

Right on Cue: Indian Media Blames Pakistan for the Sri Lankan Terrorist Attacks

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It was bound to happen sooner than later, but Indian media finally decided to play the “Pakistan card” by attempting to connect their neighbor’s ISI intelligence agency to the Sri Lankan terrorist attacks, a desperate narrative move that says a lot more about the Indian incumbent’s political vulnerability during the ongoing month-long electoral process than anything about Pakistan’s purported culpability in this tragedy.

The Cheap Shot That The Whole World Saw Coming

It was only a matter of time before Indian media predictably blamed Pakistan for the Sri Lankan terrorist attacks, which just happened earlier this week in a piece by Vicky Nanjappa for “Oneindia” about “[How ISI radicalised Sri Lanka through the Pakistan High Commission](#)”. The writer wasted no time in reminding the reader about a years-long scandal in Sri Lanka initiated by India’s National Investigation Agency (NIA) and claiming that a Pakistani diplomat on the island nation was responsible for plotting a Mumbai-style attack in South India, never mind the fact that the incident that this allegedly masterminded one was being based on was actually a [false flag](#). In fact, it can be argued that one of the consequences of the Mumbai attacks is that India capitalized on the manufactured notion that Pakistan’s ISI intelligence agency was behind it in order to portray its rival as a regional bogeyman who all of South Asia had to be suspicious of from then on out, so it’s logical in hindsight why India’s RAW intelligence agency would also cook up a conspiracy about this in Sri Lanka in an attempt to weaken historically strong Pakistani-Sri Lankan relations.

Convoluting And Conspiratorial Claims

The enduring motivation to divide Pakistan from its regional partners and opportunistically misportray it as a “state sponsor of terrorism” is what’s also behind the latest attempt trying to connect it to the Sri Lankan terrorist attacks. Mr. Nanjappa reminds his reader about the fake news claims that the Bodu Bala Sena (BBS) Buddhist nationalist organization is supposedly being bankrolled by the ISI, which is more than likely another weaponized narrative that ultimately originated with RAW. According to Mr. Nanjappa’s far-reaching theory, the Pakistani diplomat supposedly responsible for organizing a Mumbai-style attack in South Asia also paid the BBS to incite anti-Muslim violence in order to improve the ISI’s recruitment prospects of local Muslims afterwards, with the clear innuendo being that this somehow makes Islamabad responsible for last weekend’s Easter suicide bombings. This convoluted narrative is understandably confusing for most people to follow, but for as much as it turns off readers from outside the region, it nevertheless is meant to be ultra-intriguing for its intended audience in South Asia, especially the Indian one.

Fearmongering For Votes

It can't be forgotten that Prime Minister Modi is battling for his political life during his country's ongoing month-long electoral process and that he's hoping to win re-election on a platform that heavily emphasizes national security. India was just utterly humiliated, however, following the dogfight that it initiated with Pakistan in late February after the [Bollywood-style "surgical strike"](#), which led to New Delhi's rival capturing one of the downed pilots prior to releasing him as a [gesture of peace](#) and then Modi's own Defense Minister later [publicly contradicting her own government](#) by admitting that not a single person was injured in the Balakot attack. For a political leader who prides himself on his notion of national security, these events were certainly embarrassing and reduced his dwindling credibility among the electorate, hence the need to distract voters with more fearmongering scandals in the meantime so that he can improve his re-election odds. Therein lays the relevance of the ridiculous claims that Pakistan is conspiring with Russia and China to wage Hybrid Wars against the [entire world](#) and [specifically India](#), respectively.

The BJP's Hybrid War On India

In reality, these public accusations by the state and civil society are actually a form of Hybrid War in and of themselves, one that's being waged not only on the minds of the international audience that India intends to trick into thinking that Pakistan is a "state sponsor of terrorism" and therefore should be subject to unilateral US sanctions and multilateral UN ones, but also against its own citizens who these perception management practitioners want to imbue with a deep sense of fear that they can then exploit to mislead their targets into thinking that India can only be protected by re-electing Modi and continuing his "muscular" foreign policy. I predicted in my piece earlier this week about my ["Initial Assessment Of The Terrorist Attacks In Sri Lanka"](#) that "it'll be tempting for some [international forces] to imply that their rivals' intelligence agencies might have had a hand in the latest events, or at the very least present themselves as super tough on terrorism for domestic political reasons (e.g. [Modi during the elections](#))" which is exactly what India is now doing.

Political Purposes

India's "Hindi Heartland/Cow Belt", the stronghold of the BJP's support, has yet to go to the polls but is about to real shortly in the election's [upcoming phases](#), so spinning the narrative that Pakistan might have indirectly had a hand in the Sri Lankan terrorist attacks is meant to ensure that as many of Modi's supporters come out to vote as possible in order to help him win this neck-and-neck election. As an added benefit, New Delhi would be delighted if Sri Lankan media picked up on Mr. Nanjappa's piece and provoked one of their pro-Indian politicians to publicly praise it and/or demand an investigation into what India is framing as "Pakistan's Hybrid War" in the country. Even better, since his article was written in English, international media further abroad might republish it too, especially some of the forces that [have an interest in sparking](#) a so-called "Clash of Civilizations". It would be a dream come true for Modi if these weaponized fake news claims eventually made it to the UN, too.

Concluding Thoughts

It's unsurprising that an Indian writer decided to opportunistically spin a convoluted and conspiratorial story purporting to link Pakistan's ISI to the Sri Lankan terrorist attacks since

the fake news claims and attendant innuendo being put forth appeal to the preconceived notions of the BJP's base and will probably succeed in improving voter turnout for this constituency during the next phases of the country's ongoing month-long electoral process. The introduction of this weaponized narrative into the Internet's information ecosystem also carries with it the chance that it'll be picked up by Sri Lankan media and consequently provoke a pro-Indian politician there to publicly praise the piece in order to trigger a crisis in Pakistani-Sri Lankan relations. Moreover, it's too early to rule out the possibility of other forces republishing it with the intent of intensifying the so-called "Clash of Civilizations", which might have the horrifying effect of inspiring right-wing "reprisal" attacks against the Western-based Pakistani diaspora in an attempt to trigger more inter-civilizational violence that would superficially advance this false divide-and-rule narrative.

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