



The week after

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India must keep up diplomatic pressure on Pakistan to act against terror groups

- With India and Pakistan deciding to de-escalate post-Balakot tensions, the focus has moved to the diplomatic sphere.
- India's strikes on a target deep inside Pakistan were coupled with diplomatic manoeuvres that ensured no country censured India for the move.
- In recognition of India's justification to act against an imminent terror threat from the Jaish-e-Mohammad, the U.S., the U.K. and France also moved in at record speed to bring another listing request against the group's founder, Masood Azhar, at the UN Security Council's committee for terror designations.
- The government must, however, also assess what it has actually achieved in strategic terms, and the consequences of the "new normal" it has sought to create with Pakistan.
- Despite the strikes, it is far from clear that the capabilities of the JeM have been degraded to the point where it can no longer carry out attacks in India.
- New Delhi must also track the JeM's assets and abilities within Jammu and Kashmir, as well as any intelligence and security protocol failures that may have preceded the Pulwama attack.
- It is also necessary to realise the limits of calling international attention to India's concerns, to ensure that there are no curbs on what India sees as its strategic autonomy.
- Finally, the government must have a firmer handle on its messaging after the events of the past week, so that a public reading of its strategic purpose is not lost in the claim vs counterclaim spiral with Pakistan.

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