

Space Lusitania: India and Pakistan

Move 2 India Team Briefing

The Nonproliferation Policy Education Center

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What military response, if any, would be proportionate to the loss of the Maxar satellite? Please explain why.

- This was an attack on a commercial, civilian asset.
- Since this is a US company and the US has greater space capabilities, we were trying to put the response in US hands because if we escalate the situation it will lead to a conflict with China in which India can not compete
- Non-kinetic laser so that you do not create debris, which is something everyone is against, and we do have that capability.
- Since space is considered critical infrastructure for India, China is targeting Indian critical infrastructure.
 - Proportionality-wise, we would go after something with a non-reversible action very expensive of China's just due to the disproportionate space capabilities/assets of India vs. China.
 - India does not rely on space as much as China would, so taking this asset harms India more than China.
- Attack on the ground to avoid escalation in space, in spite of China's continuous escalation.
- There is clear signaling that what is happening in space is also happening on the border
 - India is moving its air force to the borders with China and Pakistan as strategic signaling.
 - We specifically dispersed our nuclear assets away from the border.
 - Increasing readiness
- We never considered attacking China's ground stations (lasers) to avoid escalation
- We focused on responding to the genesis of the conflict (terrorists) and allowing the US to choose how to respond in-space, if at all.

What information do you need from other teams? What information can you provide to other teams? What actions do you need to take?

- We asked Pakistan what they had done to respond to the terrorist attacks from their country
- We asked the United States:
 - What actions they are taking to respond
 - We asked for their intel and a clarification of what was actually happening – a lot of these answers came from the commercial sector, then supported by the Secretary of State
 - We asked for intel about further imminent terrorist attacks on India
- We issued a public statement confirming raw intelligence that the source of the drone attack came from Pakistan
- We issued a public statement with raw intel that China was responsible for the Maxar satellites going dead based on intel from US and Australian commercial companies

What actions do you need to take? (continued)

- With respect to the ground-based threats to India's territory, we are taking action. Pakistan failed to deal with the terrorists so India is conventionally responding on targets for which we have known target packages and collateral damage estimates.
- India's actions:
 - Precision cruise missile attacks on facilities from which the drones initiated.
 - intelligence suggests that the effect was as intended and the threat from that location was neutralized without civilian casualties.
 - We assess that we have successfully neutralized the imminent threat to India's territorial integrity.
 - India is now willing to come to the table for four-party talks.

How might you avoid further escalation? Conversely, how might you use military power to create a diplomatic firebreak, i.e., to lead to a specific preferred end state?

- India focused on a ground response to the attacks on its nuclear command and control, aircraft and service men and women
- India looked to the US to respond in space, especially in response to the Chinese escalation, as India cannot compete in an escalatory space war with China
- India made repeated statements about the need to not escalate conflict in a space domain
- India always referred to the OST obligations and commitment to peaceful use of space, principles of due regard, and avoidance harmful interference.
- India considered and used conventional military power to specifically target, based on intelligence, terrorist camps – not Pakistani military bases or civilian infrastructure

What counter-space capabilities in what hands might be employed to create either a firebreak or a major comparative advantage in the contest?

- The goal is to limit the amount of damage that is occurring in space
- States that have the best non-reversible, non-debris generating space capabilities would have a comparative advantage, e.g.,
 - Deep magazine weapons that can fire over a long period of time create a comparative advantage in protracted conflict
 - Directed energy
 - Supporting architecture that enables it – i.e., have an SSA network in place
 - On-orbit capabilities to provide inspection with battle damage assessment (BDA)
- People often discount ground stations and cyber, which are the true foundation of our counter-space capabilities
 - The first line of defense has to be cyber hardening where attribution can be very difficult and can be used by non-state actors.
- Hardening of the satellites themselves, greater redundancy of satellites in orbit, are there any capabilities in place that will stop the RPOs from being effective?