

India's Muscle Flexing against Pakistan on the LoC

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CommandEleven is a research organization focused on Pakistan's national security aspects and enhancing global understanding and collaboration opportunities for the nation.

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The Indian Defense Minister Arun Jatley visited the frontlines on the currently active Line of Control (LoC). After meeting field commanders and troops deployed on the Forward Defended Localities (FDLs), he expressed his satisfaction over the morale of the troops and called upon them to maintain heightened vigil. Besides, he lauded the aggressive dominance posture and instructed the fighting formations to give a befitting response to Pakistan.

Indian Defence Minister Arun Jatley and Army Chief General Bipin Rawat arrived Srinagar in Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday to review the security situation amid heightened tension on the Line of Control (LoC) and student unrest in the valley.

Given the urgency of the situation, Arun Jatley advanced his visit by a day since he was otherwise scheduled to chair the two-day long Goods and Services Tax (GST) council meeting beginning in New Delhi on Thursday.

This comes at a time when incidents of cross-LoC firing have increased. According to the Indian media, Pakistan violated the ceasefire again on Wednesday. Allegedly Pakistan fired on forward posts in the Balakote sector of Jammu of Kashmir.

India could well be playing this up so as to give a "foreign" touch to the simmering trouble in the Kashmir valley. Delhi has continued to attribute the degeneration of the situation in the valley to Pakistan. A hot LoC gives India a point to drive home its point.

"Pakistan army resorted to firing on forward posts along the LoC in Balakote sector from 0050 hours today," a defense spokesman said.

The spokesman also stated that the Pakistan army initiated indiscriminate firing of small arms, automatic weapons and 82 mm and 120 mm mortars last night along the LoC in Nowshera sector.

India had claimed that Pakistan violated the ceasefire on 15th and 13th May, targeting civilian population too.

Pakistan also complained of Ceasefire violations. Three civilians, including two women were injured in unprovoked India firing in the Baroh Sector along the LoC. The injured were identified as Zamurd Begum, Shazia Parveen and Muhammad Inziam, an ISPR statement issued on Saturday evening said. Three more civilians, identified as Haji Muhammad Younis, Rehana Bibi and Samina Begum were injured.

Army Chief General Bajwa visited the LoC and lauded the effective response given to Indian violations. Pakistan warned India of dire consequence of further provocations.

"Indian Army has been targeting innocent civilians on both sides of Line of Control in recent past. Any misadventure by Indian Army across Line of Control will be a miscalculation, shall be responded with full force and could lead to unintended consequences," the ISPR press release said.

The LoC has remained heated since India claimed that the Pakistan army beheaded two of its soldiers on 1st May. The unusual and seemingly inconceivable event was taken up to create a war hysteria with top Indian officials calling for a tit for tat response.

It is quite reasonable to believe that ramping up tensions on the borders is an attempt to deflect the brewing situation in Kashmir. Logically, Pakistan has nothing to gain by provoking India at a time when it is embroiled in eliminating terrorism at home. Evidences of Indian involvement in subverting Pakistan are backed up by its blatant opposition to CPEC and military activities along the LoC, WB and IB. The Indian military concluded a corps level exercise on the Rajasthan border. 20,000 troops took part in the simulations, which involved the Air Force as well. The Army was said to be rehearsing battlefield mobility of troops "keeping in view the fluidity of scenario and insertion of troops by third dimension". "Fluidity of scenario" refers to the fast-changing environment that is going to be a characteristic of all future wars. It was meant to test the induction of troops into a tactical situation through use of airborne platforms.

Exercises are a part of military preparations, but given the current hysterical milieu where India has time and again resolved to teach Pakistan a lesson, this exercise in proximity to the border with Pakistan is not a good harbinger and reminds us of a Brasstacks-like situation which brought both countries on the cusp of a nuclear exchange in the late 1980's. David Singer defined threat perception as a function of estimated capabilities and estimated intentions. The BSF has also launched a patrolling operation codenamed "GaramHawa" in the same Area of Operation. Counter Mobilization on the International Border would bring both countries an incident away from Armageddon. It should be remembered that both countries have not fully mobilized on IB and WB after the 2002 military stand-off.

COAS General Qamar was cognizant of these developments when he addressed a seminar in Rawalpindi a few days back when he openly named India as a perpetrator of hybrid war inside Pakistan. It is certain that Pakistan will be keeping a vigilant eye. This makes the situation very combustible and any other alleged incident may certainly have led to a clash, something which will have dangerous escalatory effects. With a nuclear rung attached to the escalation ladder, any military adventure will exert exceeding pressure on the ladder without giving India a chance to achieve "escalation Dominance" and the ability to invoke "conflict termination." As the likelihood of US estrangement with Pakistan increases, Delhi feels bolstered in going the extra mile against its adversary.

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