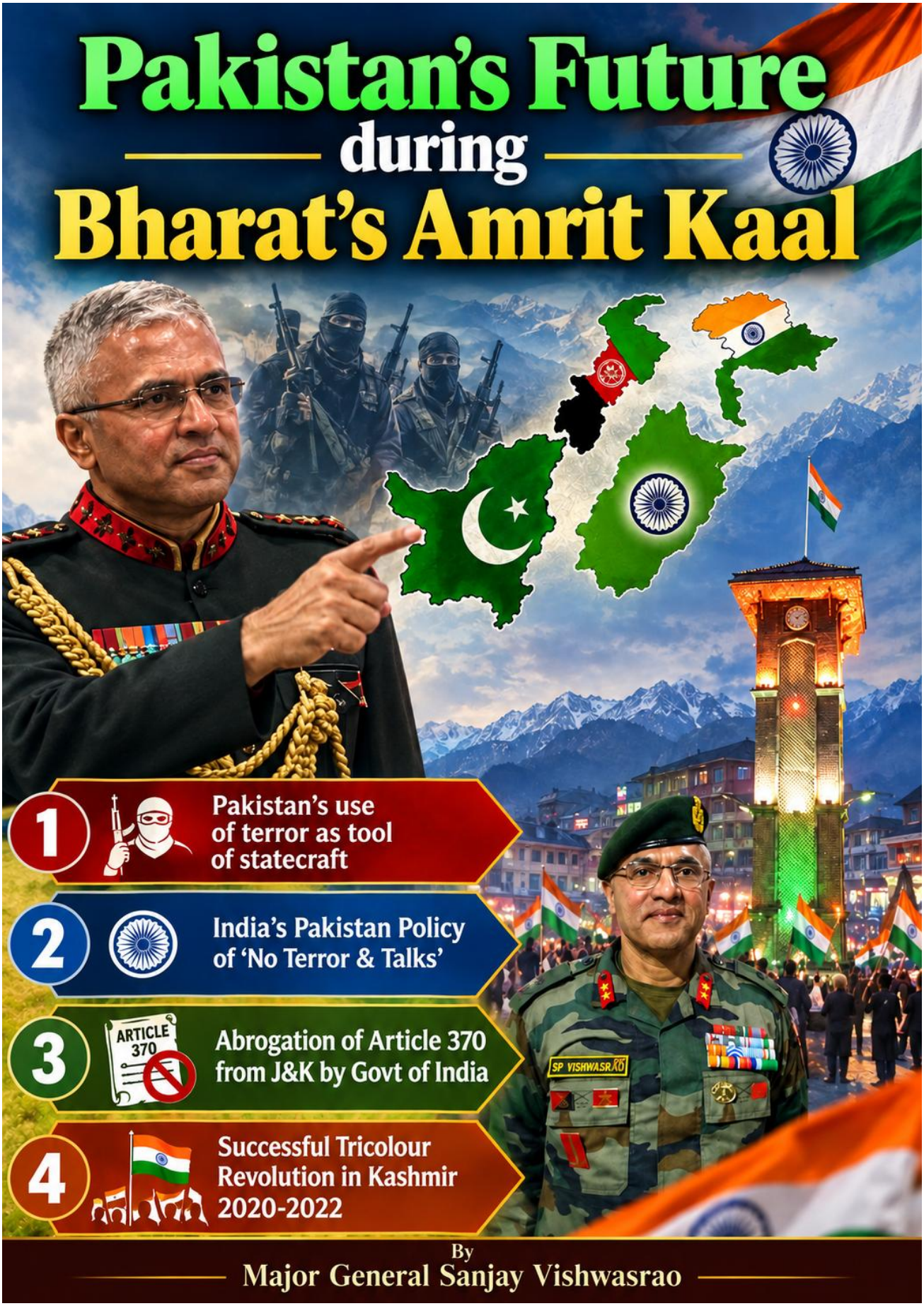

Pakistan's Future
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Pakistan's use of terror as tool of statecraft
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SP VISHWASRAO
By
Major General Sanjay Vishwasrao

Pakistan's Future in Bharat's Amrit Kaal

Originally written in 2025. Adopted in 2026 for a broader audience

A Geopolitical Risk Framework for Reading Pakistan's Terminal Decline — and Bharat's Strategic Options

Sanjay P Vishwasrao, Major General, Retired

Written in 2025 for India's College of Defence Management, drawing on his tenure as Defence & Military Advisor, High Commission of India, Islamabad (2017–2019), and continuous monitoring of Pakistani and regional media since.

> *"Every neighbouring state is an enemy,*
> *and the enemy's enemy is a friend."*
>
> **— Kautilya, Arthashastra**



PAKISTAN TODAY

Saturday, 24 March, 2018 | Rajab-ul-Murajjab 6, 1439 | Rs 19.00 | Vol VIII No 265 | 16 Pages | Islamabad Edition

PAKISTAN TELLS INDIA TO BEHAVE

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Army showcases its nuclear capable Shaheen-III missiles during the 78th Pakistan Day parade.

ISLAMABAD/LAHORE/KARACHI
STAFF REPORT

EXPRESSING Pakistan's anguish over Indian atrocities in occupied Kashmir and its continued violation of the ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC), President Mamnoon Hussain on Friday used the Pakistan Day military parade to warn India to stop its war-mongering, saying the rival country was putting regional peace at stake.

The president also paid tribute to the martyrs who laid down their lives for the safety and security of the country. He further said that peace was slowly but surely gaining a foothold in the country after successful operations like Zarb-e-Azb and Radd-ul-Fasaad.

In a rare move, Indian diplomats and senior Indian military officials in Pakistan also attended the parade, at a special invitation from the Chief of Army Staff Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa.

The invitation is being seen as an attempt to ease tension between the two states that have been involved in serious diplomatic tussles, cross-border firing incidents across LoC and Working Boundary and anti-Pakistan statements from Indian government officials and politicians. The invitation for such a ceremony also makes it abundantly clear that Pakistan wants to assure India that it would protect every inch of its land came what may.

At the beginning of his speech, the president welcomed Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena as the guest of honour, who has flown to Pakistan especially for the occasion.

The president also greeted the forces from Turkey, Jordan and United Arab Emirates that are taking part in the parade, saying Pakistan's friendship with its allies will prosper in the coming days. On the occasion, the president also announced a new medal, Tahaffuz-e-Azm, to laud the efforts of people because of which the country is prospering and the economy has started to flourish.

The Pakistan Day parade resumed in 2015 after a gap of seven years and was seen as a manifestation of the military's show of strength in the wake of a shocking attack in 2014 on the Army Public School (APS) in Peshawar, which left 150 dead, including 132 schoolchildren.

>> MORE PICTURES AND CONTINUATION OF STORY ON PAGE 04

MORE ON PAGE 03

Islamabad wants peaceful relations with New Delhi: Pak envoy

ISLAMABAD: India's deputy high commissioner in Pakistan and the embassy's military attache attend the 78th Pakistan Day military parade on Friday.

Indian Diplomats, including Brigadier Vishwasrao had been invited to Pakistan Day Parade 2018 by Pakistan's Chief of Army General QJ Bajwa as a peace initiative.
This was a lie as proven by the 29 times we were shown in the live telecast of the event and the 24 March 2018 news headline in Pakistan Today, a mouthpiece of Pakistan Army.

WHY THIS ANALYSIS CARRIES WEIGHT

This assessment draws on a tenure as India's Defence & Military Advisor in Islamabad (2017–2019) and continuous tracking of Pakistani media, economic data and internal-security reporting since. It reads Pakistan the way a country-risk desk or an intelligence assessment would — political, economic, demographic and ideological indicators triangulated together — rather than through any single news cycle. That same method, applied in real time, gave advance warning of the Pakistan Army's intent behind the 2019 Pulwama attack, later confirmed correct by Prime Minister Modi himself. The framework below is offered to publishers, think tanks and podcast hosts as a case study in structured geopolitical forecasting, and to government and corporate risk teams as a working model for reading sovereign and regional risk in the subcontinent.

2014–2024: Pakistan's Ominous Decade

Black Swan, 2013. In 2013, Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League (N) — PML(N) — won most seats in the general election and formed governments in Islamabad, Lahore and Quetta, despite the Pakistan Army's own backing of Imran Khan and his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). The China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) followed that July. These three events — Nawaz Sharif's win, the rise of Imran Khan and PTI, and CPEC — together set in motion the sequence that produced today's Munir–Sharif 'Hybrid Military Regime Pro Max.'[1]

Killing Democracy to Limit China and CPEC. Pakistan's armed forces joined the CPEC bandwagon with enthusiasm in 2014. By 2017, however, the Army — Pakistan's real 'Deep State' — had grasped the debt-diplomacy logic behind CPEC, together with intelligence on the high interest rates attached to Chinese loans (LIBOR plus 4–4.5%)[2] and large-scale corruption in CPEC's execution, implicating both Beijing and the ruling PML(N).[3] Ever

[1]Available at https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/whats-the-shelf-life-of-shahbaz-sharifs-hybrid-pro-max-regime
[2]The London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR) is the most commonly used benchmark reference rate in the global financial markets.
[3]Available at https://tribune.com.pk/story/2465456/chinese-investors-seek-offshore-funds

suspicious of civilian politicians, the Army concluded the only way out of the PML(N)-plus-CPEC trap was to take over outright — national security, it decided, now outranked democracy. What followed was the 2018 electoral coup that installed the Bajwa–Imran government (2018–2022), the original 'hybrid' regime, with a PTI government in Islamabad widely reported to be on the 'same page' as Army General Headquarters in Rawalpindi.[4] Once installed, Imran Khan's first move on Bajwa's behalf was to press China to give CPEC a more 'socialist' cast — prioritising the nine agreed special economic zones and boosting Pakistani exports to China to create jobs.[5] Six years on, progress on this front remains minimal; in December 2024, Pakistani social media accounts — wary of the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) directorate — quietly criticised China for making Chinese the primary language on signage at the new, Chinese-built Gwadar airport,[6] as it already is inside China-built power plants. This creeping colonisation by technology and language, alongside the Baloch 'Haq Do Tehreek' protests against China and CPEC in Balochistan, exposes the rentier logic underneath CPEC[7] — Gwadar today functions as something close to a Chinese enclave, despite the Army's own efforts to slow that drift.

Strategic Depth in Afghanistan, a Dead Horse. President Trump's 1 January 2018 tweet on Pakistani lies and deceit set in motion the American withdrawal from Afghanistan; the Trump administration went on to oversee the Taliban's return to power in 2021–22. Pakistan was briefly euphoric at having 'defeated' India in Afghanistan — after the US and USSR before it — by installing the Taliban. Rising terrorist and sectarian violence inside Pakistan since 15 August 2021 has since dismantled the mirage of strategic

[4]Available at https://www.wionews.com/south-asia/pakistan-government-and-military-on-same-page-pm-imran-khan-181461
[5]Available at https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/cpec-focus-must-be-on-job-creation-agriculture-imran-khan-118100900257_1.html
[6]Available at https://www.reddit.com/r/pakistan/comments/1hzg6sh/is_this_from_pakistan/
[7]Available at https://thediplomat.com/2024/07/from-activism-to-provincial-assembly-a-conversation-with-gwadars-maulana-hidayat-ur-rehman/

depth: Pashtun voices are now inverting the concept entirely, treating Pakistan's own Pashtun belt as strategic depth for Afghanistan, not the other way round. A viral image of the ISI's Director-General sipping tea in Kabul on 4 September 2021 — meant to signal victory — followed by his own court-martial and arrest, and then a photograph of India's Foreign Secretary meeting the Taliban in Dubai on 8 January 2025, together capture how far that has turned.

A Bloody Internal-Security Situation. With over 1,950 dead and 1,851 injured across 795 incidents, 2024 was Pakistan's bloodiest year since 2017. The Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) targeted the army and paramilitary forces (441 killed, 533 injured), while Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) targeted the Shia community (126 killed, 52 injured).[8] Hindus, Christians, Jews and Ahmadis continued to face forced conversions and attacks on places of worship. The result: Pakistan has become a near 'no-go' for foreign tourists and foreign direct investment alike. In 2023 it drew fewer than 100,000 tourists — half of them Afghans crossing the Durand Line[9] — against 9.2 million for India.[10] On FDI, Pakistan attracted USD 1.82 billion in 2023[11] against India's USD 28 billion.[12]

From Geostrategic 'Zipper State' to Unzipped State. The Indo-Pacific pivot, the Quad, the US withdrawal from Afghanistan, China's cooling enthusiasm for CPEC amid rising violence against its own personnel, the India–Iran deal on Chabahar port, the India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), and Saudi Arabia's own transformation have together stripped Pakistan of its old geostrategic shine — the Arabian Sea is close to its only remaining friendly neighbour. The Taliban government's refusal to

[8]Available at https://www.pakpips.com/article/8246
[9]Available at https://www.statista.com/statistics/1301532/leading-countries-international-tourists-pakistan/
[10]Available at https://www.thehindu.com/business/budget/india-saw-92-lakh-foreign-tourist-arrivals-in-2023-economic-survey/article68433380.ece
[11]Available at https://www.macrotrends.net/global-metrics/countries/PAK/pakistan/foreign-direct-investment
[12]Available at https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/india-sees-43-fall-in-fdi-inflows-in-2023-drops-to-15th-spot-unctad-124062000868_1.html

recognise the Durand Line as an international border, combined with the Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement's (PTM) slogan 'Lar aw Bar Yaw Afghan' ('Pashtuns on both sides of the Durand Line are one people'), could yet unzip the country further. It is a considerable irony that West Pakistan — created specifically to deny India land access to Central Asia and Europe — now finds itself isolated on every side.

India's Bloodless Integration of Kashmir. India's Pakistan policy of 'No Terror & Talks' (which includes retaliatory surgical strikes) has had its intended effect on Kashmiris, on Pakistan, and on world opinion alike. The quiet fading, inside Jammu & Kashmir, of both the sentiment of azadi and the old slogan 'Pakistan se rishta kya, La ilaha illallah' has already severed a jugular vein for the Pakistan Army. What follows next could be the haemorrhage.

Imran Khan and PTI's Digital Insurgency. The Pakistan Army now finds itself on the receiving end of the very social-media apparatus it built to malign Nawaz Sharif and PML(N) and to manufacture support for Imran Khan and PTI. Having been trained by 2013–2020 ISPR and ISI propaganda to trust exactly this kind of messaging, Imran Khan's online base (dubbed 'Youthias') has turned that same energy on the Army for dumping and jailing their 'messiah' — dismissed in April 2022 for incompetence and corruption, then jailed in August 2023. The ISI's 9 May 2023 false-flag operation — PTI supporters allegedly attacking the IV Corps Commander's residence in Lahore Cantonment — failed in its aim of cutting Imran Khan and PTI down to size ahead of the February 2024 election; the resulting PTI counter-offensive on social media forced ISPR and the ISI into banning X, throttling internet speeds and expanding surveillance, an internet firewall borrowed from China that has, in turn, further damaged Pakistan's international image and economy.

The Economic Crisis. Pakistan's economy remains captured by 'MilBus' — the Army's own commercial business empire — feudal landowners and roughly twenty-two elite families. The rentier geopolitics and shadow economy that once rescued it through foreign aid, narcotics revenue and counterfeit Indian currency have run their course. A CPEC debt of USD 26 billion (within total external debt of USD 131 billion) will weigh on Pakistan for years, compounded by weak governance, rapid population growth, poor labour productivity, heavy defence spending, weak rule of law, self-imposed isolation from globalisation, institutionalised corruption, thin tax collection and heavy external borrowing. None of this was resolved by 23 successive IMF bailouts or by the Army's own Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), formed in 2024 to fast-track FDI. Real GDP growth, which ran at 6% against India's 2% between 1965 and 1990, fell to an average of 3.4% across 1995–2024, and now sits at 2%, having recovered from -0.2% in 2023.[13] It is projected to stay at or below 2% in the medium term, against 7–8% for India — as are Pakistan's foreign-exchange reserves, likely to remain below USD 20 billion against India's roughly USD 650 billion. A black-swan climate event on the scale of the 2022 floods, which affected 33 million Pakistanis, could still make this considerably worse.

The Demographic Crisis. In 2023, Pakistan's population grew at 2% while its GDP contracted by 0.2%. Nearly 64% of Pakistanis are under 30; of an 80-million-strong youth workforce, 17 million are unemployed.[14] Keeping that youth bulge productively engaged would require 6% GDP growth to create a million jobs a year. Agriculture remains the largest employer at 37.4% of jobs (43% by design in India), followed by services at 37.2% (31% in India) and industry at 25.4% (26% in India) — unlikely to shift soon, given that labour-intensive manufacturing and tourism account for only 11.9% and

[13]Available at https://tribune.com.pk/story/2462399/pakistan-on-silent-economic-decline
[14]Available at https://www.brecorder.com/news/40250873

2.9% of Pakistan's GDP respectively (17% and 9% in India).[15] As a result, roughly 800,000 Pakistanis emigrated in 2023[16] and again in 2024.[17] Military and elite capture of the economy, poor education, weak job skills and self-imposed isolation have pushed Pakistan's illicit economy to roughly 40% of GDP.[18] For similar reasons, begging has become an industry worth an estimated USD 42 billion (roughly 12% of GDP) — Pakistan is thought to have 38 million beggars, and 90% of beggars arrested worldwide are reportedly Pakistani nationals.[19] This demographic bulge has set the stage for an 'Arab Spring'-style reckoning with Pakistan's military and elite — one with considerable staying power, given how little the unelected Army, or whichever party it selects to govern (PTI in 2018, PML(N) in 2024), concerns itself with social-welfare outcomes.

A Crisis of Image for the Pakistan Army. The Army's popularity has taken a severe hit this decade. Once seen as the only safeguard against centrifugal and external threats, it is now arguably the most resented institution of state power[20] — the product of brazen political manoeuvring that ended in repeated fiascos, the continued expansion of MilBus, failures of foreign and economic policy, the trial of civilians in military courts, restrictions on social media and journalists, and constitutional amendments passed to entrench its own authority (a five-year tenure for the Chief of Army Staff, paired with a Prime-Minister-selected Chief Justice, a reduced three-year tenure for that Chief Justice, and the removal of the Chief Justice's own suo motu powers).

Four Ideological Catch-22s. The Two-Nation Theory remains Pakistan's true centre of gravity, reinforced by the 1971 Pakistan Studies syllabus and its rewriting of the country's history as a 3,000-year-old civilisation

[15]Available at https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2024/06/01/tourism-and-its-impact-on-pakistans-economy/
[16]Available at https://www.dawn.com/news/1785903
[17]Available at https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2024/12/31/how-pakistan-changed-in-2024
[18]Available at https://www.dawn.com/news/1693195
[19]Available at https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/in-pakistan-begging-is-a-big-business-with-thriving-exports/articleshow/111610372.cms
[20]Available at https://youtu.be/qIiiM8ATXhY

supposedly born with Muhammad bin Qasim's 711 CE conquest of Sindh. The pursuit of status as 'Islam ka Qilla' (fortress of Islam), leader of the Muslim Ummah through the OIC, and a 'Madina ki Riyasat' modelled on the first Muslim government of 622 CE, has instead produced a pariah terror state holding the world's lowest passport ranking — 104th, against India's 85th. By 2025, this has left Pakistan's Deep State caught in four distinct Catch-22s:

- **A narrative Catch-22.** The military and elite can only sustain their grip on power by insisting 'Pakistan and Islam are in danger from India and the West' — but in a flat, interconnected world, this same narrative is steadily losing Gen Z Pakistanis even as it radicalises a shrinking minority into becoming the terrorists who then attack Pakistanis themselves.
- **A political Catch-22.** To keep Pakistan's feudal political class in check, the Army has played PML(N) (Punjab), PTI (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) and the PPP (Sindh, minus its Mohajir population) off against each other, deepening inter-provincial conflict, while also using Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), a radical Barelvi group, to counter Pashtun Deobandi and Ahl-e-Hadith organisations first cultivated as proxies during the Global War on Terror. Emboldened by the reintroduced Khatm-e-Nabuwat oath in the 2017 Election Reforms Act, these Barelvi and Deobandi groups now jointly target Shias, Ahmadis, Hindus, Christians and Jews — meaning any Army attempt to actually unify the country risks weakening its own hegemony over it.
- **A geopolitical Catch-22.** Pakistan has rented itself out to the West and China as a counterweight to India since 2017, while the West, China and Pakistan alike absorb the opportunity cost of a missing India–Pakistan trade relationship — a cost compounded, globally, by the spread of terrorism and irregular migration out of an increasingly radicalised,

underdeveloped Pakistan. The rent Pakistan collects for this role no longer covers what it, or the world, gives up in return.

- **An ideological Catch-22.** Pre-1947 Muslim leaders — Barelvi, Dehlavi, Maududi, Iqbal, Jinnah — and post-1947 figures and institutions — Ayub, Bhutto, Zia, Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, ISPR and the ISI — together imposed a narcissistic, anti-scientific religious worldview on the state,[21] generating enduring hostility toward 'Hindu India' and the 'non-Muslim West.' Absent honest normalisation of bilateral ties, India is unlikely to revisit its 'No Terror & Talks' posture — and any such normalisation, if it ever comes, could itself trigger the collapse of the Two-Nation Theory, and with it, most likely, the Pakistan Army and the Pakistan built around it.

Pakistan in 2025. Pakistan today functions as an irredentist security state atop a frail polity — the old line that 'the Pakistan Army has a country called Pakistan,' rather than the reverse, has rarely felt more literal. For regional and world peace, the 2014–2024 decade has cut Pakistan's earlier belligerence down considerably; the small number of pro-Palestine, anti-Israel rallies the ISI has permitted inside its self-styled 'fortress of Islam' is one small indicator. A pervasive hopelessness has settled over ordinary Pakistanis, who increasingly see themselves as subjects of the United States and China, and of their own Army, in that order.[22] The one silver lining for the country's elite may be the potential 'rebirth' of Bangladesh as a de facto East Pakistan once again. Barring another externally granted lifeline as a frontline state — as has happened before, from the US–China détente to the Soviet war in Afghanistan to 9/11 — the 2014–2024 decade has done much of the work of setting the stage to win the peace over Pakistan as a functioning anti-state.

[21]Available at https://youtu.be/HGOx7elrmg4
[22]Available at https://youtu.be/qIiiM8ATXhY

RELEVANCE FOR INVESTORS AND COUNTRY-RISK ANALYSTS

Read past the geopolitics, this decade of data — FDI collapsing to a fraction of India's, tourism arrivals near zero, 40% of GDP running through an illicit economy, 23 failed IMF programmes, a currency and reserve position that keeps needing external rescue — is a textbook sovereign-risk profile: an economy where political risk, security risk and balance-of-payments risk are no longer separable inputs but a single, self-reinforcing signal. Reading Pakistan this way — as a live case study, not a one-off headline — is directly transferable to how a corporate or government risk desk should read any fragile, security-dominated economy elsewhere in the world.

Viksit Bharat 2047

Comparative Advantages vis-à-vis Pakistan. Against this backdrop, India — Bharat — stands out as a plural, democratic market economy growing at 7.6%. Its comparative advantages are numerous: constitutional governance; a landmass and population roughly six times Pakistan's; a forward-looking education system and a highly skilled workforce; equality of opportunity in public services; the rule of law; a unified Goods and Services Tax (GST); digitised governance and commerce; a diversified industrial and export base; the soft power of its culture; strong tourist inflows; a well-regarded diaspora that remitted USD 129 billion in 2024 (against USD 26 billion for Pakistan); and a healthy level of foreign direct investment. It is little surprise the world remains bullish on India's trajectory.

Bharat's Pakistan Policy of 'No Terror & Talks.' Between 2016 and 2024, this policy has delivered India the integration of Kashmir, a reduction in terror attacks, public exposure of Pakistan's religiously sanctioned lies, deceit and deception, the isolation of internal sympathisers, and Pakistan's own diplomatic, political and economic isolation. It remains a necessary instrument on the road to Viksit Bharat 2047.

Pakistan's Future in Bharat's Amrit Kaal

Geopolitics in the World and in the Subcontinent. For the United States — including, quite possibly, under a Trump administration — Pakistan's economic collapse is something to be avoided, while its political chaos can largely be treated as an internal matter. Pakistan's future will depend chiefly on how Washington's own regional balance-of-power calculus, and Pakistan's continued utility within it, evolve.

Four scenarios illustrate the range of outcomes, depending on how outside powers choose to use Pakistan:

- **Scenario 1 — Use Pakistan to restrain India's growth.** If Pakistan is kept in play chiefly to slow India down, it survives its current crises.
- **Scenario 2 — Use Pakistan as a base against Iran.** If Pakistan becomes a platform to weaken Iran or engineer regime change there, it likewise survives its current crises.
- **Scenario 3 — De-fang Pakistan's terror and nuclear machinery.** If genuine global peace becomes the priority, defanging Pakistan would require Washington to lean on India (and Afghanistan) to do it.
- **Scenario 4 — Restrain China, confine India, control Pakistan.** In the shorter term, the US could use India to restrain China, Pakistan (and Bangladesh) to confine India, Afghanistan to keep Pakistan in check, and Myanmar to keep Bangladesh in check.

RELEVANCE FOR CORPORATE AND INSTITUTIONAL SCENARIO PLANNING

This four-scenario structure — mapping how several external actors might each instrumentalise the same fragile state for different ends — is a directly reusable template for corporate and institutional scenario planning: naming each plausible 'sponsor' of a given outcome, what each wants from the situation, and what survives or collapses under each. It is the discipline of building a small number of genuinely distinct futures, rather than a single forecast dressed up as several.

Bharat's Strategic Options. The self-reliance ('autarky') India can build by fully becoming Bharat is a prerequisite for Viksit Bharat 2047.[23] A pragmatic Bharat should prepare for the least favourable outcome — Scenario 4. In his 2024 book 'Why Bharat Matters,' External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar argues that Valmiki's Ramayana, Ved Vyasa's Mahabharata and Kautilya's Arthashastra remain sound reference points for designing and executing a strategy suited to Bharat's objectives. Two broad prongs suggest themselves:

Internal — the Saptanga theory of comprehensive national power. The seven classical components of a state — ruler, government, natural resources, protected capital, treasury, judiciary and allies — need to be strengthened and mobilised together to generate the comprehensive national power Bharat requires. Russia and Israel have both prevailed in wars imposed on them largely because of the self-reliance they had already built; both the NATO–Russia and Ummah–Israel contests carry real lessons for Bharat's own path to becoming Viksit Bharat.

External — the Mandala theory of balance of power. The classical twelve categories of neighbouring states need to be played against and with one another to maximise Bharat's own advantage. The live three-way

[23] Available at https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/bharat-is-a-statement-of-independence-jaishankar-emphasises-building-strong-bharat-narrative/articleshow/105729556.cms

manoeuvring today between Russia, China and the United States — each courting Bharat differently — is Mandala theory in real time.

Bharat's Pakistan Strategy. East and West Pakistan were created by the British in 1947 specifically to constrain Bharat; from 1947 until 2017–18, China and the United States backed Pakistan for much the same reason. This Western fixation on containing Bharat let China rise largely unchallenged, while turning Pakistan into the fountainhead of regional terrorism. The most effective way for Bharat to stop Pakistan acting against it, or being used against it, is to dismantle the Two-Nation Theory — the raison d'être of both the Pakistan Army and the state it commands. Bharat's 'No Terror & Talks' posture is already a cul-de-sac for Pakistan; the first milestone on the road to 'a world without Pakistan' — the integration of Kashmir — has been achieved. The second milestone, Pakistan's geo-economic collapse, has been gathering pace across the 2014–2024 decade, and Bharat should continue nudging that economy toward the edge, given the truth of the old adage that the winning side in a war prevails because the losing side's people have simply had enough. That would set the stage for an Arab-Spring-style popular revolution against Pakistan's ruling elite, its Army, the ISI, ISPR and MilBus alike. Bharat can draw directly on the 2024 regime change the US 'deep state' helped engineer in Bangladesh, using methods drawn from Gene Sharp's 1994 'From Dictatorship to Democracy.' Conducted without violating either jus ad bellum or jus in bello, as Clausewitz would insist, a peace won through this kind of decisive politico-military victory — rather than a merely tactical or strategic 'success' — would carry a considerably longer shelf life, as Colin Gray has argued.[24]

[24]Available at https://press.armywarcollege.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1822&context=monographs

Key Pre-Requisites for 'A World Without Pakistan.' India's handling of Pakistan — a country it was supposed to understand best — was, by most measures, poor right up to 2016. Three pre-requisites now matter most.

Understanding how Pakistan's Deep State actually functions. Indians, and the wider world, need educating on the structure of Pakistan's Deep State; on its use of 'saam, daam, dand, bhed' (persuasion, purchase, punishment and blackmail) to run the country; and on the working accommodation between Pakistani society, its politics and its Army that lets the Army govern in the first place.

Getting a handle on Pakistan's lies, deceit and deception. Indians, and the wider world, also need educating on Pakistan's religiously sanctioned use of lies, deceit and deception across statecraft — the claim that India and Pakistan form a nuclear flashpoint, the framing of its nuclear devices as small enough to be measured in a few hundred grams, or the notion that a 'stable Pakistan' is unambiguously in India's own interest. CPEC 2.0 (old 2019 commitments simply rebottled in 2024) and rising Hindutva-driven Islamophobia narratives inside India are two live contemporary examples. Pakistan's own inflation of tourism numbers is a particularly good case study: headlines such as 'Pakistan saw over 115% increase in tourism in 2023'[25] and 'Tourism industry in Pakistan skyrockets in 2023 with nearly 100,000 foreign visitors'[26] obscure a plainer reality — 97,500 foreign tourists visited Pakistan in 2023, of whom 50,674 came from Afghanistan, against India's 9.2 million foreign arrivals in the same year.[27]

Consistency in Bharat's Pakistan policy and strategy. The United States took from 1947 to 1991 to unravel the USSR. Across that same period, Bharat's defensive non-alignment, no-first-use nuclear posture, strategic

[25]Available at https://www.radio.gov.pk/01-01-2024/pakistan-saw-over-115-increase-in-tourism-in-2023-wasi-shah
[26]Available at https://pakistantourntravel.com/2024/01/19/pakistans-tourism-industry-2024/
[27]Available at https://www.thehindu.com/business/budget/india-saw-92-lakh-foreign-tourist-arrivals-in-2023-economic-survey/article68433380.ece

complacency and lack of a genuine 'deep state' of its own let Pakistan tilt an otherwise unfavourable power balance in its favour — earning Bharat, somewhat unfairly, a reputation for having 'no strategic culture,' despite being home to the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Arthashastra.[28] A cohesive Bharatiya deep state — one capable of sustaining consistency in grand strategy and its execution — is a necessary operating cost of securing the nation's core interests.

Making Bharat's Future Happen

In today's unpredictable world, strategic autonomy matters more than ever as the cornerstone of national security strategy. Where Bharat's objectives happen to align with another power's, that alignment should be treated as a temporary advantage, never mistaken for a war-winning alliance. Engineering 'a world without Pakistan' will depend on keeping Pakistan continuously irrelevant to the United States, China and Russia alike — and to Bharat's own pacifist 'Aman ki Asha' ('peace at any cost') constituency.

Bharat, not merely India, must and can solve its Pakistan riddle in order to make Viksit Bharat 2047 a reality.[29] Pakistan's future within Bharat's Amrit Kaal will depend far more on the strategic choices Bharat itself makes than on any choice Pakistan makes for itself. The sooner, and the more decisively — and cheaply, in lives and money — Bharat brings about 'a world without Pakistan' in its own, distinctly Bharatiya way, the better.

[28] S. Jaishankar, *The India Way: Strategies for an Uncertain World*, HarperCollins, Gurugram, 2020.
[29] S. Jaishankar, *Why Bharat Matters*, Rupa Publications, Delhi, 2024.

RELEVANCE FOR PUBLISHERS, THINK TANKS, GOVERNMENTS AND CORPORATE RISK TEAMS

This is a live, continuously updated geopolitical forecasting model, not a single op-ed: it reads political, economic, demographic and ideological signals together to project where a fragile state is headed, and has already been tested in public against real events. For publishers and podcast hosts, it offers a distinctive, contrarian but data-grounded thesis on South Asia's near-term future. For government and corporate audiences, it offers a transferable method for reading sovereign and regional risk anywhere security, ideology and economics are as tightly entangled as they are in the India–Pakistan relationship.