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Abstract: On May 10, 2025, Pakistan launched Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos in direct response to India's Operation Sindoor, which had involved missile strikes on Pakistani territory. The Indian strikes targeted areas including Bhimber, Chak Amru, Bagh, Kotli, Sialkot, and Muzaffarabad, resulting in the tragic loss of numerous civilian lives, including women and children. These unprovoked attacks prompted an immediate retaliatory response from Pakistan. Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos targeted strategic military installations across India. It marked a significant turning point in South Asia's security landscape. The operation met its tactical and operational objectives; its broader impact lay in challenging India's perceived conventional military superiority. Described as "precise, proportionate, and restrained," the operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos underscored Pakistan's commitment to international norms and the principle of lawful self-defense. Despite India's increasingly aggressive posture, Pakistan maintained a calibrated and measured approach aimed at preserving national security without escalating to full-scale war. This paper analyzes the motivations, strategic planning, execution, and outcomes of Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos within the broader context of the Indo-Pakistani rivalry. The analysis also considers the political and humanitarian dimensions of the conflict, drawing key lessons for India's ongoing defense modernization.

Introduction

Tensions deepened abruptly following a terror attack on April 22, 2025, in Pahalgam, Kashmir (under control of India) where gunmen killed some civilians. India accused Pakistan-backed militants of carrying out the attack, while Pakistan denied involvement and called for an independent investigation. India only blames Pakistan but never presented any evidence. After that India has adopted a more forceful stance in its dealings with Pakistan. This shift reflects heightened tensions between the two nations. Diplomatic postures have notably intensified. India suspended the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty, cutting off Pakistan's access to shared rivers, and cancelled visas issued to Pakistani citizens. In retaliation, Pakistan

threatened to withdraw from the 1972 Shimla Agreement and closed its airspace to Indian aircraft (Economist Times, 2025). Meanwhile, cross-border shelling along the Line of Control in Kashmir occurred almost daily. The shelling first started by India on April 30, 2025. India has banned 16 Pakistani YouTube channels. Pakistani airlines have been prohibited from using Indian airspace (Masood, 2025). On May 6, 2025 India halted the flow of water from the Chenab River by closing the gates of the Baglihar Dam. Pakistan shot down 29 Indian drones on May 6, 2025 that had allegedly violated its airspace near the Line of Control and in Punjab. On May 7, 2025, India launched Operation Sindoor, executing missile strikes on few locations within Pakistan including Bhimber, Chak Amru, Bagh, Kotli, Sialkot, and Muzaffarabad (The Express Tribune. 2025: BBC News, 2025). These attacks resulted in the tragic loss of over 33 civilian lives, including women and children. India escalated further by launching drone attacks on Pakistani territory between May 8 and 9. Pakistan intercepted and defused 90 drones but chose not to retaliate immediately. The scale and nature of this unprovoked action encouraged an immediate and forceful response from Pakistan. Then in response to Indian aggressive action, Pakistan initiated Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos, on May 10, 2025 by launching missile and drone strikes against 26 military targets across Indian Territory, including areas within Indian-administered Kashmir (Hussain Sayed, M. 2025). After Indian aggression on civilian population Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos, was designed to strengthen national security (Al Jazeera, 2025). This exactly executed operation characterized a strategic countermeasure to India's aggression and marked a turning point in the regional security landscape. Keeping in view the tense relation between the both countries, Iran's Foreign Minister visited Pakistan, offering to mediate between Pakistan and India to help ease rising tensions (Hussain Sayed, M. 2025). The Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia also met with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad, urging both India and Pakistan to pursue immediate de-escalation of the conflict. The major objectives of the Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos were following:

1. Respond decisively to Indian strikes on Pakistani territory and reported civilian areas.
2. Showcase Pakistan's military and cyber capabilities by targeting critical Indian infrastructure to deter future hostilities.
3. Promote national unity and effectively counter India's blame game against Pakistan.

Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative and descriptive methodology to analyse Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos and evaluate its strategic significance, with particular emphasis on Pakistan's self-defence and regional security concerns. The study is based entirely on secondary data drawn from a broad spectrum of publicly accessible and credible sources. These sources include academic journal articles and think tank publications, offering in-depth analyses. Additionally, mainstream media coverage from well-established global outlets such as CNN, Al Jazeera, BBC, PTV, Dunya, and ARY has been utilized for their reporting on the operation and its public reception. A particularly valuable source of information was the Pakistan-China Institute's report, which provided key data relevant to the study. Other important references include article from the Reuters, The Guardian, The Dawn, Financial Times, The Washington Post, and The Straits Times, all of which contributed critical perspectives and analyses. All sources have been selected based on their credibility, relevance, and analytical depth, ensuring that the research maintains academic thoroughness. Following research questions will be addressed.

Research Questions

1. What were the strategic goals and motivations behind the initiation of Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos?
2. How did Pakistan's armed forces plan, coordinate, and execute Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos?

3. What was the impact of Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos on the public sentiment and national morale?
4. What role did media, information warfare, and communication strategies play during Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos?

Theoretical framework

The scholar used the theory of Realism to explain this study. Realism argues that states mainly act to protect their survival and increase their power in a competitive international system. In the case of Operation Bunyan-Un Marsoos 2025, Pakistan's actions followed this logic. The operation was launched in response to Indian aggressive attacks on Pakistani airbases and civilian areas. From a Realist point of view, Pakistan's response was both rational and necessary. States must take strong actions to defend their territory and sovereignty. Through this operation, Pakistan aimed to protect its national security and show its military and cyber strength. By targeting key Indian infrastructure, Pakistan also tried to shift the balance of power in the region and build a strong deterrent. Realism also values state legitimacy, both inside the country and on the global stage. By presenting the operation as a defensive response to Indian hostility, Pakistan worked to gain national support and justify its actions internationally. This messaging helped to build unity at home and challenged India's type of the conflict. Generally, Operation Bunyan-Un Marsoos 2025 clearly reflects Realist ideas. Keeping in view the theoretical framework the research questions are discussed and explained below at heading A, B, C and D.

A: Strategic Goals and Motivations behind the Operation Bunyan-Un-Marsoos

Strategic Deterrence and Military Reciprocity

The situation escalated when India attacked Pakistani airbase and other civilian population on the night of May 9–10, 2025. All incoming threats from India were successfully intercepted by Pakistan's unified and well active air defence system. Increasing aggressive design of India made the way for Pakistan to respond accordingly. Then Pakistan launched a missile and drone campaign aimed at re-establishing deterrence by demonstrating both the will and capability to retaliate with precision and scale. A key strategic objective of this response was to degrade India's forward-operating assets and logistical infrastructure, particularly in states near the border. In a press briefing, DG (ISPR) reaffirmed that Pakistan's committed pledge is to defending its sovereignty. He highlighted that any threat to the nation's territorial integrity would be met with a swift, comprehensive, and decisive response (Khyber News, 2025; PTV News, 2025). He confirmed that Pakistan's response was restrained up till now. "We do not seek war," he stated, "but any violation will be met with a decisive response." He emphasized that Pakistan demonstrated having professionalism, ethical conduct, and restraint throughout the operation. Highlighting the country's growing reliance on advanced technology and multi-domain strategies, he asserted that Pakistan remains fully prepared to defend its sovereignty across all fronts. (ISPR, 2025). In the early hours of Saturday, Pakistan launched a series of coordinated military strikes under the codename Operation Bunyaan-un-Marsoos (Iron Wall) in retaliation for reported Indian attacks on Pakistani airbase, including those in Shorkot and Murid (Dunya News, 2025). The Operation Bunyaan-un-Marsoos targeted key Indian military installations across multiple regions. One of the major outcomes of the operation was the reported destruction of a BrahMos missile depot in Beas. In addition, significant damage was inflicted on the Indian airbases at Pathankot and Adampur (Dunya News, 2025). Notably, this operation has destroyed an Indian S-400 air-defense system in Udhampur, a system valued at approximately \$1.5 billion considered a major blow to India's aerial defense capability (Dunya News, 2025). Further strikes targeted Indian military positions such as the brigade headquarters

and supply depot in Uri, along with artillery sites. These attacks were carried out using F-1 surface-to-surface missiles launched shortly after dawn prayers (Dunya News, 2025). The strikes were executed using precision-guided F-1 missiles, loitering drones, and cyber-enabled warfare capabilities, showcasing the Pakistan's advanced multi-domain deterrent posture (The Nation, 2025). Additionally, a large-scale cyber-attack reportedly disrupted nearly 70% of India's power grid, resulting in widespread blackouts across several major cities of India (Dunya News, 2025). During a press briefing Director General ISPR, stated that Pakistan's defensive systems successfully intercepted the majority of incoming Indian missiles. He confirmed that some wreckage fell on Pakistani areas; but it caused no substantial damage (Dawn, 2025). He also revealed that Pakistani surveillance drones had been sighted over New Delhi, raising questions about India's air defence effectiveness. Moreover, he accused India of attempting missile strikes on Afghan territory, warning that such actions could severely destabilize regional peace and security (Dunya News, 2025). On Friday, Pakistan's Air vice Marshal claimed that Pakistani forces had shot down five Indian aircraft, including three Rafale jets, a MiG-29, and a Su-30. He stated that the military had recorded the electronic signatures of the downed aircraft and provided the precise coordinates where each was reportedly hit (Al Jazeera, 2025). Pakistan's military said it had shot down 77 Indian drones. The operation targeted 26 key military installations, including air force and aviation bases, across multiple locations such as Suratgarh, Sirsa, Adampur, Ambala, Amritsar, Jaisalmer, Nalia, Bathinda, Harwara, Barnala, Avantipura, Srinagar, Jammu, Mamoon, Udhampur, Gujarat, Bhuj, and Pathankot (BBC News, 2025: Reuters, 2025). The BBC reported that the operation was said to avoid civilian infrastructure, reflecting a strategic effort to uphold international humanitarian standards (BBC News, 2025). The coordinated use of missiles, drones, and air force elements maximized the strategic impact. This approach aims to exert psychological pressure not only on the Indian armed forces but also on the broader Indian public by exposing apparent weaknesses in India's air defence systems and operational readiness. Pakistan's approach was well calculated and far-reaching cyber warfare campaign targeting critical Indian infrastructure. Reportedly, in this operation major urban wind and power a system in India was shot down, it also disrupted gas supplies in New Delhi. Additionally, the cyber-attack upset the digital infrastructure of Indian Railways, significantly affecting transportation networks. In addition, high-value digital assets, including the websites of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Border Security Force (BSF), were reportedly breached, with data wiped entirely from their servers (Reuters, 2025). Al Jazeera presented additional context, portraying Pakistan's military response as both retaliatory and strategically measured. The network referenced official statements from Pakistan's military spokesperson, who affirmed that all targets were exclusively military in nature and that the operation was conducted in accordance with international laws of armed conflict (Al Jazeera, 2025). Significantly, Al Jazeera highlighted Pakistan's release of satellite imagery and radar data intended to substantiate the precision and legitimacy of its strikes (Al Jazeera, 2025). Analysts viewed this move as a deliberate effort to enhance international credibility and transparency, positioning Pakistan's actions within a framework of lawful self-defence. In response to India's increasingly aggressive posture, Pakistan has maintained a calibrated and measured strategy to ensure national security.

Domestic Political Signalling and Public Morale

Operation Bunyaan-un-Marsoos was not only a military response but it also showed that the country is ready and able to defend itself. The public moral was very high during the operation. It helped to boost public confidence and national pride, bringing people together in support of Pakistan's security and independence. The government and media highlighted the success of the operation to strengthen unity and reassure the public that the military is fully capable of protecting the nation. The strikes on Pakistani

areas triggered unease at early stage in the country. In this climate of anxiety, the retaliatory military operation served not only a tactical purpose but also played a significant role in domestic political signalling. By swiftly and decisively responding, the Pakistani military aimed to encourage the public of its operational readiness and institutional competence in the face of external threats. Such demonstrations of military capability are often essential to restoring public confidence and preserving national morale during periods of heightened insecurity (Cohen, 2004). Moreover, the operation became a tool for reinforcing civil-military unity through strategic use of symbolism and rhetoric. The naming of the operation with religious and patriotic undertones intended to resonate with nationalistic and Islamic sentiments served to emotionally mobilize the population and promote a unified national identity in Pakistan. The declaration of Youm-e-Tashakur (Day of Gratitude) following the operation further institutionalized a narrative of national victory, aligning with historical patterns (Geo News, 2025; Fair, 2014). A significant aspect of the operation was its association with the leadership of General Asim Munir, whose public visibility and strategic decisiveness during the operation were later recognized through his elevation to the rank of Field Marshal (Daily Dawn, 2025). This symbolic promotion projected an image of strong, capable command to the broader public in the country. In civil-military relations theory, such symbolic gestures are often employed to reaffirm the legitimacy and authority of military leadership, especially in countries where the armed forces play a dominant role (Siddiq, 2007). Through these mechanisms public encouragement and symbolic unity, the military operation went beyond its tactical dimensions to function as a deliberate exercise in domestic political communication and morale-building. From a realist perception, the first function of any military operation is to secure the survival and legitimacy of the state not just externally, but internally. Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos served as a powerful tool of domestic political signalling, conveying to the Pakistani public that the state reserved the capacity and will to act decisively against any threats. This also reinforced public morale, projecting an image of resilience and control, which is critical in maintaining national cohesion under uneven threat environments.

Regional Posturing and Strategic Depth

Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos was not just a counter-terror effort but it was a regional signal showing that self-defence is basic right of every state under international Law. Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos represented a significant evolution in Pakistan's strategic doctrine, aimed not only at responding to provocation but also at reshaping the regional security calculus through careful escalation control and strategic signalling. In this operation, Pakistan executed precision strikes on 26 high-value targets within Indian territory. These included key airbases such as Suratgarh, Adampur, and Pathankot, as well as BrahMos missile depots in Beas and Nagrota, along with command centres and forward artillery positions. For the first time in such a conflict scenario, Pakistan demonstrated highly synchronized joint operations involving its Army, Air Force, and Navy, alongside cyber, electronic warfare systems. There was real-time coordination which enabled the country for integrated responses across multiple domains, showcasing a matured and modernized defence posture (The News, 2025). It sent a deliberate signal reaffirming Pakistan's red line and its readiness to impose strategic costs in the event of perceived aggression (Policy Wire, 2025). Strategically, the operation was also leveraged to refocus international attention on the Kashmir dispute. Backed by swift and proactive diplomatic engagement, Pakistan secured notable international support, particularly from China, Turkey, and segments of the Western bloc. These diplomatic efforts were helpful in giving legitimacy to Pakistan's position. The phrase "A Strategic Lesson for India" summarizes the core objective behind Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos was to establish a lasting deterrent within the regional strategic calculus of South Asia. Far from being a

symbolic gesture, the operation was carefully calibrated to deliver a clear and enduring message to Indian policymakers and military strategists regarding Pakistan's deterrence posture (ISPR, 2025, May 12). Operation Bunyan un Marsoos marks decisive response to Indian aggression (The Nation, 2025). Through carefully crafted diplomatic messaging, Pakistan positioned itself as a country committed to peace and regional stability (Rashid, 2019; Fair, 2020). The Pakistan always emphasized adherence to international law, responsible state behaviour, and the importance of multilateral cooperation that resonated with the broader international community (Jones, 2021). Pakistan reinforced its enduring strategic interest by targeting military assets and infrastructure within this contested space. In launching Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos, Pakistan aimed not only to weaken India's forward-operating military positions but also to change the nature of future conflict. The message was clear for India that any further aggression could lead to a wider and more intense response, rather than just a limited or equal one. The strategic narrative of Pakistan is a sovereign actor capable of defending its territorial integrity and strategic interests (Fair & Ganguly, 2018). More broadly, Pakistan's military doctrine reflects its readiness to respond across different areas land, air, cyber, and information sending a strong message to both its neighbours and the international community.

Strategic Message to India

Realism sees international politics as a constant fight for power and safety, where sending clear messages is important to prevent conflict. In this case, Pakistan's operation was a way to show India that its military is not limited to just defending itself but it can also carry out complex and accurate attacks when needed. The Indian attacks, according to Islamabad, resulted in civilian casualties, including women, children, and the elderly clearly violating international norms (The Guardian, 2025). In response, Pakistan maintains that its counter-actions were conducted strictly in self-defence, as preserved under Article 51 of the UN Charter. Pakistan highlighted its restraint and operational discipline, deliberately limiting the strikes to military targets and avoiding civilian casualties. Strategically, the operation was clearly communicated as a deterrence-by-punishment doctrine a calculated signal to India that any future cross-border aggression will be met with a swift, integrated, and proportionate military response, encompassing conventional, cyber, and drone warfare domains (Policy-Wire,2025). Pakistan confirmed that it does not seek war. Islamabad's strategic messaging calls for constructive and meaningful diplomatic engagement, and also welcomes third-party mediation as a step toward sustainable peace. The operation sought to reaffirm Pakistan's strategic thresholds territorial, political, and military signalling clearly that any violation upon these boundaries would cause a calculated and credible response. Pakistan's strategic message to India can be explained in below table.

SUMMARY: PAKISTAN'S STRATEGIC MESSAGE TO INDIA

S. NO	THEME	MESSAGE
1.	Aggression	Pakistan confidently asserts that it did not initiate hostilities. India carried out the first act of aggression, prompting Pakistan to respond. The response, carried out within the bounds of international law, was an act of lawful self-defense, not provocation.
2.	Proportionality	Pakistan's military response was carefully planned measured, precise, and proportional. It was designed to avoid escalation while conveying Pakistan's capability and resolve. The restraint shown emphasizes a commitment to responsible state behavior.

3.	National Unity	In the face of external violence, Pakistan demonstrated outstanding internal unity. Civilian and military leadership stood together, sending a powerful message of unity. This collective restraint and solidarity earned Pakistan credibility and moral high ground on the international stage.
4.	Transparency	Pakistan proactively shared verified intelligence and evidence to clarify events and counter India's narrative. This openness helped to expose misinformation and misrepresentation, reinforcing Pakistan's credibility in the international community.
5.	Deterrence	Pakistan sent a clear signal that any future incursions or aggressive actions will be met with decisive measures across military, diplomatic, and informational domains. Pakistan's deterrence posture is resolute.
6.	Diplomacy	Despite the conflict, Pakistan endorsed its commitment to peace. It emphasized a willingness to engage in dialogue provided it is based on mutual respect and genuine intentions. The door to diplomatic resolution remains open.

B: Planning and Coordination, Employed by Pakistan's Armed Forces

Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos, launched by Pakistan in May 2025, was a complex, high-stakes military campaign involving precision strikes, joint-force coordination, and real-time tactical execution. Below is an analysis of the planning, coordination, and execution mechanisms that supported the operation:

Strategic and Operational Planning

Pakistan's Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos, showed a clear example of strong planning and smart execution. Strategically, it was part of a bigger effort called the "Marka-e-Haq" campaign, which was meant to protect the country's honor and respond firmly to India's missile attacks on Pakistani areas. The main goal was to send a strong message that Pakistan would defend itself while staying within international rules. The operation was carefully planned to restore balance and show that any aggression would be met with a serious and well-prepared response. Following the recent Indian missile strikes, the Pakistan Armed Forces quickly undertook comprehensive intelligence assessments to evaluate the threat landscape. Military planners reportedly identified over 26 high-value Indian targets, including airbases, ammunition depots, and command-and-control centers spread across Gujarat, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Indian-administered Kashmir. This rapid response was marked by close coordination between Pakistan's civilian leadership and military high command, ensuring that all strategic decisions received legal and political endorsement. The operation was symbolically named "Bunyan-un-Marsoos", reflecting a unified approach that integrated military objectives with information operations and public diplomacy to control the narrative at both national and international levels. A best planning of Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos can be seen notably, when Pakistan shot down the Indian Rafale. Then a French intelligence official informed CNN that Pakistan had successfully shot down at least one Indian Rafale fighter jet during the engagement, (CNN News, May 7, 2025). Through best strategic and operational planning Pakistan successfully targeted the airbase in Jalandhar during ongoing operations, while multiple military installations and air bases in Gujarat came under attack. Strikes were also reported on military facilities in Rajasthan and on the airbase in Srinagar, where 20 military casualties were confirmed. Reuters reported that Indian sources said three fighter jets crashed in India, though the causes were unclear. On May 8, a U.S. official told Reuters they were confident Pakistani J-10s had shot down at least two Indian jets, including one Rafale (Shah, S., & Ali, I. 2025). A legal analysis published in the Dialogue Social Science Review (2025) concluded that Pakistan's military

operation was consistent with the principles of proportionality and military necessity under international humanitarian law. The study highlighted a clear and significant contrast between the military strategies of Pakistan and India during recent escalations. It emphasized that Pakistan's response was carefully calculated, targeting only military installations with precision to avoid civilian casualties and infrastructure. In contrast, India's initial offensive was, resulting in damage to civilian areas, including mosques and residential buildings. This distinction underscored Pakistan's adherence to the principles of proportionality and distinction under international humanitarian law, portraying its actions as part of a legitimate and restrained self-defense strategy. Such actions by India, the analysis suggested, could constitute a potential violation of the Geneva Conventions, raising serious concerns about the protection of civilian infrastructure during armed conflict (Dialogue Social Science Review, 2025). Due to effective and well-coordinated strategic and operational planning by Pakistan, the country successfully carried out strikes on several key Indian military installations. From a realist point of view, a country's military strength and readiness are very important to make its threats or promises believable. Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos showed that Pakistan is strong in planning and carrying out military actions. It involved teamwork between the air force and ground troops, as well as the use of surveillance and advanced technology. Realism focuses on actual military power, and this operation gave Pakistan a chance to show how well its military is organized and how professional its soldiers are.

Coordination and Technical Deployment

PAF led the aerial campaign with offensive and defensive counter-air operations. Pakistan Army provided targeting intelligence, air defense coordination, and possibly supported ground surveillance. Pakistan Navy remained on high alert, securing coastal installations and strategic readiness tasks. Cyber and electronic warfare elements may have been deployed to disrupt Indian radar and communication grids during the air engagements. The operation demonstrated flawless coordination among Pakistan's Army, Air Force, Navy, cyber units, and electronic warfare capabilities described by ISPR (Daily Nation, 2025,). The missile and drone strikes carried out by Pakistan against the Indian aggression were very accurate to the target. The Pakistan Air Force (PAF) demonstrated a high level of operational sophistication, particularly in the aerial dogfights. It is worth mentioning that robust logistical coordination among the Pakistani forces and continuity of operation planning always boosted the image of the country (Khan, 2019). The Washington Post identified three crash sites inside Indian territory during the peak of the engagement, confirming the downing of a Dassault Rafale with local officials in Jammu and Kashmir verifying the reports that three Indian jets had crashed on May 7, with three pilots subsequently hospitalized (Washington Post, 2025, May 9). While the Indian government did not immediately confirm all the losses (Chaudhuri & Higgins, 2025). Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos indicated Pakistan's advanced coordination and technical deployment capabilities. The operation reflected unified integration between intelligence, surveillance, and precision targeting systems. It demonstrated Pakistan's ability to conduct swift, disciplined, and strategically focused military actions, reinforcing its readiness and operational excellence in high-pressure scenarios.

Post-Operational Assessment and Diplomacy

In the wake of heightened regional tensions and complex geopolitical dynamics, Pakistan proficiently leveraged global communication channels to present itself as a responsible and restrained actor on the international stage. Western diplomatic responses, including those from the United States and European Union, largely remained measured and neutral. Rather than taking sides, these actors called for restraint and the reduction of tensions, indirectly validating Pakistan's narrative of reasoned diplomacy. At the same time, Pakistan quietly secured discreet but meaningful diplomatic support from

key strategic partners. A fragile yet hopeful ceasefire was successfully brokered following intensive diplomatic efforts led by the United States, Turkey, China, and Saudi Arabia (Hussain Syed, 2025). This multilateral initiative came at a critical moment, aimed at de-escalating rising tensions in South Asia and preventing a wider regional conflict. President Donald Trump commented on the situation, stating, that, "it ends very quickly." Meanwhile, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio engaged with the national security advisers of both India and Pakistan, encouraging them to maintain open lines of communication and to take steps to prevent further escalation. (Holland, et, al 2025). In parallel, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan lauded Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for his composure and sensible leadership in the crisis, commending Islamabad's commitment to diplomatic solutions over military escalation. China, a long-standing and trusted ally of Pakistan, reaffirmed its unwavering support for Pakistan's territorial sovereignty (Hussain Syed, 2025). Beijing issued a strong appeal for calm, urging all parties particularly India to avoid further provocations and to engage in dialogue (The Straits Time 2025, May 7). This call for moderation was echoed by Saudi Arabia, which expressed grave concern over what it described as India's reckless adventurism. Riyadh stressed the urgent need for preserving regional peace and stability, highlighting the broader implications of unchecked conflict in the subcontinent. Meanwhile, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres spoke with Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Indian Foreign Minister, urging both nations to de-escalate tensions (Al Jazeera, 2025). Together, these concerted diplomatic efforts served not only to prevent immediate conflict but also to lay the groundwork for renewed dialogue, with the hope of achieving lasting peace in the region. By balancing overt diplomatic engagement with behind-the-scenes coalition-building, Pakistan succeeded in reinforcing its image as a responsible regional actor. This approach not only helped contain the fallout from the situation but also strengthened its international standing in a highly sensitive geopolitical environment. The realism emphasizes outcomes and strategic reputation. After Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos, Pakistan carefully managed post-operational narratives through both domestic and international diplomacy.

C: Impact of Operation Bunyan-Un-Marsoos on Public Morale

Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos had a profound impact on the Pakistani population, shaped by a combination of nationalism, pride, and heightened geopolitical awareness. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif convened a meeting of the National Security Council (NSC) to coordinate Pakistan's response to the escalating situation (PTV News, Islamabad 2025). Following the meeting, the NSC stated that Pakistan "reserves the right to respond, in self-defense, at a time, place, and manner of its choosing." Sharif authorized the Pakistani military, under the leadership of General Asim Munir, to take whatever action was deemed. (Ellis-Petersen, 2025: PTV News, Islamabad 2025). Pakistan's swift and coordinated military response especially the visible success of its drone and missile strikes generated a strong sense of national pride. The public perceived the operation as assertive yet controlled retaliation, reinforcing trust in the military's competence. The operation was widely framed in domestic media as a defense of sovereignty and honor, resonating with nationalist and religious sentiment. The declaration of May 16 as Youm-e-Tashakur (Day of Gratitude) served as a collective psychological uniting point. Public ceremonies, prayers, media coverage, and government messaging turned the day into a nationwide affirmation of military bravery, helping boost morale and emotional resilience. The declaration and inaugural observance of Youm-e-Tashakur on May 16, 2025, served as a powerful expression of national appreciation for the armed forces (Daily Dawn, 2025). Moreover, speeches delivered by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, President Zardari, and military chief Field Marshal Asim Munir reinforced a unified civil-military identity, helping and foster a strong sense of national consensus. According to Umair Jamal,

Pakistan correspondent for The Diplomat magazine, Pakistan emerged "emboldened" following its clashes with India. He observed that the conflict helped unify the nation, boosted the popularity of the Pakistani military, and reinforced the political leadership's recognition of the need to further strengthen the armed forces. Jamal also argued that Pakistan achieved a diplomatic advantage. Al Jazeera, further reported that, according to analysts, Pakistan's strategic gains included bringing international attention to the Kashmir issue and successfully downing enemy aircraft (Al Jazeera, 2025). It is worth mentioning that there is full support of the public to Armed forces. Pakistani military protect its national interests, keep its independence, and support peace in the region. The people of Pakistan are proud of the Pakistan Army for its success in this operation against Indian military. Many Pakistanis want the armed forces to become even stronger and better prepared for future challenge. The operation strengthened the military's image as the central pillar of national defense and identity, especially during crises. Many civilians expressed increased willingness to support defense spending, national security policies, and even compulsory service, suggesting a militarized form of patriotism. Civil-military unity was emphasized in speeches and public discourse, and consolidating national consensus in the short term. Among younger demographics, especially on social media, the operation generated digital expressions of nationalism, including memes, songs, and war-games simulations.

D: Role of Media and Communication Strategies During Operation Bunyan-Un-Marsoos

Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos in May 2025 was not only a military campaign but also a high-stakes battle in the realm of information warfare. The media both traditional and digital played a decisive role in shaping narratives, controlling perceptions, and mobilizing public sentiment. Pakistan's communication strategies were calculated, multifaceted, and aimed at securing both domestic support and international legitimacy.

Strategic Communication Objectives

During Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos, Pakistan implemented a carefully crafted media and information warfare strategy that pursued multiple strategic communication objectives. Simultaneously, the communication strategy aimed to bolster national unity and public morale by highlighting the professionalism, restraint, and operational precision of Pakistan's armed forces. Both state-controlled and private media outlets always played coordinated roles in celebrating the military's bravery, utilizing dramatic visuals, strategic briefings, and patriotic content to consolidate public support and reinforce civilian-military unity (Jalal, 2008; Thussu, 2018). Beyond addressing domestic audiences, Pakistan's media campaign was strategically designed to influence global perceptions by actively engaging international media outlets. Through carefully curated content, it portrayed Pakistan as a responsible and restrained actor, committed to de-escalation and regional peace (Chaudhuri & Higgins, 2025). This approach aimed to prevent diplomatic isolation and encourage mediation by influential global actors such as China, the United States (Kugelman, 2025). Thus, Pakistan's information strategy was a crucial element of its broader conflict management approach, designed to deter further Indian provocations and to prevail in the international narrative through soft power, strategic restraint, and diplomatic outreach. Nazir (2025), writing for Policy Wire, analyzed Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos through the prism of strategic deterrence, asserting that the operation was intended to restore regional power equilibrium by signaling to India and the international community that violations of Pakistan's sovereignty would be met with swift, proportionate, and technologically advanced responses. She concluded that the operation functioned not only as a military measure but also as a deliberate effort to reinforce Pakistan's deterrence posture (Nazir, 2025).

Media Management and Narrative Control

During Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos, both state-run and private Pakistani news outlets provided continuous, real-time coverage, effectively highlighting the professionalism and coordination of the country's armed forces (Stratheia, 2025; Ptv News, 2025). Television broadcasted the official military briefings, often accompanied by patriotic songs and expert commentary. This extensive media engagement reflected a high level of collaboration between the military and media institutions. The Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) served as the central communication hub, issuing timely updates, and visually striking drone footage of precision strikes (ISPR, 2025a). Through its strategic messaging, ISPR presented the operation as a symbol of Pakistan's technological advancement, national unity, and military resolve aiming to strengthen public morale while countering conflicting narratives at home and abroad (ISPR, 2025b). According to official statements, the operation was a clear example of how Pakistan's army, navy, and air force worked together using advanced technology and real-time information. It combined efforts across land, air, sea, and cyber space to strike key Indian military targets (ISPR, 2025a, 2025b; APP, 2025). On the cyber front, ISPR acknowledged arranging offensive digital operations that disrupted key Indian infrastructure hacking political party sites, surveillance cameras, telecom grids, and power utilities to complement kinetic strikes (Tribune, 2025; APP, 2025). This socio-digital campaign successfully engaged Pakistani youth, transforming the operation into a broader digital movement and reinforcing narratives of resilience and deterrence. The ISPR always served in past and present time as the central communication hub, releasing timely operational updates, and high-quality combat footage, which were designed to elevate public morale (Fair, 2020; Abbas, 2015; The Nation, 2025). Media accounts circulated harmonized content celebrating Pakistan's retaliatory capabilities, reinforcing the narrative of strategic deterrence and national resilience (Kugelman, 2025; The Guardian, 2025). This rise in digital patriotism worked especially well to get young people involved. It turned the whole situation into a kind of social media movement and made a big impact on people from different age groups. Pakistani online teams possibly working with the military quickly answered India's claims. They called many of them false or exaggerated and shared fact-checks to challenge stories about India's victories or high numbers of enemy losses (South China Morning Post, 2025; Chaudhuri & Higgins, 2025).

Psychological and Emotional Framing

The operation was named Bunyan-un-Marsoos, a term derived from Quranic language meaning "Solid Structure" a reference found in Surah As-Saff (61:4) which evokes imagery of unity, strength, divine justice, and defensive jihad (Esposito, 2003 : Aaj News, 2025; PTV News, 2025). The term evokes imagery of firm unity, divine strength, and spiritual resolve. This nomenclature was not incidental; rather, it reflects a deliberate effort to invoke religious symbolism and align national defense with Islamic identity and collective emotional solidarity (Aaj News, 2025; Geo News, 2025). This religious framing was central to the operation's broader narrative and messaging strategy. On the morning of May 10, 2025, prior to initiating the operation, Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff, General Syed Asim Munir, led Fajr prayers and publicly recited the very verse from which the operation drew its name. This ritual underscored the spiritual framing of the mission and served to inspire troops by presenting the military action as not only nationally necessary but also religiously sanctified (Associated Press of Pakistan , 2025; Aaj News, 2025). It fused patriotic expression with religious and emotional undertones, creating a collective narrative of national unity and moral purpose (APP, 2025). Editorial narratives within national media further reinforced this framing by presenting the operation as a manifestation of Pakistan's ideological coherence, discipline, and resilience, contrasting it sharply with portrayals of Indian

aggression (The News International, 2025). Through coordinated messaging across social media, state television, and print outlets, the state depicted itself as a unified and justified actor. In the aftermath of the operation, the observance of Youm-e-Tashakur was a strategic communication success. It transformed a military engagement into a national celebration of victory, framed not just as a tactical success but as a moral and spiritual success. The state arranged widespread media coverage, processions, and formal addresses by civil and military leaders to frame the operation as a righteous and victorious defense of national sovereignty. During the Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos the citizens of Pakistan were moved to participate in the symbolic celebration, reciting heartfelt national songs in Honor of their homeland and the armed forces. These poetic expressions, broadcast on national television and social media, played a crucial role in emotionalizing the national narrative and reinforcing public support for the military. **The scholar also selected to dedicate the following verses of national song to Honor our valiant army, beloved homeland, and courageous citizens.**

اس چمن کے پھولوں پر رنگ و آب تم سے ہے ، اس زمیں کا ہر ذرہ آفتاب تم سے ہے
 یہ فضا تمہاری ہے بحر و بر تمہارے ہیں ، کھکشاں کے یہ اجالے راہ گزر تمہارے ہیں
 یہ وطن تمہارا ہے تم ہو پاسباں اس کے
 اس زمیں کی مٹی میں خون ہے شہیدوں کا ، ارض پاک مرکز ہے قوم کی امیدوں کا
 نظم و ضبط کو اپنا میر کارواں جانو ، وقت کے اندھیروں میں اپنا آپ پہچانو
 یہ وطن تمہارا ہے تم ہو پاسباں اس کے
 یہ زمیں مقدس ہے ماں کے پیار کی صورت ، اس چمن میں تم سب ہو برگ و بار کی صورت
 دیکھنا گنونا مت دولت یقین لوگو ، یہ وطن امانت ہے اور تم امین لوگوں
 یہ وطن تمہارا ہے تم ہو پاسباں اس کے
 میر کارواں ہم تھے روح کارواں تم ہو ، ہم تو صرف عنوان تھے اصل داستاں تم ہو
 نفرتوں کے دروازے خود پہ بند ہی رکھنا ، اس وطن کے پرچم کو سر بلند ہی رکھنا
 یہ وطن تمہارا ہے تم ہو پاسباں اس کے
 یہ چمن تمہارا ہے تم ہو نغمہ خواں اس کے

During Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos, the emotional and psychological narrative was carefully crafted to inspire national pride and unity, with the powerful slogans “Pakistan Zindabad” (Long Live Pakistan) and “Pakistan Army Zindabad” (Long Live Pakistan Army) serving as central rallying cries. These phrases echoed across television screens, social media platforms, and public spaces, reinforcing a sense of collective identity and resilience. The Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) played a key role in amplifying these slogans through inspiring visuals, tribute videos, and patriotic songs that honored the sacrifices of soldiers and highlighted the professionalism of the armed forces. This emotional framing was not only meant to boost public morale during a time of conflict but also to solidify trust in the military’s role as the guardian of national sovereignty. The scholar has addressed all the research questions comprehensively across Parts A, B, C, and D. At the end, the scholar finds it essential to highlight two critical concerns: the issue of fake reporting in the Indian media and the allegations surrounding Operation Sindoor as being driven by electoral motives. These issues warrant attention, as they underscore broader patterns of media manipulation and the politicization of military actions both of which carry significant implications for democratic accountability, public perception, and electoral

integrity in India.

Fake Reporting of Indian Media

During the conflict, a significant volume of misinformation and disinformation was dispersed, particularly by Indian media sources, with several reports later found to be unconfirmed or fabricated. Notably, Indian broadcasters circulated claims of alleged Indian Air Force strikes on a Pakistani nuclear facility, the downing of two Pakistani fighter jets, and Indian forces crossing the international border none of which were verified through independent or international sources. Some of these narratives were even supported by AI-generated deepfake videos, contributing to an already volatile information environment (Chaudhuri & Higgins, 2025; Das & K.B., 2025). In one widely circulated yet baseless report, Indian media claimed that Pakistani civil Leadership had taken refuge in a bunker, which was quickly denied by Pakistani officials (The Economist, 2025). The scale and intensity of this misinformation campaign raised serious concerns among international observers. Even top-tier Indian journalists and major news organizations traditionally regarded as credible were found to have disseminated unverified, misleading, or fake content, often amplifying government-aligned narratives (South China Morning Post, 2025). Prominent South Asia analyst Michael Kugelman described the situation as one marked by a “very high volume of particularly egregious fake news,” noting that many of these falsehoods originated from Indian media circles closely aligned with the ruling establishment (Das & K.B., 2025). This convergence of media, state narrative, and emerging AI technologies illustrates the weaponization of information as a strategic tool within modern South Asian conflict dynamics a development that has unclear the lines between psychological warfare and traditional media reporting (Thussu, 2018; McGoldrick, 2020). It is fact that propaganda particularly by Indian media given bad image to India in the world. The Indian public is expressing intense anger and frustration over the alleged fake reporting by several mainstream Indian media outlets during Operation Sindoor. People all over India are very angry because some news channels gave false or exaggerated reports about Operation Sindoor. Many citizens on social media say that these channels spread wrong information. This careless reporting hurts the importance of the operation and makes people lose trust in the news media in india.

Operation Sindoor as Allegations of Electoral Motive

Several opposition leaders including those from the Indian National Congress (INC), Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), and other regional parties have accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of using Operation Sindoor to influence public opinion ahead of the upcoming elections. The Indian National Congress has led the criticism. Party President Mallikarjun Kharge questioned both the timing and purpose of the operation, suggesting it was intended to shift attention away from domestic problems and improve the Prime Minister’s image before the elections (Devdiscourse News Desk, 2025). In recent debates, Operation Sindoor has increasingly been seen not just as a military action, but also as a political move. Opposition leaders argue that the operation's launch and media coverage were carefully timed to boost the BJP’s image before key state polls. Dipankar Bhattacharya, leader of the Communist Party of India, said that Modi used the operation for political gain, especially pointing to the Prime Minister’s speech at a rally in Rajasthan (Devdiscourse News Desk, 2025). Similarly, Samajwadi Party MLA Iqbal Mehmood questioned the sudden ceasefire, saying the lack of transparency made the operation seem like a political strategy aimed at winning votes (Devdiscourse News Desk, 2025). Overall, these criticisms point to a larger concern among opposition parties in India that military operation like Operation Sindoor are being used as campaign tools. Opposition leaders have labeled this trend as “electoral militarization” where government-led defense

actions are allegedly used to stir nationalist emotions and benefit the ruling party at the polls (Financial Times, 2025). Several opposition leaders in India repeatedly said that Operation Sindoor was a motive of Modi to influence coming election in India.

Conclusion

Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos represents a defining moment in South Asia's evolving strategic landscape a calibrated yet resolute demonstration of Pakistan's military readiness, deterrent capability, and commitment to safeguarding its sovereignty across all domains: land, air, cyber, and information. Far from being a symbolic act, the operation was a deliberate and proportional response aimed at resetting regional deterrence dynamics, challenging India's conventional superiority assumptions, and reaffirming Pakistan's role as a rational and capable actor in the regional security framework. The operation not only reinforced national unity and boosted domestic morale but also served as a strategic message that aggression and escalation will not go unanswered. For India, it stands as a clear warning that provocative actions, attacks on civilian, misinformation campaigns, and destabilizing military doctrines come with serious consequences. This operation gives a lesson to India that long-term regional stability cannot be secured through force or unilateral dominance it must be built on sustained dialogue, cooperation, and a shared commitment to preserving peace. In an environment shaped by nuclear deterrence, fragile geopolitical balances, and historical tensions, the margin for miscalculation is dangerously narrow. Ultimately the most enduring lesson of Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos lies not in the scale of the military exchange, but in the imperative to prioritize diplomacy, strategic restraint, and mutual respect. As the operation redraws the outlines of engagement, it also redefines the cost of provocation in South Asia's delicate security equation.

"Pakistan Zindabad" (Long Live Pakistan) ----- "Pakistan Army Zindabad" (Long Live Pakistan Army)

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