

Agenda 2019 – Part – 2 : Prime Minister Modi’s Evolving National Security Doctrine

Posted on March 12, 2019

The JeM terrorist attack at Pulwama has brought back into focus the key issue of national security. India is a land of patriotic people. We have a history of valour and sacrifice. India struggled for Independence but with their heads held high. We still find it difficult to digest our humiliation of 1962. We remember the 1965 and 1971 Wars and the 1999 Kargil war with a sense of honour and satisfaction. Indians believe that the country must be secured. The entire nation in one voice has condemned terrorism which cost us the life of two of our former Prime Ministers, besides our security personnel and citizens.

Dangers of linking the battle against terrorism and insurgency with vote banks

Conventionally India condemned any form of terrorism and insurgency in one voice. When a misguided section of Muslim community globally took to terrorism in order to voice their issues, Indian Muslims predominantly refused to be a part of that philosophy. Fortunately for us that trend continues till date. Unfortunately, a few misguided modules in India did emerge. They are dangerous but our security forces overcame most of them.

TADA was legislated when late Shri Rajiv Gandhi was in power. It was used and abused but it continued as a law. After the 1993 Mumbai bomb blast it was widely used against the terrorists, a communal campaign started against this. TADA was dubbed as anti-minority. A campaign for its revocation started. The Narasimha Rao led Congress Government repealed TADA. India which was most adversely impacted by terror was without an anti-terror law which would act as a strong deterrent and contained both procedural and substitutional provisions to deal with crime relating to terror. The Government led by Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee legislated POTA. It took the Government a joint session of both Houses of Parliament to approve the law. The Congress promised to repeal the law. The distinction between an anti-terrorism and an anti-minority law is significant. The Congress and its allies tried to obliterate that difference. Since then the Congress started going soft on terror. It started an appeasement of terror.

When the Batla House encounter took place and the terrorists were killed, the Congress leaders dubbed it as a fake encounter. The terrorists they claimed were innocent. When the guilty of the 1993 Mumbai bomb blast, 26/11 attack on India’s commercial capital and the Parliament attack case were to be executed, many Congressmen started appealing for amnesty. The ‘disruptionists’ who prefer to call themselves ‘Left liberals’, fought a legal battle to save the terrorists.

The low point in Congress party’s attitude towards separatism and terror was reached when a combination of separatists, jihadis and Maoists ganged up to raise slogans on ‘Desh ke tukde tukde’ at New Delhi’s JNU, the Congress President Rahul Gandhi stood shoulder to shoulder with them to defend their right of free speech to champion the cause of breaking India into

pieces. He deviated from the Congress legacy of not associating with these extremists. Once the identification of Congressmen with the Maoists and the separatists was signalled by Rahul Gandhi, it was natural for Congressmen and their friends to support the cause of 'urban Maoists' who were allegedly conspiring to assassinate India's Prime Minister. It is, therefore, not surprising that the new Government in Chhattisgarh, the hub of Left wing extremism, has now taken several decisions, including appointment of committees to effectively examine the 'misuse' of police powers against the Maoists. The battle against terror has been weakened on account of Congress party and its mahagathbandhan friends diluting the fight against terror and insurgency for the sake of votes.

Kashmir and terror

The State of Jammu and Kashmir was a foremost victim of terror. The people of Jammu and Kashmir are the worst sufferers. Pakistan never reconciled to Jammu and Kashmir being an integral part of India. It waged wars but lost them. It resorted to encouraging cross border insurgency and supporting domestic terrorists. The Congress had no structured plan during ten years of UPA on how to deal with the problem.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inherited this as a legacy issue. He experimented the conventional method of trying to soften the relationship with Pakistan in a hope that wiser sense would prevail, but Pakistan responded with Pathankot, Uri and Pulwama. He encouraged the mainstream political parties of the Valley to be a part of the national coalition in Kashmir but unfortunately the double talk of support from Delhi and the pressure from the Jamat-e-Islami were to the detriment of anti-separatists policy.

Pulwama and Balakot

The terrorist strike of Pulwama which cost India the life of 41 CRPF jawans shook the conscience of the whole country. Our security forces have already liquidated some of the major terrorists involved in the Pulwama attack. Post the Uri attack, our forces and the Government have intelligence information with regard to the existence of terrorists training camps along the Line of Control. The Army in September, 2016 conducted the surgical strikes with utmost precision. There was no casualty on the Indian side and those camps were destroyed. We had crossed the LoC for the first time since 1971 war.

Our security forces and the Government again had information through intelligence agencies with regard to a huge terrorist training camp of the JeM at Balakot. On the 26th February, 2019, the Air Force conducted air strikes and destroyed the camp causing severe losses of the terrorist infrastructure comprising of men, material and premises.

By these two actions, Prime Minister Modi had evolved India's internal security doctrine. Do we fight the terrorists merely on the strength of intelligence information, preventing attacks and diplomatically isolating Pakistan? In such cases, will we be able to ensure a hundred percent success. The odds are loaded against us on this ground. Even if the terrorists succeed only once a year, they make their point. Our intelligence and security has to succeed hundred percent. That is a big challenge. Alternatively, the Surgical and Air strikes evolved a policy that we must attack terror at the point of its origin. In both cases we succeeded. Pakistan realised that there was a severe cost involved if the State continued to patronise terror. The

world welcomed our pro-active approach. Pakistan was diplomatically isolated. Its traditional friends were not willing to stand up and defend it.

Political Battle

The BJP led Government, both at the Centre and in Chhattisgarh, had a consistently strong position against the Left wing extremism. From JNU to Chhattisgarh, the Congress has struck a deal with them. There are increasing instances of Left wing extremists actively encouraging the Kashmiri Jehadis in the Kashmir valley. The Congress does not oppose the idea of a pro-active approach in destroying terror at its point of origin. It is disturbed with regard to the political fallout of this pro-active approach on the image of Prime Minister Modi. The Congress is one with the Government on condemning Pulwama but is disturbed about Balakot. Thus it repeatedly rubbishes the surgical strikes. It contends that they have either taken place in the past also or alternatively they never took place under Prime Minister Modi. On the air strikes, their conduct is even more dubious. While giving lip sympathy to the Indian Air Force for the first two days, they started a multi-pronged attack. They questioned the success of the strikes. They started demanding proof that terrorists had died at Balakot. They even contended that the strike had taken place not against terror but to ensure BJP's victory in the forthcoming elections. This was a self-goal by the Congress in domestic politics. This was also playing into the hands of Pakistan where statements of Congress leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, were played out on television channels in Pakistan. Pakistan Government cited these statements to bolster their own falsehood.

This raises the final question. When India battles ultra-Left and Jehadi terrorists, when it is faced with serious threat of cross border terrorism, how does India respond? This is a choice before the electorate in the 2019 general elections. Can an over-ground ally of Left wing extremism be put in power at New Delhi? Can those who have weakened the battle against terror for the cause of vote bank politics be trusted? Should not those who have played into the Pakistani hands be taught a severe lesson in these elections? Unhesitatingly the answer to the above question is a big 'yes'. This country is safe and secure under the NDA Government led by Prime Minister Modi.