

**PAKISTAN TRYING TO BITE OFF MUCH WITH SINGLE BYTE**

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# KASHMIR CENTRAL

A MAGAZINE INITIATIVE



## **MANAGE THE WAR OF PERCEPTION**

**It Is As Significant As  
The War On Terror**

**KASHMIR CENTRAL**  
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CENTRAL

# Break The Silence!

## Kashmir Needs Complete And Unequivocal Rejection Of Terrorism

In April 2017, on the occasion of the inauguration of the Nashri-Chenani tunnel, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said while addressing the gathering at Udhampur: “Kashmiri youth have two options – tourism and terrorism.”

Five years later, it seems the same options are there. Kashmir is witnessing a record influx of tourists. All through March and now in April, Srinagar streets are wearing a festive look. Domestic tourists from all across the country are flying in by hundreds daily.

Realizing the potential of tourism to build bridges and restore normalcy, terrorists are trying to instill fear among both locals and the tourists. In just three days, terrorists struck at multiple places, killing and wounding two non-locals. They also targeted a Kashmiri Pandit in South Kashmir’s Shopian district. The spirit among both guests and hosts remains high and unshaken, but the terrorists are determined to vitiate the atmosphere.

Whatever be the political narratives, Kashmir is yearning for peace, progress and prosperity. Complete and unequivocal rejection of terrorism by us Kashmiris can bring about a significant change and ultimately shift the ground situation.

We need to break our silence, because the silence is killing the spirit. We need to close the options for terrorism. Let there be only one option – the option for peace, progress and prosperity. The grievances – real or perceived – can be addressed through engagement and reconciliation. The Kashmir society must reclaim itself before it is too late.



**Bashir Assad**



**PAK ARMY  
CHIEF GEN  
BAJWA'S  
OFFER FOR  
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**MAKE A SPLASH**

**INCULCATE  
DEMOCRATIC SPIRIT**



# THE **KASHMIR CENTRAL** POLICY PAPER

# National Security

**PAK ARMY CHIEF GEN  
BAJWA'S OFFER FOR  
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**Pakistan Is  
Trying To Bite Off  
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A Single Byte**

**If Mufti and others tilted towards  
Pakistan endorse Bajwa's  
statement, the license for Pakistan  
being a stakeholder in Kashmir is  
renewed. Their endorsement is an  
attempt to refute and negate India's  
stand that Kashmir is an internal  
matter**



by Bashir ASSAD

**F**or the second time in one year, the Pakistan Army Chief has used the Islamabad Security Dialogue (ISD) to express Pakistan's willingness for constructive engagement with India.

The second edition of ISD was organized in early April, and was attended by global policy experts. While wrapping up the two-day event, Bajwa said that Islamabad wants to use diplomacy and dialogue with India to resolve all outstanding issues, including Kashmir, to keep the "flames of fire away from our region".

The Pakistan Army Chief had made these same comments at ISD last year. We saw how Pakistan continued with business as usual on cross-border terrorism after these lofty comments by the Army chief.

Indian security experts have learned to take all that Pakistan says with more than a pinch of salt. Bajwa's comments again triggered analysis in India, and the domain experts analyzed the offer of dialogue meticulously. There was no quick official response to Gen Bajwa's assertions. His comments have generated a debate though. Military and defense experts are busy analyzing the merits of the statement and trying to contextualize it.

A new element in Bajwa's statement was his comment on the India-China border dispute. He said the matter is of great concern for Pakistan, and "we want it to be settled quickly through dialogue and diplomacy".

The question that is oft-posed to Pakistan's claims is this. Is the Pakistan state or the Army really serious about moving towards shared progress and development in the region? Can Pakistan be trusted?

India has bitter experience of reposing trust in



Pakistan. Over the years, it has been observed that Pakistan has a history of talking sweet when it is up to something dangerous from India's perspective. Hence, it is important to analyze Bajwa's statements critically.

### PAKISTAN'S PLANS FOR HOT SUMMER FOR KASHMIR

KASHMIR CENTRAL had reported in an earlier edition about credible intelligence inputs that Pakistan has tasked its mercenaries to raise the level of violence in Kashmir. The militants have made their intentions clear by hitting soft targets. In addition, non-locals and people belonging to minority communities are being targeted to spike panic in Kashmir.

Intelligence agencies have learnt that pistols are being supplied in large numbers to youth trained as hybrid militants who otherwise lead normal lives. They emerge only for targeted killings of political workers, policemen and media persons, or for grenade blasts. After the terror attacks, these foot soldiers for Pakistan go back into hiding.

**After General Bajwa's grandstanding at the Islamabad Security Dialogue last year, the following remained the template for Pakistan's proxy war against India. Pumping in trained operatives and terrorists to spike terror attacks in Kashmir. Supplying weapons in large numbers to hybrid militants. Narco-terrorism and disinformation**

After General Bajwa's grandstanding at the Islamabad Security Dialogue last year, this remained the template. If Pakistan's game plan for 2022 is the same, India will make diplomatic outreach to the international community to denounce cross border terrorism emanating from Pakistan.

It is in this context that Gen Bajwa chose to speak to the readily available audience – the international security experts at ISD. This is the Bajwa Bluff. It is Pakistan's preemptive effort to ensure that it does

not face international censure when a terror attack against India is launched by its trained mercenaries. Through such grand statements, Pakistan seeks the cloak of deniability regarding its terror acts

Many security and defense experts miss this point and try to contextualize the statements made by the Pakistan Army Chief. They analyze it in view of Pakistan's internal problems on socio-economic and political fronts. Some even attribute the assertions to the emerging imbalances in the

**Pakistan is supplying pistols in large numbers to youth trained as hybrid militants who otherwise lead normal lives. They emerge only for targeted killings of political workers, policemen and media persons, or for grenade blasts. After the terror attacks, these foot soldiers for Pakistan go back into hiding**



Photo courtesy: Opindia



world order.

All these arguments are valid. But given the kind of machinations that Pakistan indulges in, there is more to the statement than meets the eye.

### WHY BAJWA'S STATEMENT MAY BE SEEN AS A PREEMPTIVE EFFORT

The numbers of Pakistani terrorists who have returned from Afghanistan are swelling on the terror launch pads along LoC on the Pakistani side. Pakistan is ready to pump into Indian territory more and more terrorists who have returned from Afghanistan after it was taken over by Taliban.

Pakistan cannot afford to have such a huge number of radicalized war mongers sitting idle on its soil. It wants to engage them in its proxy war against India. Otherwise, these fighters shall engage in misadventures within Pakistan, deteriorating the law and order situation there further.

Pakistan's internal security situation is steadily

worsening. Sending the Afghan-returned terrorists to Kashmir also fits with Pakistan's long-term project to keep Kashmir on the boil.

Security agencies have learnt that over the last few months, the number of foreign terrorists (Pakistanis) in Kashmir has gone up. By choosing to make grand claims vis-à-vis India at Islamabad Security Dialogue, Gen Bajwa is killing two birds with one stone. He is trying to convince the international audience that Pakistan is a peace-loving country. He is also washing his hands off subsequent terrorist misadventures on Indian soil.

### WHAT DOES GEN BAJWA'S OFFER OF DIALOGUE MEAN FOR KASHMIRIS?

Here is another point which is being overlooked while interpreting Gen Bajwa's statement. What does his offer of dialogue with India mean for

**Over the years, it has been observed that Pakistan has a history of talking sweet when it is up to something dangerous from India's perspective. Hence, it is important to analyze Bajwa's statements critically**

## GENERAL BAJWA'S STATEMENT STRENGTHENS PAKISTAN'S IDEOLOGICAL PARTNERS IN KASHMIR

General Bajwa's statement strengthens Pakistan's ideological partners in Kashmir. They get a chance to talk about Pakistan. Pakistan is accorded so-called legitimacy to be a stakeholder on Kashmir. It turns out that with Gen Bajwa's statement, Pakistan is seeking to kill more birds with one stone than one may correctly count.

The dominant narrative since the gruesome attack of February 2019 has been cross-border terrorism. It was Pakistan-engineered suicide bombing, and 45 paramilitary troopers were killed. After that attack, nobody including Pakistan's ideological partners in Kashmir spoke of the enemy nation as a "legitimate stakeholder". Bajwa's statement needs to be seen in this

context too.

General Bajwa's first speech at Islamabad Security Dialogue last year came with similar ramifications. We must not forget that.

India can never every take any statement from Pakistan at face value - be it the military or the political class. Bajwa's grand claims notwithstanding, the vigil on the borders and the hinterland must be enhanced to avert any tragedy. India must keep clear focus on the terror, narcotics and disinformation war unleashed



by Pakistan.

Simultaneously, in order to be politically and diplomatically correct, India may officially respond with cautious optimism to the statement. As things stand, it's business as usual.

Kashmiris?

This statement from the Pakistan Army Chief has many connotations for Kashmir. For some time now, there has been silence on Pakistan being a stakeholder in Kashmir. Bajwa's statement regarding dialogue with India is revivalist in the sense that the political leaders in Kashmir will endorse and welcome it.

The moment politicians like Mehbooba Muf-ti and others tilted towards Pakistan welcome the statement, the license for Pakistan of being

a stakeholder in Kashmir is renewed. Such an endorsement is an attempt to refute and negate India's stand that Kashmir is an internal matter.

This too is politics. It is politics which benefits Pakistan.

When General Bajwa's statement is analyzed taking into consideration the arguments made above, it is evident that Pakistan is trying to bite off much with a single byte. Bajwa's claim has the potential to ignite and explode that which has been contained for quite some time.



# MISUSE, ABUSE OF PUBLIC SAFETY ACT

## INACCURATE DOSSIERS:

# Often Innocents Victimized, Hardcore Criminals Get Away



by Imad RAFI MIR

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ublic Safety Act (PSA) 1978 is much maligned in Kashmir. It is regarded by the populace of Kashmir Valley as the most controversial and contested law since the inception of armed insurgency in the 1990s.

There has been public outcry and judicial reprimand on many occasions against the operation of this controversial law in J&K to “contain anti-national and terrorism-related activities in Kashmir.” For three decades, PSA has been one of the focal points in the political agenda of most of the Kashmir-based political parties.

Kashmir has also seen many upheavals regarding the charge of PSA on what is popularly called as “flimsy grounds”.

### HISTORY OF PSA

PSA was primarily by the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly to curb the abuse of forest resources and to ensure the hand of law against the forest smugglers. It was not easy for those charged under PSA to obtain bail. Since the beginning, PSA has been slapped on thousands for their alleged involvement in terrorism-related activities.

There have been allegations against the government, irrespective of the regime, of misusing and even abusing the Act by “falsely implicating innocent” people.

The blame game has been there for three decades. Every political party and leader would blame the other for falsely implicat-

**The casual and unprofessional approach of JK Police in preparing the dossiers and listing of charges against the accused leads to implication of innocent individuals. This later has far-reaching ramifications for the society**





## There are certain occasions when the law enforcement agencies are under tremendous pressure from the political bosses to act swiftly against trouble mongers. But false implications erode the trust of the common people in the democratic institutions

ing people under PSA.

The debate around PSA has been exclusively political. Most parties have seen this issue as the political feeder to gain the sympathy of common masses.

This was a ritual for political parties in J&K, wherein the ruling formation in Jammu and Kashmir had to face a strong opposition on the issue of PSA. Allegations leveled at each other by the political class have mostly been general accusatory, not case specific.

### DOSSIERS PREPARED IN SLIPSHOD MANNER

KASHMIR CENTRAL deems it appropriate to raise certain fundamental questions regarding the invocation of PSA against the accused persons by the law-enforcement agencies, particularly the Jammu and Kashmir Police.

Statistics apart, the fundamental cause of concern in the imposition of the PSA is the stage of preparation of the dossiers. A dossier is a collection of papers containing de-

tailed information about a person, an event or a subject. Therefore it merits that the dossier is prepared by a person of prudence and professional competence.

The casual and unprofessional way of JK Police in preparing the dossiers and listing of charges against the accused leads to implication of innocent individuals. This later has far-reaching ramifications for the society. There have been innumerable allegations from the public about the misuse and abuse of PSA by the political

# HOME MINISTER, LG TOOK SERIOUS NOTE OF VICTIMIZATION OF INNOCENTS UNDER PSA

Take the instance of Home Minister Amit Shah's last visit to Srinagar on October 23, 2021. Shortly before his arrival, a police inspector of the CID wing was killed by terrorists in Nowgam in the city's outskirts. This was followed by the killing of ML Bindroo, the renowned medicate in the heart of the city.

Law enforcement agencies were under tremendous pressure to act against the terror modules and OGWs. The police in each district started picking up hundreds of so-called suspects only for numbers.

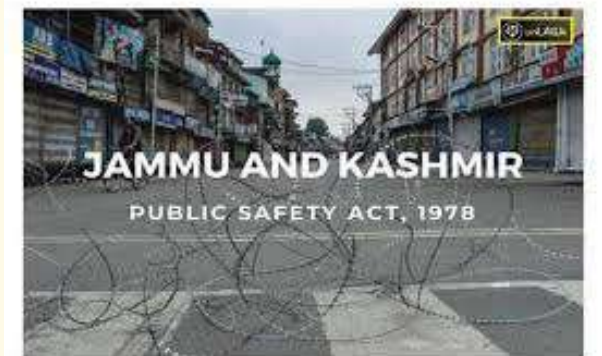
Dossiers were prepared in haste overnight. Reports say that the district magistrates signed the dossiers without proper assessment and application of legal prudence, without going into the merits of the case and raising questions. This resulted in the detention of hundreds of youth from across the valley either under PSA or UAPA (Unlawful Activities Prevention Act).

It is learnt that none of the district magistrates returned a single dossier to the police for further queries.

There was public outcry against such random arrests. The cries reached the Home Minister's ears. It is reliably learnt that in a high-level meeting of security officials at Raj Bhawan in the evening of October 23, the Home Minister expressed his anguish over the carelessness of both the police and the civil administration.

It used to be the same even at the time of elected governments. Those at the helm of affairs would express pain at the indiscriminate slapping of PSA on poor youth.

According to reliable sources, the Home Minister strongly warned the officers not to touch the innocents. LG Manoj Sinha too expressed his dismay. He directed his officers



to refrain from falsely implicating innocents and instead look for the real culprits.

Both the Home Minister and the LG received inputs that the majority of those picked up by the police across Kashmir valley and charged under PSA were those against whom cases had earlier been registered in their respective police stations.

According to sources, the Home Minister and the LG were told that the district police officers have lost touch with the ground, and that human intelligence does not flow well. The Home Minister and the LG were also informed that when the police officers face pressure after some volatile case, they randomly book men who had some kind of contact with the terrorist groups in the past. Such people are targeted even though they may have no present connect with any terror group or OGWs.

The HM and the LG were informed that the District Magistrates by and large are to be blamed for this carelessness and for succumbing to the pressure mounted by the Police.

As per law, it is imperative for each signing authority to study the dossiers carefully and raise questions of law so as to satisfy the collective conscious beyond reasonable doubt.



## INVESTIGATING OFFICERS REPLICATED DOSSIERS, DMs PASSED THEM

**A**fter the culmination of the Home Minister's visit, Principal Secretary to LG Niteshwar Kumar told this correspondent that it was criminal on the part of the district magistrates to not apply mind and wisdom while deciding about the merits of each dossier presented to them by the District Police. He emphasized that there were dual points of concern here. One, innocents or criminals of low severity got booked under PSA on flimsy grounds. Second, there were several instances where hardcore terrorists got away because the investigating agencies did not do the proper homework.

It was observed that in many dossiers, the Investigating Officer replicates the dossier prepared before for someone, changes its name to the current accused, and presents the case for further processing.

This practice of replicating dossiers is not restricted to Kashmir. There have been multiple reports by leading media houses in print and television media of mindless replication of dossiers by the Investigating Officer.



regimes of the erstwhile state.

It is understood that those booked under PSA and their families will refute the allegations. Equally, they have every right to defend themselves.

In most cases, the dossiers are prepared in a very slipshod manner. The mechanism to re-verify the facts beyond a reasonable doubt is not often exercised. This compromises on the rightful implementation of this law.

### CASUAL APPROACH OF INVESTIGATING OFFICER, DMs

After the charges under PSA are framed in the dossier by the investigating agency, the contents is approved and endorsed by the District Magistrate. Since 1990, thousands have been slapped with PSA. There is enough evidence to suggest that because the casual approach of the investigating agency, hardcore criminals and those actually involved in terrorism-related activities get away, and the innocents are implicated and victimized. This happened because of the lackluster approach of the investigating agencies.

The edifice of the Indian criminal justice administration system is based on certain fundamental maxims and beliefs. These maxims have been indoctrinated in the system to such depth that they have led to the emergence of various presumptions which envelop to a criminal trial even before it initiates. One of these is the presumption of innocence of the accused,

**The Home Minister and the LG were informed that when police officers face pressure after some volatile case, they randomly book men who had contact with terrorist groups in the past - even though they may have no present contact with unlawful elements. They were informed that the DMs by and large are to be blamed for this carelessness and for succumbing to the pressure mounted by the Police**

requirement of proof beyond reasonable doubt in order to establish the guilt of the accused etc.

“Let Hundred Guilty Be Acquitted But One Innocent Should Not Be Convicted”.

There are certain occasions when the law enforcement agencies are under tremendous pressure from the political bosses to act swiftly against trouble mongers. But false implications erode the trust of the common people in the democratic institutions.

### WHAT IS PUBLIC SAFETY ACT

The Jammu & Kashmir Public Safety Act 1978 is a preventive detention law, under which a person is taken into custody to prevent him or her from acting in any manner that is prejudicial to the security of the state or the maintenance of public order.

PSA permits administrative detention for up to two years “in the case of a person acting in any manner prejudicial to the security of the state”, and for up to a year where “any person is acting in any manner prejudicial to the maintenance of public order”.



A detention order under the PSA is issued by the District Magistrate. After the amendments were made to PSA in 2012, the detention of a person below the age of 18 was strictly prohibited under this Act.

Public Safety Act is a very powerful tool to curb anti-national elements. The Supreme Court, in a catena of judgments, has held that the District Magistrate or

any other qualified official as per the Act is under legal obligation to analyze all the circumstances of a case. If a person already under police custody is detained under the Public Safety Act, the officer has to record compelling reasons for such detention. If a person is detained multiple times under PSA, the officer must produce fresh facts while passing the subsequent detention order.



**THE**

**KASHMIR  
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**POLICY PAPER**

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**Internal  
Security**

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**KASHMIR**

**MANAGE THE  
INFORMATION  
WAR,  
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by Bisma NAZIR

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ashmir has been and remains one of the biggest challenges for the state. Cross-border terrorism, a major concern further exacerbated by the current geo-political scenario, is just one aspect of the problem. A significant challenge before the policy planners is the management of perceptions. This is part of what the military doctrine calls Information Warfare (IW).

For many years, the state has assiduously followed the Goodwill doctrine. In adhering to it, the purpose of the state was to create goodwill through outreach. The doctrine has been under severe criticism from many quarters within the establishment.

The criticism may have been misplaced. The Goodwill doctrine had the desired results when we were able to open the communication channels with the people of Kashmir. Equally, the state was able to rein in certain forces in the separatist camp and bring them into the mainstream. By following the Goodwill doctrine, the state was able to achieve specific objectives. When the extremist discourse was dominating, the state was able to create space for moderate voices. The importance of adhering to this doctrine must

be recognized.

Now when the discourse in Kashmir is being steered on different lines, the Goodwill doctrine still holds water. It remains relevant in the current times with an entirely different target group. Now, the Goodwill doctrine must bring into its ambit our own people who are alienated.

Internally, one of the fundamental issues faced by the state in Kashmir is regarding changing the perceptions. Or till the shift happens, at least managing the perceptions on a large scale.

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### WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO MANAGE PERCEPTIONS IN KASHMIR

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Strategy is wisdom. Managing perceptions is essential for national security. Why? Because actions arise from perceptions. Perceptions condition the mind to act in ways that may be detrimental for internal or external security. It is in this context that the state must drive perception.

What is the importance of managing perceptions in Kashmir? We can understand it by way of this example.

There is a village on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway near Sangam, by the name Hal-amullah. The entire hamlet and the neighbouring villages along the National Highway are into the business of making cricket bats. This industry is considered to be





**The state must move forward and ensure public engagement on vital issues that impact the society and economy. This is best done by strengthening the locals. This is best done by vocalizing the locals with the right ideology. If the state has the vision and the drive to make it happen, it can find local influencers who shall take on this challenging task**



the backbone of the local economy in the area. These villages have been into the business of making cricket bats for decades. Through this industry, employment is provided to thousands of skilled and semi-skilled labourers.

From my childhood, I have keenly observed that the cricket bat business booms when the Indian cricket team wins any tournament. The industry gets a swift boost, and the people associated with the business make handsome profit. The gains further multiply when India registers a win against arch-rival Pakistan. The domestic tourists visiting Kashmir go in for massive purchase of cricket bats on such occasions. Demand pours in from business houses in the mainland, and huge orders are received for cricket bats. When India loses any tournament, the demand for cricket bats dips, and the business faces a low time.

The contradiction I have repeatedly observed is this. For years, I observed that the people in the cricket bat business, or perhaps those in their neighbourhood would celebrate the defeat of the Indian cricket team, particularly when it was pitted against Pakistan. They would burn firecrackers on Pakistan's victory over India in any format of the game.

This to me is the classical example of the perception management. In Pakistan's defeat lies the win of the local manufacturers and traders engaged in the cricket bat industry. The victory of the Indian cricket team against Pakistan would bring them prosperity. Nevertheless, the celebrations were reserved for Pakistan's victory. Still, they would wish that India should lose and Pakistan should win.

This is the perception management which the Indian state has ignored for decades. It never at-

tempted to change the perception.

A specific pattern that was seen at ground level was this. Flared tempers after a particularly crucial cricket match would lead to celebrations in favour of Pakistan, sloganeering and show of strength in some areas. Admittedly, such reaction was engineered by separatist forces. But it emboldened the di-

visive elements within the society. This violence conditioned the next generation. It further normalized deviant social behaviour. It deepened negative sentiment against the state among innocent children and youth.

The major issue of concern is this. That the social ripples of anti-state conditioning go far beyond

what can be fathomed or measured.

The state must move forward and ensure public engagement on vital issues that impact the society and economy. This is best done by strengthening the locals. This is best done by vocalizing the locals with the right ideology. If the state has the vision and the drive to make it happen, it can find local influencers who shall take on this challenging task.

**FAULTY LOCAL NARRATIVES MUST BE CHALLENGED THROUGH LOCAL INFLUENCERS**

A sizable number of people within Kashmir tend to believe that militants won't kill civilians. Last year, two policemen were killed by terrorists at Nawgam Chowk in Srinagar. I was driving through the area around the same time. My Personal Security Officer (PSO), sitting on my left, whispered to me: "It was the handiwork of intelligence agencies".

I was shocked to hear this brazen accusation from my own PSO, who is a policeman himself. The man hails from a far-flung village in Anantnag district. The village he hails from and its adjoining areas are deeply influenced by Jamaat ideology.

The policeman himself is not a Jamaati. But the fact remains that his thought processes – his perceptions – are influenced by radical ideology.

Perceptions in Kashmir are deeply influenced by the anti-Indian political and religious rhetoric. Casting aspersions over the veracity and authenticity of military actions has been the normal discourse of the political class cutting across party lines. To add to this, the radi-



**Till recently, the security and intelligence agencies would focus on the mere statistics. They were reluctant to move beyond headcounts. On the other hand, for decades Pakistan has worked tirelessly on information warfare or perception management. The situation now is that the state and its apparatus have gained phenomenal expertise in dealing with guerrilla warfare. But they are lagging far behind their adversary in perception management**





**The focus of the policy planners in Delhi must be on both the terror war and the information war. Security and defense experts have correctly advised the state that the terror war is manageable. The Himalayan challenge is perception management**

cal ideology molds the mindset in such a manner that the fault lies always with the other.

With the expansion of cellular networks and the abuse of social media, the war of perceptions or the information warfare has intensified dimensionally. There is a pattern that is being followed in each civilian killing by the terrorists. Earlier they would either blame the state's security agencies for the killings, or remain mute. They would not claim responsibility. Now the terror groups come out with a statement after each killing. The target hit by them is either "stooge of the ruling BJP and RSS" or an "agent of enemy forces". The statement reaches the people before the news of the person's killing reaches them. This is the level at which the terror groups are fighting the info war.

Till recently, the security and intelligence agencies would focus on the mere statistics. They were reluctant to move beyond headcounts. On the other hand, for decades Pakistan has worked tirelessly on information warfare or perception management. The situation now is that the state and its apparatus have gained phenomenal expertise in dealing with guerrilla warfare. But they are lagging far behind their adversary in perception management.

**PERCEPTION MANAGEMENT IS THE KEY**

The focus of the policy planners in Delhi must accommodate both arenas now. The terror war and the information war. Security and defense experts have correctly ad-

vised the state that the terror war is manageable. The Himalayan challenge is perception management.

The political polarization that India currently faces makes it difficult for people on both sides of the divide to accept that the other may be right. It is so for people in Kashmir. It is so for people in the mainland. The media too is tilted towards the left or the right, making the task even more challenging. The split in the left wing and the right wing poses great threat to the efforts towards reconciliation.

The state faces multiple challenges in Kashmir. There is the rhetorical positioning by Kashmir's political class. There is consistent radicalization by the religious schools. The national media is split, and positions itself along ideological lines. The polarized environment prevalent in the country. All these put together have left the security and intelligence agencies of the country baffled.

It is important to fully grasp that Kashmiris are now conditioned to identify the Indian nation with the Army jawan fighting terrorism in the countryside. Any anger against the local or national political dispensation is vented on the army jawan.

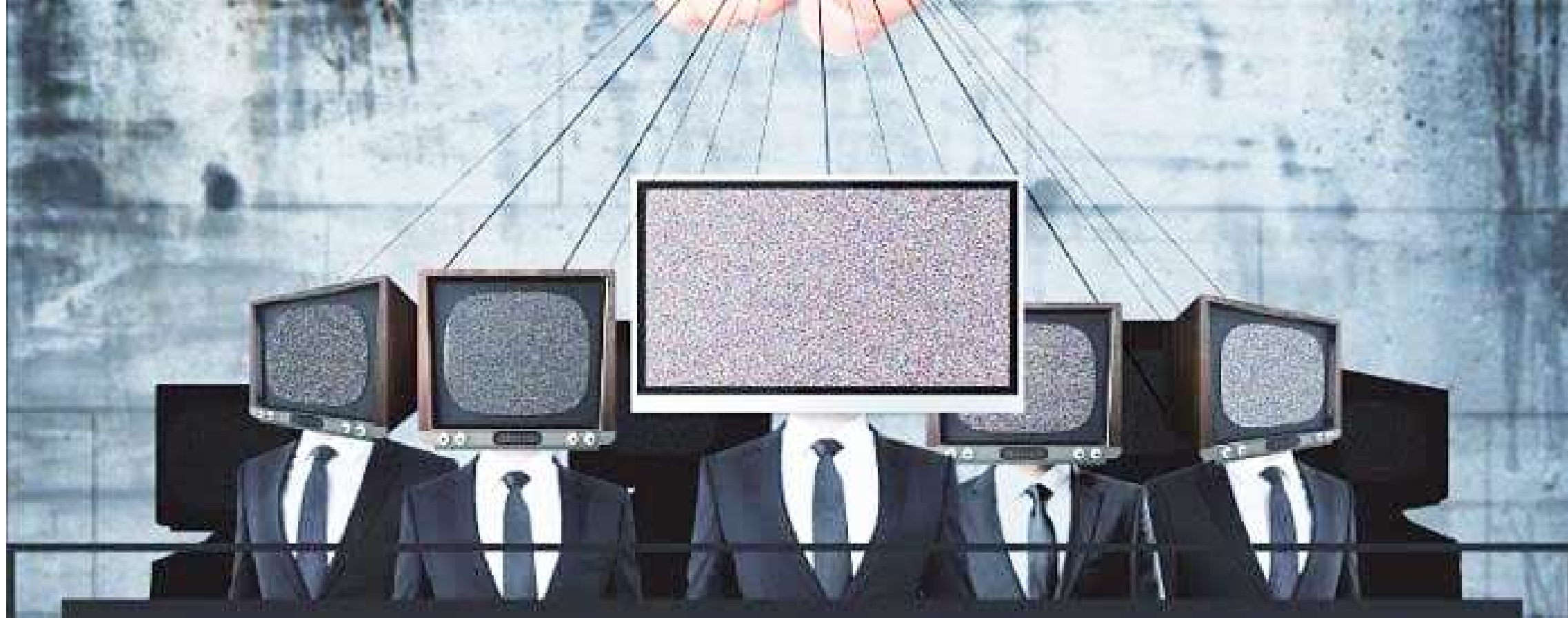
It is the security forces who face the consequences of the discourse set by the political and religious class in Kashmir. Equally, the security forces are held accountable by the Kashmiris for the utterances at the national level.

Given their presence at ground level and their unquestioned allegiance to the state, they can play the pivotal role in changing the narratives and constructively engaging the collective mind space in Kashmir.

**The bottom line is that from the perspective of the common Kashmiris, the security forces have to bear the brunt of the actions of the political establishment. Taking the analogy forward, it is the security agencies which are tasked with building bridges and rationalizing the mind space in Kashmir. This is the ground reality, and a huge responsibility. We are aware that the security and intelligence agencies walk on a tight rope in Kashmir. Equally, they must gear up even more to be able to influence the minds and engage the Kashmiris positively and constructively**







# WAR OF PERCEPTIONS: VITAL TO INITIATE AN INTELLECTUAL DISCOURSE TO ENGAGE WITH YOUTH

Amid the hardened political positioning on both sides of the divide, the security establishment along with the intelligence grid needs to focus on the following things.

## INDIA'S INFO WAR MUST BE OFFENSIVE, NOT REACTIONARY

The information warfare mechanism needs to be strengthened and upgraded. The gears need

to shift from reactionary to offensive. It is very important for the state to use the social media platforms innovatively and in ways that the adversaries are unaware of.

Over the last several years, Pakistan's deep state has used social media platforms to penetrate deep into Kashmir society. Now is the time when the same social media platforms should be used by the Indian state to unsettle the adversary.

## STATE MUST MAKE USE OF ALL AVAILABLE PLATFORMS OF SOFT POWER FOR PROPAGATION OF PEOPLE-FRIENDLY MEASURES

The political establishment has certain ideological moorings. It cannot afford to be seen as accommodative. At the same time, the state needs to win the perception war in Kashmir.

In order to achieve this objective, the security and intelligence agencies need to create a discourse on their own. The popularization of a discourse amid the unpleasant political noises on both sides of the divide is a herculean task.

The state must make use of all available platforms of soft power for propagation of people-friendly measures. Though conscious of the limitations, there should be consistent efforts of socialization of the intelligence and security grid on the ground.

Kashmir is a highly community-oriented region. Making bonds with the community is important for the intelligence and security grid. This shall lead to major gains in countering terrorism as well as in perception management and fighting the information war.

Isolation of the extremist radical elements is yet another challenging task for the security agencies. The desired results cannot be achieved without reaching out to the peaceful majority.

Development initiatives are an important part of the reach out. In the given situation, it is equally important to rationalize the political ambitions of

the youth of Kashmir.

Many development schemes have been initiated by the government, and these play an important role. But it needs to be understood sooner rather than later that the problem lies in the thought processes.

An intellectual discourse is fundamentally important to answer the questions that befuddle the youth. Kashmiris are politically aware and responsive. At the same time, they are aspirational people who seek upward social mobility. They want to be engaged intellectually. The lack of these constructive and positive intellectual initiatives is a sore vacuum. Pakistan consistently seeks to fill this space with negative propaganda against the Indian state.

Post abrogation of Article 370, the urgency of setting an intellectual discourse is being felt more than ever. There are little or no efforts to provoke the minds of the local youth for introspection. This is not healthy for the state. A war cannot be won by force alone. Strategy is a game of both hard power and soft power.

## USE EMOTIONAL CONNECT TO BUILD BONDS

The Kashmir society has all along been emotionally charged. The reason is that Kashmiris are highly emotional people. Hence the modus operandi to build community bonds with them must be through the emotional connect.



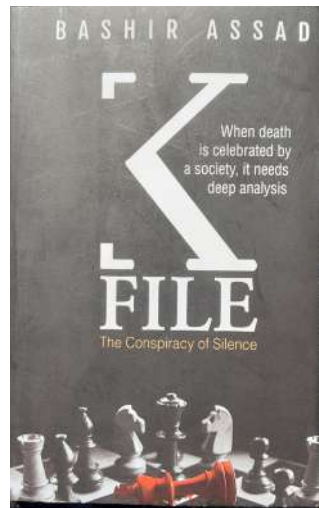
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# WHY MUST THE INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES INITIATE RECONCILIATION



Excerpt from  
**K FILE**  
**The Conspiracy Of Silence**  
**BASHIR ASSAD, 2019**

Whatever the conflict and whosoever the stakeholders - whatever its nature, tractable or intractable, there are distinct stages involved in its resolution. These are establishing contact, building communication channels, restoring confidence and building trust, understanding and recognizing each other's limitations.

The first contact is always established on behalf of the government by its intelligence agencies. They are trained for the purpose, and also for the ability to act deniably. There are always testing times in the process. Intelligence agencies are conditioned to move forward despite all hiccups.

Dr Niel Barnard, former head of South Africa's National Intelligence Service, identifies the phases of negotiation and reconciliation. These include the following.

- Establishing contact and information gathering
- Building trust
- Exploring the range of opportunities
- Transferring the process to a wider base.

There are lessons here for the intelligence and security agencies for pursuing peace and reconciliation in Kashmir.

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