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Pakistan In Indian Diplomatic Cross Hairs – Analysis

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In July 2016, Pakistan suddenly finds itself in India's diplomatic crosshairs due to its political over-reach on Kashmir by Pakistan's apex levels attempting to maximise Pakistan-generated unrest in Kashmir Valley.

India has put Pakistan on notice by what amounts to a calibrated downgrade of diplomatic relations with Pakistan. Yesterday, India's decision to ask Indian diplomats to withdraw their children from schools in Islamabad and send them back to India or abroad obviously indicates that India may be contemplating stronger diplomatic responses Pakistan's continued vitriolism on Kashmir Valley unrest.

Pakistan currently has politically and militarily over-reached itself on Kashmir Valley unrest orchestrated by it. It even led Pakistani PM Nawaz Sharif to grandiosely assert that Kashmir would soon be part of Pakistan. While this assertion may be under Pakistan Army Chief's pressures or domestic politics compulsions, the fact remains that the Pakistani establishment has miscalculated India's responses on this issue

Pakistan's miscalculations may have been prompted by the timid responses of the previous Government which for ten long years followed a 'Pakistan Appeasement' policy.

Pakistan seems to have been further emboldened that India under PM Narendra Modi in its first two years virtually toed the same line vainly hoping that Pakistan under PM Nawaz Sharif may change course in its policies towards India.

With no positive changes in Pakistan's attitudinal obsessions on India, the space for PM Modi continuing the above policy has shrunk. Indian public opinion now presses for decisive actions to stop Pakistan from its destabilising the Kashmir Valley through spurious Kashmiri separatists' leaders and exploiting the religion of Islam for political ends.

Pakistan itself has placed itself squarely in India's diplomatic cross-hairs and one can expect a sequential hardening of Indian responses henceforth in direct proportion to Pakistani establishment's provocations against India.

India in line with the above has a host of options open to it ranging from downgrading diplomatic relations with Pakistan restricted to consular functions, declaring Pakistan as a terrorist state, boycotting the forthcoming SAARC Summit in Islamabad and in a last resort to finally break-off diplomatic relations.

Indian public opinion is heavily weighted against Pakistan's continued provocative obsessions to invite Kashmir Valley separatists' leaders to the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi on various pretexts. But the Pakistani establishment is dismissive of Indian public opinion oblivious to the fact that in India unlike Pakistan public opinion weighs heavily.

Pakistan Army Chiefs including those who usurped political power through military coups have always ended up with grave miscalculations on Indian responses to Pakistani military provocations leading to their eventual downfall. The present Pakistan Army Chief, General Raheel Sharif, drunk heavily on domestic inspired calls for military rule in Pakistan may be tempted to over-reach himself in terms of provocations- generation in Kashmir Valley.

This could then be a dangerous inflexion point where Pakistan presently in Indian diplomatic cross-hairs may lead Pakistan into Indian military cross-hairs. Nuclear bravado of Pakistan Army is an over-hyped myth more arising from erstwhile Western interests over Afghanistan. Additionally, as reflected in my strategic writings of a decade ago, was the military reality that use of Pakistani strategic nuclear weapons or now the much vaunted tactical nuclear weapons 'is not a commando raid'. It would invite a possible self- destruction of the Pakistan nation-state.

Pakistan has been ratcheting –up both the offensive rhetoric against India and so also its disruptive activities in the Kashmir Valley. This could have unintended consequences for Pakistan’s security and stability in an environment in which Pakistan stands virtually isolated internationally.

In conclusion, therefore, one fervently hopes that saner voices within Pakistan and amongst Pakistan’s limited international friends would advise the Pakistani establishment not to box much above its strategic weight.

SAAG is the South Asia Analysis Group, a non-profit, non-commercial think tank. The objective of SAAG is to advance strategic analysis and contribute to the expansion of knowledge of Indian and International security and promote public understanding.