



# The vexatious question of Masood Azhar

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## **India can take up its fight against terrorism at the United Nations Security Council in various ways**

- The UN Security Council adopted a statement condemning the Pulwama terrorist attack of February 14, for which the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) took responsibility.
- India is applauding this development and it should.
- A lot of diplomatic effort had gone into achieving this result.
- But this statement should be looked at with a proper perspective.

### **Hierarchy of actions**

- Some media organisations and analysts have mistakenly described the Council as having adopted a resolution.
- This is not true; the Council made a presidential statement.
- It may be worthwhile to understand the nuances of the action the Council takes in a given situation.
- The second level is when the Council adopts a presidential statement.
- The third level is the resolution, which is the most authentic voice of the Council, carrying maximum weight.
- Again, the resolution can be under Chapter VI or Chapter VII of the Charter.
- Resolutions adopted under Chapter VII are enforceable unlike those under Chapter VI (Resolutions regarding Kashmir are under Chapter VI).
- Some analysts dismiss the statements and resolutions of the Council as of no consequence, arguing that the countries concerned should pursue their interests irrespective of the Council's action.
- The fact that China went along with the statement does not signify much of a shift in its position, since the Council had already declared the JeM as a terrorist organisation.
- In 2016, India moved the sanctions committee to include Azhar's name, with the support of three permanent members: the U.S., the U.K., and

France.

- Again, in 2017, India took a similar initiative, supported by the same countries. On both occasions, Russia did not actively support the proposal, though it went along with it.
- China vetoed it both times. It is for consideration whether and why it is so important for India to have Azhar included in the list of global terrorists.
- There is no doubt that India's relations with West Asia have improved significantly in the past five years.
- The invitation to External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj from the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to be guest of honour on March 1 at the Foreign Ministers meet is ample evidence of this.
- However, to regard the previous OIC resolutions regarding Kashmir as of no consequence is in the nature of rationalising the current approach.
- Hopefully, the OIC will respect India's gesture and refrain from embarrassing Ms. Swaraj after her departure.

### **Raising issues in the Council**

- The successful preventive non-military strike carried out by the Indian Air Force on the JeM's terrorist training camp in Pakistan undoubtedly caught Pakistan by surprise.
- Apart from military action, which Pakistan has already taken, it will certainly try to raise the issue in the Council.
- It may be difficult to prevent it, since what has happened would certainly be regarded as threatening international peace and security.
- If the Council does meet, it would give India an opportunity to expose Pakistan's true face.

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