# OPERATION SINDOOR: DOCTRINAL PATHWAYS FOR INDIA'S STRATEGIC FUTURE

## LT GEN AB SHIVANE, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (RETD)

www.cenjows.in

# CENTRE FOR JOINT WARFARE STUDIES

## CENJOWS

**Operation Sindoor: Doctrinal Pathways for India's Strategic Future**

**Lt Gen AB Shivane, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd)** is the former DG Mechanised Forces and a Strike Corps Commander. Presently, he is Distinguished Fellow and COAS Chair of Excellence at CLAWS.

## Abstract

Operation Sindoor, India's calibrated multi-domain response to the April 2025 Pahalgam terror attack, marked a doctrinal shift in counterterrorism by targeting terror infrastructure deep inside Pakistan without crossing nuclear thresholds. Demonstrating clear military objectives, political clarity, and whole-of-nation synergy, it redefines deterrence and cognitive dominance.

The post-operation SWOT highlights India's strengths in strategic assertiveness, technology integration, and joint operations while recommending improvements in narrative control and defence sovereignty. Pakistan's vulnerabilities include failure of deterrence, strategic depth doctrine, and diplomatic isolation. The matching SWOT strategies indicate that India builds on its strengths to enhance deterrence, innovation, and partnerships, addressing weaknesses through reforms. Pakistan relies on asymmetric tactics, China ties, and diplomatic efforts to manage challenges. India focuses on compellence and strategic autonomy; Pakistan on asymmetric and diplomatic balancing.

The Policy recommendations align with SWOT insights, advocating institutionalisation of proactive punitive doctrines, enhanced civil-military coordination, expanded cognitive warfare, calibrated escalatory control and credible deterrence.

Operation Sindoor signals a new era of calibrated, tech-enabled, below-threshold warfare, where victory is defined by strategic initiative, deterrence restoration, and narrative superiority—reshaping South Asia's security landscape.

## Operational Overview

Operation Sindoor, launched in response to the April 2025 Pahalgam terror attack, marked a doctrinal transformation in India's response to Pakistan-sponsored terrorism.

*For the first time, India executed a calibrated, multi-domain, and tech-enabled operation below the nuclear threshold with clearly defined objectives and tight escalation control*.

Prompted by a provocative speech from Pakistan Army Chief Gen Asim Munir—endorsing the two-nation theory and inciting jihadist sentiment in Kashmir—India responded not just with symbolism, but with precise force. The targeting philosophy focused on terror networks and infrastructure both across the Line of Control and International Border, 700 km apart and 300 km deep. The strikes targeting the headquarters of Lashkar-e-Taiba, Hizbul Mujahedeen and Jaish-e-Mohammad were linked to past terror attacks and the Pahalgam heinous attack.

The state funeral of the Pakistani terrorists attended by its security establishment validated the deep state involvement in terror. India's strikes were therefore not against non-state actors—but against a state complicit in terrorism.

The operation demonstrated India's readiness to shift from episodic retaliations to a sustained strategy of **comprehensive integrated compellence**. Operation Sindoor was unique in its execution: a non-contact war, where missiles and drones were used without troops crossing borders. It was the first time India leveraged technological superiority for a sustained punitive strike without territorial engagement. The operation showcased *India's maturing doctrine of deterrence by denial and domination—calibrated yet forceful.*

## Strategic Overview

### Strategic Construct of Operation Sindoor

- **Clear Military Objectives:** Destruction of terror launchpads, ISR nodes, and air bases—no territorial overreach. Contributed to quick mission success and ceasefire.
- **Political Clarity and Freedom of Action:** Strong, unambiguous directives enabled bold action without mission creep.
- **Whole-of-Nation Approach:** Military, intelligence, media, and civilian authorities worked in synergy—minimal collateral damage, maximum effect. All elements of national power – political, military, diplomatic and economic synergised for cumulative effect. It was **a Nation at War**.
- **Non-Escalatory Posture with Strategic Messaging:** No civilian targets hit. Airbase attacks were retaliatory. Maintained strategic proportionality.
- **Below-Nuclear-Threshold Strategy:** Avoided actions that could justify nuclear response—demonstrated strategic discipline.
- **Targeted Elimination of HVTs:** Eliminated top Lashkar-e-Taiba commanders like Mudassar Khadian Khas. Public funeral with Pakistan Army honours revealed ISI-military complicity.

**The Conceptual and Operational Framework**

Operation Sindoor has altered the conceptual and operational framework of sub-conventional conflict in South Asia. For India, it was a declaration that terror strikes will no longer be met with reactive diplomacy, but with pre-planned, full-spectrum responses. For Pakistan, it shattered assumptions about the impunity of proxy warfare under the nuclear umbrella. The operation brought forward key lessons:

- The limits of Pakistan's **nuclear bluff** and proxy strategy.
- The **end of passive deterrence** and the emergence of active, assertive doctrine empowered by Capability, Credibility and Strategic Communication.
- The centrality of **tech-enabled, integrated operations** in modern war.
- The role of **strategic communication and civil-military synergy** in achieving cognitive dominance.
- *Cognitive warfare is the new weapon* with narratives shaping perceptions and writing history.

Victory, in this context, is no longer defined by territorial occupation or attrition. It is measured in **restored deterrence, cognitive dominance, and strategic initiative**.

Sindoor 1.0 dismantled terrorist infrastructure and signal-compelled adversaries, but Sindoor 2.0 must:

- Translate that force into a structured framework of *'predictable unpredictability'*.
- Institutionalise a *doctrine of proactive punitive-pre-emptive operations* against active terror ecosystems.
- Exploit Pakistan's vulnerabilities—economic, informational, and political—through *'cognitive dominance' and grey-zone manoeuvres by covert and overt interplay.*

**Lessons for Pakistan**

**1. Failure of Strategic Depth Doctrine**

Operation Sindoor neutralized terror camps and command nodes deep within Pakistan. The proxy war is no longer a low-cost, deniable tool in the era of real-time ISR, digital forensics, and cognitive warfare.

**2. Limits of Nuclear Deterrence**

India's cross-domain response stayed below Pakistan's nuclear redlines. Nuclear weapons no longer provide political cover for terrorism. India has created operational space for punitive actions under the nuclear overhang.

## 3. Asymmetry in Tech and ISR

India's indigenous ISR, swarm drones, and EW-Cyber integration outclassed Pakistan's largely imported systems. Tactical bravado cannot substitute for technological parity.

## 4. Diplomatic Isolation and Narrative Failure

India's legal attribution and narrative control exposed Pakistan diplomatically. The information domain is now central to modern warfare. Yet a lot more needs to be done by India to translate diplomacy into action on the financial and diplomatic isolation front.

## The Notion Of Victory For Pakistan

- **Survival = Success:** Pakistan views non-escalation to full war as a win. This is strategically defensive and tactically hollow.
- **Preservation of Proxy Infrastructure:** Any remnants of terror networks may be viewed as a success by Pakistan, but this reflects denial and stasis.
- **Strategic Friction Creation:** Continuing to incite internal instability and communal faultlines in India is falsely perceived as success, ignoring India's growing resilience.

## Lessons for India

**1. Credible Deterrence through Limited but Sharp Punishment:** India proved the feasibility of punitive strikes without full-scale war. Sub-threshold deterrence is sustainable if responses are credible, calibrated, and repeatable.

**2. Tri-Service Integration and Multi-Domain Coordination:** Joint operations across land, air, sea, cyber, and space led to swift mission success. Jointness must be institutionalized. Review the architecture of integrated theatre commands. First focus on individual service empowerment and integrating resources at the theatre level like AD, UAVs, Cyber, EW, Firepower, logistics etc. Any future structure must be lean and enable a shortened OODA loop. The outcome at the warfighting end must be superior to the present methodology or structure. Also, its transition must not lead to a temporal void.

**3. Information Warfare and Cognitive Dominance:** While the military objectives were met, India momentarily lost control of the public narrative. Global headlines focused on alleged aircraft losses, turning the episode into a China vs. France technology duel. What was overlooked was India's operational success: precision strikes under hostile conditions, deep penetration of enemy air defences, and credible restraint under provocation. While diplomatic forays have been made, Pakistan got funding from IMF and WB besides a place in the counter-terrorism seat in the UNSC.

**4. Civil-Military-Political Consensus:** Operation Sindoor was underpinned by clear political directives and public backing. National security decisions must be de-politicized and built on a codified national Security Strategy. Patriotism, not hyper nationalism must find space.

**The Notion of Victory for India**

- **Deterrence Restored:** Pakistan was forced to reconsider its proxy options. Its longevity time will tell.
- **Escalatory Control:** India managed the conflict and dominated each stage and sub-stage in the escalatory ladder, denying Pakistan the initiative or credibility of its nuclear sabre rattling.
- **Technology and Psychological Dominance:** Swarm drone raids, cyber offensives, and HVT eliminations created a deep psychological impact.
- **Message to Adversaries:** India's demonstration of punitive capability was aimed not just at Pakistan but also at China.
- **Resilience Signalling:** The internal message was clear: India will respond with justice, not just grief.
- **Global Messaging:** India is capable of fighting its own Atmanirbhar Smart Wars and will not be influenced by external pressures or leverages.

**SWOT Analysis: Strategic Assessment of India and Pakistan Post Operation Sindoor**

The SWOT analysis evaluates the strategic, operational, and geopolitical ramifications for both India and Pakistan in the aftermath of the operation.

**India: Post-Sindoor Strategic SWOT Analysis**

1. **Strengths**

   (a) **Strategic and Operational Assertiveness:**

   India demonstrated credible political will and operational preparedness through a calibrated military response. The ability to execute cross-domain, limited-war operations without full-scale escalation reflects evolved doctrinal maturity post-Uri, Balakot, and Galwan.

   (b) **Indigenous Technological Integration:**

   Operation Sindoor validated indigenous platforms such as loitering munitions (e.g., *Nagastra*), unmanned combat aerial vehicles (*Tapas*, *Archer*), and AI-enabled ISR fusion systems, showcasing a maturing Atmanirbhar Bharat defence ecosystem.

(c) **Tri-Service and Multi-Domain Synergy:**

The operation featured seamless integration of air, land, and naval assets, supported by cyber and space-based enablers, enhancing India's cross-domain warfare credibility.

(d) **Narrative Dominance and Diplomatic Balance:**

India successfully projected Sindoor as a counter-terrorism initiative, gaining tacit support or neutrality from key global actors including the United States, France, Israel, UAE, and Japan.

2. **Weaknesses**

(a) **Pre-emptive Intelligence Deficiencies:**

The initial Pahalgam attack exposed critical gaps in cross-agency intelligence sharing and local ISR, raising concerns about tactical warning systems in high-risk zones. Also, the voids in the internal security domains were exposed.

(b) **Continued Dependence on Foreign Platforms:**

India remains partially reliant on imported ISR assets (Heron UAVs), EW systems, and air platforms (Mirage, Rafale), constraining full-spectrum autonomy during high-tempo operations.

(c) **Public Communication and Psychological Warfare Gaps:**

The absence of a unified government-military communication protocol post-operation enabled disinformation and polarisation narratives to fill the void.

(d) **Limited War Threshold Risks:**

India's economic structure remains vulnerable to sustained escalation. Despite a swift operation, further mobilisation could stress fiscal and logistical resilience.

3. **Opportunities**

(a) **The Institutionalisation of Compellence Doctrine:**

Sindoor sets a precedent for codifying a formal deterrence-through-compellence doctrine, integrating kinetic, digital, and cognitive warfare vectors.

(b) **Indigenous Defence Sector Acceleration:**

Operational validation offers a pathway for increased domestic and international investment in Indian defence R&D, production, and export.

(c) **Recalibrated Internal Security Strategy:**

The operation opens political and strategic space to realign internal counter-infiltration and counter-radicalisation frameworks, especially in Jammu & Kashmir.

(d) **Strategic Diplomacy and Defence Partnerships:**

India's demonstration of precision force application may enhance defence ties with Southeast Asian, Gulf, and African partners seeking counter-terror and hybrid warfare capabilities.

4. **Threats**

(a) **Pakistan-China Axis Reinforcement:**

China's veiled diplomatic support and potential intelligence/logistical assistance during Sindoor may embolden deeper Sino-Pak strategic alignment, especially in ISR, 5th Gen aircraft, missiles and drone warfare.

(b) **Retaliatory Proxy and Cyber Operations:**

The risk of asymmetric retaliation remains elevated—urban terrorism, cyber sabotage, or targeted psychological warfare against Indian institutions.

(c) **Western Restraint Narrative:**

Pressure from international actors to avoid "regional destabilisation" could constrain future Indian punitive responses and limit strategic freedom of action.

(d) **Domestic Polarisation and Information Warfare:**

Narrative warfare by adversaries and fifth columnists could deepen internal communal fissures, undermine operational gains, and complicate civil-military cohesion.

**Pakistan: Post-Sindoor Strategic SWOT Analysis**

**1. Strengths**

(a) **Tactical Information Control:**

The Pakistani military maintained operational ambiguity and narrative control domestically, managing to project deterrence continuity despite losses.

(b) **Strategic Partnership with China:**

China provided critical diplomatic shielding at global forums and likely enhanced real-time ISR and cyber support, preserving Pakistan's psychological buffer.

(c) **Proxy Warfare Continuity:**

Despite operational setbacks, Pakistan retains its capability for deniable proxy use, preserving strategic depth without triggering overt escalation. New methods with ambiguity will evolve.

(d) **Military-Political Cohesion:**

The Pakistan Army retains centralised control over state responses, minimising civilian dissent and enabling rapid strategic reorientation.

**2. Weaknesses**

(a) **Erosion of Conventional Deterrence:**

Operation Sindoor demonstrated India's ability to strike across the LoC as also IB and escalate without provoking a major Pakistani response, undermining the latter's deterrence credibility.

(b) **International Isolation:**

Apart from China and Turkey, Pakistan failed to garner meaningful international support. OIC silence and GCC neutrality reflect its diplomatic marginalisation.

(c) **Loss of Proxy Credibility:**

Targeted strikes against militant safehouses undermined the confidence of proxy actors in Pakistan's ability to protect them, potentially fracturing the terror ecosystem.

(d) **Fragile Economic Base:**

Sindoor-induced tensions exacerbated Pakistan's economic vulnerability, triggering capital flight, currency volatility, and increased risk in IMF negotiations.

3. **Opportunities**

(a) **Strengthening Asymmetric Capabilities:**

Pakistan is likely to expand cyber, grey zone, and proxy capabilities with external assistance to regain strategic parity without conventional escalation.

(b) **Narrative Recalibration Domestically:**

Post-Sindoor, Islamabad has an opportunity to mobilise nationalist sentiment to consolidate internal cohesion and divert attention from economic instability.

(c) **Leveraging Global Mediation Channels:**

Pakistan may use backchannels with the UAE, UK, or Qatar to portray itself as a responsible actor seeking de-escalation, in return for economic or diplomatic leverage.

(d) **Deeper Sino-Pak Military Collaboration:**

The aftermath provides a platform to formalise newer PLA-PAF initiatives in drone technology, satellite intelligence sharing, and cyber warfare training.

4. **Threats**

(a) **India's Strategic Normalisation of Compellence:**

If India adopts Sindoor-type operations as a template, Pakistan could face recurring punitive actions that wear down its defence and diplomatic bandwidth.

(b) **Loss of Kashmir Narrative Traction:**

India's portrayal of Sindoor as an anti-terror action undermines Pakistan's long-held narrative of Kashmir as a bilateral dispute needing global intervention.

(c) **Internal Radical Blowback:**

Disillusionment within domestic jihadist networks may spur internal rebellion, particularly if perceived betrayal by the Army increases.

(d) **Two-Front Vulnerability:**

Without assured Chinese kinetic backing, Pakistan faces strategic overstretch risk if India simultaneously activates multiple fronts (LoC, IB, maritime).

**SWOT Matching Strategies**

**India – Strategic SWOT Matching**

**1. SO (Strengths–Opportunities) Strategies**

Leverage internal strengths to maximise external opportunities:

(a) **Codify a Limited War Doctrine:** Institutionalise a compellence-based deterrence doctrine leveraging proven tri-service synergy and technological self-reliance.

(b) **Accelerate Defence Innovation and Exports:** Use the success of Indigenous platforms in Sindoor to boost investments in Make-in-India defence production and initiate technology diplomacy in the Global South.

(c) **Expand Strategic Partnerships:** Capitalise on post-Sindoor credibility to deepen counter-terror and hybrid warfare cooperation with Quad, France, UAE, and Southeast Asian states.

**2. WO (Weaknesses–Opportunities) Strategies**

Use external opportunities to overcome internal limitations:

(a) **ISR and Intelligence Reforms:** Address pre-emptive intelligence gaps by integrating AI, satellite, and HUMINT into a real-time national counter-terror fusion grid. Accelerate the internal security reforms.

(b) **Indigenisation Push for Critical Systems:** Prioritise domestic development of drones, EW platforms, and fighter jets to reduce dependency on foreign OEMs.

(c) **Narrative Warfare Doctrine:** Establish a dedicated cognitive warfare wing to ensure unified messaging and counter hostile propaganda during and post-operations.

## 3. ST (Strengths–Threats) Strategies

Use internal strengths to mitigate external threats:

(a) **Escalatory Dominance Posture:** Sustain readiness for limited, precise retaliatory action to deter proxy and cyber threats, backed by rapid mobilisation capacity.

(b) **Diplomatic Deterrence Shield:** Build layered deterrence not just militarily, but through strategic alignment with major powers to deter Pakistani and Chinese coercion.

## 4. WT (Weaknesses–Threats) Strategies

Minimise weaknesses and counter external threats simultaneously:

(a) **Civil-Military Information Integration:** Mitigate narrative vulnerability by establishing joint civil-military media protocols during conflict.

(b) **Conflict Resilience Planning:** Build contingency reserves, economic buffers, and strategic oil stocks to prevent economic fragility during prolonged standoffs.

**Pakistan – Strategic SWOT Matching**

## 1. SO (Strengths–Opportunities) Strategies

Exploit current strengths to seize emerging opportunities:

(a) **Consolidate Strategic Ambiguity:** Enhance asymmetric doctrine and ISR denial strategies to maintain psychological deterrence despite conventional asymmetry.

(b) **Deepen China Nexus:** Convert tactical Chinese support into structured military-industrial collaborations in drones, cyber, and ISR.

**2. WO (Weaknesses–Opportunities) Strategies**

Turn weaknesses into growth areas using available opportunities:

(a) **Narrative Rehabilitation via Diplomacy:** Leverage China, Gulf and Turkish platforms to soften international isolation and reshape the Kashmir-terror linkage narrative.

(b) **Economic Militarisation Bargaining:** Use crisis mediation offers as leverage to gain economic aid while pushing back against conditions from global financial institutions.

**3. ST (Strengths–Threats) Strategies**

Use strategic levers to counter existential challenges:

(a) **Cyber-Proxy Expansion Doctrine:** Increase asymmetric non-attributable operations to retain pressure on India without triggering overt kinetic escalation.

(b) **Reinforce Domestic Control:** Use controlled nationalism and religious mobilisation to pre-empt internal dissent from radical or anti-military actors.

**4. WT (Weaknesses–Threats) Strategies**

Reduce vulnerabilities and insulate against likely threats:

(a) **Proxy Realignment Strategy:** Reduce dependency on groups vulnerable to Indian targeting and develop more clandestine, dispersed proxy networks.

(b) **Conventional Deterrence Signalling:** Conduct visible but non-escalatory drills or missile testing to signal residual capability to both internal and external audiences.

**Strategic Recommendation Summary**

| Country | Priority Strategic Match | Recommendation |
|---|---|---|
| India | ST & SO | Institutionalise compellence doctrine; expand multi-domain deterrence and strategic partnerships. |
| Pakistan | WO & ST | Reinforce asymmetric doctrine; diplomatically mitigate isolation, and Chinese collusion, and manage internal radical backlash. |

**Policy Recommendations: India**

**Redefining India's Security Doctrine for the Age of Proxy Wars**

India must no longer treat proxy wars and internal security challenges as peripheral concerns. The time has come to anchor these threats firmly within our strategic doctrine. A clearly defined and actionable framework is essential—one that authorises calibrated retaliation below the nuclear threshold. This will deter adversaries without triggering full-scale conflict. What we need is not just theory, but executable plans: modular, scenario-based playbooks that can guide decision-makers through a spectrum of escalation levels. At the heart of this effort must be a complete overhaul of our internal security apparatus, with empowered intelligence agencies, restructured coordination mechanisms, and an operational culture driven by foresight rather than reaction.

**Multi-Domain Operations (MDO) Readiness**

Modern warfare demands that India move swiftly in an integrated high technology multi-domain warfare. It's imperative to fast-track the cognitive warfare domain. Fragmented responses to future conflicts are no longer tenable. The key lies not only in optimising domains of land, sea, air, space, cyber and information but also more importantly the cross-domain synergy for effect-based operations. Thus India needs a doctrinal reset, structural review, revamped PME and above all an integrated indigenous C6ISR architecture for a shortened OODA loop. Jointness must lead to interdependency and resource optimisation with the least complexity and turbulence. Besides MDO requires the right balancing of kinetic versus non-kinetic and manned versus unmanned capabilities.

**Reinvigorating the Indigenous Defence Technological**

The inadequacy of Indigenous R&D and the acquisition cycle being out of sync with the technology cycle mar the capability for niche technology induction. There is a void in the defence ecosystem where government institutions and PSU dominate the technology landscape leaving little to optimise the capabilities of MSMEs and startups. Further, the Indian landscape grapples with a triad of challenges that impede niche capabilities – unrealistic and as of tomorrow operational requirements, industrial emphasis on assembly as an economically viable approach and dependence of transfer on technology. Technology induction and technology absorption both remain challenges. The need is for a collaborative model for our defence industrial base with a focus on indigenous solutions not indigenisation of the export model. Another challenge remains the capacity, quality and surge capability. Indigenous content is often glossed over in percentage, it needs depth analysis in terms of critical components, price mapping and technology indexing.

## Cognitive Warfare: The Final Frontier

The fiercest battlefield today lies within the human mind. Cognitive Warfare is an integral facet of power projection that focuses on attacking and degrading rationality, which can lead to the exploitation of vulnerabilities and systemic weakening of the adversary's narrative.

Cognitive warfare weaponises perception management, psychological domain, and emerging technologies to control human cognition and influence favourable actions making it the sixth operational domain alongside land, sea, air, space, and cyber.

From China's "Three Warfare" doctrine (public opinion, legal, and psychological warfare) to Russia's disinformation blitz and Pakistan's propaganda playbook, cognitive tools are now integral to conflict.

India's current ecosystem is underprepared. Narrative efforts are fragmented, reactive, and often politicised. The need is for a unified, apolitical, capability-centric approach. AI and advanced technology tools must empower rapid-response teams to act with speed and precision.

## National Resilience: Strengthening the Home Front

India's faultlines especially its communal vulnerabilities are often exploited by adversaries. The period following a conflict is particularly vulnerable to the spread of communal tensions and false information. To meet this threat, India needs a comprehensive national public resilience program. India needs a National Citizen's Security Culture where the threats targeting the society are overcome by an informed and empowered society. The people become society warriors fostering alertness, physical readiness, and mental alertness to ward off threats to social cohesion or from the cyber and disinformation field.

## Astute Diplomacy and Defence Economics as Tools of Hard Power

India must employ all elements of national power in its policy of assured retribution for acts of terror and their sponsors as a strategic construct. With digitised battlespace and transparency, the psychological aspects are as important as the physical effects. India must construct irrefutable chains of evidence not for Pakistan but for the global narrative through astute diplomacy. Proactive and astute diplomacy must win the narrative space to mould international outlook towards the adversary's diplomatic and fiscal isolation. But this legal-diplomatic campaign must run in tandem with economic preparedness. Defence budgets should not be seen as burdens but as investments linked directly to our GDP growth. Moreover, the Make-in-India initiative must give special focus to defence innovation ecosystems, ensuring that India is not merely a consumer, but a producer of critical technologies that shape future warfare. Without a strong defence, diplomacy and development will be fable. Also, political will is a

manifestation of trust in the Defence Forces Capabilities to deliver against all odds. This requires defence fiscal support and vision.

**Conclusion: Toward a Doctrine of Assertive Peace**

Operation Sindoor wasn't just a military operation—India declared that the age of restraint was over. Strategic ambiguity has been replaced with strategic clarity. Deterrence has been reconstructed—not through brinkmanship, but through credible, calibrated, assured attribution. The age of **strategic restraint** is over; India is entering the era of **strategic assertion**, driven by sovereignty, technology, and doctrinal clarity.

Victory now lies in deterrence, dominance of mind space, and escalation control—not territorial gains. India's challenge is to make Sindoor the **first chapter of a new doctrine**, not the last word. Pakistan must confront the futility of its old playbook, or risk deeper instability.

The way forward for India is clear: **codify, transform, reform, institutionalise, and escalate smartly—when necessary, how necessary, and with a clear purpose. The predictability of retribution must be certain, but the unpredictability of its manifestation must keep Pakistan on the horns of the dilemma. This is the subcontinent's new normal—and India has set the terms.**

## References

1. Pant, Harsh V., and Yogesh Joshi. 2025. *"Operation Sindoor and Beyond: India's Response and Pakistani Calculus." Eurasia Review, May 9.* https://www.eurasiareview.com/09052025-operation-sindoor-and-beyond-indias-response-and-pakistani-calculus-analysis/

2. Shivane, A. B. Lt Gen (R)  2025. *India's Bold New Doctrine: Turning 'Act of Terror = Act of War'.* New Delhi: CENJOWS. https://cenjows.in/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Lt_Gen_A_B_Shivane_Web_Article_May_2025_CENJOWS.pdf

3. Shivane, A. B. Lt Gen (R), *Pahalgam Response: Why India Must Fight Smart? – CLAWS, May 2, 2025*

4. Thakur, Harish K. 2025. *"Edge of Conflict: Strategic Implications of India's Reprisal Strike on Pakistan." Eurasia Review, May 7.* https://www.eurasiareview.com/07052025-edge-of-conflict-strategic-implications-of-indias-reprisal-strike-on-pakistan-analysis/

5. Shivane, A. B. Lt Gen (R), *"Operation Sindoor: India's Dharma Yudh and the End of Strategic Restraint" CLAWS, May 10, 2025*, https://claws.co.in/operation-sindoor-indias-dharma-yudh-and-the-end-of-strategic-restraint/

6.  Economic Times. (2025). *Terrorism is an address, it's Pakistan*. Retrieved from https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/opinion/et-editorial/terrorism-is-an-address-its-Pakistan/article show/121118387.cms(@EconomicTimes)

7.  Al Jazeera. 2025. "Operation Sindoor: What's the Significance of India's Pakistan Targets?" Al Jazeera, May 7. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/5/7/operation-sindoor-whats-the-significance-of-indias-pakistan-targets

8.  Times of India. (2025). *India used satellite intel during Operation Sindoor*. Retrieved from https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/morning-news-wrap-india-used-satellite-intel-during-operation-sindoor-kohli-denies-farewell-match-request/articleshow/121126162.cms(The Times of India)

9.  Al Jazeera. (2025). *Operation Sindoor: What's the significance of India's Pakistan targets?* Retrieved from https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/5/7/operation-sindoor-whats-the-significance-of-indias-pakistan-targets(Al Jazeera)

10. Shivane, A. B. 2025. "Op Sindoor 2.0: Why & How India Must Prepare for the Next Round?" *Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS)*. May 21, 2025. https://claws.co.in/op-sindoor-2-0-why-how-india-must-prepare-for-the-next-round/

11. Times of India. (2025). *How India's punitive measures will continue to hit Pakistan's fragile economy*. Retrieved from https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/india-pakistan-ceasefire-indus-waters-treaty-suspension-trade-ban-how-narendra-modi-government-will-continue-to-punish-pakistan-economy-post-operation-sindoor/articleshow/121113877.cms(The Times of India)

12. Indian Council for Strategic Affairs. (2025). *Securing India's Future: Lessons from the Pahalgam Terror Attack*. Retrieved from https://icfs.org.uk/securing-indias-future-lessons-from-the-pahalgam-terror-attack/(icfs.org.uk)

13. Shivane, A. B. Lt Gen (R) 2025. "Operation Sindoor: Redefining Notion of Victory in the Modern Limited Wars." *CENJOWS*. https://cenjows.in/operation-sindoor-redefining-notion-of-victory-in-the-modern-limited-wars/

14. Special Eurasia. 2025. "India-Pakistan's Military Escalation and Kashmir." Special Eurasia, May 9. https://www.specialeurasia.com/2025/05/09/india-pakistan-escalation/