

# **Efficacy of Personality Traits, Religious Ideology and Political Capital of Event: The Case of Pulwama Attack**

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## **Abstract**

*History of tense relations between India and Pakistan dates back to the time of independence of both the states from the British Raj in 1947. Nonetheless, attempts have been made to pave the way for peace and trust building but in vain. This study looks at idiosyncrasy in policy making by looking at three different attacks that took place in India and the response of New Delhi to each. It further explores the personality of Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi vis-à-vis his religious and ideological beliefs and also analyses the extent to which these factors sway Modi in formulating policy particularly towards Indian minority (Muslims) and neighbours like Pakistan. Employing content analysis of the daily Dawn with the timeline of 2001 to 2019, the paper methodologically looks at three significant attacks in Indian administered territories till the Pulwama bombing. To have a perspective of the latter, this paper raises the question why the attack on the Indian parliament and Mumbai attacks failed to generate similar response as the Pulwama attack did. The paper argues that the Pulwama attack generated a different response due to idiosyncrasy, personality traits, religious and nationalistic tendency of the current administrator of India. More importantly, the season of election is always sensitive; meanwhile incumbent government is always scouting for event(s) to be exploited as political capital for election victory. Premised on the theoretical underpinnings of personality traits, religious ideology and an event such as the Pulwama attack, Modi has managed to change the playbook of India-Pakistan relations.*

**Keywords:** Pulwama Attack, Personality Traits, Religious Ideology, Political Capital of Event, Mumbai Attack.

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## Introduction

Lack of trust and oscillation have long characterised India-Pakistan relations. Nonetheless, the history of the two countries is not generally dominated by Hobbesian description of the state of nature, there have been moments of negative peace. The Lahore Declaration and Agra Summit are salient historical moments. The Lahore Declaration, signed on February 21, 1999, was a unique landmark and watershed between two countries that had fought three devastating wars. Though the Agra Summit held between July 14 and 16, 2001 had no formal signature(s) appended to it, but indelibly remains the “greatest missed opportunities” to resolving the protracted issues between the two countries. These were historical and defining moments (Lahore and Agra) that might have changed the course of history in the region and especially the arch-enmity between the two nuclear states of South Asia.

Few months following the Agra summit, the Indian parliament was attacked and seven years later, India’s financial hub, Mumbai was stormed by multiple attacks. Both incidents exacerbated the already sour India-Pakistan relations. As convenient as it might appear, New Delhi was swift to shoulder the blame on Pakistan. While the political fallout(s) of the Mumbai attacks of 2008 and the Pathankot and Uri attacks of 2016 still remained unresolved,<sup>1</sup> the peace of Pulwama city, situated in northern state of Jammu and Kashmir under the illegal administration of India was perturbed by bombs killing scores of Indian security personnel. The February 14, 2019 Pulwama attack further dented the already strained relations between the states.

Expectedly, all of these attacks further drove a wedge between the two countries; raising the bar of mistrust and tension. The three attacks are uniquely different, yet share certain commonalities. Attack on the parliament and the Pulwama suicide bombing happened under the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)’s administration while the Mumbai attacks were a terrible shock for the Indian National Congress party (INC). In addition to these attacks, there have been multiple brawls on the Line of Control (LoC)

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<sup>1</sup> Sameer Lalwani and Hannah Haegeland, “Anatomy of a Crisis: Explaining Crisis Onset in India-Pakistan Relations,” in *Investigating Crises: South Asia’s Lessons, Evolving Dynamics, and Trajectories*, ed. Hannah Haegeland and Michael Krepon (Washington DC: Stimson Centre, 2018), 23-55.

and other forms of skirmishes. With the intervention of the international community and sense of responsibility, none of the incidents were raised to the level of violating the sovereign integrity of the other state except the Pulwama attack.

The succeeding discussion methodically looks at the parliament, Mumbai and Pulwama attacks as reported in the daily *Dawn*. The discussion attempts to offer a perspective and proffer answer as to why the Pulwama attack was escalated and pushed to the level of violating the sovereignty of Pakistan. The discussion theoretically explores the idea of a parliament and the importance it occupies in a polity. The exploration raises few questions — if the parliament is supreme, being the symbol of state's sovereignty and representation of peoples' general will, why attack on such a symbol did not become a reason for war and violation of Pakistan's sovereignty by India as seen in the Pulwama case. A similar question is raised for the Mumbai attacks. The decision to change the playbook and to make the response to the Pulwama unique rests on the personality and religious ideology of the leader, which this paper considers as the theoretical underpinnings for such rationalisation. In addition, event analysis and political capital was added to the discussion for better perspective, as to why the response to the Pulwama attack made a tangent.

## **Methodology**

Methodologically, the utility of content analysis helps the paper to identify what Berelson refers to as 'manifest content' that is uncovering the apparent content within the body of large data set.<sup>2</sup> The daily *Dawn* was selected for the data set. The *Dawn* is the oldest English daily newspaper having wide readership across the country. From 2001 till 2019, India-Pakistan relations have not been generally cordial and forthcoming. The two nations have to grapple with the backlog of existing contentious issues. While there were many issues and low intensity skirmishes between the two countries during the timeline, the attack on the Indian Parliament and Mumbai attacks were overwhelmingly paramount and made serious headlines within the region and across the globe. The Pulwama attack created further complication, raising the volatile and precarious India-Pakistan relations to a new height of animosity.

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<sup>2</sup> Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 290.

## **Background**

The year 2001 experienced more than its usual share of the maintained pattern of “highs” and “lows” in India-Pakistan relations. The year started with high hopes of peace which reached their crescendo during the July summit between Prime Minister Atal Vajpayee and President Pervez Musharaf in Agra and ended with an open talk of war between the two countries. During the first half of the year, India-Pakistan relationship showed many signs of a genuine thaw. Under the umbrella of growing international pressure to decrease the tensions along the Line of Control (LoC) and to address India’s concerns regarding “Cross-border” terrorism, Pakistan officially announced that its armed forces will ensure maximum restraint along the LoC. There was relative peace, and the degree of confidence building between the two countries created some form of hope within the region and around the world until December 13 when the nascent sense of peace evaporated.

## **Indian Parliament Attack**

Accusation of cross border violence and terrorism is not new amongst the heaps of allegations between Pakistan and India. But the attack on the Indian parliament on December 13, 2001, which resulted in the death of a dozen people including five security guards, was horrifying to most Indians and the entire region.<sup>3</sup> The attack unfolded itself amidst the growing diplomatic confidence building between New Delhi and Islamabad. Even though the Agra Summit met a bad end, it was to some extent and would have been a precursor to peace between India and Pakistan. However, the attack made peace inconceivable, denied the Agra Summit its essence, and reacting to the attack, Vajpayee avowed, “Now the fight against terrorism has reached its last phase. We will fight a decisive battle to the end,” while the Home Minister, Lal Krishan Advani fumed, “We will liquidate the terrorist and those who sponsor them.”<sup>4</sup> The attack on the parliament apparently became a centripetal force and some sort of common voice across political spectrum. It was considered as a violation of India’s sovereignty, “India has technical evidence that Thursday’s terrorist attacks on not only the symbol but also

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<sup>3</sup> Jawed Naqvi, “12 Die as Gunmen Storm Indian Parliament,” *Dawn*, December 14, 2001, <https://www.dawn.com/news/404644>

<sup>4</sup> Naqvi, “12 Die as Gunmen Storm Indian Parliament.”

the seat of Indian democracy and sovereignty was the handiwork of a terrorist organisation based in Pakistan — the Lashkar-e-Taiba.”<sup>5</sup>

For India, Pakistan is a convenient target to blame for all its woes and thus, while India blamed Pakistan as a state, the bulk of the responsibility was placed on Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad (two non-state actors operating within Pakistan).<sup>6</sup> Adding to the strained and oscillating relations between the two countries, the attack on the Indian parliament invariably drew and precipitated Indian ire; thus, a day after the attack, violence erupted in the Indian occupied Kashmir. The LoC became more volatile; heavy mortar shelling on combat posts, reports of Indian army shelling in AJK village and many such incidents. The attack led to the closure of borders — the two sides of the border were closed for civilians. After the attack, Delhi-Lahore bus service and Samjhauta Express rail were closed.<sup>7</sup> The Indian Home Minister, L. K. Advani accused Pakistan of “the temerity to try to wipe out the entire political leadership of India.”<sup>8</sup> And a categorical finger pointing, “In a way, a neighbouring country is responsible for the attack, in so far as that is where the (militants) were trained.”<sup>9</sup> While hatred for Pakistan saturated the parliament, especially amongst the ruling BJP, the opposition leaders nevertheless cautioned against military measures and urged the government to exhaust all political and diplomatic options. Similarly, the Indian armed forces were reported to have admonished against launching an attack on Azad Kashmir; the consequence of which would have been weeks, if not months, of devastation, sufferable by the two sides. Rahul Roy-Chaudhury aptly identified the varying nature and levels of India’s response to the attack. The response included diplomatic, military, political, administrative, legal, international cooperation.<sup>10</sup> As much as the attack was iniquitous for India, it was equally shocking and apprehensive

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<sup>5</sup> Jawed Naqvi, “Delhi Blames Lashkar for Attack: India Wants Militants’ Arrest,” *Dawn*, December 15, 2001, <https://www.dawn.com/news/10829/delhi-blames-lashkar-for-attack-india-wants-militants>

<sup>6</sup> Jawed Naqvi, “Delhi Blames Lashkar for Attack: India Wants Militants’ Arrest.”

<sup>7</sup> “Islamabad: PTDC unaware of Indian Decision,” *Dawn*, December 25, 2001, <https://www.dawn.com/news/12022>

<sup>8</sup> Celia W. Dugger, “India Raises the Pitch in Criticism of Pakistan,” *New York Times*, December 19, 2001, <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/12/19/world/india-raises-the-pitch-in-criticism-of-pakistan.html>

<sup>9</sup> Naqvi, “Delhi Blames Lashkar for Attack: India Wants Militants’ Arrest.”

<sup>10</sup> Rahul Roy-Chaudhury, “India’s Response to Terrorism after December 13, 2001,” *Conflict, Security & Development* 3, issue 2 (2003): 280-285.

for Pakistan,<sup>11</sup> particularly for President, Pervez Musharaf. The president had mustered all diplomatic dexterity to ensure the Agra Summit becomes conflict resolution tool against the backlog of issues between the two countries. Unfortunately, the attack denied any opportunity of peace to Pakistan with India since following the attack, India closed the channel of communication and dialogue.<sup>12</sup>

According to the *Dawn* newspaper, Pakistan extended the hand of cooperation to India in investigating the attack, an offer that was rejected. Same fate befell the FBI, as the US government wanted to send the FBI to aid in the cause of the investigation.<sup>13</sup> The denial raised certain qualms in some corners both in India and Pakistan.<sup>14</sup> Politicians and policymakers were aghast and puzzled by the lack of efficiency on the part of the Indian intelligence agency to apprehend the attack before it unfolded. How did the suicide bomber gain access into the parliament premises? Was there no prior intelligence leading to the attack? Among the Pakistan religious parties, the leader of Pakistan Jamatul Islami — JUI, Amir Syed Munawwar Hassan quizzed and was of the opinion that the attack was crafted to divert the attention of the international community from the freedom struggle in Kashmir. His view resonates with the sentiment in Pakistan that believes India is good at jettisoning peace talk, in order to sabotage the Kashmir discourse. Munawwar's viewpoint did not stand isolated, but was shared by Gen. (Rtd.) Mirza Aslam Baig, who termed the Indian allegation as false. Baig argued and implicated the Indian intelligence and security agencies by saying that no group/organisation claimed the responsibility of the attack to authenticate the allegation of New Delhi that so called non state actors operating within Pakistan were involved in the attack. According to the *Dawn*, few years after the attack, cloud of doubts still shrouded in India regarding the attack and leading Indian human rights activist, Nirmala Deshpande criticised BJP government to put entire blame on Pakistan for political gain.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> "Pakistan Forces Put on High Alert: Storming of Parliament," *Dawn*, December 15, 2020, <https://www.dawn.com/news/10821>

<sup>12</sup> Editorial "Absence of Reciprocity," *Dawn*, January 8, 2002. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1062525>

<sup>13</sup> Editorial, "Dangerous Escalation," *Dawn*, May 21, 2002, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1063139>

<sup>14</sup> Naqvi, "12 Die as Gunmen Storm Indian Parliament."

<sup>15</sup> Jawed Naqvi, "Doubts Raised over Probe Findings: Attack on Indian Parliament," *Dawn*, August 12, 2005, <https://www.dawn.com/news/152014>

In addition to the rejection of Indian allegation, the *Dawn* newspaper reported that Pakistan policymakers were of the view that India orchestrated the attack, with the aim of seducing Washington, fighting its own war in neighbouring Afghanistan, and to emphasise and delineate India as a victim of cross-border terrorism purportedly sponsored by Pakistan. One conclusion is clear from the *Dawn* reporting of the attack; India's knee-jerk reaction to the parliament attack was that Pakistan was involved in it. Tensions escalated and both countries exchanged shelling, India threatened with different artillery but there was no major military confrontation and then peace talks began and a war was avoided between the two nuclear armed races.<sup>16</sup>

## Mumbai Attacks

Almost seven years into the parliament attack, one of India's most populous city and financial hub was attacked leaving the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel on fire, which is Mumbai's most historic and popular hotel. It brought India to global limelight and the world was appalled as the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel was gutted by fire, and other strategic places, which include hotels, railways and international airport, were rendered perplexed. Reports say an estimate of 119 died and 300 were injured in the attacks.<sup>17</sup> While Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad were blamed for the parliament attack, in the Mumbai onslaught, Lashkar-e-Taiba was accused as the principal villain, although the group denied any role in the activity, and no evidence was provided to Pakistan by the Indian government to substantiate the claim.<sup>18</sup> Seemingly, the Mumbai attacks exacerbated the unfinished frustration and grievance generated by the 2001 parliament attack under the BJP government.<sup>19</sup> Like its predecessor, the Indian National Congress led by

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<sup>16</sup> Jawed Naqvi, "New Delhi Warns of Hard-Hitting Response," *Dawn*, December 17, 2001, <https://www.dawn.com/news/11141/new-delhi-warns-of-hard-hitting-response> and Masood Haider, "US Stresses Restraint," *Dawn*, December 4, 2020, <https://www.dawn.com/news/11152/us-stresses-restraint>

<sup>17</sup> "Commandos battle to Regain Mumbai: Blame Game Begins, Allegations Levelled Against Pakistan; Death Toll put at 119 with over 300 Injured," *Dawn*, November 28, 2008 <https://www.dawn.com/news/332110> and, "Timeline of Mumbai terror Bloodbath," *Dawn*, November 28, 2008, <https://www.dawn.com/news/332122>

<sup>18</sup> "Mumbai Attack was run from Pakistan, India says," *Dawn*, June 30, 2012, <https://www.dawn.com/news/730644/mumbai-attack-was-run-from-pakistan-india-says>

<sup>19</sup> Editorial, "Pak-India Tension," *Dawn*, December 24, 2008, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1071840>

Prime Minister, Manmohan reiterated the narrative of state-sponsored terrorism; he accused and warned Pakistan of the costs if the latter cannot stop cross-border terrorism,<sup>20</sup> though he fell short at promoting war.<sup>21</sup> It was strongly believed that Pakistan cannot be vindicated from the Mumbai bloodbath. The accusations continued and remained salient on the Indian side. Hence, it led to the disruption of India-Pakistan ties and the resultant rupture in confidence building between the two countries.<sup>22</sup> Unlike the attack on the parliament, the Mumbai attacks were much more complicated and had several international implications. For instance, David Headley, an American citizen was linked with the group accused of masterminding the Mumbai attacks. Upon asserting his complicity in the attacks, Headley was sentenced and imprisoned in the US.<sup>23</sup> Amongst the victims of attacks were members of the European Parliament Committee on International Trade, they were caught in the web of the attacks during their stay at the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel. Few Jews were also reported to have been targeted and trapped in the mayhem and number of other foreign nationals.<sup>24</sup> The Indian government exploited the Mumbai attacks to further delineate Pakistan as a rogue state.

To deescalate the tension, Prime Minister of Pakistan, Yousuf Raza Gilani proposed a joint mechanism with India to investigate the Mumbai attack.<sup>25</sup> The proposal did not see the light of the day; it was further

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<sup>20</sup> "In the Epicentre of Terrorism," *Dawn*, December 16, 2008,

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1071818>

<sup>21</sup> Kuldeep Nayar, "Road That Leads Nowhere," *Dawn*, December 5, 2008,

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1071791>

"India Wants Pakistan Action, not War Hysteria," *Dawn*, December 23, 2008,

<https://www.dawn.com/news/906479/india-wants-pakistan-action-not-war-hysteria>

<sup>22</sup> Reuters, "Mumbai Attack Was Run from Pakistan, India Says,"

<sup>23</sup> Jawed Naqvi, "US Stumps India over Mumbai Mastermind," *Dawn*, March 24,

2010, <https://www.dawn.com/news/526875>

AFP, "India Says 35 Years Jail not Enough for Mumbai Attacks Plotter," *Dawn*,

January 25, 2013, <https://www.dawn.com/news/781354/india-says-35-years-jail-not-enough-for-mumbai-plotter>

<sup>24</sup> Dawn, "Commandos battle to Regain Mumbai: Blame Game Begins, Allegations Levelled Against Pakistan; Death Toll put at 119 with over 300 Injured,"

*Dawn*, "Timeline of Mumbai Terror Bloodbath,"

<sup>25</sup> Iftikhar Khan, "Indians Provided Information, not Evidence: Gilani," *Dawn*,

January 14, 2009, <https://www.dawn.com/news/338667>

*Dawn*, "Text of Pakistan-India Joint Statement,"

<https://www.dawn.com/news/889918/text-of-pakistan-india-joint-statement>



complicated by India accusation and non-sharing of intelligence. Even while the Congress-led government was tough on Pakistan over the Mumbai attacks, and vowed to thwart cross-border terror attacks on its territory,<sup>26</sup> the Indian government nonetheless remained committed on resuming bilateral talks with Pakistan, a decision that irked the BJP parliamentarians leading them to walk out from the parliament.<sup>27</sup>

### **Pulwama Bombing**

Almost 11 years after the attack on the Indian parliament, Pulwama a relatively unknown Kashmiri town in Indian Occupied Jammu & Kashmir, became the hotspot of media and global attention. On February 14, 2019, in Pulwama, a convoy of Indian security forces was attacked by a suicide bomber, killing an estimate of 44 security personnel. The Pulwama bombing was neither an attack on the parliament (New Delhi) nor Mumbai (India's largest city and a financial centre), but the gravity of the response begs the question *of what should be defined and constituted as an appropriate response to what is considered an attack on India.*

As part of the long established tradition, the Indian government wasted no time to place the blame on Pakistan, even as investigation into the attack remained at a nascent stage. Not unexpected, the incident further strengthened the Indian government that has vowed to isolate Pakistan at both regional and global fronts.<sup>28</sup> According to a *Dawn* news story, the government of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi was implicated by the opposition politicians who accused the government of not instituting preventive measures to avoid such attack even when the government had prior intelligence of the attack. Nonetheless, the attack forced India to embark on several retaliatory measures which include, but are not limited to, the withdrawal of Pakistan from the list of most favoured nation, imposing up to 200 per cent duty on import of Pakistani goods, closing down the waters that flows down to Pakistan,<sup>29</sup> also *raising the bar of*

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<sup>26</sup> "India Wants Pakistan Action, Not War Hysteria," *Dawn*

<sup>27</sup> Saleem Zafar and Awais Bin Wasi, "Terrorism in India: Method in Madness?," *Policy Perspectives* 7, no 2(2010):65-66.

<sup>28</sup> "Modi says India will work to Isolate Pakistan Internationally," *Dawn*, September 24, 2016, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1285839>

<sup>29</sup> "Water Belonging to India cannot go to Pakistan, Says Modi," *Dawn*, November 25, 2016, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1298575>

*violent retaliation and stricter rules on the Muslims living in the Indian occupied Kashmir.* The disruption of normal life in Indian occupied Kashmir, the shutdown of communication in the occupied territory and the revocation of Article 370 from the Indian constitution culminated in the India's decision to punish the Kashmiris.<sup>30</sup> The Pulwama attack cornered Pakistan by India; the fact that Pakistan always come as New Delhi's first point of reference when it comes to extremism and terrorism damages Pakistan's image within the region and beyond. To address the severity of the issue, Prime Minister Imran Khan conveyed and chaired the National Security Committee meeting. The meeting resolved to increase anti-terrorism operations in the country, vowed to strengthen state's writ and to reinstate the ban on Hafiz Saeed-led Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) and its charity arm, the Falah-i-Insaniyat Foundation (FIF).<sup>31</sup>

Regardless of Pakistan's effort to showcase its sense of responsibility and the intervention of international community to dampen the tension, New Delhi adamantly embarked on what it considers as the 'new normal,' a violation of Pakistan's sovereignty. The headlines, "India Claims to Have Struck 'Biggest Training Camp of JeM in Balakot'" is suggestive in many ways.<sup>32</sup> India is out of patience and committed to bring the fight to Pakistan's doorstep. Responsively, Islamabad reacted "Pakistan will respond to uncalled-for Indian aggression at time, place of its choosing: NSC)" and as further reported by the daily *Dawn*, "Pakistan Air Force (PAF) on Wednesday — a day after India violated the Line of Control (LoC) — undertook strikes across the LoC from Pakistani airspace." Escalation came to a turning point, when Pakistan downed Indian military aircraft, leading to the capture and eventual release of Indian air force pilot, Abhinandan Varthaman. The *Dawn* newspaper of March 1, 2019 writes "Pakistan Frees Captured Indian Pilot Abhinandan in Peace Gesture."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> "India Revokes Occupied Kashmir's Special Autonomy Through Rushed Presidential Decree," *Dawn*, August 24, 2019, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1498227>

<sup>31</sup> Sanauallah Khan, "NSC Orders Acceleration of Anti-Terrorism Ops; Reinstates ban on JuD, Charity Arm FIF," *Dawn*, February 22, 2019, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1465212>

<sup>32</sup> "India Claims to have Struck Biggest Training Camp of JeM in Balakot," *Dawn*, February 26, 2019, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1466149/india-claims-to-have-struck-biggest-training-camp-of-jem-in-balakot>

<sup>33</sup> "Pakistan Frees Captured Indian Pilot Abhinandan in Peace Gesture," *Dawn*, March 2, 2019, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1466951>

## Analysis

The analysis is segmented into two. The first segment explores the concept of parliament vis-à-vis the Indian response to the 2001 attack. From a behaviourist prism, the latter segment looks at personality and ideology of a leader as two powerful underpinnings, potential enough to precipitate tougher, aggressive and confrontational response to a particular event or situation. Lastly, the segment also explores the impact of event (election) vis-à-vis decision making process. These two segments help to understand and proffer answer to the question, as to what distinction and impact the Pulwama attack holds to warrant a tougher, aggressive, and confrontational response while 2001 and 2008 failed to galvanise similar response.

One of the most decisive elements of the Westphalia Treaty was that all states must respect the sovereign integrity of other states. By sovereignty, every state holds and enjoys the prerogative to enact laws, adjudicate and enforce law without interference of any foreign element. The parliament or peoples' assembly or legislative house is considered not just as a paramount institution of the government, it also symbolises the sovereignty of a state, underscores the legitimacy of a state and government and validates the supremacy of the general will of the electorates. The parliament is akin to the heart residing in human's body; a violation of the heart is tantamount to jeopardy of body. The primary duty of the parliament is enacting law which when codified becomes the constitution. The sanctity of the constitution is equal to the inviolability of the parliament and by extension amounts to the sanctity of the state as a unique sovereign entity. While a plethora of literature exists on the evolution of the parliament, it is commonly understood that the parliament holds a supreme status in any given state.<sup>34</sup> By virtue of colonial interaction, the English bequeathed on India the United

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<sup>34</sup> Jutta Limbach, "The Concept of the Supremacy of the Constitution," *The Modern Law Review* 64, no 1(2001):1-10. Also see Av. Ahmet Emrah GEÇER, "The Principle of Parliamentary Supremacy in the UK Constitutional Law and its Limitations," *Ankara Bar Review*1 (2013):157-167.

John Alder, "Parliamentary Supremacy," in *Constitutional and Administrative Law*, ed. John Alder (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1999), 90-111. Pavlos Eleftheriadis, "Parliamentary Sovereignty and the Constitution," *Canadian Journal of Law and Jurisprudence*, Oxford Legal Studies Research Paper No. 45/2009.

Harry Thomas. Dickinson, "The Eighteenth Century Debate on the Sovereignty of Parliament," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*. (1976): 189-210.

Kingdom's parliament system. And ever since the attainment of independence, India has never been shy to showcase, rather has prided itself as the world largest democracy with parliamentary system.

The sanctity of the parliament transcends political affiliation(s) and thus its violation is nothing short of disregarding the legitimacy of the state and government (ruling and opposition alike).

In the backdrop of detail mentioned above, the attacks on the Turkish parliament geared at toppling the Erdogan government and the consequent response speaks loudly of how the sanctity of the parliament stands above party politics and, therefore, any form of belligerent attack is despicable and treacherous. The response of the people against the coup and violation of parliament sanctity demonstrates a non-partisan propensity to issue greater than party affiliation. The attempt to overthrow the government and the attack on the parliament galvanised a massive popular sentiment against those whose manifested intention was to derogate the supremacy of the general will of the electorates on the one hand and delegitimise the legitimacy of elected representatives on the other.

If Turkish popular sentiment can go to the extent it went against domestic element(s) that tried to delegitimise the parliament, in what perspective or bracket should India be placed. The latter is considered as the largest democracy amongst contemporary democracies, but incapacitated to act meaningfully against 'supposed external element' alleged of attacking the Indian parliament.

If attacking the Indian parliament, the symbol of Indian sovereignty and will of the people could not be accorded meaningful response, then why the Pulwama attack, carried out in a disputed and troubled part of India, did so. Following the attack on the parliament, the Indian Home Minister, L. K. Advani, argued that Islamabad was on a mission to disturb India's political leadership.<sup>35</sup> If such assertion is reliable, then one would have expected a more Machiavellian response from New Delhi. If the essence of the parliament is well understood by the Indian political leadership as claimed, one would have expected New Delhi to display its acclaimed military masculinity.

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<sup>35</sup> Celia W. Dugger, "India Raises the Pitch in Criticism of Pakistan."

In the case of both incident i.e. parliament and Mumbai attacks, the BJP government of Atal Vajpayee (2001) and the INC government of Manmohan Singh (2008) maintained restraint. Even while there were elements within the state that have agitated for a tougher and deeper response, sanity prevailed and certain degree of space was maintained for resuming bilateral talks with Pakistan.<sup>36</sup>

### **Leader's Personality and Foreign Policy**

There is an ocean of literature on leaders' personality and public persona in foreign policy formulation. It goes without saying that it is hard to separate leaders' personality from their policy. Be it secular or religious, leader's persona always makes significant impact on policy,<sup>37</sup> and same is true for leader's cognitive and psychological disposition in the process of decision making.<sup>38</sup> Leader's personality, cognitive and psychological disposition are never groomed in isolation; they obviously become a manifest reality within a given context. Constructively, the behaviourist school of foreign policy posits that understanding [the process of] foreign policy requires a better grasp not just of the context but also the human agency which contribute to the overall policy making process. Hence, from a behaviourist optic, foreign policy making is not always and solely driven by rationality as is fanatically espoused by the rationalist school.<sup>39</sup>

Religion plays a central role in moulding personality;<sup>40</sup> for some, it is an essential part of their personality. In case of the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, through his personality, he has demonstrated an unequivocal and strong affinity with Hinduism (culturally, ritualistically, and nationalistically). Long before his premiership, Modi's religiosity, ideological leaning (Hindutva) and affiliation are well-known and established. His membership and affiliation with the RSS goes back to 1971. His religious

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<sup>36</sup> Zafar and Bin Wasi, "Terrorism in India: Method in Madness?," 65-66.

<sup>37</sup> Marijke Breuning, *Foreign Policy Analysis: A Comparative Introduction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 27-53.

<sup>38</sup> Chris Alden and Aran Amnon. *Foreign Policy Analysis: New Approaches, Second Edition* (New York: Routledge. 2017),17.

<sup>39</sup> David Patrick Houghton, "Reinvigorating the Study of Foreign Policy Decision Making: Towards a Constructivist Approach," *Foreign Policy Analysis*. (2007): 24-45.

<sup>40</sup> David W. Bemett, "Religion, Personality and Clinical Assessment," *Journal of Religion and Health* (1979):308.

consciousness has never been less than a prime factor that drives his policy as a public officer. Modi's religious personality and his leadership in the Indian province of Gujarat was riddled by controversy. Amongst others, Modi's Gujarat became famous for the violation of human rights and a place where religious persecution of minority community was perpetuated with impunity. With Modi's blessing, Vishwa Hindu Parishad orchestrated the Gujarat genocide.<sup>41</sup> The scar of Muslims massacre remains an indelible part of the province's modern history. It is no wonder that even when Modi became the premier of India, his administration held and promoted a religion-nationalist philosophy of Hindutva that questioned the Indian-ness of 'other' and allowed implicit and explicit religious discrimination and persecution of other than Hindus.<sup>42</sup> India, under Modi, is gradually morphing and wearing a systemic discrimination where minority rights are inconsequential.

In the backdrop of the different foreign policy schools of thought and premised on the role of personality, domestic and religious imperative, the acclaimed rational decision of the Indian government to respond to the 2019 Pulwama bombing cannot be unquestioned as entirely rational. The rational decision of the Indian government to decisively respond to the Pulwama incident and the consequent violation of Pakistan's airspace, failed to yield the intended foreign outcome, as India aircraft was downed. However, the tough political display yielded domestic political dividends, as Modi's BJP instrumentalised the saga for electoral gain. In this case, the success of Modi's foreign policy cannot be situated in the foreign space, rather located in domestic realm; hence the assertion that the success of foreign policy is not merely multidimensional, but "victory implies a difference between real and apparent victory, and it is as relevant to non-military as to military statecraft."<sup>43</sup> Even when certain segment of the media associated election goal scoring,<sup>44</sup> with the recent belligerent action of India against Pakistan,<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> B. G Verghese, "Lessons from Gujarat," *India International Centre Quarterly*, (2002):21.

<sup>42</sup> Ipsita Chatterjee, "How are they othered? Globalisation, Identity and Violence in an Indian City," *The Geographical Journal*, (2012): 134-146.

Khalid Rahman, "Indian Secularism and Religious Minorities: The Case of Muslims," *Policy Perspectives* 14, no. 2 (2017): 35-53.

<sup>43</sup> David. A. Baldwin, "Success and Failure in Foreign Policy," *Annual Review of Political Science* 3, (2000): 171.

<sup>44</sup> "Pulwama Attack: What are Modi's options?," *BBC*, February 19, 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-47278145>

election gain(s) does not offer wholesome explanation and cannot be the mono-causal explanation. Quincy Wright's analysis of war places the discussion in perspective, "A war, in reality, results from a total situation involving ultimately almost everything that has happened to the human race up to the time war begin."<sup>46</sup> Hence, the decision to send Indian jets into Pakistan was informed by many other implicit factor(s) that might not necessarily be connected to the Pulwama bombing.

If one must agree with the behaviourist school of foreign policy, Modi's foreign policy decision cannot be disentangled from his personality. To further dissect the response to the Pulwama bombing, Jack Levy argues that when an individual decision maker allows his psychological temperament to overpower and becloud his rational self, there is high possibility that such individual will drive the state to the verge of war by "psychologically satisfying for the individual and, in this way, nationalism contributes to war."<sup>47</sup> From a behaviourist's optic, Modi's confrontational adventurism rationally paid off at the domestic front. He was able to secure a second term, but failed at taming Pakistan. During his first term in office, Prime Minister Modi's hawkish proclivity towards Pakistan generated serious concerns amongst experts and non-experts of foreign policy alike.<sup>48</sup> Broadly speaking, Modi's action reinforces social Darwinism wherein the superior specie (in the case of state) is always prone and desirous to conquer and subjugate the "supposed" weak.<sup>49</sup> In this backdrop, as long as India considers Pakistan as the weak actor that either does not merit any form of competition or worthy of being hyphenated with New Delhi; for the latter, Pakistan must be placed and subjected to the place of the weak where it

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<sup>45</sup> "US Count Shows No Pakistani F-16s Shot Down in Indian Battle," *Reuters*, April 5, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-kashmir-pakistan-f16/u-s-count-shows-no-pakistan-f-16s-shot-down-in-indian-battle-report-idUSKCN1RH0IM>

<sup>46</sup> Quincy Wright, *A Study of War*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942): 17.

<sup>47</sup> Jack Levy, "The Causes of War: a Review of Theories and Evidence," in *Bahaviour, Society, and Nuclear War*, ed., Philips. Tetlock, Jo. L. Husbands, Robert. Jervis, Paul. C. Stern, and Charles Tilly (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 271.

<sup>48</sup> Aymen Ijaz, "Pakistan-India Relations under Prime MInister Modi's Government (2014-2016)," *Journal of Current Affairs* 2, no 1 (2017):70.

<sup>49</sup> William Nester, *International Relations: Politics and Economics in the 21st Century* (Singapore: Wadsworth, 2001): 201.

deserves and must be taught a lesson of what it meant to be the superior state.

At this juncture, the prediction of Lisa Curtis summed up the personality of Manmohan Singh and Modi. Even before taking over the mantle of leadership as the next Indian prime minister, Modi's personality had already marked him either as a man having less compassion for Muslims or ready to be soft with India's neighbours. Curtis argues "with Modi's rise to power comes an increased likelihood of greater Indo-Pakistani tensions and potential for military escalation, especially if a major terrorist attack occurs in India. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's personal commitment to maintaining peaceful ties with Islamabad, despite attacks in India over the last several years that were often traced back to Pakistan-based groups, has kept bilateral ties in check."<sup>50</sup>

The 2001 and 2019 incidents happened under the administration of the BJP, but the reactions to the two incidents lack correspondence. Unlike the Vajpayee government that opened the doors of bilateral talks with Pakistan, demonstrated some degree of restraint, and was cautious not to escalate tension after the parliament attack, the current BJP leadership from the onset, has less propensity for bilateral talks, is religiously ideological and conceives of itself to be more nationalistic. It might be safe to surmise that the personality of Vajpayee and Modi are parallel even when both are conservatively committed to a religious-ideological-nationalist political party.

## **Ideology and Foreign Policy**

Ideology be it secular or religious has always contributed to the shaping of social reality, how states make sense, construes meaning and envisions the world around them. Over the ages, the role of ideology in the making of peace and going to war has remained an indelible part of human history.<sup>51</sup> Nations, civilisations, cultures and a whole new political (sometimes transcontinental) geographies are crafted and premised on ideological underpinnings. Historically, people tend to believe that their ideological underpinnings accord them the exclusive knowledge and prerogative to

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<sup>50</sup> Lisa Curtis, "India and Pakistan under Modi," *The Heritage Foundation*. April 2, 2014, <https://www.heritage.org/asia/commentary/india-and-pakistan-under-modi>

<sup>51</sup> Nester, *International Relations: Politics and Economics in the 21st Century*, 205.



desire, change, invade the space and even exterminate others.<sup>52</sup> The creation of modern world system is heavily dependent on multiple and competing ideologies.<sup>53</sup> Like the yesteryears, contemporary (secular and religious) ideology is employed as legitimacy for violence; ideological language, text and symbols have become galvanising tools to support conceited — subjectivity position. Thus, a comprehensive understanding of today's populism, domestic politics and foreign policy will be incomplete without understanding conflicting ideologies celebrated and embraced all and sundry.<sup>54</sup> Since independence, India has largely claimed to be a secular democracy, promoted by the Indian National Congress. Such characterisation of India has no bearing with the BJP that rather considers Indian democracy inseparable from its ancient Hindu ideology, religion and culture. The efficacy and survival of any ideology is dependent on agencies. In the case of India, the BJP and its ideological organisations ensure that survival.

If Hindutva is reduced to an ideological religious belief, then it is not an overstatement that it is a “system of values and beliefs regarding the various institutions and processes of society that is accepted as a fact or truth by a group of people and provides the believer with a picture of the world both as it is and as it should be.”<sup>55</sup> As a set of value and beliefs, it also contributes to the moulding of personality, especially of a leader, who has no qualms about public visibility of his ideological religious belief. Prime Minister Modi has never been shy to demonstrate assertively his ideological conviction and fraternity. His ruling party BJP is ideologically undeterred and convinced that Hindutva is the perfect ideological touchstone for India through which India's exceptionalism can be better emphasised. The BJP is allegedly believed to be ideologically spirited by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the militant Hindu paramilitary organisation.<sup>56</sup> Although Hindutva is defined as “an ideology seeking to establish the hegemony of Hindus and the Hindu way of life” its public representation is

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<sup>52</sup> Naem Inayatullah, “Why Do Some People Think They Know What is Good For Others” in *Global Politics: A New Introduction*, ed. Jenny Edkins and Maja Zehfuss (New York: Routledge, 2014): 450-469.

<sup>53</sup> Peter Taylor and Colin Flint. *Political Geography: World-Economy, Nation-State and Locality* (Delhi: Pearson Education, 2000).

<sup>54</sup> Lyman T. Sargent, *Contemporary Political Ideologies: A Comparative Analysis, Fourteenth Edition* (Belmont CA: Wadsworth. 2009):1-19.

<sup>55</sup> Sargent, *Contemporary Political Ideologies*,2-3.

<sup>56</sup> Yogendra K. Malik and V. B. Singh. “Bharatiya Janata Party: An Alternative to the Congress,” *Asian Survey* 32, no 4 (1992):322

akin to cultural autocratic-nationalism. Analysts like Malik and Singh would argue that the contemporary Hindutva — Hindu nationalism carries a different emblem in contrast to the 19<sup>th</sup> century Hindu nationalism. The former is “more fundamentalist and ritualistic and the BJP leadership has not hesitated to use the religious symbols to mobilise Hindu votes.”<sup>57</sup>

Meanwhile, the representation of Hindutva in contemporary India, as documented by the international institutions, has exposed New Delhi as vulnerable ‘secular’ state that cannot ensure the protection of minority (class and religious) rights;<sup>58</sup> an assertion unequivocally dismissed by the BJP government.<sup>59</sup> It is hard to divorce religious belief (ideology) either from Modi’s personality or from his foreign policy; it is an interwoven process, given how embedded religious ideology fundamentally shapes the bearing of BJP<sup>60</sup> and how it engenders the making of domestic and external ‘other.’

The role of ideology in a state transcends domestic politics, it also occupies the space of foreign policy. Since the standardisation of foreign policy analysis, commentators and pundits of foreign policy have considerably shown the intersection of ideology and foreign policy. The former is one of the pivotal determinants of foreign policy.<sup>61</sup> Ideological lens “serves as a screen through which policymakers observe the international system and its dynamics”<sup>62</sup> and through which they want to be understood and recognised. Ideology in the life and policymaking process of a state becomes the yardstick of “explaining, interpreting and evaluating the behaviour and interest of a state.”<sup>63</sup> This is true for every nation-states and India is no exemption. The BJP government professes and demonstrates that

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<sup>57</sup> Yogendra and Singh, “Bharatiya Janata Party: An Alternative to the Congress,” 321.

<sup>58</sup> United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, Annual Report India, 2019, <https://www.uscirf.gov/countries/india>

<sup>59</sup> *Aljazeera*, “India Rejects Critical US Religious Freedom Report,” June 24, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/06/india-rejects-critical-religious-freedom-report-190623065422842.html>

<sup>60</sup> Henrik Berglund, “Religion and Nationalism: Politics of BJP,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 39, issue 10 (2004): 1064-1070.

<sup>61</sup> Bayless Manning, “Goals, Ideology and Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs* (1976): 271-284. Also see George Schwab, *Ideology and Foreign Policy: A Global Perspective* (New York: Cyrco Press, 1978).

<sup>62</sup> Askari Hassan Rizvi, “Pakistan: Ideology and Foreign Policy,” *Asian Affairs: An American Review* 10, no 1(1983): 48.

<sup>63</sup> Bernard P. KIernan, “Ideology and Foreign Policy: A Reconsideration,” *The Virginia Quarterly Review* 50, no. 1 (1974): 23.

there is no dichotomy between Hindutva and India (domestic and foreign) policy. Since 2014, when the BJP succeeded the Indian National Congress (INC), Hindutva has become synonymous with India and has increasingly been shaping domestic and foreign policy. Hindutva provides the ruling party with the necessary ideological legitimacy to govern and formulate (hawkish) policy that is consistent with the sizeable number of the populace,<sup>64</sup> who embrace and celebrate Hindutva. As an ideology, Hindutva has become a disguise for lust for power and cultural assertiveness. Projecting the 'larger India,' as a regional and emerging global power has been a defining policy of the Modi's BJP government, which is clearly visible in Modi's long-time domestic policy<sup>65</sup> and of recent, foreign relations. While Modi's response to the Pulwama attack might be considered a rational decision and a clear zero tolerance for terrorism,<sup>66</sup> it can equally be seen as an extension and demonstration of Hindutva,<sup>67</sup> and a fulfilment for the BJP supporters, who support hawkish foreign policy.<sup>68</sup> The nature and scope of response to the Pulwama bombing reinforces idiosyncrasy, demonstrates Hindutva is not limited to domestic politics and underscores situational factor as viable determinant in policy making.

## Event and Electoral Victory

Politics is a game meant for the shrewd ones, whose political sagacity knows when to and not to act. It is a game of power and control; a game of smartness and dexterity, not meant for those lacking political alacrity. In Machiavelli optics of politics, "one who becomes prince against the people with the support of the great must before everything else seek to win the people to himself..."<sup>69</sup> Winning people's hearts comes in many ways; over the years, election has become an established and convenient mechanism

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<sup>64</sup> Miroslav Nincic and Jennifer M. Ramos, "Ideological Structure and Foreign Policy Preferences," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 15, no 2 (2010):119-141.

<sup>65</sup> Paul Marshall, "Hinduism and Terror," *Hudson Institute*. 2004.  
<https://www.hudson.org/research/4575-hinduism-and-terror>

<sup>66</sup> Antara Desai, "India: Counterterrorism under the New Government," *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* 6, no 5 (2014):16-20.

<sup>67</sup> Waikar Prashant, "Reading Islamophobia in Hindutva: An Analysis of Narendra Modi's Political Discourse," *Islamophobia Studies Journal* 4, no 2 (2018):161-180.

<sup>68</sup> Ravi Agrawal, "It's Modi's India Now," *Foreign Policy*, May 23, 2019,  
<https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/05/23/modis-coming-back-to-power-but-hell-take-over-a-different-india-narendra-modi-bjp/>.

<sup>69</sup> Catherine H. Zuckert, *Machiavelli's Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 65.

through which political party establishes relevance and legitimacy and wins hearts.

Parties are known by their ideological leaning and policies upon which they garner the trust and maintain confidence of their electoral geography. However, election victory transcends political ideology and political socialisation. In addition to socially constructing and indexing their narratives, populist and non-populist parties take advantage of events to galvanise public sentiment for political gains.

Politicians and incumbent governments always take advantage of events to score political goal, though not every event becomes source of political fortune. As horrible as 9/11 was, it never slipped from being a political capital for the Bush administration. The hawkish response of the Bush administration to 9/11 was carefully played and imprinted on public sensibility, not just to reiterate American strength, readiness and alacrity to respond to attack against its sovereignty but also as a political ploy to regain the administration of the White House, come the next election.

The event of the unwarranted assassination of Benazir Bhutto on December 27, 2007 was an awful historical addition to the political history (democracy) of Pakistan. On the surface, the demise of Benazir was a blow to the democratic dispensation in Pakistan, but it actually heralded luck for her Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP). Following her death, the nation went for parliamentary election (February 18, 2008) in which PPP triumphed with 126 seats in the national assembly (Election Commission of Pakistan). Among other reasons, the assassination of Benazir accorded PPP sympathy votes from within and beyond the PPP.

Exploiting events for political gain is true for many countries and India cannot claim exemption. Following the attack of the Indian parliament in 2001, the sitting government capitalised on the event to its advantage. This is also not untrue in the wake of the Mumbai attack, the Congress government seized the events to its favour. The Pulwama attack was no exemption, the Modi government exploited the attack for political gain as evident in Modi's election campaign, charactering himself as the muscular strongman who can protect India from its enemies. Besides, B.S. Yeddyurappa, a prominent BJP leader was reported to have said "the armed

aerial hostilities between India and Pakistan would help his party win some two dozen seats in the upcoming general election.”<sup>70</sup>

Both the parliament and Pulwama attacks in India have something in common. The two attacks were dastardly unleashed during the BJP government and more particularly amidst election. During the 2001 attack, there were news reports that characterised India as unwelcoming to talks to Pakistan. The BJP government was portrayed as playing into public sentiment, it must not be seen as weak against terrorism and against external entities that constitute threat to India’s sovereignty. This is also true for the 2019 Pulwama attack. The current BJP leadership considers itself to be more nationalistic, religiously ideological and given its history with minorities (especially Muslims), the BJP has always been hard on the latter.<sup>71</sup> The election was a referendum on Modi’s policy; his huge electoral and political geography supports and legitimises his Hindutva policy, thus, playing the Hindutva card for election victory is not implausible. In all fairness, a smart government is known and gauged by the astuteness to transform vulnerable and sorrowful events into political opportunity.

## Conclusion

Unlike the attack on the parliament, the Pulwama attack was far from been a direct insult and attack on Indian sovereignty. However, both 2001 and 2008 attacks were direct violation of India’s sovereign integrity, the Pulwama was not. Even if the Indian government lay claim to Pulwama, which is part of Indian occupied Kashmir, the fact remains that Kashmir on both sides is a disputed territory in the lens of international law and community. If attacks on Indian sovereignty failed to reach high intensity and escalation as the Pulwama did, logically, the answer is thus not situated in sovereignty, but in other persuasive factors. Plausible answer would be that personality and ideology are indisputable variables that blend and feed into the passion of winning an election.

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<sup>70</sup> “Pulwama Attack: What are Modi’s Options?,” *BBC*, February 19, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-47278145>

<sup>71</sup> Paul Marshall, “Hinduism and Terror,” Hudson Institute, June 1, 2004, <https://www.hudson.org/research/4575-hinduism-and-terror>