

SURGICAL STRIKES - HOW FAR THEY ARE SUCCESSFUL?

2. The brief given to me is contemporary & apt – Surgical Strikes. How far are they successful. If I were to give a straight soldierly answer – it is that there were 100% successful – a perfect 10, and that too in all domains, Political, Diplomatic and Military. The key question is that have we got the desired pay offs – has it met the aspirations of the Indian Public that is open to debate and I will in the next s the strikes and various aspects of the strikes in all its domains – challenging common beliefs & of course agitating to your minds.

3. The surgical strikes executed in the night of 28/29 Sep 2017 were and are unprecedented. When I say unprecedented I make an unqualified statement. As a military Pro, and as a Paratrooper I salute each one of the 140 PARA SF Commandos who executed the surgical strikes. The selection of the targets was very apt – 7 terrorist launch pads across the LC in POK within 1 to 3 Kms of the LC, spread on either side of Pir Panjal nearly 350 Kms apart. Seven troops of the SF, one target per troop inserted on foot on a zero moon night on 28/29 Sep, totally undetected in a heavily manned LC, destroyed the designated targets by fire assault from close ranger, without any collateral damage to civilian population in POK and thereafter carried out the most difficult part of the operation, extrication to own side with a single car – a mine casualty. For anyone who has served along the LC – the enormity of the task itself would have sent shudders. The LC is not only heavily manned it is also heavily mined.

4. The military part of the strike was exceedingly well planned and executed. It is a very sensitive and delicate operation with no room for error. Firstly, all those who executed knew well that it is 'ONE WAY TICKET' any soldier having been left behind would have been a national embarrass, he would have been paraded as Pakistan victory and an Indian Military failure. Though I would not like to compare it with somewhat similar military operations executed by other nations but just to mention that OP GERINIMO – NEPTUNE STAR OBL by the marines – a helicopter had to be destroyed. Going back to Op Toggle Claw the hostage rescue of the US embassy hostages in Iran, 24 Apr 1980 – a total disaster, giving birth to the US SOF under Col Charles Beckwith-

Delta Force. In numbers it achieved little as per some reports only 39 terrorists were killed, of course Pak denied any such action.

5. Having covered the tactical part of it let me now touch upon the larger issues. Let me put the whole issue of Pakistan sponsored terrorism & proxy war in perspective. Gen Ata Hasnain has covered J&K. If you ask me to put a date to the Pak sponsored & supported militancy in. I will fix it as 13 Dec 1989. It was the day when Rubiya Soced who had been abducted on 07 Dec 89 by JKLF militants was released in exchange of 5 known terrorists. She is of course the _____ of Multi Soced who was the then House Minister - & had been the Home Minister for 5 days since 02 Dec 1989. Since then Pak has waged a proxy war – a low cost high effect was “bleeding India with a thousand cuts”. A very quick look at the major terrorist attacks over the years. I will flag three issues to put the surgical strikes and their successor otherwise in the correct conceptual framework. One all these major terror attacks well perpetuated by Pakistan, Pakistan Army & the ISI. The various terrorist org are fully founded, funded, supported, trained, and equipped by Pak Army /ISI. The three issues - Pakistan has carried out these attacks with impunity comfortable in the belief that India will not respond. The PA drives the state policy with regard India, why only India – also Afghanistan, US & China. The Pak terror doctrine is to wage a constant & continuous war in the sub conventional domain & _____ settling in the nuclear domain, thus neutrs India conventional war superiority. At the drop of a hat Pak officials, ministers, HC in Delhi & others would start reminding the world that Pakistan is a nuclear armed nation & hence India should do nothing whatsoever to disturb the status Quo & equilibrium. Result India & Indians suffered terror attacks in perpetuity & with the short memory we have, it was always back to business as usual after a few days including major terror strikes like 26/11 Mumbai. The only time we did respond war after the attack on Parliament in 2001 Dec – what is popularly known as OP PRAKRAM. The fact that we did not go to war is a different matter. Simply the US would not allow it as Pakistan was the only entry point to Afghanistan & the US wanted Pak more than Pak wanted US.

6. So back to surgical strikes. For some unknown reasons – India & Indian Army's sub conventional warfighting doctrine does not or did not include punitive & pre-emptive Ops. What did the SS achieve at the Political level. Prior to that I will like to touch upon certain key

certainities & relative uncertainties on the India – Pak context only as it relates to terrorism.

7. **Key Certainties**

- Neighbours – adversarial relations continue
- Pak will continue to try & calibrate it in Kashmir valley.
- Pak state policy of terrorism – continue unabated – PA driven.
- Pak – International in Kashmir Issue Simla agreement.
- Expl Geo Strat LOC – US & China (CPEC)
- Indian claim on PoK – J&K integral part of India.
- ARISING AND RESPONSIBLE INDIA

8. **Relative Uncertainties**

- Impact on Pak – Raising cost of Pak.
- Strat & eco impact of CPEC – PoK
- Mil – Politico – equation in Pak
- ISIS??
- Collusive and for collaborative threat from Pak & China.
- Sustaining CF along LC
- Soft Borders – Musharaf Formula.
- India's Politico – Military Will.
- Trst group acquires nuclear weapons (RDD).

9. Mr Modi – invested considerable political capital. Ideal situation for normalisation – two leaders with the mandate – Hope Shattered.

10. SS – **Strat Patience** – runout Strat Restrain

- Created a Start Dilemma
- Public Sentiment – (Political)
- Has it achieved the political ad state – YES.

- Diplomatic – Isolation of Pak SAARC Summit . Most Nations sp
India. Leveraging all over ENP.

- Synergy

- No Escalation

- Pak Denial Mode – Hit at Pak Army – RAHEEL SHARIF

11. For Marshal -

- No attacks on Pak Soil – True

- Informational - Excessive hype. A Belief that one surgical strike will change pak Policy – NEVER EVER - Public Belief – Polite

- However the politico, desired and state achieved – Aspirations & expectations of the public.

- ECO. Debate – IWT.

- Synergy all elements of National Power.

- Different domain & Impact

12. Way Forward

- More – May be but not always

- Key question is Response to Pak Terror

- Pak Army – win win

Terror & talks – play into hands.

- If not – Terror attacks.

Response Options for India