Indian Security : The New Great Game

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"Now I shall go far and far _____ into the North Playing the Great Game"

Rudyard Kipling
Kim, 1901

Introduction

India is poised for an historical opportunity of emerging as a dominant player in the world economy and polity. The vast untapped potential of the country in its multiple dimensions has been universally realised, recognised and acknowledged. The Indian diaspora is becoming increasingly assertive and is seen as an engine of growth and prosperity even in the West and in Europe. India's strengths are ironically its vast population, educated youth, appetite for energy and consumer goods and the growing military power. The long and hard battle that the country has waged to emerge as a resilient democracy, overcoming many ideological and militant revolutions, has also paid rich dividends. India today is a stellar example of "establishing democratic rule in the Third World". This evokes memories of India poised as it was in the 19th Century, a jewel in the British Crown, sought by colonial powers, Britain, France and Russia. This was the period of the Great Game, immortalised by writers as Rudyard Kipling. Today it is a player in the emerging great game of resources, trade and economy. The dimensions of this New Great Game are, thus, multi-spectral, yet there is a security dimension to it which is considerably significant and needs greater exploration.

Aim

The aim of this paper is to define security dimensions of India's economic and political growth from the perspective of the "Great Game".

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The Great Game

The Great Game was the 19th Century battle for the control of Indian wealth. The Russian empire surreptitiously supported by the French increasingly forayed across Central Asia and the Indo-Afghan frontier in an attempt to reach the gates of the Indian sub continent. The British, no mean empire builders, employed great subtlety, subterfuge and intrigue to combat this threat. Local leaders and intelligence guides, adventurists and powerful war lords were mustered through typical British skills at organisation to beat the Russians in a battle of wits and stratagem over an extended period. A number of Indian military commanders and intelligence agents had a prominent role to play in this Great Game. These were Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Zorawar Singh, Mohan Lal besides renowned British figures, Younghusband, Pottinger and Arthur Connolly.

The Great Game was marked by an aggressive forward policy by the British as against the advice of the "masterly inactivity school", which did not want to stir a hornet's nest.[1] It was adventurist nationalism at its best. There was limited use of conventional armed forces but reliance on local forces, sabotage and subterfuge, Information warfare, deception and deceit were effectively used to gain positional advantage. It had a primarily geographic dimension, located on vast wasteland of Central Asia.

The new Great Game on the other hand is a conflict over resources, energy including oil, nuclear and hydro power. Strategic minerals, trade, information technology and knowledge are all goals to be sought by the players. The size of a country's market and demand will also be significant in attracting investment and growth. Defence will be an important constituent of the Great Game because India's military capability is envied and its arms build up vied by multinational corporations. The geographical landscape of these manoeuvres will be spread over Central, West, South and South East Asia, and the Indian Ocean. The aggressive competitors will be the United States of America, China, Russia and India. The benign competitors are envisaged as the European Union, Japan, Australia and other large states. Non state actors both commercial and disruptive terrorist organisations will have an important role to play in this Great Game.

India's Strategic Strengths

India's strategic strengths, which enable it to participate in this New Great Game are now well established. The peace and prosperity of a multiethnic, multireligious democracy, which has succeeded in overcoming the vestiges imposed by partition is the country's greatest strength. India has lately made rapid progress in the quality of governance. Fall in the failed states list from 79 to 93 in just one year is one indication.[2] The jump in competitiveness index of states from 39 to 28 is another. These are all indications of long term success benchmarked against global states. India's demographic strength is indicated by the Malthusian dividend rather than the bomb of 500 million working age population by 2025. This is the most productive populace which is enterprising, risk taking and outgoing. The intellectual capital in the big league information and knowledge age signified by the Business Processing Outsourcing segment graduating towards the value added knowledge sector is fast denoting the country's strength. This is also indicated by the 2.5 million graduates every year who pass out from Indian colleges with approximately 250,000 engineers. This signifies 28 per cent of the available global work force as opposed to 11 per cent of China.[3]

India is likely to be the third largest economy by 2030. It has $ 160.677 billion foreign exchange reserves-one of the largest amongst developing countries. The low cost of compensation of production workers in the manufacturing sector which is below $ one per hour as opposed to developed nations as the USA, which is above $ 20 and the European Union, above $ 25, provide it manifold advantages. Then there are 10 to 30 million people of Indian origin living across the globe, equivalent to the population of Australia or Canada, which form a powerful source of influence. Indian industrial strength is signified by Mittal Steel, which has seen the French giant Arcelor running for Russian cover. The automobile and auto ancillary sector is another key strength of the country. India is one of the largest diamond traders with an industry value of Rs 70,000 crore per year. Thus, we see in India a resource hungry and demand heavy state, with over one billion population. The energy, consumer and infra structure appetites spell great opportunities for Indian and global corporations.

India's Vulnerabilities – The Security Dimension

India's vulnerabilities in the New Great Game, denoting crisis created by opportunities are that growth and disruption will be concomitant. There are a large number of failed states in the Great Game area as well as on the periphery of Indian territory. Resources are best acquired from the near vicinity and all land and sea routes pass through or are astride our neighbouring states. India is also surrounded by states that are either openly or ideologically antagonist as well as powers skeptical of the country's growth. These are likely to create hurdles towards smooth attainment of our objectives. The perils of the New Great Game were evident with the kidnapping and killing of two Indians in Afghanistan. Working on green field projects of infra structure development in the war ravaged state of vital significance to India, Kutty and Suryanarayana were brutally killed by the Taliban, allegedly at the behest of the Pakistan's intelligence agency, the ISI, which demanded that all Indians in Afghanistan leave the country. The outrage in the country was understandable, but this is the price we will have to pay to participate in the Great Game. The cost, however, can be reduced through better awareness of the threats and being better prepared for it.

The internal security dimension of the country is no less challenging as it affects economy and growth. India's rural landscape is a vast market of 128 million households with limited spending power. The urban market is roughly 45 million households with large paying capacity. However, the problem lies in over 200 districts of the country in the grip of severe law and order strife bordering on militancy. Some say the country is in a state of stable anarchy. Others give India's internal security, two points on a 10 point scale.[4] The increasingly para military nature of militancy in the Maoist dominated so called Compact Revolutionary Zone is a cause of serious concern as it is showing signs of a, "state within a state", with its own system of justice, taxation and governance. The organisation of Kashmiri militancy is at a lower level, a form of networked terrorism, but has a higher degree of political sensitivity and lethality. On the other hand, sporadic violence mars the landscape in the North East with splintered terrorist groups operating at will in many parts of the hilly areas. Ironically, all these areas are rich in natural resources and are also attractive tourist destinations.

The above factors denote that expansion of national power in the economic sphere has to be accompanied by growth of security power. The East India Company flourished solely because it was supported by the British state. The dimensions of security power in modern times will be kaleidoscopic where military will be the primary but not the only means. While soft power is likely to dominate, the varied dimensions of military capabilities need to be understood. There are environmental and economic proportions to this threat which need consideration. Societal security is also of increased importance with approximately 30 per cent of the Indian population living below the poverty line, 50 per cent of population in Indian cities living in slums and water and electricity, a perennial problem both in urban and rural areas, the imbalance needs to be specifically controlled.

We live in a Hobbesian World, "poor, nasty, brutish and short".

But there can be no retreat from this reality. As the weekly *Economist* has said with reference to terrorism, "It is a dangerous illusion to suppose that another retreat by the civilized world would satisfy the appetite of the terrorists and get them to leave us alone – such a retreat would convince the terrorists that free nations will change ... policies, forsake ... friends, and abandon ... interests whenever ... confronted with murder and blackmail".

THE ENERGY GAME

Energy Security

Energy security will be a key factor in the New Great Game. Energy security entails long term measures to adequately maintain the required supply of energy resources both domestic and imported in the country at all times and at minimum cost. This includes not just security of the sources of supply but other issues such as extraction and refining, economical purchase through buyer's power, distribution, environmental effects and avoiding manufacturing fraud. The US spends $ 50 billion a year on oil security deployments in the Gulf Region. India's energy requirements are gigantic. The requirement of power by 2031-32 is estimated to be 7,70,000 MW. With oil price threatening to breach the $ 100 per barrel mark and depleting resources of coal, the energy mix of hydro, oil, gas, coal, nuclear and unconventional

sources has to be carefully strategised to enable stable long term energy security. Alternate energy sources will provide 8300 MW by 2009 while nuclear energy is targeted at an ambitious 40,000 MW by 2030. Notwithstanding the above, gas and oil will be the prime constituents of the energy mix with gas forming 25 per cent of this overall combination.

70 per cent of India's crude is imported and all of it comes by sea. India is expected to be the largest importer of oil by 2050 and our oil consumption is expected to rise to 150 million tons by 2020. India's gas requirements by 2024 are said to be 125 billion cubic metres (BCM) of this 52 BCM are likely to be available locally while the balance of about 75 BCM will have to be obtained from abroad. 70 per cent of the gas reserves in the World are said to be in North and Central Asia and the Gulf countries. The same is true of oil reserves. Russia is another important player in the oil and gas energy space. World polity is increasingly focused on the energy resources in the Caucasus with the BTC (Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan) Pipeline commissioned on 28 May 2006 and the United States politically undercutting Russian influence amongst CIS nations with the formation of the Organisation for Democracy and Economic Development in Ukraine. Thus, we see the opening stages of the new Great Game unfolding.

Building strategic relations with the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus along with West Asian states to include Iran, Iraq when it gets going fully, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan is of critical importance. Myanmar too will be a key energy ally of the country. While our focus has also been in obtaining oil rights in countries as Syria where a 50:50 partnership between Oil and Natural Gas Company (ONGC) and China National Petroleum Corporation marked a new beginning as also in Sudan, Sakhalin and the Nam Con Son Basin in Vietnam, these will only enlarge our strategic capability and are too far out to provide continuity in supplies. For this we have to depend on the immediate neighbourhood. Thus, the SAARC region including Afghanistan is of considerable significance to the country for oil security. Transportation of oil and gas will be multi modal. If it comes by sea, the security of the sea lines of communications assumes importance. In case it comes through oil pipe lines, and this appears to be the way ahead, these pass through antagonist states as Pakistan to the West and Bangladesh in the East; more over

Balochistan, a province of Pakistan is seeing rising insurgency which is beyond the control of the Government in Pakistan. Under such a situation energy security assumes critical importance. The experience in Assam where oil pipelines have become a target for anti national elements also rings an alarm. The vulnerability of pipe lines in other countries some of which are antagonists is also a cause of concern. While diplomatic measures may provide a modicum of security, some of it would involve physical guarding of assets which may have to be carried out through proxy forces as the Americans have done in BCT. The key pipelines, which are in the offing in the Indian context are as follows:-

(a) **TAPI.** The Turkmenistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan gas pipe line project. The length is 1921 kms to Multan. This has the backing of the Asian Development Bank. The cost is $ 3.5 billion and the extension to India is likely to cost $ 600 million. It will deliver 55 MCM. 1200 kms of the route is sensitive.

(b) **IPI.** This is the Iran–Pakistan–India gas pipe line which is 2720 kms long with a cost of $ four billion and delivering 90 MCM per day. 760 Kms will pass through sensitive areas.

(c) **MBI.** The Myanmar–Bangladesh–India pipeline, with a total length of 897 kms, the cost is $ one billion. It has a capacity of 33.5 MCM per day. 289 kms passes through sensitive areas.[5]

Another option for laying pipe lines is by outflanking antagonist states. The Myanmar pipeline is proposed to bye pass Bangladesh and the Zaranj–Delaram route via Iran is under construction to provide an alternative approach to Southern Afghanistan, given Pakistani sensitivities to Indian forays into its back yard. All these issues highlight the need for security.

India is also emerging as a refining hub with lucrative margins of $ two per barrel the highest in the World. Pipeline manufacture is also an important area in which India is leading. The coast of Gujarat is emerging as a key area. Its proximity to Pakistan and the internal turbulence in the state is a cause of concern. Thus, the security of the port areas and the sea lanes also needs some consideration. Vulnerability of India's off shore installations, which are said to be worth Rs 175,000 crore, is also important as 68 per cent of India's oil production comes from offshore resources.[6]

In terms of security from the vagaries of world oil price and cartels as OPEC, the efforts initiated by the former petroleum minister, Mr Mani Shankar Aiyar to form an Asian or a Sino Indian cartel free of the New York Mercantile or the London Brent Crude Index needs to be pursued with vigour. In India, Mumbai appears to be the ideal location for such an Asian oil trading hub, given the strength of the financial capital in equity and commodity trading and the dynamic investing and trading community of the country.

Nuclear Energy

Nuclear energy is also assuming considerable significance given the need for environmentally superior mode of production. With a target of 40,000 MW, the Indian nuclear energy potential is attracting a large number of state and non state energy suppliers lining up for their share of the pie. France is a key nuclear energy producer, so are private players as GE, Areva and Westinghouse. The US interest in the Indo–US Nuclear agreement needs to be seen from the perspective of opening of the Indian nuclear energy market as of great commercial interest for America. To that extent it can be reasonably assumed that the outcome of the US Congressional approval to the Agreement will be positive. International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor project (ITER) is a programme conceived by the United States, Russia, China, Japan, Korea and the European Union to build a reactor with hot fusion. India has been granted admission in this exclusive club. The large hardon collider project is being built by the European Organization for Nuclear Research (Organisation Européene pour la Recherche Nucléaire commonly known as CERN). ITER is to provide unlimited, clean and cheap energy wherein one kg of fusion fuel would be able to produce the same amount of energy as 10 million kg of fossil fuels. The reactor is expected to be built by 2016.[7] India thus needs to approach the nuclear issue with growing strength and not diffidence. The countries in question have an increasing stake in India's energy market and will veer towards granting it entry into the NSG shortly.

Hydro Power

With the turbulence in Nepal showing some signs of receding there is a scope for improvement in relations with it, which is significant from the energy point of view as it can be a major source of hydro power for India to the tune of 43,000 MW which

include the following projects under consideration[8] :-

(a) West Seti Hydro Project.

(b) Upper Karnali.

(c) Pancheshwar.

(d) Sapta Kosi.

(e) Sun Kosi.

(f) Burhi Gandak.

(g) Kamla Multi purpose.

(h) Bagmati.

ECONOMIC DIVIDEND

The next significant facet of the Great Game is of economic security. India's potential is vast though it is still a small player in the global economic sphere. The potential lies in prospects rather than the present output. Market players consistently predict India's rise to the first three economies of the global order any time from 2030 to 2050 based on individual predilections. Suffice to say the potential is largely unrealised so far. Some hard facts may be more relevant. Indian exports were $ 120 billion in 2005-06, doubled in two years from 2003-04. India's foreign exchange reserves are $ 162 billion up over 10 times in as many years from the doom faced by us in early 1990's. Indian market size is also huge and a back of the envelope calculation will denote that if the one billion population spends $ one a day average, it would imply $ one billion a day or $ 300 to 400 billion dollars a year. Thus the country is seen as a major point for investment by global, national as well as multinational entities.

The security of trade through the sea is of considerable significance for India's economic growth. 90 per cent of India's trade by volume and 77 per cent of trade by value worth $137 billion is seaborne. Indian shipping has registered 584 merchant ships making it amongst the 20 largest maritime nations of the world and there are as many as 200 major and minor ports on India's coast line. In terms of international shipping, 60,000 ships transit through the Indian Ocean every year carrying goods

estimated to be over $1800 billion. Of $ 200 billion worth of oil coming through the Strait of Hormuz annually, $ 60 billion worth passes through the Strait of Malacca, with approximately 11 million barrels of oil moving through Malacca every day.[9] India's geographical location and peninsular structure enables it to dominate this area and ensure its security. The coast line off Somalia, the Gulf of Aden, Bangladesh and Indonesia has emerged as piracy infected areas of the World in the past one year or so. With resurgence of Pakistan in the maritime sphere aided by China and increased threat from piracy and crime on the high seas, security of trade routes for economic growth is of considerable significance for the country. An improved perception of security in this region will boost our trade with Pakistan, Iran, West Asia and South East Asia amongst other countries.

In the internal security sphere, economic growth is linked to development of infra structure. The National Highway project is making slow progress over the years and an additional 1113 kilometres has been approved by the Cabinet recently. This is in some of the strife prone areas. It needs an umbrella of security. In the air fields segment, out of 454 airports in the country, 170 are non operational. If these are developed it will generate growth of these areas so far removed from development. So would the additional ports which are being developed on the East as well as West coasts with Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh taking the lead. This will provide considerable boost to internal growth provided we are able to ensure security.

Another key issue in economic security is that resource rich states of the country, Chattisgarh, Orissa, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Jammu and Kashmir and the North Eastern States are under varied influence of militancy. Most of these are rich in coal, iron ore, minerals, oil and forest produce. The Bailadila mines in Chattisgarh which produced 15.75 Million tons of Iron ore earned a massive Rs 2100 crore profits in 2005-06. Assam has produced five million tons of oil out of the 30 Million tons domestic production. 1.3 billion tons oil and 1.56 billion cubic metres of gas reserves are said to be in this critical North Eastern state, while there are 55 oil exploration blocks on offer. Internal security, thus, needs to be focused not merely on political issues but also economic facets of stabilising growth.

In the international sphere, trade wars are imminent, with denial regimes, trade barriers and sanctions followed by preferential funding used as a route to foster interests by developed countries including China of late. The flooding of goods from China is a stark reality which the manufacturing lobby in India seems to have accepted. Perhaps as it has only affected the small players, the toy and the lock manufacturers it has been considered as a closed chapter. But the 1000 suicides in the Indian small scale sector is a cause for concern. Measures as free trade regimes and economic alliances need to be created to overcome these economic challenges. Indian companies such as United Breweries are facing impediments in acquisition of foreign entities as Taittinger while the NRI, Mittal is facing resistance to acquire Arcelor and emerge as the largest steel maker of the World. There is a need to provide some institutional props to our entrepreneurs stymied by foreign protection interests.

Evolution of the Asian Monetary Union is a long way off. India will have to devise a strategy to overcome these encumbrances and derive major concessions based on the size of its strategic as well as retail market. For instance the Indian and Air India deal for aircraft from Boeing and Airbus is worth $ 9.3 billion, a number of other air lines are also contracting aircraft. The large size of the demand needs to be leveraged to advantage to gain concessions.

Smooth functioning of finance, stock markets, trade and currency with a level playing field is another area of grave concern. The dimensions of money laundering are said to be worth $ 800 billion to $ two trillion per year globally. Loss of developing nations such as India is said to be $ 50 billion per year. The underground economy is sustaining terrorist organisations in Jammu and Kashmir as well as other parts of the country. Counterfeit currency is another move in the great game of undermining economic security of the country. Pakistan is the usual suspect with multiple routing through Bangladesh and Nepal. The volatility of the stock market is another cause of concern. It is said that 85 per cent of the investment in the stock market is speculative. Foreign Institutional Investors operating from Mauritius are a key factor, some of whom are acting as fronts for influential Indian players. The nexus of bankers-stock brokers and finance companies continues to be exposed from time to time. Corruption is another major issue of

concern for economic security. Mr N Vittal the former Chairman of the Central Vigilance Commission termed it as financial terrorism. In the Mumbai blasts of 1993, RDX was smuggled into Mumbai by a bribe of Rs 20 lakh leaving 200 plus dead, while in a recent incident, in Russia, explosives were smuggled on aircraft by paying a bribe of $ 16 or Rs 650/- leaving over 300 dead. In Jammu and Kashmir the cost of a grenade being thrown on a vehicle is sometimes ludicrously low as Rs 150/-. This in turn causes major social disruption in the country as seen post the Mumbai blasts. Thus we see that while India has great economic potential, its canalising towards effective contribution to stability can be achieved by measures to secure its vulnerable outposts.

SPACE DIVIDEND

Space is another area where the country has considerable leverages in the New Great Game. The budget of the ISRO is $ 700 million a year, with most of it in capital intensive development activities. The space field is an internationally integrated one. Thus international participation is seen in projects as the Chandrayan moon mission in 2007 – 08. There were 30 international responses when the project was floated for international participation. While an outer space treaty exists which denies national sovereignty over outer space, there are threats which arise in space on issues of geosynchronous orbiting. Tonga has already declared rights over its geosynchronous space in which these orbits operate, as also other equatorial countries are planning to do so shortly. Exploitation of the moon may lead to conflicts over mineral and other resources. The preparedness of the country to face such challenges in the realm of space is unknown. The much vaunted Aero Space Command could perhaps provide some focus of appreciating the threats which may arise from space exploration, presence and utilisation.

DEFENCE DIVIDEND

Indian arms build up has a security and economic dimension. While it would enhance our deterrence it would also provide a boost to economic growth in the manufacturing sector. India's defence budget appears to be creeping towards the magical Rs 100,000 crore or $22 billion. The distribution is likely to be 50:50, revenue and capital. This will imply an arms accretion of $11 billion per year. The principle beneficiaries will be the Indian

Navy and the Indian Air Force, which is aiming to be a precision strike force by 2015. The Indian Artillery is slated to acquire 1600, 155 mm guns in the next 15 years. The list of major Indian arms acquisition is impressive as given below[10] :-

(a) 8 Maritime surveillance aircraft.

(b) 6 Mid air refuelling aircraft.

(c) 80 Medium lift helicopters of the MI 17 class.

(d) 66 Hawk advanced jet trainers.

(e) 3 Airborne warning and control systems.

(f) 126 fighters for the Air Force.

(g) 60 advanced light helicopters.

(h) Light combat aircraft.

(i) Intermediate jet trainers.

(j) Medium transport aircraft in the 15 to 20 ton class.

(k) 66 hawk jet trainer – Rs 12,000 crores.

(l) Aircraft Carrier Gorshkov – Rs 12,000 crores.

(m) Phalcon AEW from Israel – Rs 10,000 crores.

(n) 24 diesel powered submarines.

(o) The helicopter acquisition list is also very impressive. The Army Aviation is seeking 60 helicopters off the shelf and 137 from HAL at a cost of $ 500 million. The total bill is of $ 1.5 billion and has also projected a requirement of 500 attack, high altitude reconnaissance and medium lift aircraft.

(p) The Indian Coast Guard is bidding for 60 helicopters by 2017.

(q) The IAF is bidding for 80 MI 17 class, while the Navy is negotiating for 16 helicopters for anti submarine warfare to replace the older Sea Kings.

The economic dividend lies in government policy of 30 per cent offsets, which is relatively modest as there is more leverage

for bargain in strategic deals. The offsets would imply that foreign companies need to outsource approximately 30 per cent components to Indian industry, implying massive potential for growth in the country's manufacturing sector. Are we exploiting this strength enough to gain maximum advantage from our vast defence import market? This is a question which needs to be pondered over. Aggressive price negotiations employing sophisticated tools and expert advice are called for. Any savings accrued would provide additional resources for development in other areas. We do not seem to be doing enough in this sphere. Indian companies are also increasingly building up their defence production capacities. BEL, BHEL, BEML and other public sector companies are leading equipment producers. Larsen and Toubro and TATA group are manufacturing 40 Pinaka MBRL each while Tata group has shown interest in other areas of defence manufacturing. India has also embarked on an ambitious missile production programme. The BrahMos Cruise missile can be produced at the rate of 400 missiles per year and the scale is over and above the indigenous requirement. The IBSA route adopted of cooperation between India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) in three different continents may provide us an entry into the lucrative South American and African defence market.

IT AND TECHNOLOGY DIVIDEND

The trend in the IT industry denotes a movement from stand alone computers to the internet to mobile, "internet". Mobile phones are increasingly used for political as well as commercial activities including social disruption, economic transactions, entertainment, general information and finally communications. Blog power exclusive to the internet is also extending to mobile phones. India by sheer force of numbers today can colonise the global IT software and services industry. Though its overall share is still very low. IT exports of the country are Rs 100,000 Crore or $ 22 billion. Software exports are slated to increase to $ 60 billion by 2010. China has exports of $ 180 billion while the US exports are $ 149 billion. We have a lot to catch up.

However, there is increased focus on high end work and we are no more seen as software coolies. There are increased signs of reverse off shoring with the Taiwan Institute of Information Industry setting up off shore development in Chennai's Olympia Park and INFOSYS hiring 300 Staff from the US Universities.

The key area of concern once again is security which has multiple dimensions today to include technology disruption, economic anguish as well as social mayhem. Mobile networks are increasingly vulnerable as 200 viruses have been discovered in this space. The vulnerability of the internet is well known. There are 17 million users of the internet in the country today and soon it will be the number one internet using nation in the World that is if the mobile revolution does not overtake the internet one. The large number of B2B AND B2C transactions on the internet and on mobile phones enhance vulnerability of these media. We have to expand beyond the present policies, organisations and implementation to ensure fool proof security of our information sphere.

India is doing well in the field of space, nuclear, energy, telecommunications, web services, bio technology, robotics, nano processes and information. In the information technology field alone we are having major advantages in RFID, remote infra structure management, knowledge process outsourcing and intellectual property creation.

Media Power Supplementing the Great Game

A quote from His Highness the Dalai Lama on media power appropriately brings out the impact of modern media "The power of the media whether direct or indirect is a real power which acts on us, which modifies our behaviour, our tastes and probably our thoughts." Media will have an increasing role to play in supplementing the Great Game. Information power can be used for national growth, control social disruption and ensure balance. However, this is an emerging field and any effort for attaining balance are being seen as control, by the media, inviting adversarial reactions. On the other hand the, "bollywoodisation" of news and hidden camera journalism has replaced respected personalities as Prannoy Roy with sensational crime reporters of all hues. Thus the space for creating informed opinion amongst the masses has considerably shrunk. Public opinion is being manipulated by commercial and vested interests to force the government of the day to act against national interest. Kandahar being one example. Such a situation will not enable us to play our cards correctly in the New Great Game. The media will thus have to be taken on board while a separate Electronic Media Council may exercise some control over this, which seems to be going berserk at times.

SERVICES DIVIDEND

India's services sector is one of its key areas for growth. It includes such value added services as media, entertainment, knowledge, health services, tourism and travel, security and clinical research services. Health services are regarded as the key business opportunity. The US is slated to spend 20 per cent of its GDP on health care. Collaboration between the US and India involving hospitals and laboratories would reduce healthcare costs for the United States with great savings for its economy while for India it will virtually replicate the benefits that accrued from the IT revolution. The potential of travel and tourism should not be lost sight of. However, unless we ensure a better security atmosphere in the country, we will not be able to reap benefits from these sectors. Security services are important and need some consideration. So far it has been restricted to the government sector with Indian participation in the UN contingents in various countries. There is increased scope for private sector agencies operating in the lucrative global security services market exploiting the expertise of domestic agencies in this sphere.

SUMMARISING THE SECURITY FOCUS

The New Great Game will be characterised by jockeying by World powers for economic advantage. It will be a multi dimensional game of energy, trade, information, technology, space and defence. There will be limited use of violence but extensive intimidation. This highlights the importance of soft power and use of non state proxies. The geographical dimensions of the New Great Game will include the areas of West and Central Asia, South and South East Asia and the Indian Ocean. The capability paradigm of the New Great Game would entail multi dimensional structuring of security forces. Covert intelligence and Special Forces capabilities will be key instruments of policy. We need to have state sponsored, commercial as well as non state proxies operating in our areas of interest and influence, Central Asia, South East Asia, Afghanistan, Balochistan, Myanmar and so on. Support of the Indian diaspora is also essential. Increased emphasis on dynamic means of conducting manoeuvres of influence to gain political and economic advantage such as information and trade warfare need to be considered. Non military dimensions of security will also assume significance. We are in for what have been called as pin striped soldiers watching giant computer screens, identifying threats to

multiple systems that denote human enterprise of the morrow. There is a need to visualise the threats more proactively and not fall prey to an energy or economic Pearl Harbour. Thus we should not fall into the trap which Roger Trinquier has called as, "...persisting(ing) in studying a type of warfare that no longer exists and that we shall never fight again".

Growth of Soft Power

Soft power is assuming increased importance to include not only information and culture but also diplomacy and cooperative security. Building economic and political alliance will be the key to exercising soft power. In some cases, economic union may precede political coalition while in other cases it may be just the opposite. Thus, we find that in SAARC, economic cooperation is preceding political as these issues are too complex to be resolved in the present state of dissonance while in the ASEAN sphere, the political is seen to be preceding the economic. In the security sphere there are a number of alliances looking for partners including the NATO and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation which controls the Central Asian Security Space. Clubbing with these may provide us major advantages if the political resistance to such ideas is ironed out. Major initiatives in Africa and South America will also provide us the advantage of the vast natural resources offered by these Continents, where China is already in the lead. A domestic consensus on foreign policy may be a precursor to achieve these objectives.

Effective use of diplomatic pressure points needs to be made which is lacking at present. There is no annual report on terrorism or annual certification of countries not cooperating with the country in anti terrorism which are means that the United States has been employing effectively so far. Two track back channel means need to continue to include Bangladesh and Myanmar as well, to achieve a breakthrough in people to people contacts. The British Foreign Secretary recently landed in Somalia amidst a civil war, demonstrating a stellar resolve at the highest level to exploit opportunities for growth of power. Such examples need to be emulated to establish presence in areas of critical economic importance. A visit by any of our leaders to Indonesia would have sent a correct signal to foster our interest in that country. Organisational think tanks as the United Service Institution of India

are also important players in the field of information and knowledge management at the higher military and civil bureaucracy level. These should be leveraged to greater effect in the World of tomorrow.

India has very effectively used aid and relief to build closer alliances with people in the neighbourhood as also well afar. Tsunami, the Jammu and Kashmir earthquake and Hurricane Katrina wherein $ five million and 25 tons worth relief were provided are all salient examples of our aid and relief diplomacy. The speedy relief to Indonesia recently is another move in this direction. This trend needs to be continued in the interest of humanitarian assistance to the needy. Traditional soft power means films, entertainment and cricket also can be continually exploited. It would thus be seen that the dimensions of soft power are vast and its potential provides major leverages to the country which need to be fully optimised.

Security against Violent Threats

The importance of the military will never diminish but will take many diverse forms. By building our economic and military capabilities concomitantly we should be able to move from military deterrence to dissuasion in the conventional and the nuclear spheres. Deterrence against terrorism also needs to be an area of focus, for which a more aggressive external policy will have to be evolved as the present soft policy is not paying dividends. Deterrence against terror has many dimensions. The first stage of deterrence is against states supporting terrorism which has been achieved during Operation Parakram, while the next stage of deterrence against covert support of terrorism by states needs greater emphasis. The strategy of deniable level of terrorism followed by some states in the neighbourhood also needs an effective counter. This alone will build the confidence of Indian power in the neigbourhood. In the domestic space too, there is a need to ensure that those groups who are playing into the hands of terrorists by acting on their minions need to be marginalised. Ironically these personalities are well known. The state now needs to act more decisively to ensure that their duality and duplicity is exposed. These elements have a greater impact on Indian security than the terrorists whose role is limited to the physical.

Nuclear deterrence is a harsh reality in the great game. It will guarantee us the umbrealla for growth. How many bombs do we need to ensure deterrence? Presently estimates are that we have 75 bombs to counter China's possible 300 plus. What ever be the numbers, the need to build up our nuclear arsenal post haste has been highlighted by the recent introduction of the Fissile Material Cut Off Treaty at the Conference on Disarmament in Vienna.[11] Building a missile shield over our critical assets to guarantee a second strike capability will also enhance nuclear deterrence. Monitoring of the emerging threat from WMD terror also needs consideration before we are hit by a, "tsunami" of terror.

Conclusion - Role of the Armed Forces in the Great Game

India's Armed Forces have increasingly played an important role in nation building. During the fight for Independence, retention of the Armed Forces as an instrument of the state led to its successful integration into the state structure. The decades of the 1950's to 1970's saw the Armed Forces successfully overcoming the threat of external aggression, while the decades from 1970's to 2000's led to establishment of deterrence. From 1950 to this day the Army is engaged in controlling internal dissension. These roles have to be expanded to fill in the diverse facets indicated by the requirements of the New Great Game. Increased force projection capability, emphasis on covert and overt role of special forces, rapid deployment potential, hostage rescue and relief, training and military diplomacy are essentials which need consideration. Intelligence operations would also have to be effective over a diverse area than being restricted to the sphere of internal and external border security management as at present. A para military structure could be considered and a force on the lines of the National Security Guard could cater for such contingencies. It will have the advantage of military rigour combined with an outward police veneer, which may be more acceptable diplomatically as well as domestically.

Major accretions in air and naval assets for power projection as well as control of the seas are called for. We may have to overcome the continental mindset of our Armed Forces and provide a larger role for the Navy and the Air Force. A blue water and strategic lift capability will be in order. This combined with the Army's rapid deployment and special forces – small team ability

would provide us significant advantages in the emerging land scape of protecting our vast economic interests. We also need not shirk from deploying our forces abroad in national interest based on economic, resource and entrepreneurial accretions. What ever be the form of security, there is a definite role for the Armed Forces in the New Great Game and the earlier it is analysed and rationalised, the greater would be the national dividend. In the end we need to abandon the age old Hindu mind set and cross the oceans for that will denote the greatest virtue in the 21st Century.

End Notes

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