



EDITORIAL: **THE HINDU**

GENERAL STUDIES 3: INTERNAL SECURITY

DATE: 20.05.2025

TOPIC: TERRORISM

In the wake of crisis, the need for bipartisanship

1. Context and Introduction:

- The **terrorist attack in Pahalgam on April 22, 2025**, reignited public grief and concern over national security.
- The editorial stresses the importance of **national unity** and **bipartisanship** in moments of crisis.
- It warns against using **national security as a platform for political showmanship**, urging for mature, non-partisan responses.

2. Dangers of Politicising National Security:

- In India, a recurring issue is the **political exploitation of national tragedies** for electoral gains.
- Example: After the **Pulwama attack in 2019**, swift military retaliation became part of campaign narratives, overshadowing long-term strategic discourse.
- This **shift from national interest to party propaganda** weakens India's security preparedness.
- The politicisation of grief **undermines both defense effectiveness and democratic values**.

3. The Challenge of Combating Terrorism:

- Terrorism demands **decisive, well-coordinated, and ideology-neutral responses**.
- Counter-terrorism must not be **guided by partisan interests or public pressure**.
- Key decisions on:
 - Counter-terror operations
 - Intelligence reforms
 - Diplomatic strategiesshould be taken through **strategic, long-term planning** involving consensus-building.
- National security must transcend political divisions.

4. Historical Examples of Bipartisanship in India:



Kargil Conflict (1999):

- Despite political rivalry, BJP and Congress **stood united**.
- Policies during the war focused on **national security, not party narratives**.
- Sonia Gandhi, then Congress president, praised the armed forces for their heroism.

Surgical Strikes (2016):

- India's response to the Uri terror attack was **measured and strategically communicated**.
- The action earned **cross-party support**, reflecting rare bipartisan consensus in recent times.

5. Global Examples of Bipartisanship:

United States (Post-9/11):

- Political parties collaborated to deliver a **swift, coordinated security response**.

New Zealand (Christchurch Attacks, 2019):

- Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern passed **bipartisan gun control reforms** within weeks.

Europe (Russia's Invasion of Ukraine):

- Broad political unity emerged to support Ukraine through **military aid and sanctions**.
- Neutral countries like **Sweden and Finland joined NATO** with cross-party support.

6. The Need for National Unity in Crisis:

- In critical times, **national interest must take precedence over party agendas**.
- Unity ensures **more effective action, a clear message to enemies, and public confidence** in governance.
- The Pahalgam attack should be treated as a **national challenge**, not a political opportunity.

7. Foreign Policy and National Interest:

Non-Partisan Diplomacy:

- Quote from the author: "There is no Congress foreign policy and no BJP foreign policy; only Indian foreign policy."
- Reflects the ideal of **policy continuity and national focus**, regardless of which party is in power.



1994 UN Delegation on Kashmir:

- PM Narasimha Rao appointed **Opposition Leader Atal Bihari Vajpayee** to lead India's delegation at the UN.
- **Salman Khurshid**, a Congress minister, served as his deputy.
- This act of **bipartisan diplomacy** confused Pakistan and strengthened India's global stance.

8. Decline in Bipartisan Spirit:

- Political discourse in India has grown increasingly **hostile, polarised, and bitter**.
- Parties now act as **enemies rather than adversaries**, eroding the core democratic principle of mutual respect.
- Constructive engagement is replaced by **extreme rhetoric and confrontation**.

9. Role of Social Media and Political Polarisation:

- The **Overtone Window**—acceptable discourse in public debate—has narrowed.
- Discussions are driven by:
 - Historical resentments
 - Revenge politics
 - Social media manipulation
- **Polarised narratives replace nuanced reasoning**, impacting even private conversations and national security debates.

10. Consequences for National Security:

- **Security issues become arenas for political blame games**, not strategic planning.
- India-Pakistan relations demand:
 - **Firm, united condemnation of terrorism**
 - Avoidance of **turning security matters into electoral tools**
- Internal division signals **weakness to adversaries** and emboldens them.
- Inflammatory language has **no strategic value**—only fuels mistrust.

11. Way Forward – A Unified National Approach:



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MAKING YOU SERVE THE NATION

Goal

Mature Politics

Aligned Diplomacy & Defense

Balanced Security Approach

Harmonized Democracy

Key Requirements

Place national interest above political competition

Ensure India's diplomatic posture complements its defense strategy

Maintain equilibrium between strong counter-terror action and internal stability

Encourage democratic dialogue that fosters national cohesion and unity

12. Conclusion – Statesmanship Over Showmanship:

- Effective leadership requires:
 - **Clarity instead of chaos**
 - **Statesmanship instead of populism**
- Protecting India is a **shared responsibility** that transcends party lines.
- In times of national tragedy, **bipartisanship must be more than symbolic—it must shape real action.**
- A **secure, stable, and resilient India** depends on the maturity of its politics and unity of its purpose.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/in-the-wake-of-crisis-the-need-for-bipartisanship/article69594987.ece>