

WATER AS A WEAPON IN INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

Executive Summary

1. Pakistan has tried to wrest Jammu & Kashmir or part of it from India in two major wars in 1947-48 & 1965 and once in a local war in Kargil, in 1999. After having been badly defeated and losing East Pakistan in 1971, Pakistan realized that it could never militarily defeat India. It then took to waging a proxy war since the 1980's and nearly resulted in a third war in 2001 when the Indian Parliament was attacked, resulting in mobilization of the entire Indian Army to the borders. The proxy war started by Pakistan in the 1980's has continued unabated and Pakistan will continue to wage this war because it is a very low cost option to bleed India. India does not seem to have been able to come up with a coherent solution to counter Pakistan's Proxy War. Military options may not be the best option as both the nations are nuclear powers. It is therefore imperative that new / out of the box methods / solutions to counter Pakistan be thought. Probably one of the most important possibility is the 'Revocation of the Indus Water Treaty'.

2. The IWT which was signed in 1960, has a number of shortcomings which have constantly been exploited by Pakistan to either stall or prevent the legal use of the waters of the the three Eastern Rivers allotted to it. Of late, even the state of J & K has started raising its voice against the discriminatory nature of the treaty. Keeping this in mind, the research paper examines the legal aspects of abrogation of the IWT with its possible fallouts and assesses the damage that can be caused to Pakistan if India decides to adopt this approach. These form three initial chapters of the paper.

3. Before the IWT is abrogated, the waters of the three Eastern Rivers will have to be diverted for our own use. However not much material could be obtained on the infrastructure requirements and their costs of such an enterprise. The research paper then discusses the reaction of the Chinese to Indian action of abrogation of the IWT and the precautions required to be taken to thwart any Chinese designs to use the waters of rivers flowing from Tibet in to India.

4. **Recommendations.** This paper recommends phase wise abrogation of the IWT as follows :-

(a) **Phase 1.** Continue with the IWT but construct infrastructure to utilize complete allocation of waters to India.

(b) **Phase 2.** India should exploit complete hydroelectric potential of the three Western rivers by constructing modern run of river hydroelectric projects with adequate storage. This would mean violations of the IWT but not complete abrogation.

(c) **Phase 3.** India should formally walk out of IWT- it should first divert the Chenab into Ravi at Mahru and subsequently Jhelum to Ravi.