

PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS

PULWAMA TERROR ATTACK- POLITICS

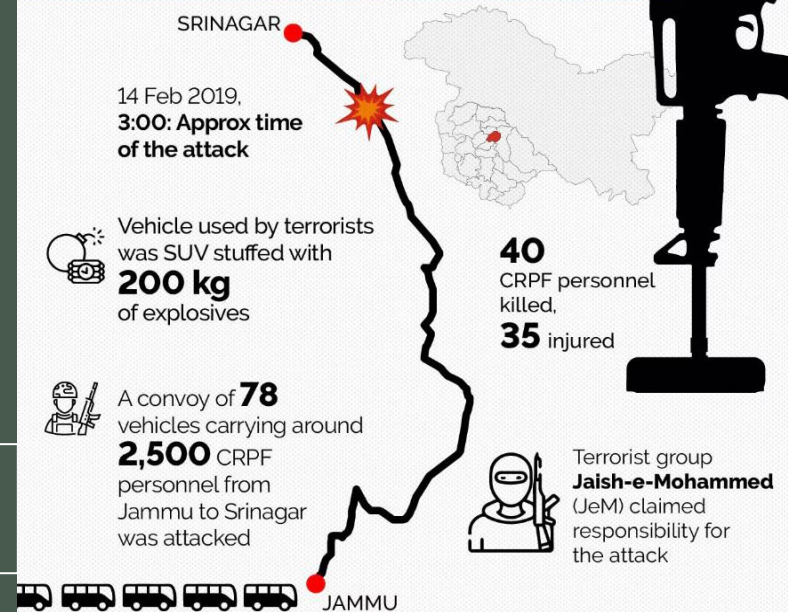
WHAT-IF SCENARIO

PREPARED BY SUMANT ARORA

CASE STUDY

REMEMBERING PULWAMA BRAVEHEARTS

Some facts about one of the deadliest terror attacks in J&K



INDIA'S RESPONSE

Twelve days after the attack, in the wee hours of February 26, Indian Air Force jets bombed the Jaish-e-Mohammed camp in Balakot, in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



Source: News reports

DECLASSIFIED

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IMPORTANT NOTE

This report is a case study based on assumptions after observing certain events following a set of pattern. For research & training purpose only.

WHAT-IF SCENARIO REPORT PREPARATION

We are assuming that the Pulwama Terror Attack was one of the **“Allowed to happen”** event so that the public sentiment can be diverted for political advantage in elections that were just two months later. **The actual reality can be different and possibly co-incidence as well.**

“Rally Round the Flag” effect.

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REMEMBERING THE MARTYRS OF PULWAMA ATTACK



DETAILS OF EVENTS

The **Pulwama Attack** occurred in the Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir, India. A **suicide bomber** from the **Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM)** terror group rammed an **explosive-laden vehicle** into a convoy of **Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)** personnel, killing **40 soldiers** and injuring many others. The attack was one of the deadliest on Indian security forces in Kashmir.

India blamed **Pakistan** for harboring JeM, escalating tensions between the two countries. In response, India carried out an **airstrike** on a JeM training camp in **Balakot, Pakistan**, leading to military confrontations. The attack significantly impacted **India-Pakistan relations** and prompted a national outcry for stronger counter-terrorism measures.

DATED : 14 FEB 2019

RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

INTELLIGENCE INPUT

Before the Pulwama attack, there were intelligence inputs warning of a possible IED attack on security forces in Jammu & Kashmir. Intelligence agencies issued alerts about Jaish-e-Mohammed's plans to target CRPF convoys. A specific warning was reportedly circulated in early February 2019, just days before the attack.

INACTION & NEGLIGENCE

In the aftermath of the Pulwama attack, reports surfaced suggesting that a request was made by the CRPF to airlift personnel instead of transporting them by road due to the threat of terrorist attacks. However, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), headed at the time by Home Minister Rajnath Singh, allegedly denied the request, citing logistical or maybe cost-related reasons. However, no official inquiry has conclusively established a single definitive reason for the request not being approved.

LACK OF COUNTERMEASURES

In the Pulwama attack, key security lapses contributed to the tragedy. The high-risk NH-44 highway was not fully sanitized, and local traffic was not restricted, allowing the suicide bomber to intercept the CRPF convoy. Despite prior intelligence warnings about a possible IED attack, questions have been raised regarding the apparent absence or adequacy of counter-IED measures, aerial surveillance, and jammer-equipped vehicles accompanying the convoy.

KEY FACTS

It is a fact that there was an intelligence input and a surety that terror attack will happen on convoy. So, there was no intelligence failure. Based on the circumstances and analysis military department is on always alert mode. It seems it happened in a way that it means “**It was allowed to happen**”. If that is the case very top level of bureaucracy might be involved. Suspicion arise as this incident happen just before 2 months of Lok Sabha elections 2019.

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

- ❑ Why did **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**, denied the airlift request to the CRPF convoy despite knowing about surety of terror attack inkling multiple intelligence inputs ?
- ❑ Assume lack of airlift support arrangement, Why the highways were not sanitized and road links were left unmanned allowing any vehicle to freely intercept convoy ??
- ❑ Governor of Jammu & Kashmir **Satyapaul Malik** asked PM of India about security lapses but he was silenced by PM & NSA Ajit Doval. Why ??

ANALYSIS

RATIONALITY : PROBABILITY : RAGE = 4 : 8 : 9

Rationality refers to the degree to which the target (an individual, group, or state) makes decisions based on logical, calculated reasoning versus emotions or misinformation.

Probability involves estimating the likelihood of success or the behavioral response to a psychological tactic.

Rage Ratio is an informal term used to quantify emotional volatility, especially anger response to specific stimuli.

This is one of the event that initiates high rage and triggers. Here nationalism dominates in the minds of the citizens. This is where the rational approach declines and in general during any war or terror attack people diverts themselves towards national approach and interests. It is one of the event which can be used for political benefits.

TACTICS USED

PSYOPS (Psychological Operations), they mean tactics designed to shift attention, focus, or resources away from a real objective and toward something else—either a false target, a distraction, or a manipulated narrative

- **Psy-Ops Type – Diversion | Strategic | “Rally Round the Flag “**
- **Agencies | Organizations Involved – Jaish-E-Mohammed & Indian Politics**
- **Scope – National**
- **Duration – 60 days Maximum**
- **Channels and Tactics – Media channels | Event staging**
- **Target Audience Profile – Indian Citizens & World Media**
- **Operation Category – Scapegoating Diversion**

EXECUTION

SCAPEGOATING DIVERSION OPERATION

FOLLOWING IS THE HOW THE EVENTS WERE BEING STAGED AND EXECUTED

“Rally Round the Flag “ EFFECT

OPERATION BANDAR

(POST PULWAMA ATTACK 2019)

After the Pulwama attack, which claimed the lives of 40 CRPF personnel, India carried out an airstrike in Balakot on February 26, 2019, under Operation Bandar.

The pre-dawn air strike by the Indian Air Force (IAF) was aimed at Jaish-e-Mohammed's (JeM) biggest terror camp in Balakot in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



AFTERMATH

BALAKOT AIRSTRIKES

The **Balakot airstrikes** took place on when the Indian Air Force (IAF) conducted a **pre-emptive strike** on a **Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM)** terrorist training camp in **Balakot**, Pakistan, in response to the **Pulwama attack**.

Balakot airstrikes escalated India-Pakistan tensions, triggered military retaliation, influenced Indian domestic politics, and shaped international diplomacy — marking one of the most volatile Indo-Pak moments in recent years.

DATED : 26 FEB 2019

RESULTS

VOTES DEMANDED IN THE NAME OF DEAD SOLDIERS

In **2019**, Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** faced criticism for allegedly invoking the **sacrifice of Pulwama martyrs** during election campaigns to **garner votes**, particularly in the context of **West Bengal and other state elections**.

During rallies, PM Modi referenced the **Pulwama attack (2019)** and the **Balakot airstrikes**, portraying them as examples of his government's **strong national security stance**.

The **Election Commission** was urged to take action, as using **armed forces for political campaigning** violates the **Model Code of Conduct**.

BJP trying to extract votes from Pulwama martyrs' blood: Vaiko

Published - April 15, 2019 09:02 pm IST

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT



MDMK general secretary Vaiko addressing an election rally at Sankarankovil on Monday.

RESULTS

BJP WON LOK SABHA ELECTIONS OF 2019

CAUSE AND EFFECT RELATIONSHIP

Lok Sabha Elections 2019 – Key Results (in brief)

Election Dates: 11 April – 19 May 2019 (7 phases)

Results Announced: 23 May 2019

Total Seats: 543 (272 needed for majority)

Victory of NDA (National Democratic Alliance)

- Led by BJP, the **NDA won 353 seats**, a landslide victory.
- **Narendra Modi** was re-elected as **Prime Minister** for a second term.
- This was one of the biggest electoral mandates in India's recent history.

No doubt the terror incident played a vital role in these elections



EVENT ESCALATION FLOW DIAGRAM



visual representation showing **how an incident or situation develops over time**, step-by-step, from its **initial trigger** to its **final consequence**

GLOSSARY

RATIONALITY : PROBABILITY : RAGE = 4 : 8 : 9

Rationality refers to the degree to which the target (an individual, group, or state) makes decisions based on logical, calculated reasoning versus emotions or misinformation.

Probability involves estimating the likelihood of success or the behavioral response to a psychological tactic.

Rage Ratio is an informal term used to quantify emotional volatility, especially anger response to specific stimuli.

SCAPEGOAT DIVERSION – Blaming an external enemy or internal minority for larger systemic issues.

STRATEGIC PSY-OP – Strategic PSYOP refers to long-term, high-level psychological operations planned and executed to influence the beliefs, attitudes, emotions, or behavior of target populations—often across nations or regions—to support national objectives like political dominance, military advantage, or ideological control.

GLOSSARY

RALLY ROUND THE FLAG EFFECT – war can be — and historically has been — used as a political tool to influence public opinion and gain votes. This phenomenon is well-documented and studied in political science, and it falls under concepts like "rally 'round the flag" effect.

When a country enters into conflict, citizens often rally behind their national leaders, increasing their approval ratings regardless of previous political issues. This surge in patriotism can be politically advantageous.

Example: U.S. President George W. Bush's approval rating soared after the 9/11 attacks and during the early stages of the War on Terror.

Effect: Leaders may gain short-term popularity, which can be used to win elections or push through legislation.

RESOURCES & LINKS

Here's an assortment of alternative resources related to the event:

- <https://frontline.thehindu.com/news/pm-modi-nsa-doval-silenced-me-on-security-lapses-leading-to-pulwama-attack-former-jk-governor-satyapal-malik/article66743512.ece>
- <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/elections/news/pm-modi-invokes-pulwama-martyrs-to-seek-votes-opposition-moves-ec/articleshow/68803075.cms>
- <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/pulwama-attack-may-have-been-orchestrated-to-win-2019-polls-alleges-cpis-amarjeet-kaur/article69993230.ece>

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HOME / NEWS PULWAMA ATTACK

DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE

'PM Modi, NSA Doval silenced me on security lapses leading to Pulwama attack': Former J&K Governor Satya Pal Malik

Malik's interview with *The Wire* revealed incompetence and negligence by CRPF and Rajnath Singh's Home Ministry in 2019 attack, sparking controversy.

Published : Apr 16, 2023 14:03 IST - 6 MINS READ

FRONTLINE NEWS DESK

COMMENTS (1)

HOME / LEAD STORY PULWAMA ATTACK

Eleven intelligence inputs warning of Pulwama attack were ignored

Frontline's investigation reveals that 11 intelligence inputs warning of the Pulwama terrorist attack of February 14, 2019, were ignored. Who was responsible for the "oversight", which resulted in the death of 40 CRPF personnel, the Balakot surgical strike, and ultimately the thumping electoral victory of the BJP?

Published : Feb 21, 2021 06:00 IST

ANANDO BHAKTO

 COMMENTS (0)

RESOURCES & LINKS

Here's an assortment of alternative resources related to the event:

- <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Madurai/bjp-trying-to-extract-votes-from-pulwama-martyrs-blood-vaiko/article26847045.ece>
- <https://frontline.thehindu.com/cover-story/pulwama-attack-intelligence-inputs-ignored-national-security-leak-compromise-balakot-bjp-win-2019/article64755942.ece>
- <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-47366718>
- <https://www.cnbctv18.com/india/balakot-airstrikes-a-timeline-of-india-successful-retaliation-to-pulwama-attack-19110251.htm>

OPERATION SUCCESSFUL

B.J.P.(Bharatiya Janata Party) Won Lok Sabha
Elections of 2019, major sentiments were
observed diverting towards martyrs

Rally Round The Flag Effect

Thanks!

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