Multi-dimensional Warfare

To the existing four dimensions of warfare - the air, land, sea and space-a fifth dimension of warfare has been added. It transcends the other four and has no boundaries nor limits. Its battlefield is the invisible, infinite space with its satellite monitoring and reconnaissance systems and a world-wide communications network. The Information Warfare (IW), as this warfare in the new dimension has been described, is engendered by the new technologies that provide us, for the first time, a capability to detect, intercept, collect, evaluate, analyse and disseminate information world-wide in real time, making it possible for the virtual presence of the top team of defence managers in the tactical area.

To be effective, Information Warfare needs a new framework of doctrine, strategy, tactics, and training with the aim to achieve information "dominance" or "superiority". Today there is a virtual flood of information; and its processing to obtain the relevant and useful, and to leave out the unimportant, is a human task; and this is the weak link which needs to be strengthened.

In addition to the information collection function, there is a need to protect our own information which may be valuable to the opponent; since information after it has been processed becomes intelligence, which we must have and which must be denied to the enemy. The value of intelligence has been stressed by military thinkers like Sun-Tzu, Chanakya and Machiavelli from the earliest times to the present. However, the new technologies have given it a sharp cutting edge and a distinct and all-pervasive dimension.

In our lead article in this issue, General John Lorber, with penetrating insight, presents a very clear picture of the multi-dimensional aspects of the Information Warfare which the new technologies make possible. His net assessment: "Information Superiority will be a battle-winning factor in future conflicts." No one can disagree with that; but can we ignore the implications of it for our own national security?