited during this period. High-level talks were infrequent, and when they did occur, they often ended without significant progress. The Modi administration has maintained a firm stance, insisting that meaningful dialogue could only proceed if Pakistan took verifiable actions against terrorist groups operating on its territory. This stance has been underscored by India's continued emphasis on terrorism at

²⁴⁶ Mohsin Abbas, Dr. Ghulam Mustafa, and Muhammad Arslan, "India's Constitutional Change: Revocation of Article 370 and 35-A and the Repercussions from Pakistan," *UOS Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities* 8, no. 1 (2024): 24–37.

various international forums.²⁴⁷ While India has increasingly sought to minimize engagement with Pakistan and redirect its strategic focus beyond South Asia, this approach has had significant implications for regional stability and for Pakistan's foreign policy calculus.

Subrahmanyam Jaishankar's appointment as Foreign Minister in May 2019 marked a shift in Modi's approach to Pakistan. While Indian foreign policy was aggressive, guided by the growing military force and confident bureaucracy of an emerging India, Jaishankar's tenure has seen a nuanced strategy. Indian foreign policy decisions have enabled India to maximize its opportunities while minimizing risks, resulting in a highly successful outcome. During his tenure at the Prime Minister's Office, Jaishankar has maintained an "India-First" policy aimed at making no new enemies and maintaining no old friendships, while leveraging the emerging geopolitical scenario to India's advantage. This policy shift has redirected India's focus from isolating Pakistan internationally to asserting its status as a regional power in South Asia. From Pakistan's perspective, such policy shifts are viewed as attempts to unilaterally shape the regional narrative and marginalize Pakistan's legitimate concerns, particularly regarding the status of Jammu and Kashmir and regional security dynamics. The continued emphasis on terrorism, without equal acknowledgment of unresolved political disputes, reflects a narrative that often places disproportionate blame on Pakistan while downplaying bilateral complexities.

During Modi's second term, Indian foreign policy has increasingly focused on its newfound global status rather than Pakistan. Since 2020, Indian foreign policy's focus has been placed on other objectives, such as developing the economy, strengthening diplomatic ties, and focusing on regional issues. By shifting its focus from Pakistan to other areas, the Indian government has increased its global influence. Following the February 2019 Pulwama attack and the subsequent Balakot airstrike, India continued to maintain a high level of alert along the Line of Control (LoC). There were several instances of ceasefire violations. In February 2021, India and Pakistan reaffirmed their 2003 ceasefire agreement, resulting in temporary reduction in hostilities along the LoC.²⁴⁸ The ceasefire has eased tensions along the LoC and helped Kashmiris on both sides,

²⁴⁷ Muhammad Farhan Khan and Iram Khalid, "PM Modi's Foreign Policy Decision-Making: A Case Study of Post-Pulwama Situation.," *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan* 58, no. 4 (2021): 35.

²⁴⁸ Christopher Clary, "The 2021 India-Pakistan Ceasefire: Origins, Prospects, and Lessons Learned," *United States Institute of Peace*, February 6, 2024, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2024/02/2021-india-pakistan-ceasefire-origins-prospects-and-lessons-learned>.

while also allowing India to reallocate some of its forces closer to China. This move has garnered praise from the international community. Despite the ceasefire in Kashmir, here are no signs that the ceasefire would lead to an improvement in India-Pakistan ties.²⁴⁹

3.4. International Structural Factors Shaping India's Foreign Policy Towards Pakistan

The period from 2020 to 2022 represents a critical juncture in the evolution of Indian foreign policy towards Pakistan. During these years, India's approach was not solely driven by domestic political calculations or bilateral developments but significantly shaped by international structural factors. These include the dynamics of global institutions like the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), strategic rivalry surrounding the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and the shifting geopolitical landscape of South and Central Asia. Within the framework of neo-classical realism, these external factors filtered through India's domestic political priorities and leadership perceptions contributed to a more assertive and detached posture toward Pakistan.

3.4.1. FATF and International Pressure on Pakistan

One of the most influential external factors was the role of the FATF, which kept Pakistan on its grey list from 2018 until its removal in 2022.²⁵⁰ India utilized FATF as an instrument of international pressure to highlight Pakistan's alleged inability or unwillingness to dismantle terrorist financing networks. Throughout this period, Indian diplomats repeatedly stressed Pakistan's links to cross-border terrorism and its failure to fully comply with FATF recommendations.²⁵¹ This strategy allowed India to externalize its security concerns and gain international validation for its counterterrorism narrative.

By leveraging its influence within FATF-member states, India aimed to undermine Pakistan's credibility in the global financial system, thereby limiting its access to economic support from

²⁴⁹ Surya Valliappan Krishna, *Bordering on Peace: Evaluating the Impact of the India-Pakistan Ceasefire*, February 24, 2022, <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2023/07/bordering-on-peace-evaluating-the-impact-of-the-india-pakistan-ceasefire?lang=en>.

²⁵⁰ Noor Fatima Iftikhar, Syed Qasim Abbas, and Areesha Shahid, "Pakistan's FATF Journey 2018-2022," *Research Society of International Law*, 2022, <https://rsilpak.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Pakistans-FATF-Journey-Global-Governance-Initiative-RSIL.pdf>.

²⁵¹ Abdur Rehman Shah, "India and Pakistan at the Financial Action Task Force: Finding the Middle Ground between Two Competing Perspectives," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 75, no. 2 (2021): 136–41, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2020.1793897>.

international institutions such as the IMF and World Bank. This diplomatic offensive functioned not only to pressure Pakistan but also to frame India as a responsible security actor committed to upholding global counterterrorism norms. This external validation of India's stance allowed the Modi government to justify its hardened position domestically and further reduce the space for bilateral engagement.

3.4.2. Strategic Rivalry Over CPEC and the BRI

Another critical factor was the intensification of strategic rivalry in the region, particularly centered around the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). India has consistently rejected CPEC on the grounds that it violates its sovereignty by traversing the territory of Gilgit-Baltistan, which India claims as part of the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir.²⁵² From New Delhi's perspective, CPEC is not merely an economic initiative but a strategic corridor that enhances China's influence in South Asia and deepens Islamabad's dependency on Beijing.²⁵³

As a response, India has opposed BRI at international forums and has strengthened its strategic cooperation with anti-BRI alliances such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad). The opposition to CPEC represents a clear example of India's geopolitical balancing, where its Pakistan policy is intricately tied to the broader strategic contest with China.²⁵⁴ The perception that Pakistan is facilitating China's regional expansion through CPEC has reinforced India's efforts to isolate Pakistan diplomatically, block its access to regional cooperation platforms, and deprioritize bilateral negotiations

In the period from 2020 to 2022, India's foreign policy toward Pakistan was deeply influenced by external structural forces. The combination of international institutional pressure, strategic competition, and shifting alliances pushed India to adopt a calculated disengagement strategy. Neo-classical realism explains this behavior by highlighting how systemic pressures are interpreted through the lenses of leadership priorities and domestic political goals that shape

²⁵² Adnan Aamir, "India's Opposition to CPEC on Shaky Ground," *Asia Times*, April 1, 2020, <https://asiatimes.com/2020/04/indias-opposition-to-cpec-on-shaky-ground/#>.

²⁵³ A Z Hilali, "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and Dynamics of Regional Connectivity: Prospects and Challenges," *Strategic Studies* 39, no. 4 (2019): 89–103.

²⁵⁴ Muhammad Atif and Prof. Dr. Muqarrab Akbar, "The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) vs. Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the Quad): A Perspective of a Game Theory," *Journal of Development and Social Science* 2, no. 4 (n.d.): 63–75, [https://doi.org/10.47205/jdss.2021\(2-IV\)6](https://doi.org/10.47205/jdss.2021(2-IV)6).

foreign policy decisions. India's gradual movement away from Pakistan-centric diplomacy represents a strategic realignment in response to global geopolitical transformations, enabling India to position itself as a rising power with ambitions that extend well beyond the subcontinent.

The three phases of Indian foreign policy toward Pakistan under the Modi administration, demonstrate a sequential shift in the country's foreign policy strategy. The first phase, characterized by strategy of non-alignment, cooperation, and peace process, resulted in limited progress in improving relations with Pakistan. The second phase, marked by a more assertive approach and a focus on isolating Pakistan diplomatically, saw a deterioration in bilateral relations. The third phase of Modi's foreign policy which emphasized reorienting India's policy away from Pakistan and towards higher regional and global objectives. To comprehend the patterns of Indian foreign policy discourse from 2014 to 2022, it is necessary to identify and analyze the dominant themes and narratives that shape these phases.

CHAPTER 4:

DOMINANT THEMES AND NARRATIVES OF INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS PAKISTAN UNDER MODI REGIME: A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

This chapter examines the dominant themes and narratives of Indian foreign policy towards Pakistan under Modi regime. The chapter reveals a complex interplay of dominant themes in Indian foreign policy towards Pakistan under Modi's regime such as cooperation, security, and strategic autonomy. These themes are strategically employed in the foreign policy discourse to construct national identity and legitimize policy decisions of India under Prime Minister Modi towards Pakistan.

4.1. Dominant themes of Indian foreign policy towards Pakistan under Modi regime

Under the Modi administration, Indo-Pak relations have grown increasingly complex, reflecting both continuity and change in the bilateral dynamic. However, certain recurring themes have consistently shaped the discourse between the two nations. These themes can be categorized into three distinct areas: (i) cooperation and the peace process, (ii) security and counter terrorism, and (iii) strategic autonomy. These thematic categorizations are used because many bilateral issues fall into these categories, and those that do not generally do not gain traction. The selection of these themes is based on their enduring relevance and impact on the international and domestic policy of both states, especially India. Incorporating and overarching the present dominant discourse for dealing with the issue at hand is the purpose of the identified themes.

The rationale for focusing on these themes lies in their centrality to the historical and contemporary interactions between India and Pakistan. These themes encapsulate the primary concerns and aspirations of both nations, providing a clear framework for analyzing their bilateral relations. The theme of cooperation and peace processes is fundamental, as decades of hostility and sporadic dialogue highlight the need for sustained engagement and conflict resolution. The emphasis on security and counterterrorism reflects how security threats,

particularly terrorism, have shaped bilateral ties. Lastly, the pursuit of strategic autonomy reflects the broader goals of maintaining sovereignty while navigating an evolving global order.

4.1.1. Cooperation and Peace Process

Cooperation refers to the process of working together towards common goals and interests. It is a fundamental aspect of international relations, enabling states and non-state actors to address global challenges and bilateral issues. The mechanisms of cooperation involve diplomacy, Trade agreements and international organizations. On the other hand, peace process involves the efforts to negotiate and implement agreements that resolve conflicts and establish sustainable peace. It includes various stages, from pre-negotiations to implementation and post-conflict reconstruction. The key elements of peace process include negotiation, mediation and peace building. In the initial phase of the Modi administration, Indian foreign policy discourse towards Pakistan placed some emphasis on cooperation and dialogue.

There was cautious optimism for improved bilateral ties between India and Pakistan when Prime Minister Modi assumed office in 2014, largely due to early diplomatic overtures and high-level engagements. The Subsequent meetings, official statements, cooperative gestures, and commitments to dialogue reflected an intention to engage through diplomatic channels. The theme of cooperation and peace process remained dominant in the initial phase of Indian foreign policy towards Pakistan under Modi. However, this focus diminished over time due to a series of political and security-related developments that influenced India's foreign policy discourse.

The oath-taking ceremony of Narendra Modi in New Delhi in 2014 was the first significant interaction between the Prime Ministers of both India and Pakistan. This event was not merely ceremonial but also a diplomatic gesture aimed at fostering a spirit of cooperation. Following their discussions, Sharif announced that *"The foreign secretaries of both countries would be meeting soon, to review and carry forward our bilateral agenda, in the spirit of our meeting today"*.²⁵⁵ This announcement indicated a willingness to address long-standing issues through dialogue and peace process, marking a positive step in Indo-Pak relations. During the 18th SAARC summit in Nepal, Prime Minister Modi's address highlighted his vision for

²⁵⁵ Ali Mustafa, *Pakistan and Indian Leaders Hold Formal Talks*, May 27, 2014, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2014/5/27/pakistan-and-indian-leaders-hold-formal-talks>.

cooperation and connectivity in South Asia. Moreover, he talked about the importance of resolving disputes and called for increased regional cooperation. However, despite these initial overtures, several obstacles such as mutual mistrust, political pressures, and cross-border incident, soon began to challenge the continuation of the peace process. Pakistani analysts argue that while these diplomatic engagements were promising, their impact was limited due to a lack of consistent follow-through and the simultaneous hardening of India's security narrative.²⁵⁶

The momentum of diplomatic engagement continued at the SCO meeting in Ufa, where Modi and Nawaz Sharif held a significant meeting. In a joint statement, the foreign secretaries of Pakistan and India said that *"The meeting was held in a cordial atmosphere, focusing on bilateral and regional interests. Both leaders emphasized their collective responsibility to ensure peace and promote development. They condemned terrorism in all forms and agreed to cooperate to eliminate it from South Asia. Moreover, they agreed on a Meeting between National Security Advisors (NSAs) in New Delhi to discuss terrorism, to release fishermen in custody within 15 days and to look for mechanism to facilitate religious tourism"*.²⁵⁷ The Ufa Declaration between Indian and Pakistani officials reflected a temporary renewal of diplomatic goodwill and further solidified the commitment to cooperation. Pakistan Foreign Secretary Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry said, *"Both sides condemned terrorism in all its forms and agreed to cooperate with each other to eliminate the menace of terrorism from South Asia"*.²⁵⁸

Furthermore, on December 9, 2015, the Indian External Affairs Minister and the Pakistani Prime Minister's Foreign Affairs Advisor met. The joint statement on discussion outline that *"both condemned terrorism and resolved to cooperate in eliminating it"*.²⁵⁹ The diplomatic engagements between Narendra Modi and Nawaz Sharif and official level meetings between both countries show their willingness to engage through formal diplomatic channels

²⁵⁶ Azam, "Pakistan – India Security Paradox: Between Deterrence and Coercive Diplomacy."

²⁵⁷ Media Center, "Statement Read out by Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan in Ufa, Russia (July 10, 2015)," Ministry of External Affairs, July 10, 2015, <https://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/25452>.

²⁵⁸ Ankit Panda, "Assessing the Latest India-Pakistan Prime Ministers Meeting," *The Diplomat*, July 11, 2015, <https://thediplomat.com/2015/07/assessing-the-latest-india-pakistan-prime-ministers-meeting/>.

²⁵⁹ Media Center, "Joint Statement on Discussion between External Affairs Minister and Adviser to the Prime Minister of Pakistan on Foreign Affairs in Islamabad," Ministry of External Affairs, December 9, 2015, https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/26133/Joint_Statement_on_Discussion_between_External_Affairs_Minister_and_Adviser_to_the_Prime_Minister_of_Pakistan_on_Foreign_Affairs_in_Islamabad_December.

and address core regional challenges. Their commitment to dialogue, regional cooperation, and a collective stance against terrorism was seen by many analysts as a pragmatic, though cautious, step towards conflict de-escalation.²⁶⁰ The progress made in these engagements provide a foundation for future initiatives aimed at establishing a more friendly and peaceful relationship between India and Pakistan.

A significant turning point was Modi's unannounced surprise trip to Pakistan, when he met with the then Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif in Lahore. Modi visit was described as a spontaneous gesture and appreciated by the government officials of both states. Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj posted on Twitter as Modi announced his trip to Pakistan: *"That's like a statesman. Such should be the relationship between neighbors"*. He added, *"This short visit has raised hopes high for peace and prosperity in South Asia"*.²⁶¹ Aizaz Chaudhry, Pakistan's foreign secretary made a statement, *"Among the decisions taken was that ties between the two countries would be strengthened and also people-to-people contact would be strengthened so that the atmosphere can be created in which the peace process can move forward"*.²⁶² Although these developments were welcomed by some segments within both countries, some remained cautious, noting that such high-level gestures must be institutionalized through sustained diplomatic channels to create lasting change. Therefore, this visit can be seen as a deliberate effort to enhance mutual trust and pave the way for more substantial and sustained diplomatic engagement.

The Kartarpur Corridor, a project aimed at facilitating easier access for Indian pilgrims to the Kartarpur Sahib Gurudwara in Pakistan, represents another significant development in Indo-Pak relations. The initiative, which was proposed and completed through mutual coordination, has been praised for its humanitarian dimension and religious significance. India's proactive approach in sharing coordinates for the corridor and proposing dates for further discussions was interpreted by some observers as a demonstration of diplomatic openness,

²⁶⁰ Dr. Rabia Akhtar et al., "An Analysis of Pak-India Rivalry over Kashmir Dispute: A Conflict Resolution Approach," *Ilkogretim Online - Elementary Education Online* 20, no. 3 (n.d.): 1979–86, <https://doi.org/10.17051/ilkonline.2021.03.227>.

²⁶¹ Irfan Haider, *Modi Returns to India after Surprise Pakistan Visit*, December 25, 2015, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1228735>.

²⁶² "Indian Prime Minister Makes Surprise Stopover in Pakistan," *The Guardian*, December 25, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/25/indian-prime-minister-makes-surprise-stopover-in-pakistan>.

though others saw it as a calculated move to shape its regional image. On November 9, 2019, the Prime Ministers of both India and Pakistan officially inaugurated the Kartarpur Corridor from their respective sides. Prime Minister Modi appreciated the efforts made by Pakistani Prime Minister and said, *“I would like to thank the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan Niazi for respecting the sentiments of India. The message and teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji is for all and not only for the Sikh community. Guru Nanak showed the path of unity, brotherhood in the society”*.²⁶³ From Pakistan’s side, the project was also viewed as a goodwill gesture and a demonstration of its commitment to religious freedom and regional peace. Pakistani leadership emphasized the corridor as a peace initiative, intended to foster people-to-people contact despite strained political relations.

In the context of the peace process, the 2021 ceasefire agreement along the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir stands as another important diplomatic step. According to India and Pakistan's joint statement on the ceasefire deal: *“In the interest of achieving mutually beneficial and sustainable peace along the borders, the two DGsMO agreed to address each other’s core issues and concerns which have propensity to disturb peace and lead to violence. Both sides agreed for strict observance of all agreements, understandings and cease firing along the Line of Control and all other sectors with effect from midnight 24/25 Feb 2021”*.²⁶⁴ This agreement was welcomed by various stakeholders in India, Pakistan, and Indian-occupied Kashmir. Former Indian-administered Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti stated, *“It’s a welcome step because people on both sides of the border are the sufferers. The two countries should also initiate a political dialogue and reconciliation to bring peace in Kashmir”*.²⁶⁵ Pakistani analysts also noted that such ceasefire agreements, while promising, need to be supported by deeper political engagement and trust-building measures to ensure lasting peace.²⁶⁶

²⁶³ “PM Modi Inaugurates Kartarpur Corridor, Thanks Imran Khan for Respecting Sentiments of India,” *India Today Television*, November 9, 2019, <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/video/pm-modi-inaugurates-kartarpur-corridor-thanks-imran-khan-for-respecting-sentiments-of-india-1617336-2019-11-09>.

²⁶⁴ “Joint Statement,” Ministry of Defense, February 25, 2021, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1700682>.

²⁶⁵ Asad Hashim and Rifat Fareed, “India, Pakistan Agree to Stop Cross-Border Firing in Kashmir,” *Aljazeera*, February 25, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/2/25/india-pakistan-agree-to-stop-cross-border-firing-in-kashmir>.

²⁶⁶ Dr. Rabia Akhtar et al., “An Analysis of Pak-India Rivalry over Kashmir Dispute: A Conflict Resolution Approach.”

The series of diplomatic engagements between India and Pakistan, including invitation to Nawaz Sharif on Modi oath taking ceremony, Ufa Declaration, Modi's surprise visit, the Kartarpur Corridor initiative, and the ceasefire agreement can be interpreted as instances of strategic diplomacy aimed at managing bilateral tensions. These efforts reflected a willingness to pursue cooperative avenues amidst longstanding hostilities. Some scholars argue that such initiatives also served an image-building purpose for the BJP government, seeking to soften its perceived hardline posture without making fundamental shifts in core policy positions.²⁶⁷ By engaging with Pakistan through these cooperative measures, Modi's government projected India as a stabilizing actor in South Asia, thereby strengthening its global diplomatic standing. However, while these measures were symbolically significant, their practical impact has been debated. Challenges such as recurring ceasefire violations, lack of sustained dialogue, and unresolved core disputes have continued to undermine the momentum for peace. Thus, while these steps reflect an occasional convergence of interests, continued engagement, mutual trust, and institutional mechanisms will be essential for fostering a stable and cooperative environment in South Asia.

4.1.2. Security and Counter Terrorism

Security and counter terrorism are pivotal elements in the discourse of foreign policy. Governments across the globe prioritize national security to safeguard against threats posed by terrorist groups, employing a combination of military, diplomatic, and intelligence strategies. These priorities not only influence national policies but also shape international alliances and collaborations. Diplomacy plays a crucial role in forming coalitions against terrorist threats and addressing their underlying causes, such as political instability and economic hardship. This dual focus on immediate threats and broader structural issues are evident in various national strategies. In the context of Indian foreign policy under Prime Minister Modi's tenure, security and counterterrorism concerns have played a prominent role in shaping relations with Pakistan. Modi's government has adopted a more assertive approach, placing greater emphasis on addressing terrorism and safeguarding national security.

²⁶⁷ Fahad Ahmed Misson, "Pakistan-India Relations: A Critical Appraisal of Power Politics."

A significant development in India-Pakistan relations was the Ufa Declaration in 2015, where both sides agreed to cooperate on security-related matters, including efforts to combat terrorism. Indian officials, including BJP leader M.J. Akbar, portrayed the meeting as a diplomatic achievement for India, emphasizing Pakistan's acknowledgment of terrorism as a shared concern. He remarked that *"The meeting was a breakthrough, the reason for this is very clear as for the first time Pakistan has accepted our definition of terrorism. For the first time Pakistan has accepted to combat terrorism in 'all its forms'".*²⁶⁸ However, perspectives within Pakistan varied, with some viewing the declaration as imbalanced and heavily focused on India's priorities, reflecting the underlying tensions between the two nations' narratives.

India's zero-tolerance stance towards terrorism was²⁶⁹ also articulated in Prime Minister Modi's address at the 6th BRICS Summit in 2014. In his address, he said that *"Terrorism is a threat that has assumed war-like proportions. I firmly believe that Terrorism, in any shape or form, is against Humanity. There should be a Zero Tolerance towards Terrorism. Humanity must unite, and isolate terrorist forces, especially states that flout basic norms"*.²⁷⁰ This rhetoric became a cornerstone of India's foreign policy approach, particularly in relation to Pakistan, as India sought to raise concerns over alleged cross-border terrorism at international forums such as BRICS and the United Nations.

Another critical moment in bilateral relations was the attack on the Pathankot Air Base in January 2016, attributed to the group Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM). Rajnath Singh, the Indian Home Affairs Minister, responded to the incident by saying that *"We want good relations with not just Pakistan but with all our neighbors. We also want peace but if there is any terror attack on India, we will give a befitting reply"*.²⁷¹ In a move seen by some observers as a positive development, Pakistan agreed to send a Joint Investigation Team (JIT) to India to assist in the

²⁶⁸ Ajith Vijay Kumar, "BJP Claims Big Victory, Says Pakistan Has Accepted India's Definition of Terrorism," *ZeeNews*, July 10, 2015, https://zeenews.india.com/news/india/bjp-claims-big-victory-says-pakistan-has-accepted-indias-definition-of-terrorism_1627732.html.

²⁶⁹ *BBC*, "Pulwama Attack: Pakistan Warns India against Military Action."

²⁷⁰ Media Center, "Prime Minister's Statement in 6th BRICS Summit on the Agenda – "Political Coordination: 'International Governance & Regional Crises,'" *Ministry of External Affairs*, July 15, 2014, https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/23632/Prime_Ministers_statement_in_6th_BRICS_Summit_on_the_Agenda__quotPolitical_Coordination__quotInternational_Governance_amp_Regional_Crisesquot.

²⁷¹ Ankit Panda, "The Pathankot Attack and India-Pakistan Ties in 2016."

investigation. While this gesture was initially welcomed, skepticism remained within India regarding the effectiveness and sincerity of Pakistan's counterterrorism efforts, contributing to further mistrust between the two countries.

The Kashmir dispute remains a central point of contention between India and Pakistan, with terrorism increasingly intertwined in the conflict narrative. India has consistently accused Pakistan of supporting cross-border terrorism, particularly by backing separatist groups and militant activities in Jammu and Kashmir. During the 33rd session of the UN Human Rights Council, India strongly condemned terrorism and drew attention to alleged terrorist activities linked to Pakistan. The Indian official spokesperson stated that "*The fundamental reason for disturbances in Kashmir is the cross-border terrorism sponsored by Pakistan which has provided active support since 1989 to separatist groups and terrorist elements including those operating from the territory under Pakistan's control. Moreover, they are using terrorism as a legitimate instrument of statecraft*".²⁷² Pakistan, however, has regularly denied these allegations, asserting its commitment to counterterrorism and highlighting the importance of resolving the Kashmir issue through dialogue and diplomacy. In response, Pakistan's envoy to the UN, Tehmina Janjua, rejected India's allegations, stating that Pakistan "categorically rejects all baseless allegations" and reaffirmed that Pakistan supports the right of Kashmiris to self-determination under UN Security Council resolutions.²⁷³ She also highlighted human rights violations allegedly committed by Indian security forces in Jammu and Kashmir, calling upon the international community to intervene.

On September 18, 2016, India experienced a devastating terrorist attack in Uri, Jammu & Kashmir, which intensified the existing discord between India and Pakistan. The incident was sharply denounced by Indian PM Modi, who also promised the country that "*those behind this despicable attack will not go unpunished*".²⁷⁴ Modi's statement reflects a broader national sentiment demanding retribution and stronger security measures. Indian Home Affairs Minister

²⁷² Media Center, "Right of Reply by India in Response to the Statement Made by Pakistan during the 33rd Session of the UN Human Rights Council," Ministry of External Affairs, September 14, 2016.

²⁷³ Syed Sammer Abbas, "Indian Attempts to Deny Illegal Occupation of Kashmir Is a Travesty of History," *Dawn*, September 17, 2016, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1284346>.

²⁷⁴ "Uri Terror Attack: Those behind This Despicable Attack Will Not Go Unpunished," *The Indian Express*, September 18, 2016, <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/uri-terror-attack-those-behind-this-despicable-attack-will-not-go-unpunished-warns-pm-narendra-modi/>.

Rajnath Singh responded to the assault by saying that “*Pakistan is a terrorist state and it should be identified and isolated as such*”.²⁷⁵ Pakistan strongly denied involvement in the Uri attack. The Foreign Office spokesperson at the time, Nafees Zakaria, dismissed the allegations as “irresponsible and unsubstantiated,” arguing that India had provided no credible evidence linking Pakistan to the assault.²⁷⁶ Pakistan also emphasized its willingness to cooperate on counterterrorism through dialogue and urged an independent international investigation into the incident

The February 14, 2019, the incident in Pulwama has continued the narrative of security and counter terrorism. The incident was linked to Pakistan-based groups, with India asserting that Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), a proscribed organization led by Masood Azhar, was behind the Pulwama attack. The Indian Ministry of External Affairs responded that “*The Government of India is firmly and resolutely committed to take all necessary measures to safeguard national security. We are equally resolved to fight against the menace of terrorism. We demand that Pakistan stop supporting terrorists and terror groups operating from their territory and dismantle the infrastructure operated by terrorist outfits to launch attacks in other countries*”.²⁷⁷ During the inauguration ceremony of a Defense Corridor and other development projects in Jhansi, Prime Minister Modi condemned the Pulwama attack and cautioned Pakistan for the consequences. He said, “*Hamara padosi desh yeh bhool raha hai yeh nai neeti aur nai reeti wala Bharat hai (the neighbouring country forgets this is an India with a new policy, new practice)*”.²⁷⁸ While commenting on Pakistan, Modi warned the terrorist networks in Pakistan that “*Those who are sitting in Pakistan, should realize that the path you have taken has led you to destruction. The path India has taken is taking the country to new heights*”. This stance of Modi is the

²⁷⁵ Mukhtar Ahmad, Rich Phillips, and Joshua Berlinger, “Soldiers Killed in Army Base Attack in Indian-Administered Kashmir.”

²⁷⁶ Mukhtar Ahmad, Rich Phillips, and Joshua Berlinger.

²⁷⁷ Media Center, “India Strongly Condemns the Cowardly Terrorist Attack on Our Security Forces in Pulwama, Jammu & Kashmir,” Ministry of Defense, February 14, 2019, https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/31053/India_strongly_condemns_the_cowardly_terrorist_attack_on_our_security_forces_in_Pulwama_Jammu_amp_Kashmir.

²⁷⁸ Liz Mathew and Lalmani Verma, “Full Freedom to Armed Forces to Act”: PM Modi’s Strong Message to Pakistan after Pulwama Attack,” *The Financial Express*, February 16, 2019, <https://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/full-freedom-to-armed-forces-to-act-pm-modis-strong-message-to-pakistan-after-pulwama-attack/1489333/>.

indicative of India's policy to not only counter immediate threats but also to ensure long-term security by demonstrating resolve and strength.

On February 26, 2019, India conducted an airstrike on what it identified as a Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) training camp at Balakot, located in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, in response to the Pulwama attack. Vijay Gokhale, the Indian Foreign Secretary, justified the strike by saying that "*Credible intel [intelligence] was received that JeM was planning more suicide attacks in India. In the face of imminent danger, a pre-emptive strike became absolutely necessary*". He claimed that "*The operation had effectively neutralized a large number of militants, including key commanders, while avoiding civilian casualties*".²⁷⁹ However, Pakistan responded to the strike with force. The Director General of the ISPR, Maj Gen Asif Ghafoor, stated that "*Indian aircrafts intruded from Muzafarabad sector. Facing timely and effective response from Pakistan Air Force released payload in haste while escaping which fell near Balakot. No casualties or damage*". Following the strike, the PM Imran Khan of Pakistan denounced the Indian action as "*Irresponsible Indian policy*". Shah Mahmood Qureshi, the foreign minister of Pakistan, concurred with this assessment, accusing India of having "*resorted to a self-serving, reckless and fictitious claim*" in reference to the 2019 Indian elections, attributing it to domestic political considerations rather than genuine security concerns.²⁸⁰

The Balakot incident must be understood within the broader framework of regional political objectives rather than in isolation. Prime Minister Modi's public statements, including the threat to "wipe them off the map" if Indian pilot Abhinandan Varthaman was not returned within 24 hours, demonstrate the intersection of security policy and domestic political messaging.²⁸¹ Modi's rhetoric and the timing of the airstrike suggest that the operation may have served both counterterrorism objectives and political purposes. The Balakot episode heightened the existing security dilemma between India and Pakistan, reflecting how security policies are

²⁷⁹ "Balakot: Indian Air Strikes Target Militants in Pakistan," *BBC*, February 26, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-47366718>.

²⁸⁰ "Balakot: Pakistan Vows to Respond after Indian 'Air Strikes,'" *BBC*, February 26, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-47375920>.

²⁸¹ "'Informed Pak Before Disclosing To World': PM's Reveal On Balakot Strikes," *NDTV*, April 30, 2024, <https://www.ndtv.com/video/informed-pak-before-disclosing-to-world-pm-s-reveal-on-balakot-strikes-780123>.

influenced not only by immediate threats but also by broader geopolitical dynamics and domestic electoral considerations.

The issue of Pakistan's greylisting by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) further exemplifies the interplay between security concerns and international diplomacy. In 2021, Indian Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar claimed that *"Due to us (government), Pakistan is under the lens of FATF and it was kept in the grey list. We have been successful in pressurizing Pakistan and the fact that Pakistan's behaviour has changed is because of pressure put by India by various measures"*.²⁸² His statement reflects India's broader strategy of leveraging international forums to address security concerns related to terrorism. Pakistan, however, has consistently criticized India for allegedly politicizing FATF proceedings. Shah Mahmood Qureshi's allegations that *"India has politicized FATF for strategic gains. They manipulated an important technical forum for narrow political designs against Pakistan is disgraceful but not surprising for the Modi Government"*. Pakistan has maintained that it has made significant efforts to meet FATF's requirements and has viewed India's actions as part of a broader strategy to tarnish Pakistan's international image.

Overall, Modi's foreign policy toward Pakistan has emphasized security and counterterrorism, often involving hardline measures and diplomatic isolation strategies. The Indian foreign policy has sought to isolate Pakistan diplomatically, emphasizing Pakistan's alleged role in supporting terrorism. This approach links security concerns with diplomatic efforts to frame Pakistan as a state sponsor of terrorism, thus consolidating domestic support for Modi's government. Moreover, Modi's approach has involved a strategic move away from direct bilateral dialogues with Pakistan, focusing instead on global pressure and multilateral engagements. Simultaneously, Pakistan has contested these narratives, portraying India's actions as politically motivated and calling for a dialogue-based approach to conflict resolution. The resulting dynamic reflects how both countries navigate a complex interplay of security imperatives, political considerations, and international diplomatic engagement, shaping the trajectory of their bilateral relations.

²⁸² "Pak. Accuses India of 'Using' FATF for Political Ends: Cites Jaishankar's Remarks at BJP Meeting as Revealing Manipulation of World Body," *The Hindu*, July 19, 2021, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/pak-accuses-india-of-using-fatf-for-political-ends/article35409995.ece>.

4.1.3. Strategic Autonomy

Strategic autonomy has emerged as a dominant theme in foreign policy, particularly for countries seeking to assert their sovereignty in an increasingly multipolar world. It is particularly relevant for nations that seek to maintain their own strategic priorities. This idea relates to a state's capacity to act in its own best interests and make choices free from external pressure or undue influence. Under the Modi regime, strategic autonomy has become a defining characteristic of Indian foreign policy. The issue of Jammu and Kashmir has remained central to this dynamic, serving as a litmus test for India's ability to uphold sovereignty, security, and self-determination in its external relations. A broader theme of strategic autonomy was reflected in India's decision to revoke Articles 370 and 35A, marking a significant shift in its regional approach toward Pakistan. When it comes to Pakistan, India's foreign policy embodies a mix of assertiveness, independence, and engagement strictly on its own terms.

The longstanding territorial dispute over Jammu and Kashmir underscores India's historical, political, and legal arguments emphasizing the region's integral role within the Indian state. India's 2020–2021 annual report notes that “*There is a greater understanding of India's position that Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of the India and that the matters related to it are internal to India*”.²⁸³ This stance is not merely a defensive posture but an active assertion of India's right to self-determination and control over its territories, which is a crucial aspect of its strategic autonomy. The situation becomes more complex with Gilgit-Baltistan, a region administered by Pakistan but claimed by India. Following Pakistan's Supreme Court ruling on Gilgit-Baltistan in 2019, India's Ministry of External Affairs reiterated, “*The entire state of Jammu and Kashmir, which also includes the so-called 'Gilgit-Baltistan' has been, is and shall remain an integral part of India. Any action to alter the status of these occupied territories by Pakistan has no legal basis whatsoever*”.²⁸⁴ This consistent Indian position reflects a determination to preserve strategic autonomy by resisting external attempts to alter the region's

²⁸³ Ministry of External Affairs Annual Report, Annual Report (2021).

²⁸⁴ Media Center, “India Protests to Pakistan against Recent Order by Supreme Court of Pakistan on So-Called ‘Gilgit-Baltistan,’” Ministry of External Affairs, January 18, 2019, https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/30919/India_protests_to_Pakistan_against_recent_order_by_Supreme_Court_of_Pakistan_on_so_called_GilgitBaltistan.

status. By dismissing Pakistan's legal actions and reaffirming its claims, India reinforces its sovereignty and its right to manage its territorial and internal affairs without external influence.

India's emphasis on strategic autonomy was also evident in the 2019 Balakot airstrike, a preventive strike against alleged terrorist camps in Pakistan. The Ministry of External Affairs declared that “*India reserves the right to take firm and decisive action to protect its national security, sovereignty and territorial integrity against any act of aggression or cross-border terrorism*”.²⁸⁵ The Balakot airstrike demonstrated India's willingness to take unilateral action to safeguard its interests, even at the risk of escalating tensions with Pakistan. However, the airstrike was widely debated internationally, with Pakistan condemning it as a violation of its territorial integrity and responding with its own military action, leading to heightened tensions between the two nuclear-armed neighbors.

Domestically, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had long advocated for changes to Jammu and Kashmir's constitutional status. Its 2019 election manifesto included commitments to revoke Article 35A, arguing that it impeded the development and integration of the region. It states, “*We are committed to annulling Article 35A of the Constitution of India as the revision is discriminatory against non-permanent residents and women of Jammu and Kashmir. We believe that Article 35A is an obstacle in the development of the state. We will take all steps to ensure a safe and peaceful environment for all residents of the state*”.²⁸⁶ The revocation of Article 370 and 35A in August 2019 was more than a domestic legal adjustment; it was a declaration of India's intent to assert greater control over its internal affairs, free from external influence. Prime Minister Narendra Modi described the move as “*a beacon of hope, a promise of a brighter future and a testament to our collective resolve to build a stronger, more united India*”.²⁸⁷ This statement highlights the government's determination to integrate Jammu and Kashmir fully into the Indian Union, reinforcing the narrative of national sovereignty. In response, Pakistan denounced the decision as illegal under international law and sought to bring international

²⁸⁵ Media Center, “Pakistan Demarched on the Act of Aggression against India,” *Ministry of External Affairs*, February 27, 2019, https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/31100/Pakistan_demarched_on_the_act_of_aggression_against_India.

²⁸⁶ *India Today*, “BJP Manifesto 2019: Top 10 Promises for next 5 Years.”

²⁸⁷ “What's Article 370? What to Know about India Top Court Verdict on Kashmir,” *Aljazeera*, December 11, 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/12/11/whats-article-370-what-to-know-about-india-top-court-verdict-on-kashmir>.

attention to what it termed as "Indian-occupied" Kashmir. Prime Minister Imran Khan condemned the move as "illegal" and a "threat to regional peace", while Pakistan's Army Chief vowed to support the Kashmiri struggle "to the very end".²⁸⁸ Pakistan also attempted to internationalize the issue, with President Arif Alvi calling "*India's attempt to further change status of Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir is against the resolutions of UNSC and against wishes of the Kashmiri people*".²⁸⁹ In 2020, Prime Minister Imran Khan released the political map of Pakistan in which the IOK was marked as India illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The Indian government dismissed Pakistan's claims as "*political absurdity*" and emphasized that such assertions have "*neither legal validity nor international credibility*".²⁹⁰ India's refusal to engage with Pakistan's narrative exemplifies its broader strategy of maintaining strategic autonomy and controlling its territorial and political narrative.

India-Pakistan relations are further complicated by the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which moves through sections of the disputed territory. India views CPEC, a flagship project of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), as a violation of its sovereignty because it passes through Gilgit-Baltistan. Foreign Secretary Subrahmanyam Jaishankar highlighted that "*The CPEC passes through a territory that we see as our territory. Surely people will understand what [the] Indian reaction is. There needs to be some reflection, and I am sorry to say that we have not seen signs of that*".²⁹¹ Randhir Jaiswal, spokesman for the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), stated, "*Our position on CPEC also is well known to you. We are not in favor of it. We are against it. It goes against our territorial integrity and sovereignty*".²⁹² India's firm stance against CPEC and its broader implications is another example of its strategic autonomy in action. By challenging the legality and legitimacy of CPEC, India is not only defending its territorial integrity but also asserting its position as a regional power that cannot be

²⁸⁸ *On Article 370 Revocation, Pak PM Imran Khan Rakes up Pulwama Attack*, directed by Hindustan Times (Youtube, 2019), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wu28LcKZ8Qo>.

²⁸⁹ "India's 'illegal Move' to Scrap Article 370 Provision for Jammu and Kashmir Will Destroy Regional Peace: Imran Khan," *Gulf News*, August 5, 2019, <https://gulfnews.com/world/asia/pakistan/indias-illegal-move-to-scrap-article-370-provision-for-jammu-and-kashmir-will-destroy-regional-peace-imran-khan-1.1565013707633>.

²⁹⁰ Chandrashekar Srinivasan, "'Political Absurdity': India's Sharp Response To New Pak 'Political Map,'" *NDTV*, August 5, 2020, <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/pakistan-political-map-political-absurdity-indias-sharp-response-to-paks-new-political-map-2274217>.

²⁹¹ Fahad Shah, "Does the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Worry India?," *Aljazeera*, February 23, 2017, <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2017/2/23/does-the-china-pakistan-economic-corridor-worry-india>.

²⁹² "'Goes Against Our Territorial Integrity': India On China-Pak Infra Project," *NDTV*, May 30, 2024, <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/not-in-favour-of-cpec-india-reiterates-its-stance-on-pojk-5780805>.

easily coerced or influenced. India's opposition to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) reflects broader international structural dynamics shaping its foreign policy toward Pakistan. As part of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), CPEC strengthens Pakistan's position while expanding China's regional influence, which India views as a challenge to its strategic interests. Since CPEC passes through Gilgit-Baltistan, a territory India claims, it considers the project a violation of its sovereignty. Additionally, growing China-Pakistan military and economic ties, along with the U.S.-China rivalry, have influenced India's stance. By rejecting CPEC, India asserts its strategic autonomy, counters China's presence in the region, and seeks to diplomatically isolate Pakistan.

India's foreign policy towards Pakistan, particularly concerning Jammu and Kashmir, is deeply rooted in the principle of strategic autonomy. Through its diplomatic efforts, legal positions, and military actions, India has consistently sought to assert its sovereignty and control over its territories. BJP's political vision further reinforces this approach, as it aligns domestic policies with the broader goal of maintaining strategic autonomy. India's decision to revoke Articles 370 and 35A reflects a broader trend in its foreign policy towards strategic autonomy, particularly in its dealings with Pakistan. By asserting its sovereignty over Jammu and Kashmir and rejecting external interference, India is reinforcing its position as a self-reliant and assertive regional power. As India navigates its complex relationship with Pakistan, its commitment to strategic autonomy will continue to shape its actions and policies, ensuring that it remains the master of its destiny in the region.

The theme of strategic autonomy in Indian foreign policy under Modi reflects a calculated response to both internal pressures and the external multipolar world order. At the regional level, India's revocation of Articles 370 and 35A symbolizes a decisive move to reinforce its control over Jammu and Kashmir, asserting sovereignty against perceived regional challenges from Pakistan. This action aligns with India's strategy to protect national interests and project a dominant stance in South Asia. Socially, the emphasis on strategic autonomy has gained traction domestically, with BJP's consistent support for policies asserting India's sovereignty, particularly in Kashmir, which resonates strongly within Indian public opinion. This autonomy-driven approach highlights India's aim to act free of external constraints, strengthening its image as a self-reliant regional power capable of protecting its interests and

solidifying its position on the global stage. By consistently dismissing Pakistan's counterclaims over Jammu and Kashmir, India reinforces its stance on strategic autonomy, ensuring that it remains in control of its regional narrative and broader geopolitical engagements.

The discourse analysis of Indian foreign policy towards Pakistan under Modi's regime reveals a complex interplay of themes such as cooperation, security, and strategic autonomy, which shape diplomatic engagements and public perception. This analysis explains how language and rhetoric are strategically employed to construct national identity and legitimize policy decisions, reflecting the evolving dynamics of Indo-Pak relations. The diplomatic engagements between India and Pakistan, including significant initiatives such as Modi's surprise visit, the Kartarpur Corridor, and the 2021 ceasefire agreement, highlight a mutual recognition of improved bilateral relations and dialogue and commitment to promoting peace and cooperation. Furthermore, Indian foreign policy discourse regarding Pakistan has often centered on the theme of security and counterterrorism. The Balakot attack, the revocation of Articles 370 and 35A, and Pakistan's MFN status demonstrate India's strategic autonomy in foreign policy. These events combine domestic political motivations with security imperatives.

CHAPTER 5:

IMPLICATIONS OF MODI'S FOREIGN POLICY ON PAKISTAN: ANALYSIS AND THE WAY FORWARD

This chapter analyze the implications of Modi's foreign policy on Pakistan by mainly focusing on the significant events and foreign policy decisions of India. This chapter explores the significant occasions, calculated choices, and diplomatic initiatives that have defined the relationship between India and Pakistan and give a thorough understanding of the implications of Modi's foreign policy toward Pakistan. The chapter gives insight into the implications at different levels including political implications, economic implications, security implications and social implications. Moreover, the chapter suggests some policy recommendations to navigate Indian Modi foreign policy for future developments that could strengthen ties between the two countries.

5.1. Implications of Modi's Foreign Policy on Pakistan

The foreign policy of Modi has fundamentally reshaped the dynamics of India-Pakistan relations, bringing about significant implications for Pakistan across various spheres. Modi's approach, marked by assertive nationalism and a securitized outlook, has been presented under the guise of strategic diplomacy, has intensified tensions between the two neighbors. His government's stance on key issues such as Kashmir, cross-border terrorism, and regional cooperation has not only heightened political and security challenges for Pakistan but has also had broader economic and social repercussions. India's policy under Modi is characterized by a strict approach to security threats, particularly those that India alleges originate from Pakistan, and a deliberate strategy aimed at sidelining Pakistan diplomatically, often met with resistance and critique from various quarters. These developments have posed significant challenges to Pakistan's internal and external policy responses, affecting its political landscape, regional alliances, economic stability, security environment, and public perception of India. This section examines the political, economic, security, and social implications of Modi's foreign policy, providing a detailed analysis of how each area has been affected and the challenges Pakistan faces in navigating this complex relation ship

5.1.1. Political Implications

During Modi's tenure, India's political discourse towards Pakistan has become increasingly rigid, shaped by the BJP's Hindutva-driven ideology and domestic political considerations. The depiction of Pakistan as a key adversary has been amplified within Indian political rhetoric, particularly during electoral campaigns, where anti-Pakistan narratives are often mobilized to strengthen the BJP's support base. This politicization of foreign policy not only complicates bilateral engagement but also deepens existing mistrust between the two nations. The issue of Kashmir, especially in the aftermath of the 2019 abrogation of Article 370, remains central to these tensions. India's decision to revoke the region's special status was interpreted by Pakistan as a unilateral move aimed at consolidating control and undermining Pakistan's longstanding position on the dispute. This development has contributed to further political deadlock and escalated diplomatic estrangement.

Regionally, Modi's foreign policy has emphasized building stronger ties with neighboring states such as Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka under the "Neighborhood First" initiative. While officially framed as a move to enhance regional cooperation, Pakistan perceives this approach as a strategic attempt to marginalize its influence, particularly evident in the dormancy of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) since 2014. Additionally, India's growing engagement with Afghanistan and Iran, particularly through the development of the Chabahar Port, introduced new geostrategic complexities for Pakistan by creating alternate regional trade routes that bypass it.

On the global stage, Modi's government has pursued a strategy of systematically presenting Pakistan as a state that sponsors terrorism. This narrative has been propagated in international forums such as the United Nations, G20, and BRICS, where India has consistently highlighted terrorism as a major global threat, often linking it to Pakistan. India's efforts to diplomatically isolate Pakistan were further strengthened by its closer relations with key global powers like the United States, European Union, and Gulf states, each of which has, to varying degrees, aligned with India's counterterrorism narrative. This diplomatic isolation has significantly constrained Pakistan's ability to engage constructively in global political forums, reducing its leverage in influencing international discourse on regional conflicts, particularly the Kashmir dispute.

5.1.2. Economic Implications

The economic implications of Modi's foreign policy towards Pakistan have been profound. Bilateral trade, which had shown potential for growth in the early 2000s, has all but collapsed since the Pulwama attack in 2019, leading to a cessation of formal trade relations between the two countries. For Pakistan, the loss of India as a trade partner has had significant consequences, particularly for sectors that relied on exports to India, such as textiles, cement, and agriculture. Moreover, the increase in tariffs and non-tariff barriers has stifled the possibility of economic recovery in bilateral trade. This trade disruption has contributed to the economic strain Pakistan faces, exacerbated by its existing balance of payments crisis and dependency on international financial aid.

India's regional economic strategy under Modi has increasingly focused on cultivating alternative trade partnerships with neighboring countries, including Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and the Gulf states. These efforts, while framed as part of broader regional connectivity goals, have been perceived by Pakistan as an attempt to reduce its strategic relevance in regional trade. Key initiatives like India's investment in Iran's Chabahar Port have created new corridors that bypass Pakistan, challenging its role as a traditional gateway to Central Asia. Additionally, India's growing influence in regional economic forums, such as the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), further sidelines Pakistan from key economic initiatives in South Asia.

On a global scale, Modi's foreign policy has successfully aligned India with key economic powers, such as the United States, European Union, and Japan. India's growing integration into global supply chains, coupled with its strategic economic partnerships with countries like the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, has expanded its economic influence beyond South Asia. Pakistan, by contrast, continues to face obstacles in attracting foreign investment, shaped by a complex mix of security concerns, economic volatility, and perceptions of political risk. These challenges have limited Pakistan's integration into global markets and contributed to an increasing economic asymmetry in the region. However, Pakistan continues to seek alternative pathways to economic resilience through regional collaboration and internal economic reforms, despite the difficult regional environment.

5.1.3. Security Implications

Modi's foreign policy has significantly impacted Pakistan's internal security environment. India's aggressive stance on cross-border terrorism, exemplified by the 2016 surgical strikes and the 2019 Balakot airstrikes, has heightened tensions along the Line of Control (LoC), resulting in frequent ceasefire violations and cross-border skirmishes. For Pakistan, the escalation of tensions on its eastern border has compounded existing security concerns, particularly in sensitive areas such as the tribal regions and the Afghanistan border. The resulting pressure has compelled Pakistan to increase its military preparedness, which has further strained national resources amidst broader economic challenges.

At the regional level, India has pursued a more assertive military and strategic posture under Modi, marked by large-scale defense modernization and expanded security cooperation with countries such as the United States, Israel, and Russia. The acquisition of advanced, ranging from missile defense systems to modern fighter aircraft, has shifted the military balance in South Asia. Pakistan perceives this growing asymmetry as a threat to strategic stability, prompting a corresponding strengthening of defense ties with China and reinforcing its reliance on nuclear deterrence. These parallel military build-ups have heightened the risk of strategic miscalculations in an already volatile region.

On the global stage, India has actively promoted its counterterrorism narrative in forums such as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), where Pakistan has faced repeated scrutiny. While India has sought to link regional terrorism issues to Pakistan, Islamabad views these efforts as part of a broader strategy to apply diplomatic pressure and undermine its international standing. The FATF grey listing has subjected Pakistan to external economic constraints and increased demands for reform. Simultaneously, India's growing partnerships with global powers, especially the United States, have contributed to a shift in South Asia's security dynamics. As a result, Pakistan's strategic environment is increasingly shaped by the evolving India-U.S. and China-Pakistan alignments, complicating its efforts to maintain regional balance and diplomatic maneuverability.

5.1.4. Social Implications

Modi's foreign policy has had significant social implications, particularly in shaping public opinion in both India and Pakistan. In India, the rise of nationalist rhetoric has fueled anti-

Pakistan sentiments, often portraying Pakistan as an existential threat. This has been reinforced through media narratives, political campaigns, and public discourse, particularly during election cycles. In Pakistan, the perception of India as an increasingly aggressive and hostile neighbor has solidified, leading to a rise in anti-India sentiment. This mutual distrust has created a social environment that is hostile to peacebuilding and dialogue, with both populations becoming increasingly polarized.

The deterioration in diplomatic relations has also curtailed cross-border interactions that previously served as confidence-building measures. Cultural exchanges, people-to-people contacts, academic collaborations, and sports diplomacy have all but ceased since 2019. These interactions, which historically helped foster goodwill between the two populations, have been replaced by a climate of suspicion and animosity. The absence of such soft diplomacy efforts has further entrenched negative perceptions, making it more difficult for future diplomatic efforts to succeed.

The role of media in shaping public perceptions of India-Pakistan relations has become increasingly important under Modi's leadership. Indian media, often aligned with the government's nationalist agenda, has played a central role in amplifying anti-Pakistan rhetoric, framing Pakistan as a constant threat. In Pakistan, media has reciprocated with equally hostile narratives, often portraying Modi's government as anti-Muslim and aggressive. This information warfare has not only deepened the mistrust between the two nations but has also influenced the broader South Asian region's perception of the bilateral conflict.

5.2. Way Forward for Pakistan: Navigating Modi's Foreign Policy Discourse

Given the complexities and challenges posed by Prime Minister Modi's foreign policy, Pakistan faces a multifaceted path to effectively manage its relations with India. To address the impact of Modi's foreign policy and build a constructive relationship, Pakistan can consider the following strategies:

5.2.1. Rebuilding Diplomatic Channels

For Pakistan, establishing and maintaining open lines of communication with India is crucial to managing the complexities of Modi's foreign policy discourse. Pakistan should

proactively seek opportunities for dialogue on various platforms, including bilateral, multilateral and Track II diplomacy. In situations where direct negotiations prove difficult, the involvement of neutral third parties or international organizations can play a crucial role. Moreover, mediation by trusted international actors can provide a platform to address sensitive issues and help both nations find common ground. To build a more constructive relationship, Pakistan should focus on reassessing and reinvigorating existing bilateral agreements and frameworks. Focused discussions on agreements related to trade, security and border management could restore trust and address contentious issues. In addition, it is crucial to create new frameworks for cooperation in areas of mutual interest such as counterterrorism, economic development and environmental sustainability. Creating and promoting new frameworks for cooperation, particularly in areas of common interest, can pave the way for a more positive and cooperative relationship. These frameworks should prioritize mutual benefit and focus on long-term stability and prosperity for both countries

5.2.2. Addressing Core Issues

To effectively navigate Modi's foreign policy discourse, Pakistan must prioritize resolving long-standing territorial disputes, particularly related to Kashmir, by engaging in peaceful dialogue and international mediation. Pakistan should also be open to possible compromises and cooperative solutions. Another focus is on combating terrorism through cooperative measures with India. This includes sharing information, coordinating counter-terrorism strategies and participating in joint initiatives to combat extremist threats. Additionally, promoting trade and investment between the two nations could create economic incentives for cooperation, benefiting both economies and contributing to a more stable relationship. Concluding trade agreements, reducing tariffs and facilitating cross-border investment are crucial steps in this direction. Additionally, Pakistan should explore opportunities for regional economic integration with India and other South Asian countries as initiatives such as regional trade agreements and infrastructure projects can improve economic connectivity and promote a cooperative atmosphere.

5.2.3. Strengthening Regional and International Alliances

Strengthening ties with other South Asian countries and regional organizations can provide Pakistan with additional support and influence in dealing with India. Joint efforts in regional forums can strengthen Pakistan's voice and influence. Active participation in regional stability initiatives, including conflict resolution and economic development programs, can enhance Pakistan's reputation and demonstrate its commitment to peace and cooperation in the region. Building alliances with world powers and international organizations can help Pakistan gain support for its positions and causes. Collaborating with international actors on issues such as human rights, security and economic development can create a supportive international environment. Participation in multilateral forums and organizations can provide platforms for Pakistan to address its issues with India and advocate for its interests. Effective engagement in international institutions can also help shape global perceptions and policies.

5.2.3. Promoting Internal Stability and Unity

Pakistan should work towards achieving consensus on foreign policy issues and addressing internal challenges to maintain a unified stance in negotiations with India. Focusing on domestic economic and social issues can strengthen Pakistan's position in international relations. Economic development, social cohesion and addressing public grievances can strengthen the country's overall stability and resilience. Engaging in public diplomacy to promote positive narratives and mutual understanding can help counteract negative perceptions. Initiatives such as cultural exchanges, educational programs and media outreach can create a more conducive environment for bilateral relations. Actively addressing misunderstandings and misinformation through transparent communication and education efforts can improve public perception and reduce tensions between the two countries.

To conclude, Prime Minister Modi's foreign policy has posed significant challenges to Pakistan, impacting security dynamics, diplomatic relations and economic interactions. To address these complexities, Pakistan must adopt a strategic approach focused on rebuilding diplomatic channels, resolving core issues such as territorial disputes and counterterrorism, and improving economic cooperation. Strengthening regional and international alliances and promoting internal stability and unity will be crucial to counteract the impact of India's assertive

posture. By prioritizing dialogue, cooperation and mutual interests, Pakistan can work towards a more stable and constructive relationship with India.

CONCLUSION

The discourse analysis of Indian foreign policy under Prime Minister Narendra Modi from 2014 to 2022 reveals a significant transformation in the trajectory of Indo-Pak relations, shaped by a complex interplay of historical, political, and ideological factors. The historical overview underscores that India's foreign policy towards Pakistan has long been influenced by past conflicts, political developments, and deep-rooted tensions. Understanding these historical underpinnings is essential for comprehending the Modi administration's foreign policy shift. Under the leadership of Modi, the ideological foundation of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its commitment to nationalist politics have had a profound impact on India's foreign policy discourse, manifesting in both assertive postures and strategic diplomatic maneuvers towards Pakistan.

The Modi administration's foreign policy evolved through three distinct phases, each representing a sequential shift in India's approach toward Pakistan. The initial phase, characterized by a policy of non-alignment, cooperation, and peace initiatives, sought to improve bilateral relations, though progress remained limited. The second phase marked a clear departure from this approach, as Modi's government adopted a more assertive stance, seeking to diplomatically isolate Pakistan on the global stage. This shift was accompanied by a heightened focus on security and counterterrorism, resulting in strained relations between the two countries. The third and final phase of Modi's foreign policy marked an even more significant shift, with India reorienting its foreign policy objectives away from Pakistan, focusing instead on broader regional and global ambitions. This phase reflects India's desire to assert itself as a dominant regional power, moving beyond a narrow focus on its historically contentious relationship with Pakistan.

The analysis of Modi's foreign policy discourse reveals a complex and evolving narrative, in which key themes such as national security, strategic autonomy, and counterterrorism dominate the rhetoric. The use of assertive language and symbolic actions, such as the Balakot airstrikes, the revocation of Articles 370 and 35A, and the suspension of Pakistan's Most Favored Nation (MFN) status, reflect Modi's strategic focus on safeguarding India's national interests and projecting strength on the global stage. These actions also underscore a

broader ideological framework, where foreign policy decisions are aligned with the BJP's nationalist and security-oriented agenda. Despite occasional diplomatic overtures, such as Modi's surprise visit to Pakistan in 2015, the establishment of the Kartarpur Corridor, and the 2021 ceasefire agreement, these efforts were largely overshadowed by India's broader strategic objectives.

The implications of Modi's foreign policy for Pakistan are profound and multifaceted. India's assertive posture has exacerbated existing tensions, creating significant challenges for Pakistan on diplomatic, security, and economic fronts. The diplomatic isolation of Pakistan, combined with India's focus on counterterrorism and military preparedness, has further complicated efforts to engage in meaningful dialogue and conflict resolution. Moreover, India's growing regional and global ambitions, particularly its strategic alliances and participation in multilateral forums, have increasingly marginalized Pakistan within the regional security architecture.

For Pakistan, navigating this complex and challenging landscape requires a strategic recalibration of its foreign policy. Pakistan must prioritize rebuilding diplomatic channels, addressing core issues such as territorial disputes and counterterrorism, and fostering economic cooperation. In addition, strengthening regional and international alliances, promoting internal stability, and enhancing its global diplomatic outreach will be crucial in mitigating the adverse impacts of India's assertive foreign policy. Pakistan's long-term strategy should focus on dialogue, cooperation, and the pursuit of shared regional interests, while maintaining a pragmatic approach towards addressing security concerns and fostering mutual trust.

The patterns of Indian foreign policy under Prime Minister Modi represent a significant departure from previous approaches, highlighting a blend of assertiveness, security concerns, and a broader focus on regional and global objectives. This research has demonstrated how Modi's foreign policy discourse, shaped by the BJP's nationalist ideology, has systematically challenged Pakistan's diplomatic, security, and economic interests. By critically analyzing the evolution of Indian foreign policy towards Pakistan, this study has highlighted the key themes that have driven Modi's approach, while also identifying the pathways for Pakistan to navigate these challenges. Ultimately, the prospect of achieving a stable and constructive Indo-Pak

relationship hinges on both nations' ability to balance their national interests with a genuine commitment to dialogue, conflict resolution, and regional cooperation. For Pakistan, adopting a forward-looking and strategically calibrated approach will be essential in navigating the evolving dynamics of its relationship with India.

Findings

The key findings of the research study are:

- The Domestic support for Hindu nationalism under PM Modi government cater the Hindu nationalistic agenda to be used for anti-Pakistan and anti-Muslim rhetoric in foreign policy.
- Modi's foreign policy framework excludes bilateral engagement with Pakistan, consistently framing the relationship through the lens of terrorism and religious extremism.
- The framing of Pakistan as a national security concern has strengthened public support for Modi's policies but has hindered prospects for peace and reconciliation between the two nations.
- The global power transition from unipolarity to multipolarity, intensifying U.S.-China rivalry, and shifting regional security dynamics.

Recommendations

South Asia's complex geopolitics require Pakistan to strengthen its regional ties, particularly with China, to counter India's influence. It is essential to improve relations with Afghanistan, Iran, and Central Asia for regional stability. Pakistan's foreign policy should reflect a unified national identity while consolidating its position through regional cooperation through SAARC and international efforts regarding Kashmir.

- To counter the securitized narrative, Pakistan should continue to take a proactive approach to raise all outstanding issues in all relevant international forums and work with global stakeholders to seek resolution and support.

- India should reaffirm its secular character and focus on non-conflictual bilateral engagement patterns to improve relations with Pakistan.
- Pakistan should invest in strategic communication and public diplomacy to counter hostile narratives, while engaging regional and international forums to highlight the risks posed by ideologically driven foreign policies
- Pakistan should prioritize enhancing its all-weather strategic cooperation partnership with China and other regional states to counter India's growing influence in South Asia.

The core argument that Indian foreign policy under PM Modi towards Pakistan has undergone a significant shift marked by assertiveness, driven by geopolitical imperatives and ideological influences, aimed at diplomatically isolating Pakistan and reinforcing India's regional dominance in South Asia, has been substantiated through this research. The evolving nature of the PM Modi foreign policy underscores the importance of strategic foresight in managing India-Pakistan relations. As both nations continue to influence the geopolitical fabric of South Asia, their interactions will significantly impact regional stability and global diplomacy.

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