[Kashmiri intifada!](https://nation.com.pk/22-Feb-2019/kashmiri-intifada" \t "_new)

Imran Malik February 22, 2019 the nation

The brutalisation of Kashmir continues unabated. It is still occupied by well over half a million Indian soldiers. This is the highest concentration of hostile soldiers per civilian anywhere in the world. The Kashmiris (and the Palestinians) are the most dehumanised peoples under hostile occupation forces anywhere in the world. Their struggles continue.

The Kashmiri Intifada’s strife has been epitomised by the Pulwama suicide car bombing (vehicle based improvised explosive device - VBIED) recently.

What most people have failed to register in this entire conundrum is that with the Pulwama attack the strategic environment within Kashmir has undergone a massive paradigm shift. There has been a definite escalation in the rhetoric and belligerence from both sides and the potential for violence has skyrocketed. It is no more like a David versus Goliath story, stone pelting against semi-automatic/automatic weapons and the cursed pellet guns. A new element has been introduced in the Kashmiri Intifada against the deadly occupation Indian Armed Forces. Suicide bombing has now made its way onto the battlefields of Kashmir, taking the levels of violence in the Kashmir Valley to yet another even deadlier dimension. This time one of the Kashmiri freedom fighters, Ahmad Adil Dar, a local lad, has reportedly carried out the suicide car bombing at Pulwama. The Kashmiri Intifada has thus demonstrated yet another option now to retaliate against the repressions, tyrannies, horrors, incarcerations, humiliations, tortures, murders, beatings, rapes, arson, intrusive cordon and search operations, blowing up of houses, etc by the occupation forces. Suicide bombings, vehicle based or otherwise, threaten to become the new normal of attacking the Indian occupation forces henceforth. The Indian Armed Forces, on the other hand, are reportedly now considering using the IAF fighter-bombers to bomb the Kashmiri Intifada into submission. Violence in Kashmir now appears to be well on its way up the escalation ladder.

What next?

The Pulwama attack was predictably followed immediately, perhaps even before the anguished cries of the fatally wounded and others had died down, by a torrent of unfounded, ungrounded, unproven albeit traditional accusations against Pakistan by most sections of the Indian Government, politicians, media and general public. The Indians as usual acted as the accusers, the witnesses, the prosecutors, the judges and pronounced their unilateral and foregone judgement themselves within minutes of the incident. Thereafter, the Indian print and electronic media took up the cause and unleashed a vitriolic, frenzied and feverish offensive against Pakistan. Simultaneously, the Indian Government launched a diplomatic blitz to “isolate” Pakistan. Apart from ratcheting up Indian emotions these efforts achieved precious little. It seemed like the implementation of an already made and well-rehearsed “contingency plan”- (a la Mumbai, Pathankot, Uri, Chittisinghpura etc and now Pulwama)!

PM Imran Khan (IK) on the other hand displayed much greater maturity, stability and statesmanship in response. He called PM Modi’s bluff and came out with a crystal-clear, unambiguous stance. He asked for proof of Pakistan’s involvement in the Pulwama incident, promised immediate action if the Indians were to provide credible actionable intelligence, offered talks on terrorism as well as a joint and/or independent international investigation of the incident. (The Indians predictably balked!)

Most ominously he cautioned PM Modi about undertaking any ill-considered, impetuous (mis)adventures across the LOC/WB/international borders. He promised immediate and much more than commensurate retaliation, placing PM Modi in a terrible Catch 22 situation. PM Modi and his BJP are now likely to become victims of their own brinkmanship and rhetoric. If they heed PM IK’s words and sit down to talk then they will appear to have succumbed to PM IK’s threat of retaliation and would thus lose credibility, come across as a weak leader and party and lose the elections as well. If PM Modi in his misplaced bravado initiates a conflict, he will take both countries, rather the whole region down with himself!

In case of hostilities, the Indians are likely to follow a multidimensional strategy in a hybrid war environment. In a double envelopment they might want to activate both the eastern and western borders while they destabilise Pakistan’s internal front through their sleeper cells. This strategy will be manifested through kinetic operations from the East (LOC/WB/international border) and by employing its terrorist proxies from Afghanistan and Iran at the same time. Simultaneously, the Indians would activate their sleeper cells within Pakistan who will be tasked to link up with the terrorists and cause unrest and instability through terrorist, subversive and sabotage activities in the entire length and breadth of the country. They could be tasked to also target leaders of the defunct parties which may have ostensibly harmed the Indians at some time or the other. They will also try to disrupt the CPEC/BRI projects. Furthermore, simultaneous cyber-attacks as well as diplomatic, media, information and propaganda offensives at the regional and global levels will be launched.

This rise in violence and this potentially brutal turn of events in the subcontinent is the logical conclusion to PM Modi’s short sighted and disastrous policies towards Kashmir and Pakistan. He needs to realise that Kashmir is a political issue that cannot be solved through exceedingly excessive military force. The unfettered brutalisation of the Kashmiri people has totally alienated them and Pakistan from India. The longer this state of affairs continues the wider the chasms between them will become and the more difficult it would be to bring this blistering and historical issue to an acceptable-to-all closure.

India’s unbridled belligerence, hubris, a miscalculation or misplaced bravado could yet cause the confrontation to spiral out of control and engender a major war. It is not without reason that Kashmir is known as the most likely nuclear flashpoint of the world! PM Modi will be well advised not to start anything he cannot possibly manage, control or bring to a sensible closure. His unbridled and uncouth ambition to get re-elected may threaten the whole of South Asia and the world at large with a possible nuclear winter!

PM Modi must realise the gravity of the situation and the fallacy of his policies; henceforth the Kashmiri Intifada will operate within a nuclear overhang!