



# Coalition of the concerned

Posted at: 26/02/2019

## **Multi-pronged diplomacy is vital to compel Pakistan to end its support for terrorist groups**

- In the wake of the Pulwama attack on February 14, the government has iterated once again its plan for the “diplomatic isolation” of Pakistan.
- The idea, which was first articulated after the 2016 Uri attacks, is a non-starter, as was underlined by the visit of the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman to both countries earlier this month, just a few days after Pulwama.
- In Pakistan, the Prince called himself “Pakistan’s Ambassador” in his country, and issued a joint statement praising Pakistan for its fight against terrorism.
- Clearly, a more considered diplomatic strategy, less full of rhetoric, must be chalked out by the government in response to cross-border terrorism.

## **Beyond isolation**

- To begin with, the government would do better to repackage its idea of “isolating Pakistan” into one of building a more inclusive ‘coalition against terrorism emanating from Pakistan’.
- In the past couple of weeks alone, Iran and Afghanistan have faced terror attacks on their security forces along the border with Pakistan — and several other countries, which have also faced such attacks or see the presence of Pakistan-based groups on their soil, would be willing to join ranks on this.
- The truth is, in today’s interconnected world, it is vainglorious to expect countries to join a unilateral plan for isolation.
- An inclusive coalition is more likely to move nations at the global stage as well.
- The success of the efforts led by the U.S. and other countries to ‘grey

- list' Pakistan at the Financial Action Task Force or of French efforts for a United Nations Security Council statement on Pulwama points to that.
- Second, India must focus on the case against Masood Azhar, which pre-dates the case against 26/11 mastermind Hafiz Saeed.
  - Third, India must prepare for a pushback from Pakistan, most likely in terms of internationalising the Kashmir issue, and linking it to progress in Afghanistan.

### **The American angle**

- Next, the government must prioritise action over words, when it comes to moves against Pakistan's sponsorship and hosting of the JeM.
- The measures taken thus far — cancelling Most Favoured Nation status, maximising use of Indus waters, denying visas to Pakistani sportspersons, etc. — have little real impact on Pakistan and certainly none on the military establishment.
- Instead of priding itself on extracting statements of condemnation from various governments in the world, it is better for New Delhi to use India's considerable diplomatic leverage to ensure action that would shut down the JeM and the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) permanently and bring their leaders to justice.
- In this regard, mere statements and bans have not worked for more than two decades, and the government must consider other options, especially with the countries that carry the most leverage and access in Pakistan: China, the U.S. and Saudi Arabia.
- India must also press the U.S. to place travel sanctions on specific entities in the Pakistani military establishment unless visible action is taken against the JeM, whose leaders hold public rallies and issue videos threatening India.
- A similar line of talks must be pursued by New Delhi with Riyadh — which once was a donor to Pakistan's Islamist institutions, but now is wary of funding extremism — to withhold any funds that may trickle down to charitable wings run by the JeM and LeT.
- With China, it is surprising that the issue of a simple ban at the UN Security Council has not been made India's chief demand from Beijing.
- It is hoped that this will be rectified soon when the next proposal to ban Azhar is brought to the UNSC, and during Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj's visit to China this week for the trilateral Russia-India-China meeting.
- More than the ban, however, India must ask China for action against any entities dealing with the JeM in Pakistan, given that China is the partner

with the most influence in Pakistan today, and one with the most to lose from terror groups in Punjab operating along the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

### **Steady dialogue**

- Finally, India must look to its own actions on the diplomatic front with Pakistan.
- A measured, steady and non-political level of dialogue is a more effective way of impressing India's determination to root out terrorism than the present on-again, off-again policy.
- As the nation prepares for a possible military response to the Pulwama attack, it is important that New Delhi consider its diplomatic response carefully, particularly taking into account both the historical and regional context of its moves.

The Hindu

