



# Mediation and Interference

## Assessing Chinese Views & Analyses on the Latest India-Pakistan Tensions

Anushka Saxena

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In the aftermath of the April 22 terror attack on civilians in Pahalgam, Kashmir, China is developing its response to the flare up in India-Pakistan relations. Chinese analysts and commentators, in addition to government officials, are shaping rhetoric on what India-Pakistan tensions mean for each of the actors in specific, and for regional stability in general. This Issue Brief assesses Chinese analysts and commentators' views on the ongoing tensions, and discusses China's priorities, as they emerge from said views.

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# Executive Summary

In the aftermath of the April 22 terror attack on civilians in Pahalgam, Kashmir, there is an ongoing exchange of hostilities between India and Pakistan. As a regional power, a strategic ally of Pakistan, and a threat actor for India, China is developing its own response to the issue. Chinese analysts and commentators, in addition to government officials, are shaping rhetoric on what India-Pakistan tensions mean for each of the actors in specific, and for regional stability in general.

This Issue Brief assesses Chinese analysts and commentators' views on the ongoing tensions between India and Pakistan. Three main threads emerge from an assessment of their writings:

- China's support is for Pakistan and its position, even if it is disguised as support for regional stability, peace, and de-escalation.
- China is envisioning itself as a potential mediator in the bilateral tensions between India and Pakistan. But its pitch to mediate is based not on an interest in bringing a fundamental thaw between India and Pakistan, but enhancing its own leverage and regional legitimacy. A low-scale, limited or simmering conflict between India and Pakistan serves China's interests.
- China, however, remains concerned about escalation, given its economic and security interests in Pakistan.

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## Author

Anushka Saxena is a Staff Research Analyst with the Indo-Pacific Studies Programme at the Takshashila Institution, Bengaluru. She can be reached at [anushka@takshashila.org.in](mailto:anushka@takshashila.org.in).

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# I. Introduction

On April 22, 2025, a terror attack in Pahalgam, Kashmir, led to the deaths of 26 innocent tourists, most of whom were civilians. The initial claimant of responsibility was The Resistance Front (TRF), a terror group considered to be a shadow outfit of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). Subsequently, they withdrew their claim, arguing that their statement was caused by a “cyber intrusion.” However, the tragedy of the attack, and the involvement of Pakistan in sponsoring such terrorism, have led to a free-fall in India-Pakistan relations. This has manifested itself in the form of deteriorating diplomatic ties – the declaration of defence attachés on each side as *persona non grata*, holding of the 1972 Simla Agreement and the Indus Water Treaty by Pakistan and India respectively, and closing of airspaces for the other’s aircraft. Further, India has launched airstrikes on 9 terrorist-linked facilities in Pakistan in the early hours of May 7, 2025. The situation is dynamic and developing rapidly.

As a regional power, a strategic ally of Pakistan, and a threat actor for India, China is developing its own response to the issue. Chinese analysts and commentators, in addition to government officials, are shaping rhetoric on what India-Pakistan tensions mean for each of the actors in specific, and for regional stability in general.

Three main threads emerge from an assessment of their writings:

1. Implicitly, China's support is to Pakistan and its position, even if it is disguised as support for regional stability, peace, and de-escalation. Narratives surrounding the issue are focused on augmenting Islamabad's rhetoric and policy actions, all the while de-legitimising New Delhi's counter-measures and general policy approach to terrorism by referring to them as "irrational."
2. China is envisioning itself as a mediator in the bilateral tensions between India and Pakistan. But such an articulation of its role is mostly posturing. This is especially given that Chinese commentators either dismiss the possibility that there will be a hot war, or cite China's military might to prove that it is not in India's interests to escalate. Beijing's main goal with proposing mediation is to internationalise an otherwise bilateral issue – an idea Pakistan supports and India opposes.
3. There is an understanding among Chinese analysts that tensions between India and Pakistan have negative implications for Beijing's regional interests. Hence, they resort to overblown and misrepresented specifics, often including statements claiming that it is India sponsoring terrorism on Pakistani soil, to prove that India has created great concern for Pakistan.

Further, it can be gauged from the assessment of analysts and commentators' views that the following is China's SWOT analysis of the situation:

<p>Analysts believe China's strength is that it is a big enough power in Asia to be able to mediate between India and Pakistan to sway regional stability. They also emphasise China's military power and defence support to Pakistan as leverage over India.</p> <p><b>Strengths</b></p>	<p>Analysts believe China's weaknesses in the situation include international pressure on Pakistan and its sponsoring of terrorism. It also believes the success of India's response measures may put Pakistan on the backfoot, and Beijing's mediation efforts may fail.</p> <p><b>Weaknesses</b></p>
<p><b>Threats</b></p> <p>Analysts recognise that China's major threat in the situation is the impact of Indian aggression on Pakistan's ability to protect Chinese assets in the country. This especially includes CPEC projects in Balochistan. They also believe that India's "sponsoring of terrorism on Pakistani soil" can impact Chinese citizens and diplomatic assets in Pakistan. The potential breaking out of hot war can also have serious economic and security implications for Beijing. Its anxieties are evident from repeated statements around how India and Pakistan are both China's neighbours, and their conflict is not restricted to them alone.</p>	<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <p>Analysts contend that China can help Pakistan internationalise the issue of Kashmir and of so-called irrational Indian aggression against Pakistan. Some commentators also see a potential hot war as an opportunity for Pakistan to test the might of Chinese weapons systems. At the same time, they support the Chinese government's position that Beijing can act as the rightful mediator to ease tensions and de-escalate conflict between New Delhi and Islamabad. Some commentators may also see opportunity in the fact that even though India is hesitant to do so, to engage in a hot war with Pakistan, it may have to vacate forces from the Line of Actual Control with China.</p>

As long as India-Pakistan tensions remain under the threshold and the hyphenation of the two continues, China has leverage and opportunity. This is because an India that is concerned about dealing with the security threat from Pakistan, or one that is divesting resources and capital on its Western border, is an India that is distracted from the Chinese threat. This threat is not just on the northern and eastern borders, but also in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), restricting India's focus to its continental theater and away from a naval one. So a low-grade, localised conflict is not something adverse from China's perspective. The challenge is escalation to a full-scale war, which impacts its economic and security interests.

Hence, Chinese analysts and commentators support under-the-threshold methods of keeping the pressure on India alive. These range from supporting Pakistan's position at the international stage and critiquing that of India, to recounting India's defeat in 1962 war and reminding it of Pakistan's nuclear weapons. Most of these methods largely carry narrative value, and demonstrate China's unwillingness to be deeply involved in India-Pakistan relations.

Beijing's pitch to be a mediator should also be taken with a grain of salt, given that if it was a serious proposal, it would have been broached with representatives at the 15th meeting of the BRICS National Security Advisors in Rio de Janeiro on April 30, 2025. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi also held a meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on the sidelines, but there was no mention of regional tensions due to the India-Pakistan fallout, even though Pakistani Defence Minister Khwaja Asif had called on both Beijing and Moscow to mediate.

## II. Supporting Pakistan's Position

In the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiankun commented<sup>1</sup> that Beijing firmly opposes all forms of terrorism. And yet, Chinese commentaries posturing on the issue do so in a manner that expresses implicit support for Pakistan's position, in three ways.

The first way in which they do so is by describing the Pahalgam attack as a case of unknown but positively local<sup>2</sup> gunmen “shooting” civilians. This is evident from coverage on two of China's largest and most popular media platforms, Xinhua<sup>3</sup> and CCTV,<sup>4</sup> both owned and operated by the Chinese party-state. The only way Chinese articulation differs from that of Pakistan, in this regard, is that popular coverage has referred to the location of the incident as “India-controlled” or “India-administered” Kashmir, as opposed to the preferred Pakistani nomenclature of “Indian illegally-occupied Kashmir.”



At least 25 people were killed and several others wounded on Tuesday after unknown gunmen fired at them in the Indian-controlled Kashmir, Indian media reported.

India has accused Pakistan of involvement in the attack.

On Wednesday, the Indian government announced several measures against Pakistan, including the suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, border closure, and the expulsion of Pakistani personnel. ■



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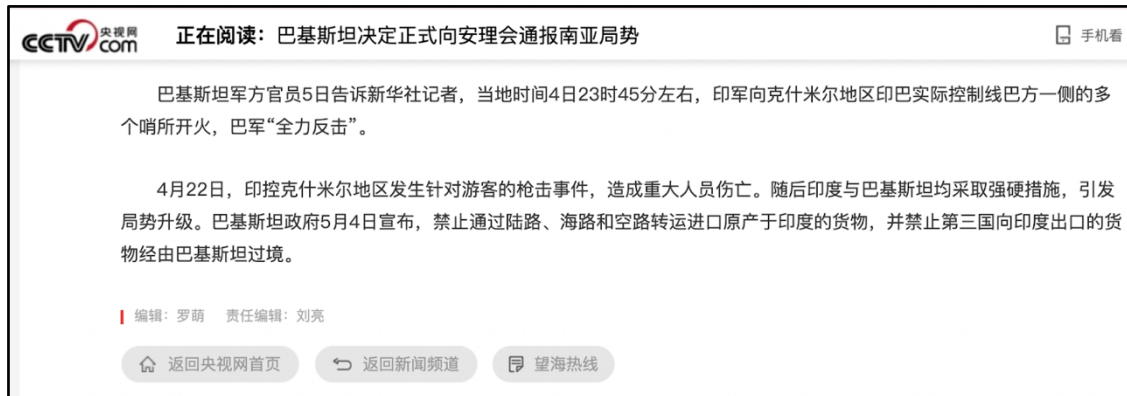


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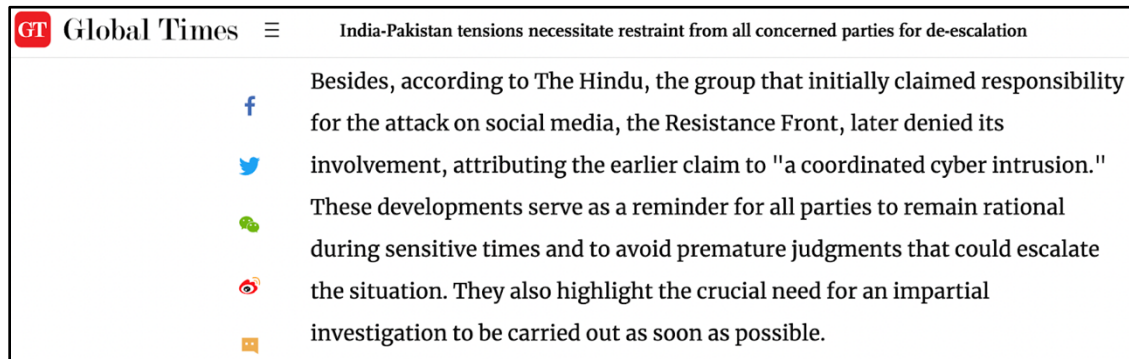
*A Xinhua English report screenshot from April 26, 2025, observing the use of the terms “unknown gunmen” and “firing.”<sup>5</sup>*



*A CCTV article screenshot from May 5, 2025, stating, “On April 22, a **shooting** targeting tourists occurred in the India-controlled Kashmir region, resulting in significant casualties.”<sup>6</sup>*

Such framing undermines the idea that the incident was an act of terror, and papers over Indian concerns surrounding infiltration of Pakistani state-sponsored terrorists into Kashmir. In fact, coverage in leading

Chinese state-owned media platforms like the Global Times<sup>7</sup> feeds fodder to the authenticity of The Resistance Front (TRF)'s rather hasty withdrawal, wherein the terror group attributed its statement claiming responsibility for the attack to a cyber intrusion. On this account, the platform urged India to act "rationally" and "avoid premature conclusions." To an informed audience, this is a blatant disregard for the history and context of Pakistani state-sponsored terrorism on Indian soil.



*A Global Times article screenshot from April 28, 2025, calling on India to be "rational."*<sup>8</sup>

Secondly, to package its de-legitimisation of India's position and counter-measures more appealingly, China has formally called on both India and Pakistan to move toward a peaceful resolution of the dispute, and accept bilateral negotiations as the way forward. This was notably emphasised<sup>9</sup> by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in a phone call with his Pakistani counterpart Mohammad Ishaq Dar on April 27. The sentiment was reiterated by Guo Jiankun in his regular press conference on April 28, where he stated that "*As a common neighbor of both India and Pakistan, China hopes the two sides will exercise restraint, move toward each other,*

*and properly handle their differences through dialogue and consultation.”<sup>10</sup>*

There is some support for this position in scholarly circles in China. For example, Wang Shida, an Executive Director at China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (a Chinese Ministry of State Security institution), argued in an opinion piece<sup>11</sup> for *Huanqiu* (*Global Times* Chinese) that because India and Pakistan have a long way to go in terms of economic development, the two should focus on quickly resolving the dispute and moving on to their developmental agendas.

What is also interesting, however, is that the proposal for de-escalation doesn't exactly seem to be motivated by a desire for a fundamental thaw in India-Pakistan relations. It rather comes across from commentaries in Chinese media wherein analysts argue that India doesn't have the capability to engage in and win a hot war on Kashmir with Pakistan, and that it will derail India's developmental goals and ambitions if it attempts to do so. Broadly, this also reflects Chinese threat assessment surrounding how a hot war between India and Pakistan may impact its own interests and situation – especially if it has to get involved by either servicing Pakistan's military and economic requirements, or by turning the heat on at the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

Scholars like Wang put it more subtly. “*If the situation in Kashmir further escalates—or even ‘explodes’—it would clearly not serve India's fundamental interests,*” he writes in the above-cited opinion piece.<sup>12</sup>

Scholars such as Hu Shisheng (Director of the South Asia Institute at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations) attempt to disincentivise India from undertaking harsh measures to avoid “international condemnation.” In a recent interview with Jiefang Daily,<sup>13</sup> the official newspaper of the Shanghai Municipal Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), Hu said:

*“From the perspective of the incident itself, based on current information, the attack may have been carried out by non-state actors, such as extremist groups based in Pakistan, rather than by the Pakistani government or military. As such, an excessive Indian response could provoke international condemnation.”*

Hu also added:

*“From a practical standpoint, if India were to launch a large-scale military operation, it would need to redeploy forces currently stationed primarily along the China-India border to the Pakistan front—something India is hesitant to do.”*

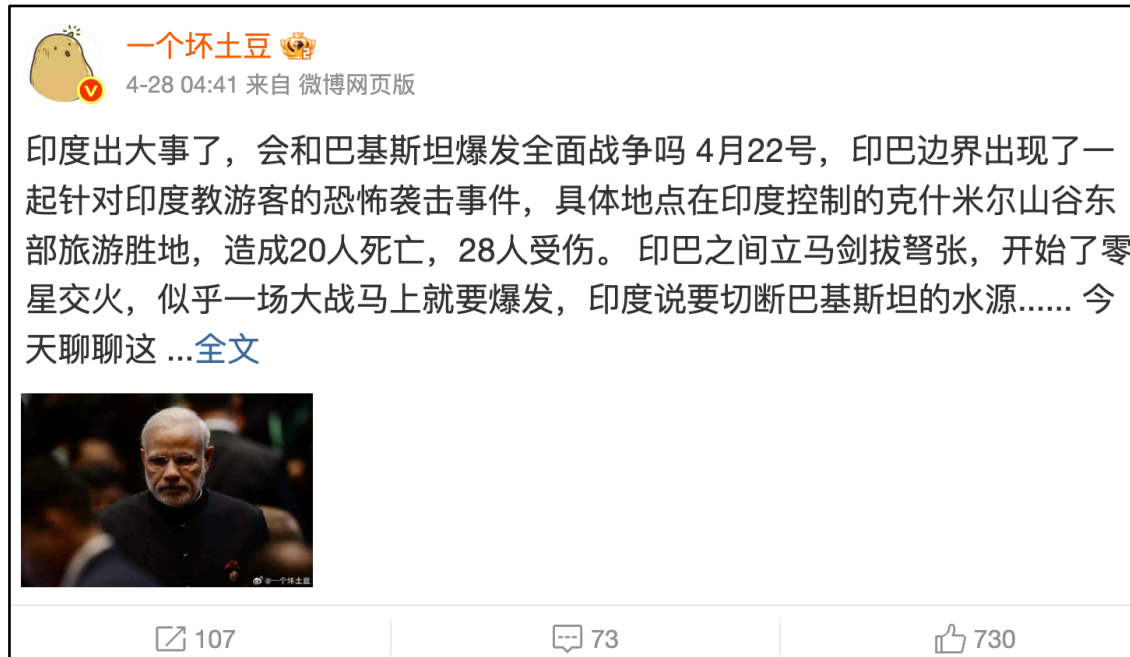
Hu’s arguments reveal two pillars of the Chinese analytical community’s posturing in this regard. The first, is that there is an active effort to build an image of immorality and extremeness around India’s response. The second is that there is thinking about which factors may disincentivise India from taking harsh measures, and from the Chinese perspective, the threat from China itself, as well as anxiety regarding condemnation from the international community, figure right on top.

Citizen commentaries on QQ and Weibo do not necessarily engage in the second pillar surrounding disincentivisation. But they have been actively commenting on the morality of the state's actions in furthering the Hindu-Muslim divide in India, ignoring the nature and context of the Pahalgam terror attack. For example, in a Weibo post, dated April 28,<sup>14</sup> a commentator with the username 'A Bad Potato' (一个坏土豆), and a byline, "*Fight back together with my country*" (陪我的国一起逆袭), pugnaciously argues:

*"Modi, playing the populist card, blamed Article 370 for hindering national unity and fueling separatism. In August 2019, he scrapped the article, removing Kashmir's autonomy. The Indian military took over, cut off the internet and communications, and arrested thousands of local opponents... Locals realized they couldn't win openly — so they turned to covert resistance. The region became a hotbed for terrorism... Multiple terrorist groups claimed responsibility [for the April 22 attack]. Modi singled out one — the 'Resistance Front' — and accused Pakistan of supporting them... India has weak capabilities and zero shame. If it were the U.S., it would be far more dangerous."*

The post has over 900 engagements from other *Weibo* users and was accessible under the 'Popular' section on *Weibo* upon searching 'Kashmir' (克什米尔). It has also been reposted on *Zhuanlan Zhihu* (a popular

Chinese Q&A platform).<sup>15</sup> On this platform, the account ‘坏土豆’ (‘*Bad Potatoes*’) has 2,17,410 followers.



*Screenshot of A Bad Potato's post, with around 910 engagements from other Weibo users, as of May 7. Interestingly, the first line of the article acknowledges the incident as a terror attack.*<sup>16</sup>

Another interesting post is from May 6, 2025,<sup>17</sup> published on *Tencent's QQ*, a Chinese social media platform, and authored by a widely read user, ‘*Lee Mengmai*’ (李孟买), who claims to work on deciphering India and Indians. In this post, titled ‘*Between Censorship and Conflict: The Dual War of Journalism in India and Pakistan*’ (在审查与冲突之间：印度与巴基斯坦新闻业的双重战争), the user argues:

*“India and Pakistan—long-standing adversaries who have fought three major wars—are once again caught in a fierce ‘war of words’. Indian media, with few exceptions, has turned newsrooms into ‘war rooms’. In contrast, Pakistani media has adopted a more professional approach, referring instead to ‘situation rooms’. After all, this is an unfolding event, and the Pakistani media is using this context to discuss and debate developments while advocating for peace and dialogue rather than escalation.”*

Clearly, driven by nationalism, Chinese Public opinion appears to be vehemently swayed against India, and Pakistan is witnessing a massive swell of support online.

Adding to the rhetorical list on why India will not and should not take up military retaliation against Pakistani terror sites, in a commentary on *GuanCha* titled, “*Is India really going to take action?* (印度真的要动手?)”,<sup>18</sup> Lin Mingwang, Vice Dean at the School of International Studies, Fudan University, argues:

*“Compared to the 2016 Uri and 2019 Pulwama attacks, India’s biggest challenge in mounting a large-scale response this time is the lack of a clear justification. The previous attacks targeted India’s military and paramilitary forces—something that would require a high level of coordination, training, and resources that only professionalized forces, potentially with state support, could manage. In contrast, general separatist groups usually lack access to high-end training, advanced*



*weaponry, and, crucially, real-time intelligence on Indian troop movements.”*

It can be seen that Lin is attempting to achieve a two-fold goal here – to convince readers that India is most likely to find itself in a disadvantaged position if it escalates, and to make the case that there is “no justification” for India to launch a surgical strike this time around. To augment the first point, Lin further adds:

*“The situation may appear to be on the brink of an India-Pakistan war, but there are likely subtle dynamics at play. On Pakistan's part, publicly disclosing ‘reliable intelligence’ was actually a way of implying that ‘Pakistan already knows the Indian military’s plan—its methods, targets, and timing’. The intent may have been to dissuade India from taking action. After all, if even the military plans have been exposed and India still proceeds, wouldn’t that be self-defeating?”*

Other commentators, such as ‘*Gu Huoping*’ (谷火平; a pen name for an account that frequently writes on military affairs concerning China), argue that in the face of India’s aggressive posture, Pakistan is right to not back down. In fact, in a recent article for the Chinese media platform NetEase,<sup>19</sup> Gu opines that a hot war may be a test of all the ‘Made in China’ defence products the Pakistan armed forces are heavily reliant on. Using examples of India’s retreat in the 1962 war with China, and by misleadingly arguing that India has not held a clear advantage in its historic wars with Pakistan, Gu attempts to propagate the idea that Delhi should best back off.



Similar writers on NetEase take their warnings up a notch, and address Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi directly. A 30th April piece<sup>20</sup> by a user going by ‘*Big Mouth Talks About the World*’ (大嘴说天下) says:

*“A word of advice to Modi: drones are not toys, and the nuclear button is certainly not a game console. If you really push our Iron Brother [Pakistan] too far, the CH-9 drone will teach you a lesson in no time. At that point, don't even think about ‘reaping benefits from the fire’ – the whole of India might suffer the consequences.”*

In this regard, commentaries and analytical arguments attempt to draw out a de-legitimisation-disincentivisation-deterrence cycle. The narrative tools being used to do so include pointing out the futility of countermeasures, making the case for international condemnation, threatening the extension of Chinese military support for Pakistan, and citing a lack of “evidence” for who caused the terror attack. One can safely assume that the hope here is that domestic and international readers (including policymakers in India) will calculate the costs of escalation based on Chinese warnings. Further, it can be taken as signalling that Chinese analysts are projecting onto India, that Beijing can deter an escalating response from it (even if they don’t actually believe so).

Thirdly, Chinese discourse is emphasising the so-called immorality of India’s punitive measures against Pakistan. This especially holds for India’s decisions to keep the Indus Water Treaty in abeyance, and even before that, to revoke Article 370 granting special status to Jammu and Kashmir.

For example, a recent commentary on *Sohu*,<sup>21</sup> a Chinese internet media and online search company, glorifies Pakistan's retaliatory decision to shut off its airspace to Indian aircraft and halt bilateral trade as a landmark response to India's punitive measures. The commentary is authored by a popular analyst, going by 'Global Defense Focus' (全球防务看点), and has over 720 million+ reads. Similarly, on the issue of India's "threat" to stop Pakistan's water supply, a recent article<sup>22</sup> on popular media site *Guancha* highlights support for Islamabad's claims that India has caused moderate flooding in several low-lying areas in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Such rhetoric clearly ignores meteorological facts. Even if there are higher levels of waterflow recorded in Jhelum in the past few days, it is likely a result of seasonal melting of glaciers – something the Lahore Flood Forecasting Division itself warned residents of, on April 18.<sup>23</sup>

Similarly, in his above-cited commentary for *Guancha*, Lin Mingwang also stated:<sup>24</sup>

*"India is unwilling to showcase this internal dissent [between Hindus and Muslims in Kashmir] to the international community, as it would undermine the legitimacy of its governance in the region. Thus, the preferred strategy is to externalize the cause of unrest by blaming Pakistan."* Lin's goal appears to be to divert attention to India's purported ignorance of internal dissent by tugging at political and ideological divides to salvage Pakistan from evident involvement.

Such a sentiment was also accentuated in comments from before the strikes made by Liu Zongyi, Director of the South Asia Research Center at the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies (a government-affiliated think tank), in an April 25 blog<sup>25</sup> by SIIS (based on an interview with *The Paper*). He warns:

*“India is increasingly anxious about regional developments, and we cannot rule out the possibility that the Modi government might take risky actions [including “surgical strikes”] to exploit the chaos.”* Such a reaction by India, he says, *“is not surprising,”* because *“For years, India has blamed Pakistan for every terrorist attack on its soil.”*

Then, India’s decision to launch missile strikes via ‘Operation Sindoor’ has stirred both official rhetoric and digital commentary in China. As a spokesperson of the Foreign Ministry (though unnamed, it is most likely Lin Jian) said on May 7, *“China finds India’s military operation early this morning regrettable. We are concerned about the ongoing situation.”*<sup>26</sup> Combined with other above-cited commentaries on a lack of “justification” for India’s actions and the “irrationality” of its approach, Liu’s remarks prove how China’s active effort is to subvert India’s right of response and reinforce Pakistani approaches, actions, and narratives.

### III. China as the Right Mediator?

Another angle that ties into this narrative on negotiation as the way forward, is Beijing's willingness to play mediator. In his April 28 remarks, Guo Jiankun also stated, "*China welcomes all measures conducive to de-escalating the current situation and supports the early launch of a fair investigation.*"<sup>27</sup> A foreign ministry spokesperson also reiterated this during the May 7 remarks on the launch of India's airstrikes.

Interestingly, Guo's April 28 statement was made in response to a question posed by a journalist of the *RIA Novosti*, a Russian state-owned media agency, based on the platform's recent interview with Pakistan Defence Minister Khawaja Asif.<sup>28</sup> In this interview, Asif said that he would find an international intervention by Russia, China, or any Western countries highly useful to figure out who was behind the incident, and added that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif supported this proposal.

Naturally, Beijing seems to believe that it could be the right actor to enable de-escalation of the situation, including by supporting the launch of a "fair and swift" investigation. In fact, coverage of Guo's statements rarely acknowledges that Asif also called on other actors, including countries in the West, to support an international investigation. If one further looks at the Chinese transcript of Wang Yi's phone call with Dar, Wang vouches for Pakistan's sovereignty and "legitimate security concerns," while again calling for an "impartial investigation."<sup>29</sup> By consistently iterating its ability to bring peace, Beijing is inadvertently

supporting Pakistan's internationalisation of what is clearly a bilateral issue, and undermining India's opposition to global mediation.

Further, based on the discussion in Section II, it can be said that China also believes de-escalation is essential from the perspective of its own threat assessment, and the larger interests of the region. As Lin Mingwang attempts to argue:

*"... In terms of the international landscape, no country supports India deliberately pressuring Pakistan. More importantly, Chinese troops have been stationed near Indian-controlled Kashmir since 2020, which in effect helps to maintain balance and promote peace in the region. After all, India must take into account China's interests and sensitivities."*<sup>30</sup>

In this light, analysts are, in general, attempting to encourage India to seek mediation as a pathway. This is evident from what Wang Shida says in his above-cited *Huanqiu* opinion piece:

*"Currently, many regions of the world are embroiled in geopolitical conflicts: the Russia-Ukraine war, the Israel-Palestine conflict, U.S.-Israel hostilities with Yemen's Houthi forces, and the civil war in Sudan... Against this backdrop... de-escalating the India-Pakistan crisis should be a shared consensus of the international community... Encouragingly, some nations have already expressed a willingness to mediate... As long as all parties work together with peace as the goal, there is hope that India and Pakistan can... resolve their disputes through peaceful means."*<sup>31</sup>

It is important to note here that China's official rhetoric surrounding negotiation and mediation to resolve India and Pakistan's differences is not new. Similar statements<sup>32</sup> were presented by the Foreign Ministry to respond to the Jaish-e-Mohammed attack in Pulwama in February 2019. Even then, spokesperson Geng Shuang had refused to acknowledge Pakistani involvement, arguing that India's naming of the terror group responsible for the attack does not indicate a confirmed judgement, and this is likely to remain a rhetorical trend in China's posturing vis-à-vis India-Pak tensions.

## IV. Impacts on Chinese Interests

Another angle to explain why Chinese narratives have specifically delegitimised India's countermeasures is that they potentially impact China's interests in Pakistan. Comments<sup>33</sup> on the incident by the popular analyst Liu Zongyi, inform readers that Beijing may be concerned about implications for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). In fact, to further the cause of de-escalation and for Pakistan's own "security interests," he pointed out that Pakistan accuses India of supporting separatist and extremist groups inside Pakistan and Afghanistan—groups that threaten Pakistan's internal security and disrupt CPEC.

Popular Chinese bloggers, such as *Hanfeng 1918*, have also responded to the event with an assessment of China's skin in the game. In the latest post from May 5, 2025,<sup>34</sup> a user by the name of 'Housha' threatens: "*...If India had attempted to annex the entire Kashmir region, China would not have*

*stood by idly. Kashmir is very important to China, as our access route to the Indian Ocean must pass through Kashmir.”*



*The Hanfeng1918 Blog’s screenshot, wherein the author titles the article ‘China’s Ultimatum!’<sup>35</sup>*

In this regard, even as Beijing’s official rhetoric has been relatively mild and vague, the societal and analytical support for the strategic convergence between China and Pakistan is clearly evident. At a time when India-Pakistan relations are witnessing an intense shake-up, China is likely to sustain its posturing, including through proposals to mediate in the name of regional stability. From the Indian perspective, it is vital to assess how best to counter such narratives, all the while retaining its position on resolving issues with Pakistan bilaterally.

## V. Conclusion

China's disincentivising tactics and de-escalation narratives are likely to continue despite India's May 7 airstrikes, given that their goal is to add to the costs and calculations of conflict. At the same time, Chinese analysts will likely continue to play up Beijing's possible role as a mediator, along with other parties, without essentially making a concrete effort toward this. Simultaneously, fiery commentaries discouraging India from facing a 'Made-in-China' Pakistani army head-on will attempt to strike fear.

However, because it is not in China's interests to see the tensions escalate to a hot war, given the military and economic impacts it may have to bear, it is important to take note of how analysts are shaping the public and policymakers' opinions. Are they disincentivising India from retaliating to a Pakistani counter-attack, or are they confident in Islamabad's capabilities? Are they suggesting that China leverage deployment at the LAC to put pressure on India's troop presence, which is presently divided between the LAC and the LoC? These are pertinent questions on which India must deliberate.

India and China are continuing to inevitably compete in not just representation of the Global South, but also in economic, technological and military domains, in general. In this regard, such narratives emerging from China are highly important to take into account to develop counter-narratives to support the Indian approach to contemporary partnerships.



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