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GENERAL STUDIES 3: INTERNATIONAL RELATION
TOPIC: INDIA-NEIGHBOURS

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On tackling ideology behind terror, we can't hit pause

1. Trigger: Pahalgam Terrorist Attack (April 22, 2025)

- A **terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Kashmir Valley**, resulted in the **death of 26 Indian tourists**, marking one of the deadliest attacks in recent years.
- The **Indian government**, led by the **Prime Minister**, responded with **firm resolve**, addressing the nation in **English** — a symbolic act intended for **international audiences**, reinforcing India's **global stance against terrorism**.
- PM stated unequivocally that **India would track and punish terrorists and their supporters**, directly blaming **cross-border terrorism** for the attack.

2. Pakistan's Reaction and Pattern of Hostility

- Pakistan responded with a **threatening tone**, warning that any attempt by India to **reconsider or disrupt the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)** would be seen as an **"Act of War"**.
- **Historical animosity** has long defined the bilateral relationship:
 - Full-scale wars in **1947–48, 1965, and 1971**
 - The **Kargil conflict in 1999**
 - Repeated **terror incidents** allegedly backed by **Pakistan-based terror groups**
- Pakistan has consistently **denied involvement**, often dismissing India's claims as **internal security failures**, as seen in recent statements denying connection to the **Pahalgam attack**.

3. Shift in India's Internal and Political Response

- Unlike past attacks like **Pulwama (2019)**, the current situation has witnessed a **unified political response** across party lines and ideologies.
- The **Jammu and Kashmir region**, often marked by local political divides, saw **public protests against terrorism**, suggesting a shift in **local sentiment** toward national unity.
- This **consensus-based response** is being hailed as a significant development in India's **domestic counter-terrorism narrative**.



4. Ongoing Challenges in Counter-Terrorism

- **Security Measures:**
 - India has successfully **weakened terror infrastructure**, especially **outside of Jammu and Kashmir**, through **surveillance, intelligence, and strikes**.
- **Ideological and Institutional Challenges:**
 - However, the **ideology, indoctrination, and mindset** that fuel terrorism continue to **persist**, especially in **cross-border networks**.
 - Eliminating terror operatives does not necessarily dismantle the **ecosystem of radicalization and support**.
- **Continuous Threat:**
 - The idea of a “**permanent solution**” to terrorism is seen as **unrealistic** by many experts.
 - Counter-terrorism is a **continuous process**, requiring **vigilance, adaptive strategy, and global cooperation**.

5. India's International Strategy and Messaging

- The Prime Minister's address in **English** was designed to mobilize **international opinion** and demonstrate **India's maturity and resolve**.
- India seeks to shift global perception by projecting itself as a **victim of terrorism**, demanding **accountability from international institutions** and **neighbouring states**.
- This also enhances India's image as a **responsible power** committed to the **global fight against terror**.

6. Lessons and Strategic Outlook

- **Civil Society and Governance:**
 - Civil society must play a role in resisting ideological extremism.
 - Democratic institutions should stay vigilant against **politicization of terrorism**.
- **Global Partnerships:**
 - India must strengthen partnerships in counter-terror frameworks like **FATF, Interpol, and UNSC**.
- **Historical Reflection:**



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- Drawing on **Benjamin E. Mays'** warning against complacency, the article concludes that **passivity in the face of terrorism** is dangerous.
- **Proactive, united, and sustained effort** is the only way to effectively confront the **perennial threat** of terrorism.

Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/on-tackling-ideology-behind-terror-we-cant-hit-pause-9975440/>



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