

What it's Advisor's Must Tell the Congress Party on National Security

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Yesterday the Congress President announced appointment of Lt. Gen. D.S. Hooda (Retd.) and a committee headed by him to advise the Party on National Security Policy. Lt. Gen. Hooda is an experienced and distinguished former officer of the Indian Army. I have not the least doubt that he would give a very valuable advice to the grand old Party.

The appointment of General Hooda is significant. It is a belated and grudging recognition and acceptance of the surgical strikes of 2016 with which the General was intrinsically associated. I am sure the Head of the Advisory Panel would educate the Party leaders that the surgical strikes were no routine step which had been taken several times in the past, but a significant first for India.

The Party which has ruled the country for over half a century should need to be educated on national security concerns is somewhat intriguing. I am sure amongst the various advices that experts will render to the Congress President on strategic issues, a few basic points would be essential. I am enumerating some of the basic points which are integrally connected to consistency on the issue of national security:

Do not give an impression to the world that India is divided on how to fight terrorism. When the world is rallying around India, the Opposition in India should not be striking a discordant note.

Do not trivialise a serious national concern on terrorism as has been done by the Congress Spokespersons in the past two days.

Next time if extremists and separatists raise slogans on how to break India (the JNU incident), no one from mainstream parties should pay a supporting visit to them. There is no freedom of speech to advocate a breakup of India.

Do not encourage indiscriminate illegal immigration into India and block steps which are taken to stop it. It hurts national security.

Our Armed forces are amongst the most professional organisations which have served this country exceedingly well. They work under a civilian command and maintain an arm's length distance from the internal politics of the country. Politicians of any shade of opinion should not get into slanging match with any of the services personnel or their Chief. The Chief of a Force can't be described as a 'Sadak ka Goonda'.

When security personnel fight the terrorists and make sacrifices (e.g. Batla House), do not legitimise terrorism by standing shoulder to shoulder with the terrorists and call the war against terror as a fake encounter.

When our intelligence agencies conduct anti-insurgency operations along with the security forces (e.g. Ishrat Jahan case), do not let lose investigative agencies on the intelligence and security network of India.

To serve petty political gains, do not politicise defence procurement on false and imaginary facts. It hurts defence preparedness.

I am sure there would be many serious inputs relating to the security strategy that experts would give to the Congress Party. Ordinary patriotic Indians who do not have the benefit of strategic inputs, would also know the response to the above points.