

# CAUTIOUS CHINA URGES INDIA, PAK. TO IMPROVE TIES

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: India - Pakistan

Lu Kang

China on Tuesday has responded cautiously to Indian air strikes across the Line of Control (LoC), criticising New Delhi for taking unilateral action but urging both India and Pakistan to improve ties.

Asked to comment on India's assertion that it had targeted terrorist camps and not Pakistani military sites, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lu Kang said New Delhi should have avoided unilateral action, and instead dealt with the situation through "international cooperation".

"As for India's claims on taking action against terrorism, fighting terrorism is a global practice. It needs to be dealt with by international cooperation. And India needs to create a favourable condition internationally for that," Mr. Lu said.

China has repeatedly placed a "technical hold" on designating Masood Azhar, head of the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) — a UN designated terror group based in Pakistan — as an international terrorist by the 1267 committee of the UN Security Council, as demanded by India and other Permanent members of the Council. The JeM has claimed responsibility for the February 14 attack on a paramilitary convoy that killed 40 troops.

But instead of singling out India for steps to defuse the crisis, Mr. Lu advocated that the onus was on both New Delhi and Islamabad to cultivate a "sound relationship".

"We have taken note of relevant reports. I want to say that India and Pakistan are important countries. A sound relationship and cooperation serves the interests of peace and stability in South Asia. Both parties (should) remain restrained and do more to improve bilateral relations," he said.

## Call for dialogue

Chinese news agency Xinhua reported that on Monday, Chinese Foreign Minister and State Councillor Wang Yi called upon India and Pakistan to ease tensions arising from the Pulwama attack "through dialogue as soon as possible and avoid an escalation of the situation". He urged both sides to collaborate on fighting terrorism and jointly safeguard the security and stability of South Asia.

The Chinese Foreign Minister advocated a bilateral engagement during a telephonic conversation with his Pakistani counterpart, Shah Mahmood Qureshi.

China is expected to further elaborate on its stance on Wednesday, when Mr. Wang meets External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj on the sidelines of the Foreign Ministerial meeting of Russia-India-China (RIC) in Wuzhen in East China.

Russia, led by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, is also expected to weigh in on the post-Pulwama situation between India and Pakistan.

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