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India Bombs Jaish-e-Muhammad Camp in Pakistan

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Twelve days after the Pulwama attack, in an aerial surgical strike, the Indian Air Force (IAF) has bombed the Jaish-e-Mohammad's (JeM) terror-training camp in Balakot in the Pakistani province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The operation was carried out by 12 Mirage-2000 fighter jets, after intelligence inputs that the said JeM facility is crowded with 200-325 terrorists.

India's Statement

- India has said that the **strike was based on hard intelligence inputs** about the presence of terrorists in the camp.
 - By calling it an intelligence-led operation, the government was trying to send a message to the global audience that the airstrikes were not done at some arbitrarily chosen place but were part of a well-considered action.
- India said that strike was “**non-military preemptive action**” was important for two reasons:
 - By calling it non-military, India wanted to reassure everyone that **it is not an act against the Pakistani military**.
 - The words “preemptive action” were to suggest that the **airstrike was not an act of revenge or retribution but an act of self-defense** to prevent a likely terror attack in the future.

International Response

- India has received **support for its air strike from several countries like Australia and France**.

The countries **recognized India's right to self-defense**, and asked Pakistan to put an end to operations of terrorist groups established on its territory,.

- The US said that India and Pakistan **should exercise restraint**, and avoid escalation at any cost and avoid further military activity.
- The British government called on India and Pakistan to **pursue diplomatic solutions**.
- China has said that the two countries **should keep restraint** and do more to improve bilateral relations.
- With the exception of the **Organisation of Islamic Cooperation**, there has been no global criticism of India's statement on the strikes.

Analysis

- The Indian Air Force's strike on a Jaish-e-Mohammad terror training camp in Pakistan's Balakot **delivers a robust but calibrated message that India can strike deep inside Pakistan for its self-defense**.
- Airstrikes by the Indian Air Force **establishes a new threshold between the two nuclear neighbors** for an Indian response to a terror attack.
- This was the **first time Indian fighter jets have crossed Line of Control, since 1971**. Even during the Kargil war in 1999, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had drawn a red line over the IAF crossing the LoC, to avoid international recrimination.
- Along with these surgical strikes, India is also working diplomatically to isolate Pakistan.
 - UN Security Council has condemned the Pulwama Attack.
 - Pakistan has been listed in the Financial Action Task Forces (FATF) greylist.
 - India has also withdrawn Most Favoured Nation Status of Pakistan.
 - India has also taken Pakistan to International Court of Justice against death sentence given to Indian citizen Kulbhushan Jadhav.

What is a Surgical Strike?

- A surgical strike is a **swift and targeted attack on a specific target** that aims to neutralize them while ensuring minimum collateral damage to the surrounding areas and civilians.
- India has conducted surgical strikes in **2015 in Myanmar against the insurgent groups** and in **2016 in Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir against terror launch pads** along the line of control.

How is it carried out?

These attacks can be carried out via air raids, airdropping special operations teams or a ground operation.

The significance of Surgical Strike

- Neutralization of targets with surgical strikes also prevents escalation to a full-blown war.
- Surgical strikes are part of **India's Cold Start doctrine** and have proved effective in foiling infiltration bid by terrorist groups across the LoC.

Cold Start Doctrine

- **The 'Cold Start' doctrine of the Indian Armed Forces envisages swift deployment of troops on the western border within days if a situation of a full-blown war arises.**
- This doctrine aims to allow Indian forces to conduct sustained attacks while preventing a nuclear retaliation from Pakistan. The operation would be carried out by a unified battle group involving various branches of India's military.
- **The Cold Start doctrine sought to prepare the army in such a manner that offensive operations could be undertaken within 48 hours of the orders being issued, enabling the Indian troops to take their Pakistani counterparts by surprise.**

Way Forward

- **Pakistan has denied that the Indian strike caused any damage on the ground.** This may obviate the need for retaliatory strikes, or if Pakistan responds this could escalate the situation with a military response.
- Pakistan could also make a break from its past, and begin to shut down the terror camps on its soil, which would win friends internationally and ensure peace in the region.
- Surgical strikes are not a one-stop solution, uprooting terrorism will require sustained efforts on by India diplomatically at the global level, which also includes the adoption of **Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT)**.

Systems Used

Mirage-2000

The Dassault Mirage 2000 is a French multirole, single-engine fourth-generation jet fighter manufactured by Dassault Aviation. It was designed in the late 1970s.

- **SPICE 2000**

SPICE stands for 'Smart, Precise Impact and Cost-Effective' a kit which converts a conventional bomb into a smart munition and is manufactured by Rafael of Israel. The '2000' refers to a bomb of 2,000 pounds (about 1,000 kg).

- **Crystal Maze Mk2**

- Crystal Maze Mk2 also called AGM 142 Popeye is a precision-guided munition (PGM).
- The PGM enable the aircraft to release them from stand-off distances while staying away from harm's way and the munitions glide to the target once launched.

- **NETRA AEW&C**

- The IAF also deployed the Israeli Phalcon and indigenous Netra early warning aircraft to monitor the mission — to direct the aircraft
- IAF also used a Heron long-range Unmanned Aerial Vehicle that was used for monitoring and assessment.