



## Pre-Emptive Strikes- A Fitting Response To Pulwama

February 27, 2019 Commentaries



The Indian air force conducted a well-directed air operation across the LoC on Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) terror camps in Balakot, Chakothi and Muzaffarabad in the early hours of February 26, 2019. India's Foreign Secretary V K Gokhale, in a press conference, dwelt on the Balakot strike and said that in this operation, "a very large number of JeM terrorists, trainers, senior commanders and groups of jihadis who were being trained for fidayeen action were eliminated".

He reiterated the Indian resolve "to take all necessary measures to fight the menace of terrorism" and called this a "non-military pre-emptive action" which was "specifically targeted at the JeM camp". The attacks were conducted with the help of the IAF's 12 Mirage 2000 aircraft, on the three specific targets, nearly 300 militants were killed.

This precise operation was India's response to the Pulwama suicide attack on February 14, 2019, that killed more than 40 CRPF personnel. It was claimed by Pak-based Jaish-e-Mohammad, following which there was a national furore in India about Pakistan's unrepentant advocacy of terror against India. Even when India was mourning its dead, the reactions coming in from Pakistan smacked of insensitivity and indifference as there was a brazen denial of any Pakistani hand in the act. Despite Jaish's open claim, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan had sadly asked for 'credible evidence' to take action against this terrorist outfit.

There was a national consensus in India to respond to Pulwama attack in a firm and decisive manner. All political parties came together after the incident endorsing the government's decision to prepare an appropriate response, to convey India's sense of anger and frustration at Pakistan's continued sponsorship of terror in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir.

While Indians are now hailing the Balakot operation as 'Surgical Strike 2.0', Pakistani reaction has been one of surprise and denial; much like the surgical strike following the heinous terror attacks in Uri. The Pak army spokesperson, Director General, Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), tried his best to put up a brave front through his tweets that the attack was repulsed by Pakistan Air Force. However, foreign media organizations in operating Pakistan accepted the Indian air strikes in Balakot, Chakothi and Muzaffarabad. The BBC Urdu news was the first to talk to some residents from an area near Balakot, who confirmed the attacks.

The briefing by Pakistan's DG, ISPR, however, confirmed that Indian formations moved in three directions—the first one towards Bahawalpur, the second one towards Sialkot and the third one, the 'heaviest' of the formations, towards Muzaffarabad. The third formation, according to him, was challenged by Pak air force forcing the Indian aircraft to release the payload (carrying four bombs) which followed its trajectory and fell in Balakot in Khyber Pakhtun Khwa (KPK) province.

While it is natural for Pakistan military to tailor its narrative to suit domestic audience, it was forced, unlike in the case of the Uri strike, to acknowledge the attack. The operation confirms the operational capability of the Indian security forces to conduct 'non-military pre-emptive strikes' to potentially deter Pak intelligence's efforts to raise terror launch-pads in areas under its control, close to Line of Control (LoC) and disrupt peace in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. The operation also called the bluff of Pakistan military's operational readiness on the one hand and their threat of nuclear escalation on the other.

Post-Pulwama, the international community's recognition of India's right to respond to the provocation from Pakistan sponsored terror groups; operating out of Pakistani soil has strengthened India's resolve and morale to take on Pakistan's proxy war in a proactive manner.

It remains to be seen whether Pakistan raises a war-cry over the issue and escalates the crisis further. India's preemptive measure has to a great extent succeeded in denting Islamabad's image in the world.

Script: Dr. Ashok Behuria, Senior Fellow & Coordinator South Asian Centre, IDSA

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Statement by Official Spokesperson of Ministry of External Affairs

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PM Modi calls upon youth to play pivotal role in making of New India

### World News

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No country, including China spoken out in favour of Pakistan: Husain Haqqani

Australia asks Pakistan to take urgent and meaningful action against terrorist groups

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Sanath Jayasuriya banned from cricket for two years

Hungary's Veronika Major wins gold medal at ISSF World Cup

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Sensex slips 240 points; Nifty closes at 10,835


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### The Review of Indian Press

The Indian newspapers have commended the Indian Air Force surprise air strikes on PoK militant camps, exactly 12 days after the Pulwama terror attack. The papers have opined that the attack eliminated "a very large number of JeM terrorists, trainers,...

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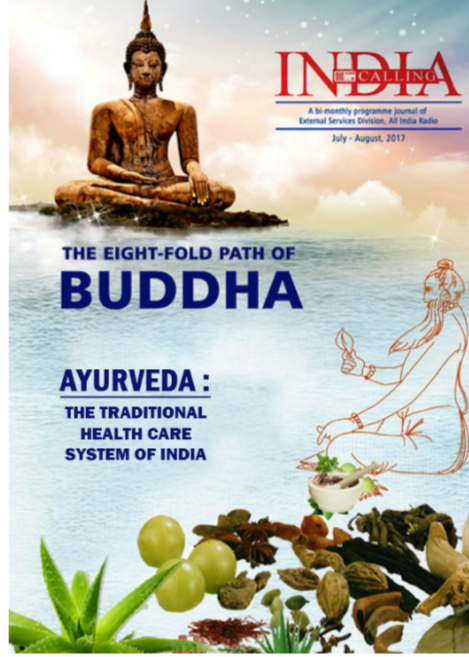
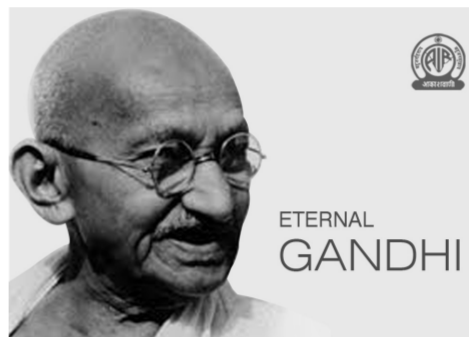
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