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## Sledgehammer to crack a nut

UP's plan to use the NSA for cow protection is frightening

**T**he Uttar Pradesh government has decided to use the National Security Act (NSA) — a law primarily enacted to deal with the defence of the country, India's relations with foreign powers, and the security of India — to deal with instances of cow slaughter and smuggling. Equating crimes like this as a threat to national security is taking things too far. The Uttar Pradesh DGP has permitted preventive detention of a suspected person for three months without bail in matters of cow slaughter and smuggling.

The move is not only scary but also disproportionate. Enacted in 1980, the NSA has draconian provisions which permit the government to detain a citizen on presumption alone without any recourse to challenge the detention order. Preventive detention envisaged under the NSA is different from ordinary detention under normal laws, i.e. the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC). Under the IPC and the CrPC, persons are arrested for having committed acts violative of the law. But under preventive detention, persons are arrested to prevent them from doing whatever the government does not wish them to do.

The use of the NSA in this context shows the lengths the UP police is willing to go to enforce cow smuggling laws. While the BJP has enacted cow protection laws in several states — Madhya Pradesh was the first state to use the stringent provisions of the NSA against its citizens. Last year, the Dewas district administration slapped the NSA against Anwar Mev, an office-bearer of the BJP who was expelled from the party after meat alleged to be beef was found from his house. He was arrested and sent to Ujjain Jail. But a question that is often asked is if the NSA puts irrational curbs on citizens' rights, why is it not struck down by courts? Because the states take the plea that prevention detentions are necessary to avoid potential public order situations. While state governments continue to enact rules for cow protection, there is a rising fear that the new measures towards cow protection could be used to harass the minority community.

## AAP is becoming overambitious again

Its nationwide agrarian protest must not be at the expense of governing Delhi

**F**ortune favours the brave, but this seems like sheer recklessness. Delhi chief minister and national convenor of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Arvind Kejriwal has decided to launch a nationwide protest on June 10 over the agrarian distress. This he hopes will reach out to rural people across India and help expand the party's base for future elections. This is commendable given the acute problems that farmers are facing. But politically, the party is going down the same route that did not pay off for it in the past — becoming too ambitious before consolidating. When it got the chance to make a real difference in Delhi for a second time, it frittered away its goodwill and time in a ruinous fight with the former lieutenant governor. In recent times, the party has been locked in a battle with the Election Commission of India arguing that the EVMs were rigged, leading to its defeat. A smart political party does not waste time on such things; it picks itself up, regroup and lives to fight another day. AAP has the huge task of governing Delhi and the excuse that others are not allowing it to work may be valid but wearing thin.

Mr Kejriwal's combative style alone won't work when Delhi is facing a scorching summer with all its attendant problems. He and his government should be seen to be addressing these rather than taking on a national issue in the hope that this will yield to future political gain. This is precisely the sort of cynical politics that AAP had said it would stay away from when it began. Recouping lost ground in Punjab should not be at the cost of Delhi. There were many schemes that the party began, among them mohalla clinics, that are in need of attention. No doubt the party is hobbled by the complicated nature of political power in Delhi, but it has not even been seen to try to deal with these since its poor showing in Punjab and the municipal elections in Delhi.

If one hoped that the recent defeats would have jolted AAP into some degree of realism, they are bound to be disappointed.

## Probability of a limited war is low

India and Pakistan, being nuclear armed, can do no more than engage in Hybrid War at present



HS PANAG

**W**ith cross-border firing between India and a Pakistani making headlines, some of the hotter heads in both countries have begun to argue, especially on social media, for an escalation of hostilities. The implication is that a limited war would somehow be decisive, by "teaching the other side a lesson, and making it behave." But is a limited war possible?

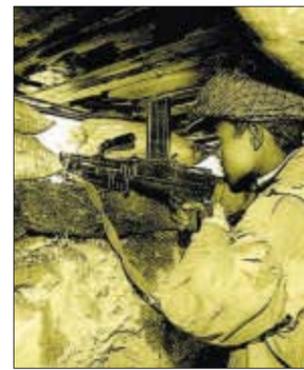
The answer is proverbial — it is possible but the probability is very low. At the outset two fundamental points must be made. First, nuclear weapon-armed states cannot fight a full-scale conventional war of annihilation or even absolute defeat of the adversary. However, below the "nuclear threshold" space exists for a limited war — limited in time, space and aims. Second, a war is waged to achieve political aims. A war of retribution is a war without an aim.

The nature of war has undergone a change in the last two decades. What we face today is a Hybrid War which is a complex hybrid of conventional, asymmetric, information, political, diplomatic and economic warfare. India is already engaged in a Hybrid War

with Pakistan. However, over the last 15 years we've remained below the threshold of a limited war. Kargil, 1999, was a classic limited war initiated by Pakistan. India also restricted its aim to restoration of status quo and won a victory militarily and diplomatically.

Due to primordial religious emotions, the deprivation of Jammu and Kashmir in 1947 and its dismemberment in 1971, Pakistan considers India as an enemy state and its political aim is to seize Jammu and Kashmir and achieve international parity with India. It has an unambiguous National Security Strategy to wage a Hybrid War backed by military, political and public consensus. Essential features of its strategy are: wage a deniable fourth generation warfare (4GW) in Jammu and Kashmir and hinterland of India; avoid a limited war and if it is forced upon it, stymie India with conventional capability, "irrational nuclear brinkmanship", and actual use of tactical nuclear weapons if required. India's political aim in relation to Pakistan is simple — prevent it from interfering in its internal affairs through a Hybrid War and if it does so, maintain good relations. To achieve its political aim India's strategic options are: contain the 4GW being waged by Pakistan; surgical strikes in PoK/Pakistan; wage a proactive limited war to compel Pakistan to stop a 4GW in India.

Pakistan has the capacity to respond in a quid pro quo manner to all Indian threats/actions below a limited war while continuing



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to wage 4GW in Jammu and Kashmir. Given its military limitations, it is disadvantageous for it to initiate a war. Thus the onus is on India, either to accept status quo or to force compliance through a limited war. And this scenario — a limited war with a nuclear backdrop — worries the world most. Will a limited war be cost-effective and decisive enough to force compliance on Pakistan? That the Indian government including the present one has not exercised this option despite the 1,000 cuts, answers this question.

Can a major change in the strategic situation force the Indian government to initiate a limited war? The casus belli could be a 26/11 type of attack or the situation in Kashmir going out of hand. Since terrorism is cali-

brated by the ISI it is unlikely to repeat 26/11 and despite the "intifada" the situation in J&K is militarily well under control. Can charged political and public emotions force the government's hand? In my view the present political leadership while exploiting and manipulating public emotions, is smart enough not to fall prey to them.

Since the probability of a limited war is very low, let me paint a hypothetical scenario. The year is 2022. Indian economy has grown at 8-10%. Major security reforms have been undertaken. Armed Forces have been restructured, and a clear technological military edge over Pakistan has been established. The situation in J&K is under control but Pakistan continues to bleed us with 1,000 cuts. International environment is in favour of "war on terrorism".

India's political aim is to compel Pakistan to peace on own terms. Essentials of likely politico-military strategy: the war will be initiated as a pre-emptive strategic offensive; maximum territory will be captured in PoK for permanent retention; a belt of 20 km relative to tactical objectives will be captured across the IB for post war negotiations; maximum damage will be caused to Pakistan's war Air Force, Navy and mechanised forces; damage will be caused to Pakistan's economic potential; all objectives will be achieved in 10 days, however, prolonged operations may be undertaken in PoK. Be prepared for use of Tactical Nuclear Weapons by the enemy.

Until the conditions for this hypothetical scenario are created it may be prudent to continue with "strategic restraint".

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The views expressed are personal

### SURVIVAL INSTINCT



Congress Vice President Rahul Gandhi with JD(U) leader Sharad Yadav, SP leader Akhilesh Yadav, CPI leader D Raja and RJD leader JP Yadav en route a public rally in Guntur

## Opposition efforts have no narrative or cohesion

Attempting to come together with a 'remove Modi' message alone may not work with the electorate in 2019



PRASHANT JHA

**I**ndia's opposition parties are very busy. As the Narendra Modi government celebrated its third anniversary, Congress president Sonia Gandhi hosted a lunch for opposition leaders. Seventeen parties — including those at war with each other like the Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party in Uttar Pradesh, and Trinamool and Left in West Bengal — agreed to coordinate inside and outside parliament, strategise for the presidential elections together, and work towards a common front in 2019.

Over the past week, these efforts shifted south. Rahul Gandhi, Nitish Kumar — who missed Sonia's lunch, Omar Abdullah, Sitaram Yechury and others travelled to Chennai to greet Muthuvel Karunanidhi on his birthday. Rahul and the other UP ka 'ladka', Akhilesh Yadav, also spoke at a rally in Guntur. Lalu Prasad has called a mega opposition rally in Patna in August.

What has triggered so much action? The opposition unity efforts come not because of sudden affection for each other — but pure and simple desperation and the instinct for survival. Three years after his election, Narendra Modi remains India's most popular leader by a long stretch. The opposition has recognised that if Modi stays

on in power, the rules of Indian politics may get entirely rewritten; and individually, they do not have the strength, resources, nationwide reach and capacity to take him on.

But if this impulse for opposition unity is obvious, what are its prospects?

On paper, if all opposition parties come together, they have arithmetic on their side for 2019. Do remember that Modi still has less than 50% vote share in key battleground states. The Bihar Mahagathabandhan model has the strength of numbers in other settings. For instance, if Akhilesh, Mayawati and Congress unite in UP, and carve out a Jatav-Yadav-Muslim unity, BJP is in trouble.

But politics is not just arithmetic. In an increasingly presidential-type contest, the electorate wants to know who the leader is much before the elections. The opposition parties may share a cup of tea, but to get any of them to accept another leader as the pre-eminent face before elections will be a challenge. A faceless opposition will be no match to Modi.

Two, besides the visible desperation, the opposition has not been able to articulate what is their common platform. Modi won on a mix of hope and resentment. The opposition is confused. It does not want to play up the secular-communal debate for fear of losing Hindu votes; it does not have a cogent economic message despite the jobs crisis. The electorate may not be satisfied with only a remove Modi message.

Amid all the action, the opposition needs to do some hard reflection.

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## Is Iran the new theatre of action in West Asia?

Under Trump, tensions with Tehran are set to rise. India can make tactical gains if it retains diplomatic flexibility



ASHOK MALIK

**W**ednesday's shootings in Tehran are being linked to the United States' solid backing of Iran's regional adversaries. They come in a certain historical context. From the end of World War II to the Iranian Revolution of 1979, the US became the anchor power in West Asia. It came to balance the predominant Shia and Sunni nations of the region, with both the Shah of Iran and the King of Saudi Arabia as allies.

The overthrow of the Shah changed all that. It made Iran the visceral enemy in America's eyes. The populist revolt in Iran was led by a radical clergy and this in turn triggered Islamist energies across West and South Asia. In a sense the world is still paying for that seminal moment in 1979.

Since the revolution, Washington has found it difficult to talk to much less collaborate with Tehran. Tehran hasn't helped. It has pursued a nuclear weapons programme illegally, even while being a member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. It has exported its radical ideas to militants targeting Israel — the Hamas — and to Yemen and Syria. Even platforms such as the Non-Aligned Movement — Iran hosted the summit in 2012 — have been exploited to abuse the US.

A breakthrough was made when US President Barack Obama offered Iran an agreement predicated on Iran capping its nuclear weapons programme or, realistically, significantly delaying it. More important, it gave the US and Iran the opportunity to have a semi-normal relationship.

While Obama's West Asia policy was all over the place, the tentative handshake with Iran was an achievement. It left his successor with the chance to strengthen ties with the Saudis and the Sunni Arab powers as well have a line open to the Iranians. While unlikely to be as ambitious as American dominance in the pre-1979 period, this

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expanded US options in the arc of terror extending from Afghanistan to Syria and in the war against the Islamic State (IS).

Obama's successor Donald Trump had different ideas. His close advisers instead sought an entente cordiale with Russia. Trump's early calculation was he could reject Iran and make up for the absent space by aligning with Russia, bringing Moscow's firepower to the conflict against IS.

This plan proved a non-starter. Trump's Russia outreach is dead in the water. On the other hand, as the US president's recent speech in Riyadh showed, he has placed himself squarely in the Sunni corner. While claiming the US was divorced from the sectarian struggles of the region, he repeatedly attacked Iran and did what he could to please his friends in Riyadh. They responded with a large military purchase.

In the normal course, a good equation between the US and Saudi Arabia would have gladdened Pakistan. However, Trump's position on Islamabad's role in the Afghan crisis is not obvious. His national security adviser has said all the right things but the big political statement on Afghanistan is awaited. This is crucial for Iran, which is now going to be an even more determined spoiler in Afghanistan.

Iran began in the 1960s by backing Afghan Shias. Mercenaries descended from that engagement have been deployed in Syria and among Hamas. In the 1990s, Iran began supporting Farsi speakers in Afghanistan, not limited to Shias, as the civil war between Farsi and Pashto speakers intensified. Post-9/11, Iran gradually aided Sunni Pashtun commanders of the Taliban in the name of Islam and against US "occupation".

Simultaneously, Iran-Pakistan tensions have risen along the border the two countries share. This is partially a result of Sunni supremacists in Pakistan targeting Shias and partially a consequence of Iranian Balochi rebels being sheltered in Pakistan, including, Iran suspects, by American agents.

What will this lead to? In an unlikely extreme, the Pakistan-Iran frontier in the Balochistan region could become a Sunni-Shia fault-line. More immediately, Afghanistan could become a busier theatre for Iranian intervention. Iran could target Pakistani assets, in case the Trump-Saudi-Rawalpindi alliance is renewed — or it could compete with Pakistan for assets, in case Trump cuts off Islamabad.

This is not India's war. Yet, New Delhi can make tactical gains if it retains diplomatic flexibility.

Ashok Malik is distinguished fellow, Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi

The views expressed are personal

**innervoice**

STAY POSITIVE IN TOUGH TIMES AND YOU CAN CONQUER THE WORLD

### Neba Bhalla Khanna

Dreams, ambitions, goals and the pressure to achieve them in the first attempt has made this generation so vulnerable that even a single thought of failure scares them, with many taking extreme steps such as suicide. But who are they punishing by doing so? Their family and loved ones! So, it's important to make these young, impressionable minds understand that every single failure is an experience in itself, which will lead them to their goals.

The importance of "the power of the brain" must be inculcated. The most beautiful thing about the brain is that depending on the way you nourish it, it will bear the fruit in that flavour. Instead of thinking what could probably go wrong, we must think about the best that we have, and can achieve. Tell yourself, 'I can do it and I have to do it'.

Here's an incident which changed my outlook: there was a competition for tug of war in a school between team A and B. Team A was strong in physique. Team B wasn't,

but one of its players was mentally very strong. As the game started, team A took the lead, as predicted. But the one strong player in team B did not give up, and gathered all his strength to give tough competition.

Seeing his endless efforts, other weak members of team B also gave it their all, and eventually won the game. So, don't lose heart, ever!

Inner Voice comprises contributions from our readers.

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