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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

STUDY GUIDE

AGENDA: CLASSIFIED



LETTER FROM THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

ESTEEMED MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL,

Under grave circumstances, we convene this emergency session as there is a direct threat to the sovereign integrity and strategic equilibrium of the Republic of India. You sit in this council not as generic delegates or ceremonial debaters, but as the principal architects of India's statecraft- commanding the Armed Forces, directing intelligence apparatuses, managing internal security and steering external diplomatic posture.

The strategic landscape before us has fractured. At **05:30 hours on 18 September 2016**, armed militants penetrated the administrative perimeter of the Indian Army's **12th Infantry Brigade Headquarters in the Uri sector of Baramulla district, Jammu & Kashmir**. Within minutes, pre-dawn incendiary strikes ignited fuel storage depots and tents, resulting in the martyrdom of 17 soldiers on site and leaving dozens critically wounded, while direct combat engagement neutralised four heavily armed terrorists.

As this council meets at **12:00 hours IST on 18 September 2016**, the clouds of smoke over Uri has not cleared, and the operational reality is unforgiving. Patience is being tested against public outrage, volatile border postures, and escalating asymmetric warfare across the Line of Control (LoC). The conventional binary between non-escalatory diplomatic posturing and full-scale war has collapsed. It is within this gray zone that you must formulate actionable, legally defensible, and tactically decisive countermeasures.

The Prime Minister's Office awaits your presence and response.

Sincerely,

Parth Mangal

(Prime Minister)

ABOUT THE COMMITTEE

Established on 19 November 1998 by executive resolution under the Atal Bihari Vajpayee administration following the strategic imperatives made apparent by the Pokhran-II nuclear tests. The **National Security Council (NSC)** stands as the apex collegiate institution responsible for advising the Prime Minister's Office on internal stability, military strategy, intelligence operations, and external diplomatic posture. While the President of India remains the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, executive command rests with the Prime Minister and the Union Council of Ministers. The NSC serves as the strategic clearinghouse where cross-domain power is synthesized. It removes bureaucratic barriers across previously siloed departments-bridging the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of External Affairs, the Ministry of Finance and the armed services- to formulate cohesive strategic policies during both peace and active kinetic conflict.

Composition:

- **The Apex Council (National Security Council / Cabinet Committee on Security):**

Chaired directly by the Prime Minister of India, with the National Security Advisor (NSA) serving as its secretary and special situation/crisis analysts, this tier acts as the country's supreme strategic decision-making authority. Its core ministerial core comprises the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS): the Minister of Home Affairs, the Minister of Defence, the Minister of External Affairs, and the Minister of Finance. In times of acute crises, this tier functions as a virtual war room. The Chief of the Army Staff, Chief of the Naval Staff, Chief of the Air Staff, and the heads of intelligence agencies attend as permanent invitees, providing direct battlefield updates, operational assessments, and options for kinetic or asymmetric retaliatory measures.

- **The Strategic Policy Group (SPG):**

Presided over by the Cabinet Secretary, the SPG serves as the premier bureaucratic engine and civil-military coordination mechanism of the NSC. It brings together the top civilian, military, and financial executives of the Indian state, including the Chiefs of Staff of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, the Foreign Secretary, Home Secretary, Defence Secretary, the Secretary (Research) of R&AW, the Director of the Intelligence Bureau (DIB), the Secretary of Defence Production, the Chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes, and the Governor of the Reserve Bank of India. The SPG is mandated to conduct comprehensive strategic defense reviews, model emerging geopolitical threats,

evaluate procurement bottlenecks, and operationalize the strategic directives issued by the Apex Council.

- **The National Security Advisory Board (NSAB):**

Functioning as an independent advisory body, the NSAB is composed of distinguished non-governmental security scholars, retired military flag officers, veteran diplomats, and strategic analysts. Appointed on fixed terms, the board provides long-range threat assessments, structural doctrine evaluations, and policy perspectives, insulating long-term national planning from day-to-day crises. Notably, it was the first NSAB that drafted India's initial Draft Nuclear Doctrine in 1999, establishing the core tenets of Credible Minimum Deterrence, No First Use (NFU), and massive punitive retaliation.

National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS):

Housed within Sardar Patel Bhawan and operating under the direct authority of the National Security Advisor, the **National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS)** provides the operational support and daily strategic assessments for the Council. The NSCS coordinates the **Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC)**, which collates, analyses, and evaluates raw intelligence feeds from the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), the Intelligence Bureau (IB), the National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO), and the Directorate General of Military Intelligence (DGMI). By filtering inter-agency friction and resolving intelligence contradictions, the NSCS ensures that the Prime Minister and the Apex Council receive actionable operational briefs. It is also charged with monitoring the execution of cabinet-level National Security Directives, overseeing critical communications infrastructure, and coordinating operational war gaming exercises across the civil-military bureaucracy.

NATURE OF PROOF / EVIDENCE ACCEPTABLE IN THIS COMMITTEE

The following categories constitute admissible evidence and will be accepted as credible by the Executive Board:

1. **Official Intelligence & Intercepts:** Verified signal intelligence (SIGINT), communication intercepts, technical assessments, and situation briefs generated by primary statutory intelligence agencies- including the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), the Intelligence Bureau (IB), the Directorate General of Military Intelligence (DGMI), and the National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO).
2. **Physical & Forensic Artifacts:** Direct battlefield materials recovered on-site and authenticated in post-engagement manifests. This includes GPS navigation coordinates, captured weapons and ammunition serial batches, ordnance packaging markings, manufacturer stamps on rations or medical supplies, biometric profiling, and forensic telemetry.
3. **Government & Parliamentary Records:** Formal statements delivered on the floor of the Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha by the Prime Minister, Defence Minister, External Affairs Minister, or Home Minister; gazetted statutory notifications; and formal white papers or judicial inquiry reports (e.g., the Kargil Review Committee Report).
4. **Bilateral & International Legal Accords:** Legally binding bilateral agreements and joint declarations defining state commitments- such as the 1972 Simla Agreement, the 1999 Lahore Declaration, and the 2004 Joint Statement- as well as relevant multilateral frameworks under public international law.
5. **Multilateral Sanctions & Transnational Bodies:** United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Sanctions Committee listings under Resolutions 1267/1989/2253; Financial Action Task Force (FATF) mutual evaluation reports on terror-financing compliance; INTERPOL Red Notices; and evidentiary dossiers submitted to foreign governments or multilateral institutions.
6. **Official Diplomatic Communications:** Formal diplomatic notes verbale, demarches, transcripts of bilateral summits, and accredited statements issued by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) or foreign ministries of relevant sovereign states.
7. **Operational Military Logs:** Declassified unit war diaries, border observation post (BOP) logbooks, ceasefire violation (CFV) trackers maintained by the Directorate General of Military Operations (DGMO), and aerial reconnaissance readouts.

What Cannot Be Considered:

1. Unverified rumors, anonymous leaks, and open-access forums (e.g., Wikipedia, unverified blogs, defense opinion forums).
2. Sensationalist media reporting, speculative prime-time television debates, or unnamed "sources say" stories.

Note: Any event, intelligence reveal or diplomatic development dated and timed after 18 September 2016, 12:00 PM IST will not be considered as credible evidence.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

1. The Doctrine of Asymmetric Warfare & Proxy Confrontation

The strategic friction between India and Pakistan following the 1998 nuclear tests in Pokhran and the Chagai Hills established a paradox of deterrence in South Asia. Operating beneath India's conventional military superiority, adversarial strategic planners operationalized a doctrine of asymmetric proxy warfare, colloquially termed "bleed India with a thousand cuts." By utilizing non-state proxy outfits- predominantly **Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)** and **Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM)**- hostile elements sought to tie down Indian security formations in counter-insurgency grids while maintaining plausible deniability. This posture calculated that the presence of nuclear capabilities would restrict New Delhi from mounting significant cross-border conventional retaliation.

2. From 26/11 to "Strategic Restraint" and its Discontents

The baseline of Indian strategic response was historically defined by strategic restraint. Following the **2001 Indian Parliament attack**, Operation Parakram witnessed a ten-month-long full-scale military mobilization along the International Border and Line of Control. While it imposed severe economic costs and elicited diplomatic commitments in the 2004 Joint Statement, it also revealed mobilization delays that gave international actors time to intervene diplomatically. This realization prompted the conceptual development of rapid-mobilization doctrines designed to achieve shallow, high-tempo punitive objectives without crossing adversary nuclear tripwires. However, during the **2008 Mumbai attacks (26/11)**, the Indian state opted for diplomatic isolation, international dossier diplomacy, and financial-sanction pathways via the FATF and UNSCR 1267, deliberately avoiding a direct military response. Over time, this doctrine of restraint faced mounting criticism within national security circles for failing to alter the strategic calculus of trans-LoC handlers.

3. Defensive Offence and Bilateral Outreach

Following the formation of the new government in New Delhi in May 2014, India's strategic doctrine signalled a transition from passive absorption to proactive deterrence, often articulated in strategic circles as a policy of "defensive offence." Initial foreign policy efforts attempted high-profile diplomatic outreach, including the historic invitation of SAARC leaders to the May 2014 swearing-in ceremony and the Prime Minister's surprise diplomatic stopover in Lahore in December 2015 to meet Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

4. Pathankot & The Summer 2016 Unrest

This diplomatic momentum was rapidly dismantled within days of the Lahore visit. On **2 January 2016**, a heavily armed Fidayeen module infiltrated and attacked the frontline **Pathankot Air Force Base** in Punjab, triggering an intense multi-day gunfight that killed seven security personnel. Despite India permitting a Pakistani Joint Investigation Team (JIT) to access the peripheral perimeter of the base in an unprecedented bilateral gesture, the process yielded no substantive accountability or prosecution of JeM commanders in Bahawalpur.

The internal security environment in Jammu & Kashmir deteriorated sharply on **8 July 2016** following the encounter death of Hizbul Mujahideen, commander Burhan Wani in Kokernag, Anantnag. The incident triggered widespread civilian unrest, continuous curfews, mass stone-pelting, and attacks on security convoys across the Kashmir Valley throughout July and August 2016. Taking advantage of the overstretched counter-insurgency security grid and divertive valley-wide deployment, cross-border launchpads along the Pir Panjal range and North Kashmir activated high infiltration volumes, culminating in the pre-dawn strike on the 12th Infantry Brigade Headquarters in Uri.

CHRONOLOGY AND SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

- **27 July 2015 - Dinanagar Police Station Assault (Gurdaspur, Punjab):**
Three heavily armed Lashkar-e-Taiba militants crossed the Ravi riverine sector along the International Border, hijacked a civilian vehicle, targeted a passenger bus, and stormed the Dinanagar Police Station. The ensuing twelve-hour siege resulted in the death of seven personnel, including a Superintendent of Police. GPS forensics recovered on-site established cross-border infiltration routes originating in Shakargarh.
- **25 December 2015 - The Lahore Diplomatic Stopover:**
In an impromptu bilateral overture following a visit to Kabul, the Indian Prime Minister landed in Lahore to meet Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif at his ancestral residence in Raiwind. The meeting signaled high-level political intent to revive the stalled Comprehensive Bilateral Dialogue.
- **02–05 January 2016 - Pathankot Air Force Base Siege (Punjab):**
A four-to-six-man Jaish-e-Mohammed fidayeen squad breached the perimeter of the Pathankot Air Force Station. In an operation lasting over 72 hours, seven Indian security personnel- including a Garud Commando and an NSG officer- were martyred before all attackers were neutralized. The incident marked a critical escalation, proving proxy assets were targeting high-value military installations rather than civilian targets alone.
- **27–31 March 2016 - The Pathankot JIT Precedent:**
In an unprecedented diplomatic and procedural concession, India permitted a five-member Pakistani Joint Investigation Team (JIT)- which included an Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) official- to visit the cordoned outer perimeter of Pathankot Air Base. The process stalled after the Pakistani delegation returned and alleged in domestic media that the attack was staged, denying evidence of JeM's Bahawalpur headquarters involvement.
- **08 July 2016 - Neutralization of Burhan Wani (Kokernag, Anantnag):**
Burhan Wani, the social-media-savvy operational commander of Hizbul Mujahideen, was killed alongside two associates in a joint operation by the Rashtriya Rifles and J&K Police. His death triggered massive civilian unrest, sustained stone-pelting, and attacks on security installations across the Kashmir Valley.
- **July–August 2016 - Mass Valley Unrest & Security Grid Stress:**
The Valley was placed under continuous curfew for over 50 consecutive days as widespread civil defiance paralyzed administrative machinery. Over 80

civilians were killed and thousands of security personnel were injured in continuous clashes. The operational absorption of Rashtriya Rifles units and Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) into law-and-order duties created vulnerabilities in the counter-infiltration second-tier grid.

- **17 August 2016 - Khawaja Bagh Ambush (Baramulla):**

Militants ambushed an Indian Army and J&K Police convoy at Khawaja Bagh in Baramulla along the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad national highway, killing two soldiers and a policeman before escaping into built-up urban pockets. This attack demonstrated active operational mobility within Baramulla district weeks ahead of Uri.

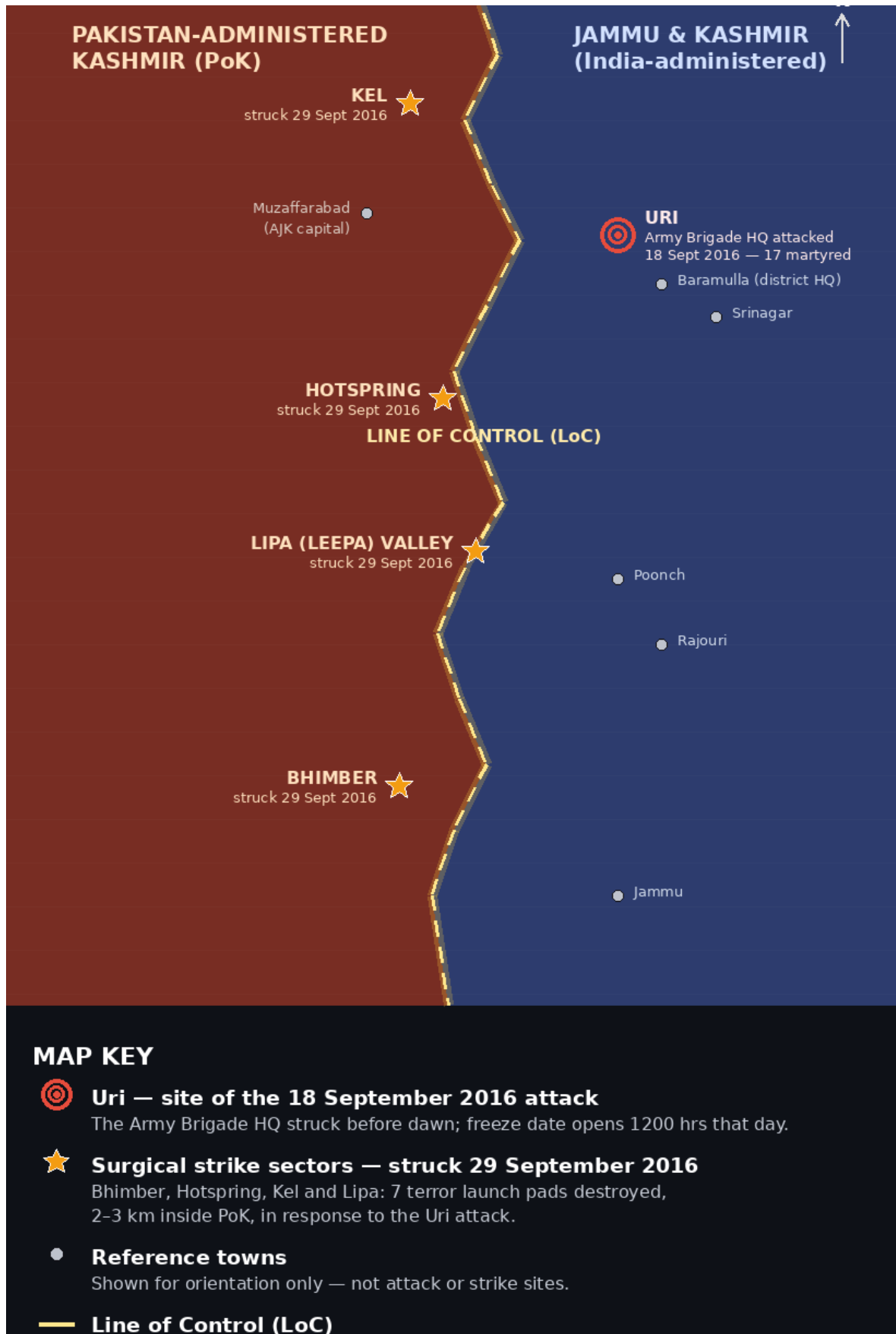
- **11 September 2016 - Poonch Mini-Secretariat Encounter:**

Four heavily armed terrorists infiltrated across the Pir Panjal Line of Control and took tactical positions inside an under-construction administrative complex in Poonch town. A policeman was martyred during a multi-day standoff, confirming coordinated infiltration attempts across multiple sectors along the LoC.

- **18 September 2018 - Day of Attack:**

At 05:15 hours, exploiting heavy mountain fog and riverine terrain along the Jhelum nullahs, a four-man militant team bypassed frontline observation posts less than six kilometres from the Line of Control. Cutting through the outer concertina wire along the rear perimeter, the attackers infiltrated the 12th Infantry Brigade Headquarters in URI.

CARTOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION





CRISIS UPDATE - 1

PRABANDH / NSC EYES ONLY

BREACH IN THE URI SECTOR

Time of NSC Meeting: 12:00 Hours, 18 September, 2016

Place of Meeting: *Confidential*

1. Infiltration

At 05:15 hours, exploiting heavy mountain fog and riverine terrain along the Jhelum nullahs, a four-man militant team bypassed frontline observation posts less than six kilometres from the Line of Control. Cutting through the outer concertina wire along the rear perimeter, the attackers infiltrated the **12th Infantry Brigade Headquarters in Uri**.

2. Casualty Manifest

The assault coincided with an ongoing battalion rotation: the **6th Battalion, Bihar Regiment** was actively relieving the outgoing **10th Battalion, Dogra Regiment**. With the station operating over capacity, troops were temporarily quartered in canvas tents and prefabricated shelters pitched adjacent to the brigade supply depot and diesel reserves.

At 05:30 hours, the attackers initiated a concentrated barrage of Under-Barrel Grenade Launchers (UBGLs), firing incendiary and high-explosive rounds directly into the canvas shelters and fuel drums. The resulting fuel firestorm swept through the transit lines within minutes. Seventeen personnel were killed on site- most immolated inside their quarters before they could extract or engage. Over thirty jawans have been airlifted to 92 Base Hospital in Srinagar with catastrophic burns and blast injuries.

3. Neutralization

The camp's Quick Reaction Teams (QRT), reinforced by combat teams from **4 Para Commandos (Special Forces)**, cordoned the depot area and contained the

attackers within the administrative barracks. In the ensuing room-intervention and close-quarter gun battle lasting over five hours, all four terrorists were neutralized. The garrison is currently undergoing sanitization to clear unexploded ordnance.

4. Recovered Material & Forensic Evidence

Weapons and material recovery from the encounter site confirm a specialized trans-border assault profile:

- Four AK-47 assault rifles fitted with UBGL assemblies and spent incendiary grenade canisters.
- Unspent hand grenades and 7.62mm ammunition rounds bearing identifiable ordnance factory lot numbers.
- Garmin GPS units with cached navigation coordinates indicating transit routes originating in Pakistan-administered Kashmir directly to the Uri garrison perimeter.
- Rations, combat medical packs, and communication sets with clear Pakistani markings, hinting heavily towards the involvement of **Jaish-e-Mohammed**.

The Council must answer the following critical questions today:

1. Is the forensic evidence sufficient to definitively establish Pakistani state complicity, or is this a rogue JeM operation?
2. Does the Indian Armed Forces have actionable, real-time intelligence on JeM launchpads across the LoC? Are we in a position to execute a covert, deniable kinetic strike (Surgical Strike) without triggering an all-out war?
3. If we choose the kinetic route, how do we manage the international narrative? Have we secured the tacit understanding of key global capitals to prevent immediate sanctions or intervention?
4. What simultaneous diplomatic, economic, and political isolating measures (e.g., Indus Waters Treaty, FATF, diplomatic downgrades) must be activated to punish Pakistan regardless of the military outcome?

SUGGESTION TO THE MEMBERS FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

The first update is given to you as a starting point and is created in a very basic approach as to ensure everybody's participation and on a basic idea that if India is in a position to retaliate. This is exactly what we will call your opening statements for the first committee session.

As members of the National Security Council, your opening statements in this inaugural session must move beyond generic condemnations and directly address the core strategic dilemma i.e. **"is India currently in a position to plan and execute a calibrated kinetic retaliation, and what immediate course of action must we adopt to formulate this plan?"**

With forensic evidence heavily implicating Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed and the nation demanding a decisive response, the Council must assess whether we possess the actionable real-time intelligence, military readiness, and diplomatic cover required to strike terror launchpads across the Line of Control, or if non-kinetic isolation must precede any military action.

Therefore, your opening statements must be highly specific to your portfolio's role in this potential retaliation. Military and intelligence delegates must brief the Council on target viability, operational risks, and the threat of domestic sleeper-cell backlash. Diplomatic, economic, and internal security delegates must outline how we will manage the inevitable international fallout, secure global non-interference, and maintain domestic stability while a strike is being planned. The objective of this first session is to synthesize these assessments into a unified, multi-domain Course of Action (COA) that transitions India from a posture of reactive shock to proactive, calculated deterrence.

Lastly you all would need to understand that the composition of this committee is made in such a way that all the portfolios present are extremely important to address the attack and in the planning of counter action. Therefore, we would like to welcome any new ideas and suggestions which can be incorporated in the final plan of action as the committee moves forward.

Best of Luck!

For any doubts, please write to us at parthmangal.muns@gmail.com & yashashwibhargava@gmail.com.

ADDITIONAL READING MATERIAL AND REFERENCES

1. Foundational Doctrinal Frameworks & Institutional Reviews

1. The Kargil Review Committee (KRC) Report (1999)
2. Draft Nuclear Doctrine of India (NSAB, 1999) & Cabinet Review (2003)
3. The Naresh Chandra Task Force Report on National Security (2012)

2. Bilateral Accords & Diplomatic Thresholds

1. The Simla Agreement (1972)
2. The Lahore Declaration & Memorandum of Understanding (1999)
3. The Joint Statement of Islamabad (2004)

3. Key Declassified Dossiers & Official Records

1. Ministry of Home Affairs & MEA Dossiers on the 26/11 Mumbai Attacks
2. National Investigation Agency (NIA) Chargesheet: Pathankot Airbase Attack
3. United Nations Security Council Sanctions Committee Documentation (Resolutions 1267 & 1373)

References:

- a. [Militants attack Indian army base in Kashmir 'killing 17'](#)
- b. <https://idsa.in/publisher/issuebrief/uri-surgical-strikes-and-international-reactions>
- c. https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/sanctions/1267?spm=a2ty_o01.29997173.0.0.495955fbnrPUWH
- d. https://www.icwa.in/show_content.php?lang=1&level=3&ls_id=1927&lid=538

Note: Research should not be limited to only these documents. This is a list to develop the fundamentals about the committee. Furthermore, comprehensive research is encouraged, recommended and instructed.