

Visit of USI Delegation to China – A Report*

Lieutenant General V K Kapoor, PVSM (Retd)

Background

A delegation comprising the following senior officers visited China from 09 July to 13 Jul 2005 for discussion with members of China Institute for International Strategic Studies (CISS) at Beijing and with Institute of International Studies at Shanghai :-

- (a) Lieutenant General Satish Nambiar, PVSM, AVSM, VrC (Retd), Director USI.
- (b) Vice Admiral PS Das, PVSM, UYSM, VSM (Retd), former Vice Chief of the Naval Staff.
- (c) Air Marshal Vinod Patney, SYSM, PVSM, AVSM, VrC (Retd), former Vice Chief of Air Staff, currently a member of the Executive Council of the USI
- (d) Lieutenant General V K Kapoor, PVSM, (Retd), former Commandant Army War College, Member of the Executive Council of the USI.

A total of four papers were presented by participants from both sides. These were as follows : -

- (a) *Global Security Trends and their Impact Upon the Security in Southern Asia* by Lieutenant General V K Kapoor, PVSM, (Retd).
- (b) *Trends in Global Terrorism and their Relevance to the Situation in East and South Asia* by Air Marshal Vinod Patney, SYSM, PVSM, AVSM, VrC (Retd), former Vice Chief of Air Staff, currently a member of the Executive Council of the USI.
- (c) *East Asia Security Situation* by Mr Xie Wenqing, Senior Research Fellow, CISS.

Lieutenant General V K Kapoor is the former Commandant of Army War College, Mhow.

*The USI Delegation visited the China Institute for International Strategic Studies (CISS), Beijing and Shanghai Institute for International Studies.

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- (d) *UN Reforms* by Mr Shung Maocheng, Senior Research Fellow, CISS.

Chinese Participants

The Chinese participants for the discussions at the CISS were as follows :-

- (a) Major General Cai Bingkui, (Retd), Vice Chairman, CISS.
- (b) Major General Miao Pengsheng, Secretary General, CISS.
- (c) Major General Luo Peisen, Former Defence Attache in India.
- (d) Major General Gong Xirong, Former Defence Attache in Russia.
- (e) Major General Xian Fu, Former Defence Attache in USA.
- (f) Mr Wu Siniu, Associate Research Fellow.
- (g) Mr Xie Wenqing, Senior Research Fellow.
- (h) Mr Shuang Maopcheng, Senior Research Fellow.
- (i) Mr Wang Chuajing.
- (j) Mr Lui Chuinlin.

At the Shanghai Institute of International Studies, the following Chinese scholars participated in the informal discussion on 12 July 2005 :-

- (a) Yu Xintian, President of the Shanghai Institute of International Studies.
- (b) Zhao Gancheng, Senior Fellow and Director Department of South Asia Studies.
- (c) Zhao Nianyu, Senior Fellow and Director Office of Research Management and International Exchanges.

ISSUES DISCUSSED AT CISS

The discussion at CISS covered two sessions (pre and post lunch) and involved presentation of four papers, two each by participants from the USI and the CISS respectively. The presentation cum discussion gave a good opportunity to participants on both sides to understand each other's perspectives and views and though these constituted personal views, they did manage to convey the respective national stand points, interests,

compulsions and sensitivities and could be employed to analyse future trends, if required.

The Vice Chairman warmly welcomed the delegation and introduced the members of the delegation from the USI. In his "opening remarks" he emphasised China's peaceful rise being the most appropriate strategic option for them because throughout history, new powers had always brought new challenges. But if these new challenges are met through cooperation, then conflict could be avoided. He said that considering the parameters of global power, China currently did not measure up to this status and considering that it had many internal challenges they regarded themselves to be a developing country whose focus should be on achieving a peaceful rise through cooperation, and regional and global consensus.

This was followed by Lieutenant General Nambiar's talk on "*China Peaceful Rise and Its Implications for India*", encompassing the parameters which determined global power in the 21st Century and how China measures up in this calculation. Stating that China had already achieved the status of an important global player, he went on to cover his perceptions of what China sought for itself, which included : protection of basic interests, national security, sovereignty, territorial integrity and achievement of development goals. He said that China seeks a peaceful rise. The Chinese have themselves said that they do not pose a threat to others. But China has expressed fears about attitudes and responses of existing hegemonies and hence it rationalises military modernisation, technology investments, and nuclear modernisation. He followed up with a pointed reference to "The India Factor" in international economic and political space as India was fast joining China as a central actor in the international economy, which may be accompanied by political influence in due course. He rounded off his talk with a few pertinent pointers on the management of India-China relations followed by the aspects that needed analysis and attention by both sides. He explained that as China gradually emerges as a global power, space would have to be created for India too because she was also rising and the consequent, possible, tensions in the region would have to be managed. In the course of China's continued economic growth, it would have to allow India to realise its potential and some assurances in this regard would become necessary. There were reports that India's population may

match that of China and the productive demographic profile would favour India but he hoped that this factor would not become a source of tension. He also added that India's base of scientific and technological manpower would be an asset that could be usefully harnessed for mutual benefit. He mentioned that both countries had common perspectives on multilateralism, in the conduct of international relations, and through coordination with other countries it could be used to balance unilateralism. He emphasised that the India-China boundary dispute needs to be addressed and settled. The Chinese support to Pakistan in its nuclear and missile programmes would remain a sore point. The other points that he highlighted were : the USA's role as an Asian player, effective coordination of efforts for exploring energy requirements, effective cooperation in the area of counter terrorism, increased bi-lateral trade, greater military to military interaction and dialogue. He stated that China should recognise India's nuclear status and China's genuineness in endorsing a role for India in the international arena should be backed by endorsement of India's claim to permanent membership to the UN Security Council.

Discussion

The enthusiastic response of the Chinese participants was evident from the large number of questions raised by them. The questions pertained to issues such as : India-China bilateral trade, the purpose of closer US relationship with India, the imperatives for Asia's rise and its impact on the region and the world, the apprehension that India may surpass China in its economic growth in the long run, the presence and role of the USA in Asia, the Sino-Indian boundary dispute, energy cooperation and the challenges confronting India as of now and that it would face in the future. The interest of China's strategic community in India was evident.

A large number of Chinese participants seemed apprehensive regarding the US presence in Asia. While they tried to disguise their apprehension in diplomatic vocabulary, their stand that the US presence in Asia is unwelcome was obvious because of their fear of the US acting unilaterally, which, they kept emphasising, was neither good for China nor for India.

Another issue, which was of concern to a number of Chinese participants was regarding the perception other nations had of China. They stressed that China was a developing power and not

a global or even a regional power and that it had to overcome a growing number of internal challenges. For them, the US view of a hegemonic China was absurd.

One participant from China suggested that when two powerful countries were neighbours, it could be like a double edged sword. If friendly it would be beneficial for both but if the relations remained hostile, it could be disastrous for both countries. He recommended a cooperative approach as most prudent and beneficial for both countries in such an environment. The barely hidden significance of this statement was not lost on the audience.

The Vice Chairman summed up the session by stating that the talk by Lieutenant General Nambiar was rich in content and important because Sino-Indian relationship had entered a new phase of building a long term comprehensive relationship, which could be of mutual benefit for both countries.

Global Security Trends

The thrust of Lieutenant General V K Kapoor's presentation on "*Global Security Trends and their Impact upon the Security in Southern Asia*" embodied the environment of the post cold war period. He said that the challenges facing states, and the supra-national institutions they generated such as the UNO, European Union and NATO, had taken many disruptive forms and the institutions, despite some good work, had not helped stabilise the world. Examples of volatile and murderous conflicts were many and a large number of scenarios on how the security environment in the future could deteriorate, could be conceived. All scenarios predicted uncertainties. There is a real danger to one and all nations unless the UN is strengthened. Else, it will not be able to cope with the threats and challenges that are likely to arise in the future. He went on to illustrate how nations were ill prepared and ill equipped to face modern security threats especially the non-traditional threats, which also encompassed ecological degradation, shrinking of natural resources and natural disasters. He went on to state that logically a situation in which both strong and weak states find themselves vulnerable should lead to a solution through the UN, through a universally protected regulation but this was unlikely due the differences that persisted among nations.

After a quick survey of global and regional security scenes he put forward his views on four global trends, namely, the doctrine of

unilateralism; the threat of terrorism; proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD); and radical Islamic movements.

The speaker highlighted some pertinent aspects while explaining each trend. He said that there was no point in lamenting and criticising the US on the issue of “unilateralism” because historically it was a fact that all powerful nations have invariably adopted unilateralism to dominate international politics. It is for the global community to examine how, in a globalised world, multilateralism can be employed to balance unilateralism. As regards international terrorism, he pointed out that India had been at the receiving end of a state sponsored terrorism by Pakistan for the past 16 years. Pakistan, he reminded the audience, was the epicentre of international terrorism where terrorists were trained, indoctrinated, nurtured and funded by Saudi Arabia. This country was the main source of funds for the Wahabi “hate filled” ideology taught in the madrassas of Pakistan. India’s warnings were ignored till the tragic events of 11 September 2001 occurred. The mercurial statements of President Musharraf hold no credibility any longer as he encashes each terrorist strike to explain the rationale of his past inaction.

On proliferation of WMD, he cited the acts of AQ Khan as the most blatant acts of proliferation undertaken and that all proliferation activity in recent times had taken place between countries with authoritarian regimes. He pointed out that it was this group of countries which represents a primary challenge to world security.

The crucible of radical Islamic movements in the Middle East, is Saudi Arabia. It is characterised by an oppressive monarchy, an intolerant and fundamentalist Wahibi Sect of Islam to form together a volatile mix. They are the major factors encouraging and funding Jihadi terrorism and Islamist radical movements all over the world. He also mentioned that the situation in Iraq had given rise to violent insurgency and the only viable option was to develop a coherent political strategy for combating insurgency. A failure to do so could arouse Islamic sentiment for greater radical movements in the Middle-East and in the new states of Central Asia.

Discussion

The Chinese side responded with a short commentary by Major General Cai Bingkui (Retd) who stated that there were many reasons for global military instability. He said that the US was

seeking regional military allies and the Bush regime was changing military focus to Asia. Serious disputes had occurred between North Korea and the US and the process of dialogue was restarting after some flexibility was shown by the US recently. He said that there were two major areas of security, namely, the non-traditional and the traditional variety and it is in the non-traditional and non-military areas of security that greater focus needs to be given. He offered a four point approach to obtaining security through mutual trust, mutual benefits, equality and coordination.

Mr Xie Wenqing, a senior research fellow at the CIISS, remarked that in the current global context, the outbreak of any major war was unlikely but chances of regional conflicts existed. He said that it was the non-traditional and non-military security issues which were engaging attention. Since the end of the cold war, the US had emerged as the sole super power with its military, scientific and economic power. It had adopted unilateralism and domination as its approach to managing international relations. He felt that the relationship between major powers needed readjustment based on the universal theme of peaceful cooperation and non confrontation. He added that a balance of power policy continued to dominate global politics.

Trends in Global Terrorism

A paper on 'Trends in Global Terrorism and their Relevance to the Situation in East and South Asia' was presented by Air Marshal Vinod Patney in the post lunch session on 11 July 2005. The paper encompassed two main issues – the nature of global terrorism and combating the threat. While elaborating the first issue the speaker traced the post 11 September 2001 events and pointed to the contradiction between economic globalisation and increasing curbs on individual freedom due to the nature of global terrorism. He stated that terrorism could not be defeated by military means or through economic power or even global political influence. He pointed out how much easier it was to win a military conflict than to bring about peace at the end of a war. He gave the examples of Iraq, Palestine, Phillipines, Sri Lanka and Indonesia. Globalisation had made it easier for the terrorists to reach their targets and they made use of all modern means of communications including media, electronic money transfers and other public utility systems to ensure operational effectiveness. While elaborating on terrorism in and around India, he pointed out that the LTTE in Sri Lanka, a banned

terrorist organisation, had acquired an air force.

To combat threat, the following major points were highlighted:

- (a) The perception of the oppressed of being exploited and wronged should be addressed through the concepts of fair play and eschewing double standards.
- (b) Good intelligence is the key to success.
- (c) The criticality of wholehearted international cooperation.
- (d) Against state sponsored terrorism, deft diplomatic initiatives are needed to seek common ground while recognising that continued mutuality of interest is the only way to retain cooperation.
- (e) The urgent need to counter the threat of maritime terrorism.
- (f) Need to use technology to ensure counter-terrorist effectiveness.
- (g) To utilise public support in containing terrorism.

Discussion

Chinese participants raised the issue of Iraq and said that the “unilateralism” shown by the US had proved counter-productive. Lieutenant General Satish Nambiar observed that while the civilians being killed in Iraq was reprehensible, no one would like the US to leave Iraq at this juncture because that could increase regional instability, and radical Islamic groups could be emboldened by their ostensible success in Iraq. Mr Lu Chunlin, a participant from China, mentioned that in fact before the Iraq war, such insurgent activity did not exist and the current violence was a result of an unjust war. All participants felt that in all such cases there was a requirement of political resolution of the conflict. Counter terrorism would be a long and arduous fight and its widespread nature required international cooperation in addressing the root cause, sharing intelligence and in giving political space to the insurgents to absorb them in the political mainstream. While fighting international terrorism double standards should be eschewed and the financial resources of the terrorists should be curbed. Attention should also be paid to the likely use of biological, chemical and radiological weapons by terrorist groups and steps taken to avoid such eventualities..

East Asia Security Situation

Mr Xie Wenging presented the paper on '*East Asia Security Situation*'. He stated that the current situation was stable and showed a trend towards better development. The relationship between major powers was adjusting to one of mutual dependence and mutual containment, in which there is both competition and cooperation. Multilateral security dialogue and cooperation have become active. Existing divisive issues are being sorted out through dialogues and discussion. Countries in the region are involved in their own economic development while simultaneously addressing international terrorism, national separatism, religious extremism, smuggling, drugs, piracy and illegal immigration. These activities in the region are not conducive to relaxation of tensions.

After highlighting the favourable changes, he dwelt at length on the unstable factors clouding East Asia security situation. These were explained as under :-

(a) Continuance of US in strengthening regional military alliances with countries such as Japan and redeploying its forces from Europe to Asia-Pacific region with a view to ensure the security of Taiwan and check China's rise in the region. While continuing to intensify traditional allied relations it has also strengthened military relations with some South East Asian countries through various types of military cooperation. This, the speaker felt, is a cause of concern and uneasiness for other Asian countries.

(b) The situation in the Korean peninsula was unsatisfactory due to differences between the US and the DPRK. However, recent flexibility, shown by the US, has enabled China in arranging for a fourth round of six party talks at Beijing. He felt that the nuclear issues can be resolved through talks but ideological and social differences between South Korea and the US on one hand and DPRK on the other would persist making the Korean peninsula a hot spot in East Asia.

(c) The Taiwanese authorities hold that Taiwan is a sovereign state and refuse to recognise "One China" principle and the "1992 consensus" demonstrating the One-China policy. They are seeking the legal basis for Taiwan's independence through constitutional re-engineering. The separatist activities of

Taiwanese authorities have adversely affected Sino-US relations and stability of the region.

(d) In South and East Asia, there is a belt which extends from Pakistan to the Philippines and Indonesia where terrorists have taken shelter. This affects the social stability and economic development of both regions. Moreover, some territorial disputes still exist between Russia and Japan, China and Japan, South Korea and Japan, China and some South East Asian countries, which if not settled can become a cause for future military conflicts.

The speaker concluded with the statement that in order to maintain sustainable peace and stability in the region, China had advocated a new security concept, which could be summarised as four pillars namely, mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and coordination.

UN Reforms

The presentation on '*UN Reforms*', by Mr Zhuang Maocheng was the last presentation of the day.

Acknowledging the unique role played by the UN in preserving world peace and security in the past 60 years since its inception, it was regretted that the role could have been far greater and more meaningful. The end of cold war had provided the UN with rare opportunities to play a greater role but unfortunately this was not taken up. The challenges confronted in the last decade together with the profound and complex changes taking place in the international situation and unilateralism exercised by a super power, had found the UN lacking. Against the backdrop of globalisation and interdependence of nations, the international community expected a bigger role from the UN and this the speaker felt could only be performed with some radical reforms in the organisation.

The two aims to be achieved by the reforms were to promote human development globally and to ensure democratic decision making at the UN and strengthening the authority of this vital international organisation.

For the first goal to be achieved the speaker felt that the UN should reverse the trend of giving priority to security over development by increasing inputs in the field of development,

reducing poverty and facilitating the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals set by 2000 Summit of the United Nations. Serious attention is required for the needs of the developing countries for equal participation in global economic affairs. This could be done through a new political and economic order and an open and fair multilateral trading system, based on the interests of developing countries and new members. He advocated elimination of agriculture subsidies and substantial reduction of tariff and non-tariff trade barriers with the mandate provided by Doha Declaration. He further advocated reduction and waiving of debts owed by developing countries to the developed nations.

As regards the democratic decision making of the UN, he advocated institutional reforms including the reforms of the Security Council, which was long overdue. He expressed the view that the Council reform should aim to enlarge membership, increase efficiency and improve working methods. As the membership had grown from 50 to 191, the reforms were necessary but the enlargement of the Security Council should not make it cumbersome and prudence should be exercised in allotting the veto right to the new members as that would affect the Council's working efficiency. He favoured the improvement of working methods, transparency and a democratic style of work in the Security Council.

The speaker was not appreciative of the Group of Four (G-4) draft resolution submitted to the UN Secretariat for consideration of the General Assembly, which was opposed by the group of "United For Consensus". The latter had submitted its even formula. He said that G-4 formula had very little chance of succeeding due to the ratification process involved by two-third of the member states and the Permanent Five (P-5).

He felt that in the case of UN reforms, only a decision arrived at through consensus could obtain credibility and support and would then help in enhancing the representation and authority of the Security Council. Rushing into reforms would not achieve satisfactory results.

Discussion

At the end of the two presentations by the Chinese participants, the brief discussion that took place remained centered around UN Reforms.

Lieutenant General Nambiar mentioned the impossibility of the UN continuing to remain in the same form. Security Council needs to be re-consolidated for greater representation from the developing world. He felt that as and when the international community decides to undertake the reform, India would meet the conditions for permanent membership. Major General Cai Binkui was at pains to explain that China does not oppose India's permanent membership but it does oppose Japan and hence China's opposition to G-4.

ISSUES DISCUSSED AT SHANGHAI INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

A brief discussion lasting approximately two hours was held at the Institute on 12 July. The President Yu Xintian, after welcoming the USI delegation and explaining the history of the Institute, requested the Indian delegation to commence the discussion. Admiral Das gave a short and crisp presentation on the Asia-Pacific region. He pointed out the shift in focus from the European region to the Asia-Pacific region. The world had become increasingly unipolar in the last decade and key US strategic goals and objectives as spelt out in the Clinton National Security Strategy of October 1998 are almost exactly the same as those spelt out in the Bush Security Strategy of September 2002. They stress a world political order amenable to America's values and interests and an economic dispensation in which it would seek enhanced access to critical raw materials, exclusive control of cutting edge technologies, non-proliferation of WMD and generally a world in which America's preeminence would remain undisturbed and unchallenged. The US presence in the Asia-Pacific region was a reality and it is not likely that they would move out of this region. A large number of cogent reasons in support of the US presence in this region were given. The so called states of concern are located in this region; the world's largest oil reserves are located here; the most blatant acts of WMD proliferation have taken place in this very region; three major markets of the world are located here; and nearly all short and long term global concerns are here.

He said that future threats would be non-traditional and transnational and cannot be tackled by a single state. The non-traditional wars will require global cooperation and effort.

India has to be increasingly focussed regarding the safety of her sea routes, to ensure an uninterrupted energy supply and her

overseas trade on which depends her overall growth and development.

China also faces soaring energy demands, which will have to be principally met through imports. This is an area in which India and China can cooperate to ensure that Asian energy serves to fulfill the needs of Asian countries rather than moving westwards. He said that India-China bilateral trade had grown to nearly 14 billion US dollars and there was room for a substantial increase.

Mr Zhao Gancheng, Senior Fellow, from the Institute, stated that China's rise was not aimed at becoming a super power. This perception has been deliberately given by some Western countries and distorts the image of China. It is also because of lack of communication with the international community that this impression continues to prevail. Chinese scholars are now attempting to correct this impression. He also said that India and China both being developing countries, with common core national interests of developing their economy, enhancing national power, improving living standards of people, safeguarding national security and maintaining sovereignty and territorial integrity; would do well to have a strategic partnership for peaceful rise of both nations.

Lieutenant General Kapoor mentioned that one way in which each other's perception could be improved is by settling the boundary dispute so that the major cause of suspicion and distrust is removed and this process should be hastened.

Air Marshal Patney asked a question regarding their view of the progress made by Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). Their response was Central Asian States were still trying to consolidate themselves as nation states and needed all possible support. SCO is helping them in this regard.

Admiral Das mentioned that a super power status was not feasible without becoming a first rate maritime power and he sought views in this regard.

The President asserted that not only was maritime power necessary for a big power status but also military technology as applicable to the modern era. This was a complex issue and required a multi-disciplinary study. He said that the talk about China's rise to a super power status is exaggerated because they consider themselves to be a developing nation which has a larger number

of internal challenges which needed their attention and effort. There was a wide technology-gap between the US and China. The US presence in Asia-Pacific region was a reality though the US would prefer to involve regional allies to tackle regional problems. She said it was China's policy that she would not send troops to any country. The US had nearly 100,000 troops deployed in East Asia alone. She said that China had noted India's economic performance and her growing importance and China would like to develop a strategic cooperative partnership with India in their mutual quest for development.

On the question of North Korea, the Chinese participants were of the view that USA must not term North Korea as an "axis of evil" and that the US must change its mindset and address the genuine security requirements of that country. On querying whether North Korea possessed nuclear weapons, they said that they were not aware.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

China is a dynamic nation, a giant who is taking long leaps to emerge as a global economic and military power. Unlike a democracy, the authoritarian regime in China is able to execute their plans vigorously and hence the pace of development and reform is very high. The Chinese Communist Party is no longer termed "communist". The Western analysts call them "Bureaucratic Capitalists".

The last 20 years have seen an unparalleled growth in China's power and influence, which has had an unintended consequence – a fear that continued growth could produce a regional hegemon in the Asia-Pacific region. Such fears give rise to security competition, which China wishes to avoid at this juncture of development in their country as also growth of their comprehensive national power. Hence it is obvious from the statements of all Chinese scholars that there is a ground design to conceive a new doctrinal framework affirming their permanently peaceful intentions and an emphasis on good neighbourly relations. This new doctrine is called "China's Peaceful Rise", which was emphasised and reiterated by every Chinese scholar that the delegation met. It is within this doctrinal framework that they offer their four point approach to obtaining security through mutual trust, mutual benefits, equality and coordination.