
BRICS SUMMIT: WHY CHINA AND RUSSIA DID NOT NAME PAKISTAN ON TERRORISM

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P'M Modi has just been delivered an unhappy lesson at the just-concluded BRICS summit in Goa: though nine-tenths of geopolitics is about bluff, the critical one-tenth is about knowing when to fold.

In 1216, Genghis Khan sent envoys to Samarkand, the capital of Ala ad-Din Muhammad II, Emperor of Khwarezm, bearing gifts of gold, jade, ivory and cloaks spun from the hair of white camels. I know your power and the vast extent of your empire, his letter read, and I regard you as my most cherished son. For your part, you must know that I have conquered China and all the Turkish nations north of it; my country is an anthill of soldiers and a mine of silver, and I have no need of other lands. Therefore, I believe I have we have an equal interest in encouraging trade between our lands.

The imperial consensus was that Genghis Khans forces were too stretched to pose a threat [] Muhammad II decided to show the Khan what he thought of his peace offering. In 1218, the Khwarezm Shah killed 450 Mongol merchants, following it up with the execution of an ambassador.

Less than two years later, the Khwarezm disintegrated in the face of the Mongol assault. Genghis Khan, proclaiming himself the flail of god, built towers outside Samarkands walls with the skulls of his enemies.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has just been delivered an unhappy lesson at the just-concluded BRICS summit in Goa: though nine-tenths of geopolitics is about bluff, the critical one-tenth is about knowing when to fold.

The Prime Minister proclaimed, in his closing statement at the summit, that BRICS member-states were agreed that those who nurture, shelter, support and sponsor such forces of violence and

terror are as much a threat to us as the terrorists themselves. The BRICS 109 paragraph summit declaration, however, doesn't have a single sentence reflecting this purported consensus [] even the words nurture, shelter or sponsor.

Worse, from India's optic, the summit declaration calls for action against all United Nations-designated terrorist organisations which include the Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Muhammad but names only the Islamic State and al-Qaeda's proxy, Jabhat al-Nusra [] threats to China and Russia but not to India.

China's President Xi Jinping, said success against terrorism made it imperative to address both symptoms and root causes [] stock-phrase Islamabad often uses to refer to the conflict over Kashmir. Russian President Vladimir Putin made no mention of terrorism emanating from Pakistan at all.

Add to this, the United States' studied refusal to be drawn into harsh action against Pakistan and there's a simple lesson to be drawn: less than a month after it began, the Prime Minister's campaign to isolate Pakistan is not gaining momentum.

No one seriously disputes New Delhi's right to punish cross border-terrorism [] Pakistan's best friend China offered no reproach when India struck across the Line of Control, and has been quietly counselling Pakistan to get its house-jihadists under control. However, there's a big difference between quiet counsel and public censure; Pakistan is far too useful to all the world's big powers in a number of ways.

For one, both China and Russia, as well as Iran, see Pakistan as a potential ally in their anti-jihadist game. The Islamic State and al-Qaeda, now being slowly choked in Syria and Iraq, are likely to divert a significant portion of the resources to Afghanistan as the war against them proceeds. That means numbers of Uighur and Russian Muslim jihadists could be located close to their homelands borders. Beijing and Moscow will then need Islamabad's cooperation.

Interestingly, both countries have already expanded their covert outreach to the Afghan Taliban, seeing them—rightly or wrongly—as a counterweight to the Islamic State.

Then, Moscow is increasingly skeptical about the US combatting Islamists. Last year, when Putin travelled to New York, he called for a genuinely broad international coalition to fight the Islamic State. His efforts to bring one about on Syria, though, have fallen apart [] Moscow persuaded that the United States war on terror is insincere and opportunistic.

Finally, New Delhi has no chips to cash in because of its dogged refusal to be embroiled in its allies wars. Given New Delhis indecision on participation in the war against the Islamic State, it is not in any position to ask Russia for a return favour on Pakistan. Nor can New Delhi credibly ask the US to jettison Pakistan when India remains, at best, a marginal provider of security in Afghanistan.

New Delhi has no real ability to project military power across its borders. Its economic influence is limited, compared to that of China or even Russia.

By contrast, Pakistan profits from being a nuisance. Its covert services have birthed toxic proxies, who can spawn savage small wars across the region. This doesnt make Pakistan popular but it does give it influence.

Prime Minister Narendra Modis failure to distinguish between performance theatre intended for audiences at home and the real business of power has caused India some embarrassment. This is a good time to learn lessons, time for a clear-eyed, unsentimental look at the problem for learning some painful lessons.

Kaynak/Source: