

G W Bush Was Right About India

 claws.in/1397/g-w-bush-was-right-about-india-sumantra-maitra.html

The South Asian internet broke on early Tuesday, the 9th of June, as reports of a cross border raid by the Indian Army Special Forces inside neighbouring Myanmar's territory. This comes after an ambush by Naga and Manipuri terrorists in India's restive north-east, which resulted in the deaths of 18 soldiers. Indian army and air force combined for this joint special operation, and raided deep inside Myanmar territory, and destroyed two separate insurgent camps in two different locations. Myanmar Government was informed and the Burmese military was kept in loop of the operation, after it happened.

Details of the operation are still extremely sketchy. Around 3 AM at dawn, Special Forces of the 21 Para commandoes, were flown in Indian army's "Dhruv" helicopters inside Myanmar. Once in, they were slithered down, where they trekked 11 KM deep inside Myanmar's territory. And Indian Air Force Mi-35 attack helicopter was on standby inside the Indian border, just in case of emergency. The forces then divided into two groups and attacked two different camps in separate locations. The entire operation took 40 mins, without a single casualty on the Indian side. The Indian media claims over 100 were killed, although the Indian military never gave any numbers, only mentioning "significant casualties inflicted" on the rebels.

The attacks are signal of a tough new approach by India, as it "annihilated the entire camps," according to Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore, a minister of state in India's Information Ministry. Myanmar's military didn't directly participate in the operation, but the two sides were in close touch, Mr. Rathore said. The operation was approved by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and was over seen by the National Security Advisor Ajit Doval directly. The Indian Army, Air Force were jointly coordinating the attack, with specific and precise intelligence being provided by the Indian external intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW).

According to Wall Street Journal, Zaw Htay, director of the office of Myanmar President [Thein Sein](#), confirmed Wednesday that Indian troops had entered his country. He said that there was "coordination and cooperation" between the Indian troops and Myanmar's armed forces based in the area of the raids, but added that no Myanmar soldiers were directly involved, and it was a complete solo show by India. "We will never allow or support insurgents, whether [they are] against Myanmar or against our neighboring countries," Mr. Zaw Htay mentioned.

This is a new development in Indian foreign policy and military doctrine, and signals a new, tough and proactive approach by PM Narendra Modi. As new doctrinal evidence, the Times of India reported that Indian intelligence agencies have pinpointed locations of at least 17 camps of NE militants inside Myanmar. The locations of these camps are apparently within the 40km radius from the India-Myanmar border. Sources within the foreign policy and military establishment also mentioned more such cross border raids to come soon. It is the new *Modi-Doval doctrine*, which focuses on offence rather than defence against insurgent and terrorist groups.

This event proves what George W Bush, the first American President who tried to get India in a traditional balancing China coalition of democracies, always stated. India, like Australia, Japan and South Korea, is a natural democracy, with Realist tendencies, and naturally the rise of China would rattle the other Asian giant and would provide a platform for American policy in Asia during the pivot. It was under Bush, the biggest civilian nuclear deal was signed with India and arms and technology transfer and intelligence sharing almost doubled. India also proved to be a solid ally in the war against Islamic terrorism, having suffered for decades from Pakistan backed Kashmiri terrorists. Bush said India, being a democracy is a natural ally against any authoritarian rising hegemon in Asia (China) and perhaps his foreign policy legacy should be judged on the basis of this foresight, and not just Iraq, as the Liberals mention.

These strikes can be essentially regarded as a signal to external powers, primarily Pakistan and also to an extent to China. Pakistan is always accused of harbouring cross border terrorists and Kashmiri insurgents, and due to its relatively weak conventional military compared to a giant like India, is known to practice asymmetric warfare. Up till now, India, a messy, chaotic natural democracy like US and nuclear power, which is traditionally known to punch under her weight, was playing the defensive part, but this raid signifies a hardening of approach. This also is a subtle-as-a-

sledgehammer gesture to China. Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson, Hong Li, however vehemently denied that China had close ties with Indian North Eastern insurgent groups, an accusation alleged by the Indian media.

This raid is also a significant change in the operational doctrine of Indian armed forces, which thus far had always been retaliatory. This is the first instance, of a cross border strike, during peacetime. This is also a first time, when Indian armed forces acted on the basis of the doctrine of pre-emptive strike, only currently practiced by United States and Russia, when dealing with non-state actors.

Finally, this raid shows the new “Look East” policy of the Indian government. India is already in talks with Vietnam regarding berthing of the Indian navy in Cam Ranh Bay, and oil drilling rights in South China Sea, thereby cheesing off China further. A sale of Brahmos missiles is also being considered. Similarly India is solving a land dispute with Bangladesh, and increasing military to military and intelligence sharing. This raid in another sovereign country, during peacetime, arguably signifies, Myanmar now, is too strictly in Indian sphere of influence. A shy and awkward giant is waking up from slumber to face off the adversary that America is currently trying to balance in Asia. American policy makers should take note of this change in Indian foreign policy posture, and use this as an opportunity.

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