

Space Lusitania: India and Pakistan

Move 2 Pakistan 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.

- Pakistan decided the only military move necessary was using a meeting of its national command authority and readiness drills
 - There was never even a discussion of Pakistani direct military actions during the play of the game, though after India's cruise missile strike there was some discussion about a kinetic response
- Pakistan debated having the Nuclear Command Authority meet to review the prevailing situation, and leaking details of this meeting to Pakistan media as a way to conduct nuclear signaling to warn India and alert the US
 - We decided that this step was too escalatory, and that the National Security Council should meet instead with the details leaked. The meeting itself was intended as a warning to India and signal to the US
- We played coy with our actions and intentions in order to take advantage of degradation of Indian capabilities, but as China's actions went beyond proportionality and into the destruction of the entire constellation, Pakistan urged restraint
 - Based on India's aggressive rhetoric at the end of Move 1, we aimed to avoid taking military action. As the situation militarized, Pakistan felt the need to take actions to assure readiness and deterrence
- Pakistan's need to walk a narrow tightrope to avoid angering China in particular led us to be a step behind and often forced to be responsive to actions rather than proactive
 - This lack of capacity to act quickly was misinterpreted by other powers as a snub

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

- After four-way talks were dead, we would need to know what steps the US is taking to restrain Indian aggression against Pakistan
- We need the US to understand Pakistan's need for military action against India for domestic messaging
- We would want to know whether China is done with its retaliatory actions in space and what a return to normalcy would look like for them
 - This information was also needed during the crisis, as Pakistan was unable to coordinate its responses with circumstances created by China's ongoing space actions
 - China's thinking and next steps were opaque to Pakistan
- We would need to know how badly Pakistan's satellite capabilities have been degraded
 - Pakistan would first aim to independently assess this, then bring in Chinese experts and officials for their expertise
 - Pakistan aims to communicate how many billions of dollars of damage has been done to its economic development by this
- Pakistan may also want to do a "show and tell" at the UN to show the damage India inflicted against them in its cruise missile strike, depending on what there is to show
- Pakistan would need to decide how to handle the terrorist groups and the private company supporting them
 - Tighter crackdowns and cutting off access to satellite constellation would be likely next steps
 - Pakistan would be unlikely to try too hard to shut down the group entirely, given that it would likely not be a priority given the extent of the game's escalation
- The US team's efforts to pry Pakistan away from China by leveraging China's demand that Pakistan pre-clear its messages was seen as eavesdropping and offensive. This drove Pakistan further into China's arms

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?

- Pakistan would likely conduct a tit-for-tat cruise missile strike against Indian targets
 - Pakistan would take its time to assess the damage before striking. Depending on the severity of India's strike, they would find a proportional response.
 - If no valuable targets, civilians, or military personnel were killed or destroyed, they might fire at empty land near a target or some runways
 - If the strike caused greater damage, Pakistan would be more likely to make a direct strike against Indian military targets
- Based on past crises, after the immediate tit-for-tat, Pakistan may seek de-escalation
 - Others argued that, given that Pakistan's military never took any action of its own
- China consistently chose the more hawkish option, despite Pakistan's urging, so the off-ramps to de-escalation are likely very limited

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