

The Interplay of Hindutva Belligerence & Indian Economic Decline

February 27, 2021, marks the second anniversary of Operation Swift Retort when the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) effectively thwarted the thoughtless provocation and uncalled for aggression of the Indian Air Force (IAF) by [downing](#) two Indian fighter jets. Despite IAF's numeric [advantage](#) in both active-duty personnel and aircraft, the PAF's response was both befitting and measured, thus showing its greater discipline, skill-set, and grit while it lost no aircraft or personnel in the ensuing dogfight despite [false](#) Indian claims to the contrary.

Acting as the nation's defender as well as ambassador, the PAF sent a strong message to Delhi's powers-that-be that while Pakistan had no interest in regional disputes or shallow hegemonic power tussles, it was ever-ready to defend its national and ideological frontiers at all costs and at all times.

One wonders at the incessant Indian meddling and unilateral attacks on Pakistan's sovereignty despite the latter's mature and restrained demeanor, as well as its peaceful and concerted diplomatic engagement with all its neighbors. The Indian allegation of Pakistan's role in the [Pulwama attack](#) was also found unwarranted and without any substantiation as all quarters of the Pakistani state [condemned](#) the incident, while Foreign Minister [Shah Mahmood Qureshi](#) invited India to share evidence and launch a joint probe into the causes of the incident.

Hitherto, all the signs indicate that the Indian state—especially under the command of Prime Minister Narendra Modi—is becoming more adept at Goebbelsian [propaganda](#) and manufacturing an artificial conflict [involving neighbors], especially when faced with a domestic political or economic crisis. As a famous Indian poet wittily remarked *Sarhad pay tanao hai, Lagta hai Bharat mein chunao hai* (there is a conflict at the border indicating that an election is taking place in India); thus, pointing to the facile nature of cross-border conflicts usually carried out at the behest of a segment of Indian [state] elite to secure their interests.

With the Pulwama attack, such foul [play](#) by the Indian deep state and PM Modi cannot be ruled out—especially in the context of notorious Indian journalist Arnab Goswami's leaked [WhatsApp Chat](#)—considering that the Indian economy is in shambles, and [2019](#) was one of its worst years with the slack in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth the longest over the past [23 years](#). It is also clear that the 'Gujarat Model'—supposedly characterized by high economic growth, better infrastructure, and low corruption—that Mr. Modi trumpeted during his 14-year stint as Chief Minister of Gujarat, has failed to morph into a national 'Indian Model' as indicated by his economic performance which, according to some observers, is the worst to be seen in the past [42](#) years!

This analysis still leaves out the economic havoc wreaked by COVID-19 in India, which was partly exacerbated by Modi's ineptitude, and resulted in a shrinkage of GDP by as much as [24%](#) — the highest among the world's major economies. In contrast, Pakistan's GDP only fell by [0.4%](#), and overall the COVID-19 crisis was dealt with more efficiently by the incumbent government.

The futile belligerence of Hindutva can better be explained by the theory of [economic determinism](#), which is generally attributed to Karl Marx (1818-1883), but has many other prominent proponents. The theory asserts that it is the material economic conditions [of life] that

shape all facets of society viz. politics, culture, religion, family, and so on. In other words, in the complex structure of any society, economy forms the base or foundation while all other aforementioned aspects are merely its derivatives.

When seen in the context of this theory, the ruthlessness of Hindutva suddenly makes sense. Since Mr. Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) allies are presiding over the worst Indian economy in decades, they have therefore upped the ante in terms of kinetic and non-kinetic violence, both inside as well across the borders.

Upon failing to stir unrest at the borders, the Hindutva junta led by Modi has now started targeting peaceful minorities living within India and inside the territory of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. This is conspicuous by the passage of the infamous Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the revocation of the special status for Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), as such cold-hearted policies find instant acceptance among the radical Islamophobes of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and BJP, who form the most potent support base for Narendra Modi and his virulent agenda.

By sowing the seeds of hatred and division within India, such policies achieve their target of diverting the attention of the Indian masses from the issues that matter viz economic decline, ubiquitous poverty, illiteracy, poor health indicators, gender-based violence, rampant rape and misogyny, to name a few. In other words, to cover his failures in dealing with the society's base (i.e., economy), Modi and his team have ruined the entire Indian superstructure by artificially manufacturing local and cross-border conflicts.

In this context, then, Modi and his junta will be well-advised to focus their energies in resolving the great many economic shortcomings of India, and foster a spirit of peaceful co-existence which reflects the true essence of Hindu *dharma*. If, however, he persists with his belligerent discourse, then the Pakistan Air Force is ever-ready with another swift retort.

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