USI Gold Medal Essay Competition 2024
Open to All Officers
Subject: 'Non-Contact and Non-Kinetic Warfare in the Indian Context: Concepts and Pathways'

Concept Note

1.   The concept of generations of warfare is a framework that categorises different eras of warfare based on the dominant characteristics, technologies, and strategies employed. A commonly referenced model includes the First-Generation Warfare (Pre-Industrial Age) to infantry-based, limited technology, close combat e.g. the Napoleonic Wars. The Second-Generation Warfare came about in the Industrial Age and included mass mobilisation, use of artillery and machine guns, trench warfare as it was in World War I. The Third-Generation Warfare had mobile warfare with an emphasis on speed and surprise, combined arms as in the Blitzkrieg operations of World War II. As far as the Fourth-Generation Warfare was concerned it included irregular warfare and asymmetric warfare with non-state actors, unconventional tactics, with an emphasis on information warfare. The post-Cold War conflicts, such as the War on Terror were part of this. Finally, the Fifth-Generation Warfare is dominated by technology, cyber-attacks, and information manipulation. Modern cyber conflicts, and hybrid warfare are part of this type of warfare.

2.   In the specific context of India, non-contact and non-kinetic warfare involve strategies that avoid direct physical confrontation. These approaches are crucial in the face of evolving threats, including cyber operations, information warfare, economic coercion, diplomatic manoeuvres, and strategic communication. India's vulnerability to cyber-attacks necessitates a focus on strengthening cybersecurity measures. Instances of information warfare, economic pressures, and diplomatic strategies further highlight the importance of non-contact approaches. The key elements include:

>   (a)   **Cyber Operations.** These involve the use of technology to disrupt or damage the information systems of an adversary. India has witnessed instances of cyber-attacks, and there is a growing emphasis on strengthening cybersecurity measures.

>   (b)   **Information Warfare.** This includes the use of propaganda, disinformation, and psychological operations to shape perceptions and influence public opinion. It is also possible to combat civil unrest through psychological operations within the framework of non-contact and non-kinetic warfare. India has encountered instances of information warfare, particularly in the context of regional conflicts.

>   (c)   **Non-Contact Hybrid Warfare.** A modern form of warfare that combines conventional military methods with non-contact or indirect strategies, often leveraging technological advancements and unconventional tactics to achieve strategic objectives. Unlike traditional warfare, which relies heavily on direct physical force, non-contact hybrid warfare incorporates elements such as cyber warfare, electronic warfare, psychological operations, and information warfare.

(d)   **Economic Coercion.** Nations may employ economic measures such as sanctions or trade restrictions to achieve strategic objectives without resorting to direct military force. India, being a major player in the global economy, is vulnerable to economic pressures.

(e)   **Diplomatic Manoeuvres.** Non-contact warfare can also manifest through diplomatic channels, where nations use political influence and alliances to advance their interests. India's foreign policy and diplomatic strategies play a crucial role in navigating international relations.

(f)   **Grey Zone Operations.** These operations refer to activities that fall below the threshold of traditional armed conflict but are more aggressive than routine, peaceful state interactions. In the context of non-contact and non-kinetic warfare, grey zone operations take on a distinctive form, relying on indirect, subversive, and often deniable means to achieve strategic objectives.

(g)   **Strategic Communication.** Effectively communicating a nation's stance and intentions is crucial. India needs to enhance its capabilities in strategic communication to counter misinformation and effectively convey its policies.

3.   In light of the above carry out an objective analysis of non-contact and no-kinetic warfare with the theme "Non-Contact and Non-Kinetic Warfare in the Indian Context: Concepts and Pathways.   Among other points that the author may wish to cover, the essay must address the following:

(a)   Historical Context of Fifth-Generation Warfare in India.

(b)   The Concept of Non-Contact and Non-Kinetic Warfare.

(c)   Hybrid and Grey Zone Operations.

(d)   Instances of Non-Contact, Non-Kinetic Warfare, Hybrid and Grey Zone Operations in the Indian Context.

(e)   Challenges.

(f)   Potential Pathways for Integration.

Rules

4.   **The competition is open to all commissioned officers, of the Defence Services of India, officers of the Territorial Army, Assam Rifles and the Senior Division of the National Cadet Corps, and Gazetted Officers of the Civil Administration in India including retired officers.**

5.   The word limit of the essay is between 3,000 to 4,000 words. The word length should be shown in brackets at the end of the essay. **Entries exceeding the word limit are liable to be rejected.**

6.   All essays should be sent by post to the Director General, United Service Institution of India (USI), Rao Tula Ram Marg, Post Bag No. 8, Vasant Vihar PO, New Delhi-110057, **to be received no later than 15 Sep 2024. A softcopy should also be sent by email to [usiessaycompetition@gmail.com]. The subject of the email should be the MOTTO which is defined in Paragraph 8 below. There should be No Signature Block in this email.** The email should just state **'My entry for the USI Gold Medal Essay Competition is attached'.**

7.   Essays should be written in the English language, and printed on one side of the paper in double space, and should be submitted in TRIPLICATE in hardcopy.

8.   Entries will be strictly ANONYMOUS. No details pertaining to the individual are to be mentioned in the essay or in the cover letter. The individual is to select a MOTTO (which should not be more than ten words) and type it on the first page of all the copies of his essay. One sealed envelope is to accompany the essay with a paper indicating the MOTTO, personal number, rank, name, date of commission and Unit Address (as applicable), e-mail and contact number of the individual written on it. On the outside of the envelope, only the MOTTO is to be written. These envelopes will be opened during the USI Council meeting, after the judges have given their decision. **Essays violating the anonymity rule will be rejected.**

9.   The essay must be an individual's personal and original effort without plagiarism and not a cut-paste job. Jointly written essays are prohibited. The soft copy will be used for a plagiarism check at the USI. **Entries for which a soft copy is not received will be rejected.**

10.   Three judges chosen by the USI will adjudicate the essay on the basis of the following:

    (a)   Understanding of the subject.

    (b)   Thought, logic, development of theme.

    (c)   The extent to which the contribution throws fresh light on the subject.

    (d)   Language/expression.

    (e)   Whether in the whole or in large part it is in a form suitable for publication.

11.   **The awards by the judges will be final.** They may recommend the Gold Medal to the winner and/or a cash prize of Rs.15,000/- as well as cash prize of Rs 10,000/- to the runner-up. USI life membership will be given to the essay competition winners on gratis basis. The names of the winners of the essay competition will be published in the USI Journal. The winning essay will be published in the forthcoming USI Journal.

12.   The Institution reserves the right not to make an award if none of the essays submitted are of a standard which the judges consider adequate. **Cases of plagiarism will invite disqualification.**

13.   The copyright of all essays submitted will be reserved by the USI.

Style Sheet

14.   **General**

    (a)   Font style should be Arial, Size -12, and Spacing- 1.15.

    (b)   All diagrams, charts and graphs should be referred to as 'Figures' and consecutively numbered. Tables should carry only essential data and should complement the text rather than repeat what has already been said. These should carry a **short title**, be **numbered** and carry the **source at the bottom**.

    (c)   The paper should have centre, group, paragraph and sub-paragraph headings to make it more reader-friendly.

    (d)   Use English (UK) spellings.

(e)   Write dates beginning with the day followed by the month and the year (e.g., 11 Sep 2014). Only the first three letters of a month should be written e.g., Jan, Feb, Sep.

(f)   Nothing should be underlined.

(g)   In the text, write numbers in words till number nine and then in numerals (e.g., two, four, nine; then 10, 11, 12 and so on).

(h)   Write 'per cent' and not % or percent.

(j)   Acronyms and abbreviations should carry the full form at the first mention with the acronym in bracket; and thereafter use the abbreviated version. No need to create acronym if word is used once.

(k)   Any text written in a language other than in English will be in italics with the meaning alongside in brackets.

(l)   While referring to currency, use INR 2,000 cr, not 2000 crores of rupees. Similarly, USD 8.5 million, not 8.5 million dollars. Currency will be mentioned as, Million-mn, Billion-bn, Crores-cr.

15.   **References/End Notes**

(a)   It is desirable that the author furnishes complete details of the articles/books/journals referred to in the article as endnotes. This includes full name of writer of article or book referred to, title of book/article, journal in which it was published (in case of articles); issue details, and page numbers. Besides end notes, if the author so desires, bibliography may also be included.

(b)   While referring to a **book**, follow the example below:

Lt Gen CK Kapur, *Chinese Military Modernisation*, (New Delhi: Manas Publications, 2003), pp. 17-18.

(c)   While referring to an **article** in a journal, follow the example below:

Lt Cdr Neeraj Malhotra, "Pratap Singh of the Indian Legion". *The Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CXXXIV, No. 556*, p.283.

(d)   While referring to a **website**, follow the example below:

"Escalation Control in a Nuclear Environment", Report of a Seminar organised by the *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies* on 17 November 2004 at New Delhi. Available at: www.ipcs.org. Accessed on 08 February 2005. **Use of Wikipedia as reference must be avoided. Entries quoting Wikipedia as reference are liable to be penalised.**

(e)   If two successive citations/references refer to the same source, use Ibid.

(f)   If the same reference is to be cited after a few other references or citations, write the name of the author followed by the citation number e.g.: Imran Khan, op. cit.