

Concept and Environment of National Security

MAJOR GENERAL MN RAWAT

"When war comes it dominates our lives...It challenges virtually every institution of society-the justice and equity of its economy, the adequacy of its political systems, the energy of its productive plants and wisdom and purposes of its foreign policy."

—Walter Millis

INTRODUCTION

WE as a Nation have seldom paid serious attention to the subject of National Security in our country. The result has been that from the times of Alexander's invasion the indigenous powers have been found to be unprepared against foreign armies. The invading hordes of Kushan, Scythians, Huns, Muslim rulers of petty states and small European powers who had utilised their economic surpluses to buttress their political ambitions with modern and strong armed forces for those times have succeeded in their designs with a regular monotony. Local population has never seriously opposed an invading army throughout our recorded history. Even since independence, "India has been forced to use its armed forces on five occasions against external powers and for preservation of our internal security in Nagaland, Telengana, Naxalbari, Mizoram and on numerous occasions in aid to civil power. If we wish to learn from history, and do not wish it to be repeated with such regular frequency, we will have to pay a lot more attention to national security. No nation has been able to achieve development without ensuring secure environments against stresses and strains posed by the international power system. While we have achieved a viable and vibrant political set up by means of adult franchise, federal constitution and social control of economy, we have not been able to do the same in the sphere of national security.

CONCEPT ON NATIONAL SECURITY

Walter Lipmann has defined security in the following terms and I quote 'A nation has security, when it does not have to sacrifice its legitimate interests to avoid war and is able, if challenged, to

maintain them by war." National security has to be the concern of every citizen who values the sovereignty of his country. It over-rides all other considerations, for without secure environs, an individual or society cannot live and develop in lawful freedom. The technological revolution of the current century coupled with far-reaching political, sociological and economic changes that have swept the world has made the ability of a nation to protect its internal values from external threats a very complex problem. Henry Kissinger has stated that "National Security Policy...In its widest sense, comprises every action by which a society seeks to assure its survival or to realise its aspirations internationally." The basic factors that govern national security are political, technological, economic, psychological and social, we will discuss these separately.

POLITICAL

The important aspects of political factor that affect national security are:-

(a) *Dynamic International Relations.* The problem of security is inextricably linked with the development of nation-states. Nation states like England, France, Germany, Russia, Japan and United States during their development came in conflict with the existing environment and had to earn their eventual place in the hierarchy of nation-states after a series of wars. As a developing nation possessing the second largest population, the third largest technical manpower and being capable of changing the existing hierarchy of the Nation-States, India is bound to come into conflict with International environment. Conflict with superpowers which desire status quo and with those powers who may have to go down to ladder is, therefore, inevitable unless we reconcile to retain subordinate status in international environment at the cost of our national interests.

(b) *Superpower Interests.* The superpowers have kept the international political environment in a state of flux as they move from the era of confrontation and containment towards detente and strategic arms limitation and again to gaining spheres of influence and proxy wars. Most of the recorded 150 conflicts since 1945 whether national or international have been as a direct result of interaction between superpowers. It should be quite evident that Cuba could not have posed threats to countries in Africa without active support it received from a superpower nor could Pakistan become a threat to India without active support it received earlier from USA and lately from USA and China. China's efforts to achieve a major power status and parallism that USA sees in her gaining a sphere of influence in SE and South Asia similar to one that USSR achieved by Brezhnev Doctrine after Helsinki accords of Nov

1975, will influence the security environments for India for a long time to come.

(c) *Internal Events of Neighbours.* Pushing of millions of East Bengali refugees into India in 1971 which threatened communal harmony of our country was a subtle threat to our internal values and thus to our security. Similarly, our successful elections and formation of linguistic states which contributed to our national stability gave rise to similar demands leading to the first ever election in Pakistan in December 1970 and its eventual bifurcation. Honest elections conducted by India in March 1977 again led to considerable disturbances and to the present military rule there. Similarly, Chinese model is considered a threat by some nation states who have certain contradictions in society and consequent vulnerabilities. President Nasser's coming to power in Egypt had important repercussions in other neighbouring states.

(d) *Diplomatic Pressures.* Countries which are prone to subversion may face threats to their security from within aided or abetted by external encouragement or material aid. The coups engendered in Iran, Guatemala and Chile in 1950's by the Central Intelligence Agency of USA are common knowledge. So is the training and material aid given to Naga and Mizo hostiles by China and Pakistan. Similarly, pressure was applied to India to arrive at a settlement with Pakistan on Kashmir when we were looking for arms aid from the Western powers in 1962. Numerous examples of such political pressures directly or indirectly applied are available in the history of the newly independent states of Africa and Asia.

(e) *National Aspirations.* In addition, national aspirations may change with changes in external or internal environment and these will also help to shape the evolution of a national security policy. We cannot today depend on aid from the United States like we got in 1962. Article IX of the Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty can also be nullified by the Chinese acceptance of "No War Pact" offered by USSR on numerous occasions. We have, therefore, to depend on self reliance. The simplistic faith of our elites that we will be rescued whenever hard pressed by one or the other superpower must now be changed to a more concrete foundation. Similarly, we will have to evolve a satisfactory solution to reconcile the aspirations of minorities, linguistic and tribal groups and regional centrifugal tendencies.

TECHNOLOGICAL

Advanced nations today safeguard their technological secrets more intensely than their military secrets. Transfer of technology is used today to gain influence over the receiver-country's policies, to make for scale of economies in the donor-country or to increase their

own employment. The more advanced a technology is, the more difficult it is to get on commercial terms. The acquisition of less sophisticated technology, however, poses a problem of fast obsolescence. Nuclear as well as sophisticated conventional weapons can be produced by only a few industrialised nations. The twin pillars of military power in this country are mass production and large scale research. Until World War II the former was all important but increasingly military power today flows from organised research, science-based industries, highly skilled workers and the brain power of scientists, engineers and managers. While escalating cost of arms race is a significant factor in the US-Soviet detente and Strategic Arms Limitation or Reduction Talks, there has been a brisk international traffic in weapons. Nations, therefore, do not appear to have abjured the use of force to settle their international problems.

While we got full-scale plants for manufacturing products, we have not acquired the associated design technologies to be able to go forward from these, especially in the desired fields. Our economic and scientific plans were not matched earlier and even now have not been made by an integrated planning forum. Both economic and science and technology plans had been conceived and executed without regard to their implications on National Security. Defence has not only been considered separate from development, but our intellectual elite have been fed on the impression that they are mutually exclusive and even contradictory. While we have concentrated on import substitution, we have not given attention to give direction to original research and development. We can acquire self-sufficiency in technology soon, provided we import the best design technology in the desired fields and develop these further by earmarking our best scientific talent and enough economic resources to retain the state of art. We should not then have to take recourse to future imports of technology or finished products in vital sectors of our economy and for national security needs like we had been forced to import various generations of aircrafts, tanks, steel mills and electronic components. Technological independence alone can avoid diplomatic pressure from industrialised countries.

Technology has also increased man's ability to feed himself and create a better life for his family and society. It has helped to spread the word of these advances further and faster than ever before. It has, therefore, created a revolution of rising expectations. If one political system will not satisfy these aspirations then another will and if it is not readily available by peaceful means then violence will

appear to be justified to younger generations. Technology has, by increasing cost, speed and frequency of change, has reduced the value of custom, tradition and precedent as standards of international behaviour, lessened the predictability of actions and thus helped to make international balance and stability far more fragile.

ECONOMIC

Foreign aid and investments have been used as a potent instrument for exercising political influence on developing nations. Foreign aid, like in our case of PL-480 aid, had increased dependence on the donor country. The green revolution only started after PL-480 shipments of grain had been cut off. Dangers from foreign investments as exemplified by ITT, an American firm in Chile and Union Miniere in Congo are too well-known to need an explanation. Restrictive trade practices also come in the way of development of third world countries and all the efforts of UNCTAD have come to little avail to-date.

Even though economic potential and finance is the vital nerve of war, in the age of sharp, short conflicts, it is clear that industrial potential has lost a great deal of its significance. After the outbreak of a short conflict the side whose forces in being, are superior will gain a decisive advantage. The age which permitted mobilisation of potential resources like in World War II is gone for ever. Even in the World War II economic might of the allies was of no avail till 1943. Economic might of France and USA did not win them victory in the jungles of Vietnam.

PSYCHOLOGICAL

The desire for security is motivated by fear. The fear of a threat, generates the desire to have power. We should be able to realistically assess potential long and short term threats to our security, so that we could develop a balance of power against them as also to make intervention by their more powerful allies too costly to be acceptable to their people. The nature of such power in our case need not have offensive capability as we have no desire to covet others territory or the necessity to impose our will on others. We will, however, need to develop 'defensive' as well as 'deterrent' power, the former being "the ability of a state to avoid coercion by another" and the second meaning "the ability to present certain threats or actions from being carried out by posing an equivalent or greater threat". Precautionary defensive policy and deterrence would, therefore, mean the capability to take preventive action to curb an aggression. We need not and should not adopt a purely defensive policy

like waiting for an enemy to come upto 'Panipat' before taking action. Precautionary defensive policy which Britain followed, to ensure that Antwerp or Tibet were not occupied by a potentially hostile power, should be adopted, as by the time the opponents' intention becomes clear, it may be too late to affect them.

Similarly, deterrence depends upon aggressor's assessment of risks and operates not on credibility but uncertainty. If aggressor has even a reasonable doubt that the defender will retaliate, he is unlikely to launch his aggressive design. If deterrence is successful, aggression does not take place. An effective deterrent strategy thus has an inbuilt pressures to strengthen the arguments of those who argue that a defence effort is unnecessary. We often hear the later argument in our press and inspired comments by our so called experts. We should, however, remember President Kennedy's words: "Today the expenditure of billions of dollars every year spent on weapons... ..is essential to keep the peace."

SOCIAL

Social stresses and strains impinge on the quality and solidarity of human resources and the competence and character of the leadership it throws up. Elites under Chiang-Ki-Shek and Tsars ignored the interest of the nation and satisfaction of their sectoral interests alone led to revolutions. Even in the past indigenous empires and kingdoms have over run by invading hordes due to passiveness of our common people. The area South of R Kaveri where people opposed the invading hordes of Samudra Gupta, Malik Kaphur, Allaudin Khilji and Aurangzeb could maintain its independence till British were able to sow dissensions. We have in the past been treating the interests of our power elites as synonymous with those of our nation. Thirtytwo years of planning has shown that the income disparities have grown and so has the unemployment. We have to develop a commonality of interests between the elites and the masses so that we develop a society which is viable, has united and dedicated human resources and which throws up competent leaders with strength of character to evolve a credible and self-reliant policy for development and National Security.

THE CONCEPT OF NATIONAL POWER

It is frequently assumed that a nation's power is simply the sum of its tangible and intangible resources. This definition, however, fails to do justice to the concept of power. When two nations have equal capabilities to wipe each other from the face of earth, their

power vis-a-vis each other would be nil. That happened in the bipolar world of 1950s and 60s and this allowed comparative freedom of action to smaller states. The relational and psychological aspect of power is crucial. Real power of a nation depends on what other nations perceive it to be. Some time a leading nation might by doubly careful not to provoke an irresponsible leader of some smaller state like Idi Amin of Uganda or wait deliberately for the right time to exploit favourable environmental conditions. However, in an emergency or in anticipation of conflict, it is the capabilities that count. The physical capabilities of a nation depend upon tangible factors like geography, natural resources, size, population, economy, technological advancement, social and political stability and institutional framework of Government. None of these, however, are decisive by themselves. Russia whose vast size and climate defeated Charles XII of Sweden, Napoleon and Hitler, was in 1904 brought low in a naval battle by tiny Japan. Similarly, mere possession of natural resources is, by no means, decisive, for example, Brazil. Afghanistan and Congo are not global powers inspite of having rich natural resources. It is the use that a nation is able to make of these natural resources, which makes it powerful. The latter depends on the country's economic and industrial development and its command of an advanced technological base. England, Germany, Japan prior to World War I and Soviet Russia and United States since assumed great power status based on their strong industrial economies. Similarly, population can become the basis of national power provided it is used profitably in the development of modern industrial base which, in turn, makes possible a first-rate military establishment.

The psychological aspect of the power chiefly concerns intangible factors like national character, morale, ideology and national leadership. National character is highly elusive, and contrary to common belief, is constantly changing. The roots of national character and morale as source of power are probably to be found in the culture, historical experience and social structure of nations. The sudden collapse of Germany in 1918 can be contrasted to its fanatical fight to the last in 1945. Similar is the change in the tremendous staying power of the Red Army in World War II to that of Russian Army in 1918, or that of the Peoples Liberation Army as opposed to the Chinese Army under Chiang-Kai-Shek. It would, therefore, be seen that national character and morale provide tremendous reservoirs of power but are variable commodities and can be cultivated if desired, as had been done in the case of North Vietnam lately. These can be reinforced by ideologies like Napoleon's vision of "Equality, Liberty

and Fraternity". Hitler's idea of "Superiority of the Aryan Race" and the faith in the "Ultimate triumph of communism", held by the Soviet Union and the Chinese leadership. Finally, the quality of the nations' leadership and the image it projects upon the world are important sources of power. If the leadership is defective, all other resources may be of no avail as the use of all the tangible and intangible resources of power is decided by the leadership of the nation through proper governmental organisations. The early triumphs of Nazi Germany were the product of Hitler's mind but so was the final act of its national suicide. India under Nehru in 1950s wielded much greater power than physical attributes would justify. These yielded certain valuable results, both in anti-colonial struggles all over the world and in cold war issues. However, when the same was tried in an environment of emergency in 1962 the importance of capabilities revealed itself in its stark reality. This brings us to the question of understanding the internal and external environment that conditions the problems of National Security.

ENVIRONMENT OF NATIONAL SECURITY

National Security of a country depends in a large measure upon the dynamic and ever changing international environment, the hostility or friendship of which is rarely certain and never absolute. Every nation attempts to enhance its power and influence; to promote well being and progress of its friends; to create beneficial, political, economic, cultural and military links and to deny resources and support to its adversaries, potential or presumed. A desire for equality, dignity and individual rights has given rise to nationalism in all the 157 states who speak with equal voice in the United Nations irrespective of their power. Their conflicting interests, ideologies, world-wide and regional rivalries have led to disruptive tendencies for world stability.

The vast destructive power of modern weapons, revolutionary changes in the field of transportation, communications, command and control systems brought about by technology have led to new and far reaching developments in strategic doctrines, tactics and organisation. Man may not yet be able to improve much upon what Alexander did to Tyre or Rome to Carthage, but the ability to do it within minutes, from thousands to miles away has revolutionised the concept of war and peace. 170 urban centres in USA containing 75 per cent of manufacturing industry, 55 per cent of population and 80 per cent of managerial talent can be destroyed in the first one hour of general war reducing superpower into a third rate one. There is, therefore, a strong

urge among the superpowers to avoid all situations leading to war among industrialised powers or violate their vital national interests. The Cuban missile crisis of 1962 was significant not only for bringing the two superpowers to the brink of war, but also for the alacrity with which one of them backed off. This had led to a strategy of deterrence and a high state of preparedness.

Since 1945 the superpowers, despite occasional confrontations have pursued their rival interests by classic devices of arming proxies, fomenting revolts and winning loyalties of client states. The past decades have seen an alarming rise in frequency and intensity of inter-states, anti-colonial and insurrectionary wars. All these had, however, been limited in aim, scope and use of weapons for superpower's dread of escalation to nuclear wars. They have been able to control these due to dependence of developing states, used as proxies, for the supply of their armaments on industrial powers, large cost of maintaining weapons inventories which get obsolescent very fast and the conflicting interests of superpowers which put a restraint on the quantity and quality of armaments that either camp makes available to the area of conflict.

The quality of national security policy and its decisions depend on soundness of our assessment of short term threats and trends in the international strategic environment which would affect our security perspective over the long term. The character of war, the tensions between the wars and a long lead time required for preparation of weapon systems specially those of the Navy and Air Force coupled with rapid obsolescence due to technological innovations calls for assessment of military capabilities of all our potential adversaries not in isolation, but in conjunction with their economic strength, scientific achievements, political intentions and psychological and social vulnerabilities. We will also have to assess their ability to acquire these capabilities from superpowers and other regional powers. This assessment has to be a continuous process and should be done separately to meet current preparedness and future orientation of research and development.

The following factors of international environment which have implications on National Security have to be considered in our context:-

- (a) Though the danger of nuclear war between the two superpowers has receded on the continent of Europe after Helsinki accords of November 1975 which gave a similar advantage to USSR to that enjoyed by USA in the Western Hemisphere since 1823 by Monroe Doctrine, the competition for spheres of

influence in the continents of Africa and Asia has, however, not only continued but intensified. Similarly, the Sino-Soviet rift in the context of which, in Chinese perceptions India figures as leaning towards the Soviet Union, will continue to pose problems for our security. Superpowers will also not like India to upset status quo of the hierarchy of nations by developing an independent power centre. Similarly, the strife in the international environment will continue to pose problems to our national security till we reach our destined place in the hierarchy of nation states.

(b) Pakistan and China are likely to continue to have an adversary relationship with this country for some time to come. Short-term improvement of relations with Pakistan due to its own internal problems and indications from China to reduce tensions due to their pre-occupation with their northern borders should be treated as bonus. Pakistan has considerably enhanced its military capabilities since the 1971 War and has been spending around 9-10 per cent of its GNP or 45 per cent of its budget on defence. It is also determined to develop a nuclear weapons status and assume the lead of Islamic states to achieve a major regional power status and military parity with India in spite of strains created for its economy. China has indicated its stake in the sub-continent by her military aid and championship of Pakistan, their support to anti-Indian stance of Bangladesh and Nepal, their arms aid and training to Naga and Mizo hostiles and their moral support to the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist). China sees itself as a natural leader of the Third World and wishes to ensure that India remains totally independent of Soviet influence. It is the capabilities of potential adversaries that have to be taken into consideration while preparing for national security and not their immediate intentions as intentions in a dynamic international environment are never static. Fate of our security will be decided much before either of these countries reach 'Panipat' in future.

(c) The USA has not fulfilled its treaty obligation to defend South Vietnam and has not been firm in its commitments to Japan and Taiwan in its eagerness to reach a detente with China. Lack of its credibility in Europe led De Gaulle to develop its own independent nuclear deterrent. It sees parallelism of interests with Communist China in its confrontation with USSR. In fact, according to some reports, American policy makers feel that China must be allowed its own sphere of influence in South East and South Asia. Similarly, USSR has no intention to go to war with China, has offered a 'no war pact' to China over the border issue, which could be made operative at short notice like its predecessor the 'Non-Aggression Pact' with Hitler in August 1939. India must, therefore, develop its own self reliant defensive and deterrent power.

(d) Increased energy requirements of the Western industrialised nations and Japan and increased flow of sophisticated

armaments to West Asia have security implications to India by transfer of arms and surplus petrodollars to Pakistan. Its assumption of leadership of Islamic states in the context of upheavals in Afghanistan are clear indication of such polarisation. Even conflict of countries like Iraq and Iran with imported weapons poses threat to our security due to our dependence on Middle East Oil. There is also an increased tendency to exploit religion on the part of Pakistan's present leadership. We have also to contend with the vital interest of the United States of America in Gulf area. The location of Pakistan on the mouth of Persian Gulf and its proximity to USSR, makes it indispensable to the United States. USA had released weapons to Pakistan in 1973 long after it had made USA to shift its base from Peshawar and was no longer counted to contain communism in Afghanistan. The same interest has forced USA to cultivate Pakistan now.

(e) Increasing unemployment, widening income disparities, large scale spread of poverty with social contradictions, like problems of language, minorities and tribal populations, call for a faster rate of industrialisation, modernisation, national integration and equitable distribution of incomes. The two tasks of industrialisation and building of military power had been achieved simultaneously by England, France, Germany, Japan and Soviet Russia. China is trying to achieve the same these days. It is, therefore, vital for us to undertake these two vital tasks simultaneously. It is only then we will be able to contain the fissiparous tendencies apparent in our border states in the North East, Jammu and Kashmir, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

India may be advised, in the circumstances, to keep out of all these troubles and concentrate on its development. We have seen that inspite of India's effort in the fifties to stay non-aligned but by remaining militarily weak, USA armed Pakistan and China decided to humiliate India on the border question. What would, however, be apparent from the above is that international relations and security threats are dependent upon each other and this conforms to the famous saying of Clausewitz that "War is a continuation of political intercourse with an admixture of other means."

CONCLUSION

Given the conditions where defence policies, strategic principles and military weapons are changing fast, the governmental organisations for the higher direction of war cannot afford to remain static. Though relieved by occasional talks on detente, Strategic Arms Limitation and Cooperation and Security, the world environment today continues to remain as predicted by

he great historian and philosopher. Arnold J Toynbee, "We must expect in the round world of today to be under seige for as long as we can see ahead". The weapons of mass destruction have both increased and dramatised the stakes. In the state of armed preparedness where satellites of superpowers scrutinise every military movement and are able to disseminate that information over world-wide fast communications, where "Salus populi suprema lex" . . . "The safety of the People" is the Supreme Law, mere partial response to a bold challenge—reaction instead of initiative, vacillation as compared to an affirmative policy-making—may well decide our future in the hierarchy of Independent Nation States for a long time to come. It is time we decided for an independent course to earn overdue place in the Hierarchy of Nation-States irrespective of the cost involved.

Join
United Service Institution
Of India

(Founded : 1870)

For the furtherance of

INTEREST AND KNOWLEDGE IN ART,
SCIENCE AND LITERATURE OF THE
DEFENCE SERVICES

For Particulars, write to

Secretary, U.S.I.

'KASHMIR HOUSE'

RAJAJI MARG, NEW DELHI-110011