

US, UK, France backs India to ban Masood Azhar in UNSC



Since the Pulwama attack of February 14, India has been pushing the ban of Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Masood Azhar in the UNSC. Backing India - the US, UK and France have submitted a fresh proposal in the UNSC to designate Masood as a global terrorist and making him face a global travel ban, asset freeze and arms embargo.

Amid the tensed situations between India and Pakistan after Pulwama, India carried out a preventive non-military air strike by the Indian Air Force on JeM terror camps in Balakot as a retaliation, the move that took Pak by surprise. In response to the air strike, Pakistan has been continuously conducting military infiltration and ceasefire violations in the Poonch region at LoC. But besides military actions, both the nations are trying to create diplomatic pressure, with India pushing for ban of Masood Azhar in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC); and Pakistan will certainly try to raise the problem in the Council.

In a fresh development, India received support of three significant nations - the US, UK and France, who submitted a proposal at the UNSC to designate Masood Azhar as a global terrorist on Wednesday. All the three nations are veto-wielding members of the UNSC, and even Russia is expected to back the proposal as expressed by Moscow earlier. It will take 10 days for the Council to consider and decide on the proposal submitted; and if the proposal is passed, Azhar will be tagged as an 'UN-designated global terrorist' and he would become subject to global travel ban, asset freeze and arms embargo.

However, all eyes are now on the all-weather ally of Pakistan - China, who might step up on behalf of its protégé and repeat the blocking of such proposals, like a number of times before. But for India, it has already succeeded in diplomatic talks with China and Russia to agree that it is important to remove the breeding grounds of extremists - a thinly veiled reference to Pakistan. With a three-nation diplomatic meeting in the Russia-India-China (RIC) format ongoing in China, India will attempt to build up the maximum diplomatic pressure. But for now, the ban of Masood Azhar in the UNSC remains to be a vexatious question.