

U.S.I. JOURNAL

INDIA'S OLDEST JOURNAL ON DEFENCE AFFAIRS

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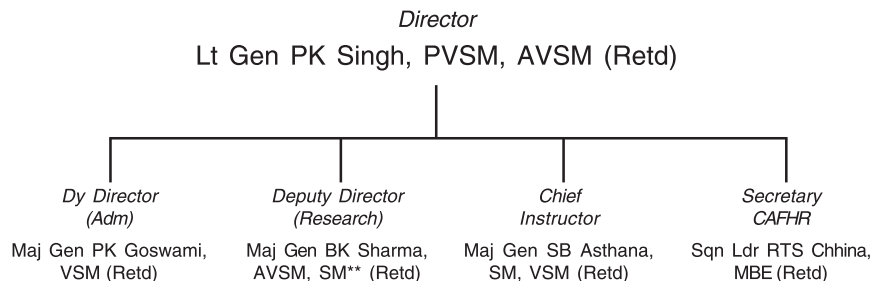
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Editor

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2. It is mandatory that the author furnishes complete details of the book/journal referred to in the article as end notes. This should include full name of the writer of article/book referred to, title of book/article, journal in which published (in case of articles); issue details, and page numbers. A guide to writing endnotes is given on the next page. Besides endnotes, if the author so desires, a bibliography may also be included, though not mandatory.
3. Abbreviations if any, should be used in their expanded form the first time and indicated in brackets.
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5. The author will receive a copy of the issue of the Journal in which his/her article appears along with three offprints. A suitable honorarium will also be paid after the article is published.

GUIDE TO WRITING ENDNOTES

1. Endnotes are notes added to the main body of a paper or an article, in which the author directs readers to sources referred to or to add extra comments of his or her own. Endnotes are placed at the end of the paper/article. A superscript number (^{1,2,3,4,.....}) at the end of the sentence signals the reader to look for the corresponding endnote at the end of the article. The endnotes should be numbered consecutively, starting from '1'. Citations should include the author's name, title of the book (in italics), publishing information (in parenthesis) and pages consulted, all separated by commas. For example :-

¹ Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy : A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*, (Oxford University Press, London, 1988), p. 45.

² Lina Bolzoni and Pietro Corsi, *The Culture Memory*, (Bologna : Societa editrice il Mulino, 1992), p. 45.

2. Use of *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, and *loc. cit.*

Ibid. refers to the immediate preceding reference; *op. cit.* refers to the prior reference by the same author and *loc. cit.* is used instead of *op. cit.* when reference is made to a work previously cited and to the same page in that work. For example :-

⁴ R Poirer, *Learning Physics*, (Academic, New York, 1993), p.4.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁶ T Eliot, *Astrophysics*, (Springer, Berlin, 1989), p. 141.

⁷ R Millan, *Art of Latin Grammar*, (Academic, New York, 1997), p.23.

⁸ Eliot, *op. cit.*, p.148.

⁹ Eliot, *loc. cit.*

3. Where websites have been used to access information, the complete web address of the website should be cited, followed by the date the website was accessed by the author. For example :-

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1497degama.html>.
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During this period a total of 42 new books have been added. Details of the new books are available on USI Website.

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During the period 01 Jan – Mar 2018, 27 registered as New Life Members ; 12 Ordinary Members renewed their membership and 13 registered as new Ordinary Members.

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During the same period, 455 Officers registered for Course Membership.

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Editorial

The article “North Korea Blinks : Is it Real or a Ploy to Minimise Sanctions” by Major General SB Asthana makes very interesting reading. Kim’s invitation for talks to President Trump and its acceptance may have generated positivity amongst some of those affected, but an analysis of the ground realities reflects that the situation is complicated and talks may or may not take place. The author has essentially put forward three reasons for his apprehensions. Firstly, it is perhaps too late to convince North Korea to completely denuclearise. Nuclear tipped North Korea is a reality and North Korea is unlikely to give away the only instrument of its regime survival. Secondly, without participation of South Korea, China, Japan and Russia in talks, any lasting solution may not emerge. Finally, strict sanctions are generating pressure on North Korea, but leakages are taking place thereby ensuring that minimum sustenance can be maintained. However, any further misadventure by North Korea may encourage countries like Japan, Iran, Saudi Arabia and South Korea to go nuclear leading to a dangerous nuclear world.

Afghanistan derives its political significance because of its geo-strategic position. It is situated at the crossroads of ancient civilisations - Indian, European and Chinese. The article titled “The New Geo-political Realities in Afghanistan : India’s Constructive Role as US Partner” by Shri Gaurav Dixit has highlighted that China has emerged as a new player in the contemporary world order. China is behaving dominantly across South Asia, South East Asia and Africa. It is challenging the unilateral world order dominated by the USA. It appears that a new Cold War between China and the US is likely in the near future, introducing new security dynamics in Afghanistan. China-Pakistan-Russia-Iran axis is emerging in the region. These countries want the international forces out of Afghanistan. Neither Russia nor Iran wants the US in their backyard. US-India-Afghanistan partnership also appears to be getting formalised. The US is trying to counter the growing imprints of the China – Russia nexus. In Afghanistan, India would like a stable regime which is sensitive to its interests. Backed by the US, India can be a crucial player in helping Afghanistan to counter terrorism, usher in stability and promote peace.

A USI delegation visited Vietnam from 27 to 30 November 2017. Report on the visit by Major General BK Sharma has been published as an article. Essentially, the Delegation had interaction with Institute for Defence International Relations (IDIR) of Vietnam. The IDIR is a premium 'Think Tank' of Ministry of Defence of Vietnam, with direct access to top leadership of the Country. Vietnam sees great opportunities in developing multi-dimensional strategic relations with India. However, China factor weighs heavy on Vietnam's strategic engagement with India. India's Vietnam Policy and expectations from Vietnam will need to factor this aspect as an essential ingredient.

The subject for the USI Gold Medal essay Competition 2017 for Group 'A' was "Role of the Indian Armed Forces in Strategic Decision Making and Reclaiming the Strategic Space". Commander Pankaj Kumar won first prize in the competition. Edited script of his essay has been included as an article in the Journal. The author has highlighted that while India has strong Armed Forces, there is absence and lack of involvement of the Military in the decision making process on National Security and Defence matters. The dissonance is based on the civilian bureaucratic view that the Military ought to execute the policies formulated and need not be part of the evolution and formulation of strategic policies. This view is outdated and needs to be changed in the interest of national security and to promote efficient strategic decision making process. The recommendations made by the author are bound to assist in greater role being played by the Armed Forces.

The next article is titled "An Enlarged Partnership" by Mr Claude Arpi. It pertains to emerging Indo-French relations in the field of defence and security. India and France are eager to expand strategic engagement in the Indo-Pacific. The French President, Mr Macron recently visited India. The focus of discussions was cooperation to maintain the safety of international sea lanes for unimpeded commerce and communications in accordance with the international law. France has retained control over the Reunion and Mayotta Islands in the Indian Ocean and New Caledonia and French Polynesia in the South Pacific. France also has military presence in Djibouti in Africa and in the United Arab Emirates. The author has highlighted that the recent

agreement will enable Indian vessels access to facilities in French bases. It is evident that India and France have firmed up arrangements with China in mind. A maritime deal with France when finalised, can enhance India's capacity to counter challenges from China and help protect sea lanes for India's oil imports.

The article "Chinese Culture and Democracy – Chalk and Cheese" by Colonel Sanjay Kannothe makes interesting reading. The Chinese continue to contest that modernisation and democracy are linked to each other. China is neither effected by scourge of Islamic fundamentalism nor faces problem of illegal immigration faced by democracies. China has done well economically and achieved social stability. To promote their interests, the Chinese are trying to propagate their economic, social and political model. According to the author dealing with the Chinese model is a major challenge for India. India has to make efforts to catch up with China in the economic, military and strategic fields. It is apparent that China is not going to switch over to the liberal democratic path anytime soon. The issue to be tackled globally is how to prevent some nations from switching over to the Chinese model of totalitarian system.

The Indo-Pacific Region is witnessing a complex interplay of collaboration and competition drawn by the need for maritime connectivity and security. Japan is expanding international engagements. The article "Japan's Expanding International Engagements and Alignment with India" by Commander Subhasish Sarangi focusses on this emerging trend. The author has highlighted that Japan and India have sought to counter assertive behaviour of China by mobilising opinion on values such as peaceful, equitable and rule based order; freedom of navigation and over flights; and compliance of international laws. The maritime security is driven by economic and strategic factors. With the bulk of the energy sources located in West Asia, security of Sea Lanes of Communications is important for Japan. India's east bound sea trade has also increased. India is also concerned about its sea lanes to the Pacific. However, the assertive behaviour of China in the South China Sea, and non-traditional security threats have created anxiety for the affected nations. Greater engagement between India and Japan has become essential

because of concurrent rise of China. Development of good bilateral relations between Japan and India is significant for maintaining power balance in Asia.

Bangladesh replaced East Pakistan and emerged a separate country in 1971 with India's help. Paradoxically, on 15 Aug 1975, military coup led to assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family members and bonhomie between Bangladesh and India suffered a setback. The article "Reflections on Indo-Bangladesh Relations" by Brigadier Dheerendra Singh Kushwah traces the historical background, Social, Political and Economic paradoxes and trajectory of bilateral relations. Two consecutive terms of Awami League Government under Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina have led to good bilateral relations but Indian policy seems to lack an alternate plan in case reversal with change of Government in Dhaka takes place. Secularism is one of the basic tenets in Bangladesh's 1972 Constitution. However, in Part II of the Constitution it is spelt out that secularism is not enforceable through legal recourse. Islam is the State religion. Share of Hindu population in Bangladesh has been going down in every census. Economically Bangladesh has done well; gradually moving from an aid driven to trade driven. It has ambition of being a middle income country by 2021 and a developed country by 2041. India is anxious with growing footprint of China in South Asia. China sees Bangladesh and Myanmar as means to access the Bay of Bengal, somewhat like access to the Arabian Sea through Pakistan. There are unresolved issues between India and Bangladesh. Measures to address trade imbalances and other issues must be adopted with holistic approach reinforced by Indian Soft Power which cannot be matched by China.

The moral and ethical value system is the backbone of organisations in the Armed Forces. Psychologists claim that humans are born with five inherent values of care, fairness, loyalty, respect to authority and restraint. The article "Morals and Ethics – How to Teach, Imbibe, Implement and Enforce Desired Standards in the Indian Armed Forces" authored by Major Sushant Rai makes interesting reading. Indian Armed Forces are drawn from our society at large. As in other organisations, some transgressions occur in the Armed Forces as well. These are linked to moral decline of the society in general and the service

culture is also facing a downfall. However, the Armed Forces have the ability to imbibe high standard of moral values and courage through training and discipline. The Armed Forces leaders need to set personal examples and enforce impeccable discipline.

War is an instrument of policy and not an end in itself. In matters of state, it is essential that policy must guide strategy. The article "Re-learning the Lessons from the 1962 Conflict" by Brigadier Nitin Khare is quite perceptive. Published literature on the issue by and large points towards the shortcomings in the Indian statecraft that led to debacle in 1962 conflict with China. The events that unfolded were a recipe for disaster; wherein the political leadership was seduced by the idea of using military force without due thought process, intelligence appreciation and preparation. The Army also has to shoulder part of the blame because inputs from ground troops were disregarded and military leadership did not discharge their professional role properly. The politico-military synergy was a failure and the strategic military management of warfare was found wanting. Why the Air Force played only a limited role remains unexplained. International politics is about power. Statesmen and military leaders are obliged to protect the vital national interests. The strategy is to be jointly forged by the political and military leadership. Military capability needs time and resources to build up and must be ensured in the interest of national security.

In 1947 before leaving India, Britishers partitioned the country into India and Pakistan. Two bordering provinces of Punjab and Bengal were divided according to majority areas of Muslim and non-Muslim population. Article titled "Partition of India in 1947 : Military Evacuation Organisation (MEO) for Refugees" by Dr Narender Yadav has essentially covered refugee movement from West to East Punjab. The communal passions got aroused to an astonishingly high level and many innocent lives were lost. In order to maintain law and order; in July 1947 a Special organisation called Punjab Boundary Force (PBF) was created. The PBF could not cope up with massive communal frenzy and was disbanded on 31 Aug 1947. Subsequently, responsibility was entrusted to the troops of respective dominions. Headquarters

East Punjab Area Jullundur was given the responsibility for evacuation of refugees from West Punjab to East Punjab. A new organisation called Military Evacuation Organisation (MEO) India with Headquarters at Amritsar was established on 01 September 1947. Evacuation Programme was drawn up, transit camps to collect refugees, their transportation by rail, road and foot columns upto relief camps across the border were arranged. MEO evacuated over three million refugees from West to East Punjab. Despite constraints, MEO did their best to cope up; but casualties and damage to property still took place. The MEO was wound up on 23 August 1948.

OFFICER OF THE ORDER OF LEOPOLD



Squadron Leader Rana Chhina, MBE, Secretary, USI-CAFHR has been appointed **Officer of the Order of Leopold**. The Badge of the Order was presented by HE Ambassador Jan Luykx at his residence on 26 Feb 2018. This is the oldest and highest Order of Belgium.

Squadron Leader Chhina was awarded this distinction for contributing to the excellent bilateral relations between Belgium and India through his ground breaking historical research into the contribution of tens of thousands of Indian troops and civilians at the Belgian Front during and in the aftermath of World War I.

Together with Belgian historian Dominiek Dendooven, from the In Flanders Fields Museum in Ypres, he wrote a joint Indian-Belgian reference work '**India in Flanders Fields**'. This book was launched in the presence of Their Majesties, the King and the Queen of the Belgians during their State Visit to India in November last year.



**(L to R) Sqn Ldr Rana Chhina, Mrs Raka Singh,
HE Amb Jan Luykx and Mrs Rana Chhina**



**(L to R) Lt Gen PK Singh, Maj Gen Ian Cardozo, Sqn Ldr Rana
Chhina, HE Amb Jan Luykx and Maj Gen PK Goswami**

North Korea Blinks: Is it Real or a Ploy to Minimise Sanctions?

Major General SB Asthana, SM, VSM (Retd)®

The news of Kim's invitation for talks to President Trump and its acceptance by US President besides surprising the world (including some key US officials), may have generated hopes of positivity amongst the affected parties, but the crisis is far from being over. The talks are scheduled to be held in May 2018, after China failed to get North Korea to the negotiation table, South Koreans came forward to soften up North, being the most affected party and historical brothers. After the niceties of sports diplomacy, the South Korean officials met North Korean leader Kim Jong-un on 05 March, 2018, wherein he conveyed his willingness to denuclearise the Korean peninsula, if his country's security is assured.¹In exchange, Kim wants an end to military aggression and a guarantee of his regime's safety. He also offered to suspend nuclear and ballistic missile tests while dialogue is underway. This may be attributed to a mix of tough sanctions imposed by the US in February 2018, in addition to the UN sanctions imposed earlier, international pressure and fear of domestic turbulence.

The first meeting between North Korean and South Korean leaders scheduled at Panmunjom in April 2018, is the first such instance since 2007. Looking positively, it seems to be a welcome step generating positive hopes in the US, North and South Korea, China and Russia. Japan diplomatically welcomes the step, but continues to bat for tougher actions, being skeptical about the games which Kim can play to ensure his regime's survival. He could be temporarily blinking to avoid disastrous effects of sanctions. While it may be good news for the region, it seems too good to be true; hence, the suspicion that it could well be a ploy of Kim to reduce and escape sanctions temporarily and restart business as usual later at an appropriate time, when the going gets easy for him.

The South Korean National Security Adviser Chung Eui-yong, briefed President Trump on 08 Mar 2018, at the White House about his meeting with Kim in Pyongyang on 05 Mar 2018, when he conveyed the invitation from Kim to him, to which President Trump agreed promptly. President Donald Trump may have felt that North Korea seems “sincere” in its apparent willingness to halt nuclear tests if it held denuclearisation talks with the US,² but it seems to be a step to salvage the pride of the US as a super power. The US, otherwise, is no less skeptical about Kim’s action than Japan hence, it will continue with all sanctions and application of maximum pressure, besides demanding verification of the denuclearisation efforts of North Korea. Notwithstanding the above, the diplomacy of South Korea, including the ‘Sports Diplomacy’ of Koreans is first step to break the deadlock to have some face saving move forward and needs to be appreciated in such a trying time, when fierce war of words between adversaries had taken place and rhetoric was on high note between the US and North Korea.

What Justification North Korea has for its Actions?

When North Korea surprised the international community by claiming to have successfully tested a hydrogen bomb in January 2017, many were skeptical about its truthfulness expecting it to be one more fission bomb similar to what it had tested earlier. Later, North Korea launched a long-range missile that put a satellite into orbit in February 2017, to demonstrate its ballistic missiles capability to the rest of the world. Its actions were criticised not only by the West, but also the regional players as everyone was concerned about the instability attached with such an act. Amidst the criticism, Kim continued with his tests, which irked the US and its regional allies. North Korea justifies these acts purely as defensive measures against the US threat of forcing regime changes in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and other countries, which did not follow its dictate. The threat from the US regional allies has also been given as an excuse. The Korean War is also an unforgettable historical event when the US might was used against them. Convincing the domestic population with “America threat theory” and propaganda that North Korea stands surrounded by the US troops stationed in South Korea and Japan

has been a major factor to keep domestic opposition under control, and to continue with Kim's autocratic regime.

North Korea's nuclear misadventure seemed to have gone beyond a reasonable limit of its own defence. It continued to work on its underground nuclear testing site, saying that it would 'redouble the efforts to increase its strength to safeguard the country's sovereignty and right to existence' and establish "practical equilibrium with the US." This, as *Sputnik News* alleges, is because 'Pyongyang appears to utilise the "Bluff and Bluster" strategy.³ It means to create a geopolitical crisis and request compromise from opposing forces, assuming they can be rewarded since other nations want to prevent war'. This kind of nuclear blackmailing is being used as a weapon by their leadership.⁴ Kim is ready to endanger lives of its own people, by continuing with nuclear tests (presently suspended till conclusion of their proposed talks) to save its autocratic regime (accused of killing his own half brother to eliminate any contender), using 'Hate America' theme as rallying point. By doing so, Kim expects that the world should behave on his terms to save lives of people of other countries, despite risk of suicidal destruction of their own country, like a *fidayeen* mission. While all these actions of Kim may sound illogical to any sane mind, but for an analyst, they are well thought out strategic moves by Kim to consolidate his personal leadership from any domestic or external threat, igniting pro-regime nationalism, and tightening his grip on power. To achieve it, he is ready to antagonise world community along with his long-time allies and suffer international sanctions hoping for deliberate leakages in sanctions by his allies to avoid war.

What are the Stakes for the US? What are their Red Lines?

When President Trump used the phrase 'America First' and indicated Japan to pay for its security, the confidence of its allies like Japan, South Korea and Taiwan went all time low. The credibility of the US as their 'Net Security Provider' came under criticism and serious doubt. A few months later, his administration realised it to be a retrograde step. During visits of President Trump, Rex Tillerson and Defence Minister Mattis, it became evident that the US is trying to restore the confidence of its allies, as well as regaining its shrinking strategic space, which came under threat and encroachment due to aggressive design of China

in South and East China Sea, and irresponsible threatening behaviour of North Korea in the region. This was followed up by missile and nuclear testing by North Korea, and boycott of the International Court of Arbitration (ICA) decision regarding South China Sea by China, after converting atolls into military bases, thus encroaching on the US strategic space.

The threat of missile attack on Guam by North Korea (later called off), and renewal of missile attack on 15 Sep 2017 over Japan, indicated that North Korea is going well beyond the justification of its survival need. Kim's fantasy, of seeking 'Military Equilibrium with US', seemed to be driving him crazy. The US then started off with military posturing exercises with South Korea, deployment of Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) and came out with threatening statements like "If forced to defend itself or allies, it will have no choice but to destroy North Korea completely" (President's speech in UNGA on 19 Sep 17). It started seriously examining all options including military options to deal with North Korea.

An analysis of options from an all out war with North Korea, to *status quo* has been carried out. The end result is that the practical and realistic option is to negotiate diplomatically, impose strict sanctions, till redline is crossed or first shot is fired. In the meantime, the use of covert means for regime change by increasing domestic pressure due to shrinking resources by sanctions cannot be ruled out. In my opinion, redline for the US is any missile or nuclear attack on its base or mainland or allies including accidental fire on any of its vessels. The desirability of the US in these negotiations is to denuclearise North Korea completely. The compromising limit will be to ensure that North Korea does not reach a capability to be able to deliver nuke on its mainland. If complete denuclearisation is not achieved, Japan may nuclearise, and tactical nukes may be deployed in South Korea along with full deployment of THAAD system. This may not be to the liking of regional players like China and Russia.

Is China Double-Gaming or its Leverages on North Korea are Overhyped?

When President Trump tried to outsource the problem of resolving North Korean crisis to China, presumably in exchange of some

trade concessions, his administration deliberately overlooked the fact that China was part of the problem. It was obvious at that point of time that they will be disappointed, because North Korea has always been nurtured by China to be used as a 'Frontline State' against the US and its ally South Korea. This strategy dates back to Korean War of 1953, when China entered the war to avoid the US or its ally South Korea to be its continental neighbour, and a permanent continental military threat. This deep rooted strategy helped North Korea to become a militarily strong nuclear state, even if the US does not recognise its nuclear status. There being no change in geography and alignment of South Korea towards the US, the same strategic scenario still exists, hence, the same strategy is still applicable, with China's overt and covert support to North Korea. It is suspected that the missile technology was shared with North Korea and some irresponsible power transferred nuclear technology to Pakistan. Later, as per media reports, both exchanged these technologies with each other and went towards a path of nuclear and missile test misadventures, posing a threat to their greatest competitors. While Pakistan focused more on developing tactical nukes to blunt conventional superiority of India, North Korea went a step ahead to develop long range arsenal to threaten the US mainland, which it sees as the biggest and most powerful threat for its regime protection.

The continuation of nuclear misadventure by North Korea exposed to the world that, either China does not have enough leverage on North Korea or China is deliberately not putting enough pressure on them. In either case North Korea seems to have become a liability for China, with its irresponsible actions despite the UN sanctions which Russia and China have supported (at least on paper). It is surprising as to how North Korea is managing to get so much of weapon grade nuclear fuel to be able to sustain so many nuclear tests. This has invited deployment of THAAD in South Korea, which makes China and Russia extremely uncomfortable as they apprehend that the system could be used to spy on Chinese and Russian missile flight tests. In the war of rhetoric and provocative statements, when Kim threatened to attack the US bases, Beijing announced that 'If North Korea invades another country, China will not defend them'. North Korea is unlikely to listen to any country to roll back its nuclear ambition, because every country which has nuclear weapons cites it to be

its insurance for defence and peace ever since these weapons were invented. In this context, China has no moral right to stop North Korea from developing it because it itself went nuclear citing it as protective arsenal against the US threat, which North Korea is emulating.

In my opinion, China or Russia may not be keen to invite and support a nuclear war by North Korea and would be looking for a peaceful solution, but may not be in a position to address the insecurities of North Korea (especially their leader). The other danger is that, if a war does take place and China does not enter the war directly like 1950-53, but decides to give moral and material support to North Korea from outside, someone else will gain control of North Korean nuclear and missile assets; and if China wants to get it, it will amount to being dragged into fruitless war, despite trying to avoid it. In the given circumstances, the best option for China is to prolong the *status quo* by keeping North Korea under some pressure by implementing sanctions already imposed. How sincerely would China implement the UNSC resolution, and additional global and US sanctions is anyone's guess, but it will redefine its credibility, global image and its future dream of being a responsible world power, more so now as Xi Jinping has become undisputed, autocratic ruler of China for life.

The Other Stakeholders

Russian position, with respect to North Korean crisis, is not much different from Chinese, except that their degree of involvement is far less than them. They also do not want a nuclear war in their backyard, nor do they want the deployment of THAAD in South Korea. They have generally followed Chinese line and will be happy with *status quo* (no further tests by North Korea and no war in Korean peninsula), with no disturbance to them.

Japan has a precarious position which forces it to make hard choices. Japan would like the threat from North Korea to be resolved forever, which is not possible without complete denuclearisation of North Korea. Its strategic interests coincide with the US because North Korea has already achieved the range required to strike Guam. Japan is already disturbed by the varying statements from the US President expecting them to pay for their security on one occasion and swearing by his allies on another. It

is leaving them with very little choice to raise their own defence capabilities, and go nuclear if Korean denuclearisation does not take place. The capacity building for defence is a long process, more so when Japan has been under the US defence umbrella for so long. It also involves convincing the population, a segment of which is strictly opposing nuclearisation after bearing scars of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, making decision to do so that much more difficult.

In any conflict in Korean Peninsula, South Korea has a lot to lose irrespective of the outcome. It is the most affected country by Korean crisis and out of proportion growth of North Korean arsenal. While the US and North Korea can make provocative statements challenging each other for war, South Korea has to bear the brunt of it being the geographical neighbour of North Korea. Any war in Korean Peninsula means that Seoul will have to be vacated to minimise casualties, being in range of long range artillery of North Korea. The threat of destruction of manufacturing hubs and an economic holocaust, besides heavy casualties is too big a risk to take. Even after the deployment of THAAD, the chances of some of the missiles of North Korea to pass through are possible, and that is good enough to cause unprecedented damage to South Korea. South Korea, therefore, has every reason to try for peaceful resolution of the crisis including establishing of hotline between Pyongyang and Seoul as confidence building measure to prevent escalation. In fact, it is a diplomatic achievement for them to convince the US and North Korea to talk at apex level, something which even China could not achieve for whatever reasons.

Will the Talks Succeed?

The talks between North and South Korean leaders scheduled in April will set the tone for possible talks between the US and North Korea. In my opinion there may be a chance that despite President Trump's acceptance, the talks may still not take place due to unacceptable stance of the US or North Korea. Some ground realities which make the situation complicated are:-

- (a) The US-North Korea talks without South Korea, China, Japan and Russia will not lead to any lasting solution. The date and place has been left vague, perhaps to accommodate this requirement. The fact that Kim had

consultations with President Xi Jinping last month and his high officials are consulting Russia justifies the argument.

(b) It is too late to convince North Korea to completely denuclearise. A nuclear-tipped-missile capable North Korea is a reality, and North Korea is unlikely to give away the only instrument of its regime survival.

(c) Strict sanctions are showing some pressure on North Korea, but suspected leakages are also taking place ensuring minimal sustenance for them. These leakages will continue, even if the countries doing so do not own up as was the incident of ships allegedly delivering resources to them from Hong Kong under Maldives flag.

(d) No one will deliberately like to initiate war, but it will continue to be a flashpoint prone to accidental triggers.

(e) The North Korean strategic assets and critical arsenal are well tucked in mountains. They are unlikely to be destroyed in any conventional attack including Massive Ordnance Air Blast (MOAB). North Korea will, thus, retain a second strike capability.

(f) US technological capability to make nuclear arsenal of adversary malfunction or possibly destroying it, will be under test. Presently it is doubtful.

(g) Providing protective hardware, technology, fighting capability to its allies is a must for the US to ensure credibility to its military alliance.

(h) Further misadventures of North Korea may encourage other neighbours to go nuclear. This may start a chain reaction starting from Japan followed by Iran, Saudi Arabia and South Korea redeploying tactical nukes. This will lead to a dangerous nuclear world.

Considering the ground realities mentioned above, in my opinion, the chances of talks being successful are minimal. The US is unlikely to settle down for anything short of snatching away North Korean's capability to attack their mainland with nuclear tipped missiles; and North Korea is unlikely to give away the only leverage it has for its regime survival. If the talks take place at apex level and fail, Kim will come out much stronger, having

convinced his domestic constituency of being capable of making the US President talk to him. Prolonging strict sanctions is a must to crack the will of the North Korean people and Kim.

How does it Affect India?

Although India had reasonably good relations with North Korea in the past and still maintains its embassy at a small scale, but suspected proliferation of missile technology by North Korea to Pakistan has never been appreciated by India. India is following all sanctions imposed by the UN on North Korea. It is seen that North Korea is blatantly blackmailing the US and its allies by its missile and claimed nuclear capability for its survival, even at the cost of risking lives and prosperity of its countrymen. The world cannot afford *status quo* ante in this case, because if no action is taken against North Korea, the world will have to live with the problem of nuclear blackmailing. Other countries like Pakistan are also working on similar philosophy, wherein it is propagating Proxy War on India through militants and threatening to use nukes if Indian Defence Forces cross Line of Control or International border to chase militants or use conventional forces. It may lead to a situation where humanity suffers from a threat of nuclear blackmailing by states, as well as militants, if tactical nukes accidentally fall into their hands. This is not in the interest of humanity. The tendency of nuclear blackmailing should not go unpunished.

Conclusion

The uncertainties will continue till Kim meets South Korean President in April and President Trump in May this year. Expecting that North Korean Dictator will abandon his nuclear ambition sounds unrealistic, although it may be most desirable to bring peace in the Korean Peninsula. This seems to be a beginning of a very tough and hectic diplomatic exercise, as few in the US feel that the Trump administration lacks an experienced team of diplomats. The fact that President Trump has been personally ringing up President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Abe, after taking the decision, shows some hesitation and after thoughts about its implications. The possibility of talks getting scuttled cannot be ruled out even before the meet at diplomatic level, if the hardened stance of both sides leaves little chance of reaching a meeting point. If the world succumbs to nuclear blackmailing, the

nuclear states will tend to use this tool more often, and the non-nuclear insecure states will tend to go nuclear. The disclosure of unstoppable nuclear missile by Russia just before elections is a case in point, even if it was for domestic consumption, it can be construed as a signal to the West.

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The New Geopolitical Realities in Afghanistan: India's Constructive Role as US Partner

Shri Gaurav Dixit®

Strategic competition in Afghanistan is not a new phenomenon, but is inherent in its geo-strategic position. Afghanistan derives its political significance because of its geo-strategic position i.e. it is situated at the crossroads of ancient civilisations – Indian, European, Chinese. The modern state of Afghanistan has the curse of being the battleground of intense ideological, political and military conflict between the great powers. If it was the epicentre of the 'Great Game' between the Great Britain and Russia for hegemony over Central Asia and South Asia in the second half of the 19th century; it became a decisive factor in holding reign of the US over the Soviet Union during the Cold War that ultimately led to disintegration of the Soviet Union. In addition, various global actors supported by the regional powers have endorsed non-conventional strategies like terrorism and civil wars bringing devastating impact on Afghanistan's stability. The centuries of conflict has made Afghanistan a perpetual security nightmare- an outcome of complex interplay of internal disturbances and political interference of the global and regional players. Afghanistan, often called the graveyard of empires has itself become graveyard of civilization due to decades of conflict fought to preserve geopolitical interests of the great powers.

During both, the Great Game and the Cold War periods, global players pursued regional grouping to counter its nemesis. It was the regional players like Pakistan, Iran, India and Saudi Arabia that played dominant roles in shaping and securing the outcome of rivalries of the great powers.

New Geopolitical Realities and China as the New Player in the Great Game

New geopolitical realities are reshaping the contours of the global politics, with China behaving more aggressively and dominantly across South Asia, South East Asia and Africa. It is challenging the unilateral world the US has dominated for over two decades since the end of the Cold War. Similarly, the US is trying to reassert its hegemony over the global order. What appears from the emerging trend of political and diplomatic moves from China and the US is that a new Cold War is imminent in near the future between the two countries, introducing new security dynamics in Afghanistan.

The National Security Policy and the New Defence Strategy of the US seem to be leading to a contentious US approach towards the 'revisionist' Russia and China. The impending threat is from China which has challenged its supremacy over the South China Sea and Indo-Pacific region, forcing the US to revise its policy towards China.¹ At the same time Chinese growing imprint in these regions has sent mixed signals to the US and its allies.

In its National Security Strategy Paper, unveiled in December 2017, the US has suggested helping South Asian nations maintain their sovereign against increasing Chinese influence in the region. In other words, it would act to keep revisionist power like China from gaining strength in the region.

China is on ascendance in Afghanistan. It is fast expanding in the region. It has strengthened its ties with many Central Asian countries, and is increasing trade and commerce ties with Afghanistan. It has in the last couple of years created a crucial space for itself, which it is using for a future political solution in Afghanistan that is conducive to its economic interests.

Undoubtedly, it has made its presence felt in the region as it has done in many other countries with heavy investment in infrastructure and diplomatic engagement coupled with financial guarantees.² China remains the third largest trading partner and the largest source country of investment in Afghanistan. The bilateral trade between China and Afghanistan has crossed US\$1 billion mark. China has proposed to include Afghanistan in the US\$57 billion economic corridor in Pakistan, a part of Beijing's

Belt and Road initiative. Afghanistan has welcomed Chinese offer to join the belt and road initiative, and china is slowly becoming reliable partner of Afghanistan.³

New Strategy, New Alignment of the Regional Players

Afghanistan has always been at risk of unwelcome external influences, primarily from the opportunistic neighbouring states. No regional state is prepared to allow another to gain a preponderance of influence in Afghanistan. Moreover, each retains links to client networks that are capable of fractionalizing and incapacitating an emerging Afghanistan.⁴ China sees an opportunity in bringing all these countries together to form a unique front against growing India-US relationship in the region. There is formalization of relations going on among China-Pakistan-Russia-Iran on one hand, and on the other US-India-Afghanistan. Each country is crucial for the outcome of the Afghan problem, and each country has its own set of interests and its own strategies to gain maximum stronghold in the region.

Pakistan is the most predatory neighbour of Afghanistan. In the last few decades, it has been a key player, and a crucial ally of the US in determining the fate of the war the US had fought against the Soviets as well as the Islamic terror groups like the Al-Qaeda, the Taliban and now the Islamic State of Khorasan. It has often been blamed for helping the international forces on one hand, and patronising the terrorist groups on the other. Pakistan has played this double game purely for the sake of gaining what it calls strategic depth in Afghanistan.

The new Trump Government in the US is not happy with Pakistan's policy on Afghanistan, where it sees the country's refusal to act against Taliban insurgency as part of its larger game plan for an unstable Afghanistan. President Trump has warned Pakistan to mend its ways or else be ready to pay the price. The US administration has increased pressure on Pakistan by trying to put it on the "gray list" of the Financial Action Task Force, cutting off US\$1.3 billion in aid. However, every time the US has pressurised Pakistan to act tough against the terrorists, it has played its China card. What appears from the latest developments is that Pakistan is ready to move to the China camp at the cost of American interest. Scholar Andrew Small suggests that unlike the

past, China won't hesitate to defend Pakistan, if it becomes impossible to retain the *status quo* of the relation between the two.⁵ Over the long term, China would welcome estrangement in US-Pakistan ties, as it will provide it the space to unilaterally dominate Pakistan and reap benefits of its strategic location. It has traditionally sought to bolster Islamabad's capacity to serve as a hedge against India's rise.⁶

Iran too has made bold strategic gambit in Afghanistan. Once a very strong rival of Pakistan-based insurgent groups, it now has its own calculations to support the Taliban in Afghanistan to keep it unstable and force the international community to leave Afghanistan.⁷ Saudi Arabia, which has been a loyal partner of the US and Pakistan against communism, backed Taliban for long before turning away from the group.⁸ Russia is also pushing for its influence in the region, and is accused of supporting the Taliban.⁹

One thing which is common in China-Pakistan-Russia-Iran axis is that these countries want the international forces out of Afghanistan. Neither Iran nor Russia want the US in their backyard what they consider as their strategic area of influence. Similarly Pakistan has its own interest in keeping the region unstable. While, China is at the forefront of this new Axis, trying to bring into line the interests of these regional players with its own interests in the region; the US is trying to counter the growing imprints of the China-Russia nexus, which it terms as revisionist.

India stands out as an interesting player in the region. In Afghanistan India would like a stable regime which is sensitive to Indian interests. It had backed the Soviet Union installed government in Afghanistan in 1979 and has given its support to every successive government, before the takeover by the Taliban.¹⁰ India's support for stable Afghanistan is driven by many extraneous factors such as India's historic conflict with Pakistan, which through its proxies in Afghanistan has used its territory against India.¹¹ India's expanding economy and search for markets in Central Asia through Iran and Afghanistan is also an important determinant.¹²

China's Policy Contrasts the US Policy in Afghanistan

The question is – how will Afghanistan be affected by the growing conflict between the two nations and their allies? At the outset, it is clear that the two global powers will not be involved in outright military adventurism in the region. The kind of economic interdependence they have, apart from significant cooperation in other areas including the climate change, it appears unlikely that they will be fighting a war to counter each other's influence. However, there is all possibility that they might engage in strategic manoeuvres, with the US trying to curtail the Chinese influence in the region, as well as Chinese trying to limit the US dominance in Afghanistan.

Although both China and the US want to have a conflict free, stable Afghanistan, they have chosen different approaches to pursue their goals. Two major areas of divergence in their policies are going to be the real bone of contention between the two countries.

First, the Chinese want a political solution to Afghan problem that could mean accommodating the warring factions including the Taliban; a solution, which is in direct conflict with the present US dispensation, which currently wants to quell the deadly insurgency in the region, before negotiating a peace deal. In December 2016, in a trilateral meeting; senior diplomats from China, Pakistan and Russia, in Moscow, supported lifting of international sanctions on the Taliban leaders.¹³ China, Russia and Pakistan have repeatedly asked the UN and the US government to lift the sanctions on the Taliban. However, the US government appears to disagree. In January 2018, the US administration slapped fresh sanctions on four Taliban and two Haqqani Network leaders for terrorist activities.¹⁴ Secondly the Chinese embrace of Pakistan is again in contrast to new US defence and security strategy for the region. Pakistan, which has been a US ally for decades, has witnessed public censure from the Trump Administration. It has long been accused of being an ally of the international forces in Afghanistan, at the same time being promoter and facilitator of terrorism in the region. Additionally, Chinese growing economic imprint in Afghanistan would also mean strengthening its hold over the landlocked Central Asia, which could further benefit from the trade and commerce in the region. This will be a threat to the American interests in Central Asia.

One thing is clear in Afghanistan – both China and the US are making their security bets in Afghanistan. One, to retain its position as the most powerful country in the world, the other to upset the hegemony the US has enjoyed for decades. One factor that is making immense influence in the region is the economic heft of China. By nature, economic changes start to bring about changes in the distribution of strategic power. It is here, where the US is losing to the Chinese. American aid and military presence is creating contrasting image of Americans among Afghans, which cannot match the image of the Chinese as a reliable partner, which has invested a lot on tangible infrastructure projects. Secondly, it appears the US has lost a crucial strategic partner in Pakistan, which holds enormous strategic influence over Afghanistan. In fact it has not only lost, but the old ally is now comfortably placed in the opponent's camp of China. The grouping of Iran and Russia with China and Pakistan has compounded the US problems in Afghanistan. And, therefore, the US needs more than just military boots and economic aid to counter the growing influence of the Chinese in the region, and this is where India can play a crucial role.

India is Answer to China not Pakistan

Indian interests converge with the interests of the Chinese and the US in Afghanistan – which is to see a peaceful, stable Afghanistan. India, like the US, has a lot at stake in the region and will not be comfortable with the kind of political solution the Chinese want, certainly not with the kind of prominence the Chinese policy gives to Pakistan. Ideally, India would want Chinese to find solution to the Afghan problem without much support from Pakistan, which by now has been thoroughly exposed for its links with the insurgent groups operating in the region. India would have its own reservations as far as peace talks are concerned. India may not be completely averse to certain sections of the Taliban being given political mileage, with heavy load of checks and balances to accompany.¹⁵ Therefore, even though India and the US along with China might want a peaceful, stable Afghanistan, there is a clear case of divergences in their approaches towards how to achieve and to what level trade off with the warring faction can take place.

India has implemented some important infrastructural projects in the past and is implementing some new projects such as the Shahtoot Dam and drinking water project for Kabul that would also facilitate irrigation, water supply for Charikar City, and road connectivity to Band-e-Amir in Bamyan Province that would promote tourism. In addition, India will also take up 116 High Impact Community Development Projects in 31 provinces of Afghanistan.¹⁶ India has pledged or spent around US\$ 3 billion worth of aid over the last decade.

Similar investment has been made by China and the US. The kind of investment all these countries have made in Afghanistan will be fruitful only when Afghanistan is stable, without the kind of violence it is witnessing. Similarly a stable government is pre-requisite to violence free Afghanistan. Afghanistan with its immense resources can be a cog in the development of the region. Both India and China with expanding economy and population would require these strategic resources and capabilities for their own benefits, and, therefore, two countries could act together for a stable Afghanistan. However there is monumental difference between ideal soft power policy adopted by India, and the hardcore realpolitik game played by the Chinese in the region.

The consolidation of anti-US forces in the form of China-Russia-Iran-Pakistan has worried international forces in Afghanistan. However, India unlike the US, still shares good ties with some of these countries. It has till now been able to achieve a balance between its friends, by keeping itself distant from their inter-personal tensions; additionally, it has not allowed the state of their inter-personal relations to dictate policy choice to India, the textbook case is its plan to build Chabahar Port in Iran and provide alternative route to Afghanistan. The growing tension between Iran and the USA and between Russia and the US has not affected India's relation with these two countries, which by all means are powerful players in Afghanistan. Indo-Russian relations are not at all time high because of Russia's growing collusion with China and Pakistan, but the relation has maintained the level of maturity it had decades ago.

Overall, India is placed more comfortably than the US in the region to balance the growing imprints of the Chinese, as India

holds similar advantages with some of these countries. Secondly, India's growing economic and bilateral ties give it advantage over the US.

Backed by the US, India can be a crucial player in Afghanistan. The US and India together can achieve more than what the US has been able to achieve till now. At the same time it would send a strong message to subversive forces in the region that the Afghan peace process cannot be hostage to strategic interests of a few countries. It will highlight the fact that India has a crucial role to play in assisting the Afghan State to achieve peace, eliminate terrorism and stabilise the country.

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Report on Visit of USI Delegation to Vietnam 27-30 November 2017

Major General BK Sharma, AVSM, SM and Bar (Retd)®

General

Institute for Defence International Relations (IDIR) of Vietnam

and United Service Institution of India (USI) undertake delegation level exchanges in New Delhi and Hanoi alternatively, since 2006. The IDIR is a premium 'Think Tank' of Ministry of Defence of Vietnam, with direct access to the country's top leadership. A USI delegation comprising the following members visited Vietnam from 27 Nov to 30 Nov 2017:-

- (a) Vice Admiral Shekhar Sinha, PVSM, AVSM, NM and Bar (Retd), USI Council Member, former Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee (CISC) and Commander in Chief Western Naval Command.
- (b) Lieutenant General AK Ahuja, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM and Bar (Retd), USI Council Member, former Defence Attaché to Vietnam and Deputy Chief of Defence Staff, Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff (IDS).
- (c) Major General BK Sharma, AVSM, SM and Bar (Retd), Deputy Director (Research) and Head of Centre for Strategic Studies and Simulation, USI.
- (d) Major General PK Goswami, VSM (Retd), Deputy Director (Adm) at the USI, Former Senior Directing Staff, National Defence College.
- (e) Colonel PS Punia, SM, VSM, Indian Defence Attaché in Hanoi (representative from Embassy of India).
- (f) Shri Aman Bansal, Second Secretary (representative from Embassy of India).

The Vietnam side was led by Senior Colonel Nguyen Thanh Dong, Deputy Director, IDIR and included the following:-

- (a) Colonel Tran Hoai Nam.
- (b) Colonel Le Trac Vuong.
- (c) Lieutenant Colonel Tran Minh An.
- (d) Lieutenant Colonel Tran Van Quan.

- (f) Leading strategic experts from universities and other civil Think Tanks.

Interaction with IDIR Vietnam

The two sides discussed geopolitical trends in the Indo-Pacific region, dynamics of Indo-Vietnam relations with China and the US and developments in outer space and cyber space. Key points of presentations are summarised as under:-

- (a) Vice Admiral Shekhar Sinha spoke on the topic “*Security Environment in Indo-Pacific Region: Challenges and Prospects*”. He provided an in-depth analysis of traditional and non- traditional security threats in the Indo- Pacific and offered a slew of recommendations to build mutual trust and mitigate security challenges through bilateral and multi-lateral cooperative arrangements.
- (b) Colonel Tran Hoai Nam, Head of Association of the South East Nations (ASEAN) – Asean Regional Forum (ARF) Division, Vietnam, spoke on the topic “*Situation in East Sea, the Impact to Region.*” He described the South China Sea dispute as a major flash point and a source of regional instability. In his view, China after creating ‘New Facts on Ground’, strives for a tactical *status quo* and in the meanwhile woos other claimant countries to sign a ‘Code of Conduct’ mechanism. China has driven a wedge in the ASEAN and it is unlikely that the 10 member countries will reach a consensus on how to deal with the problem. The US, on the other hand will assert for freedom of navigation and step up its military activities in the region. Japan has emerged as another important player in the South China Sea and is bolstering its relations with Taiwan and Vietnam.
- (c) Major General BK Sharma spoke on “*Sino- Indian Relations and Indo-US Relations*”. In the first part of presentation, he elucidated on China’s strategic outlook and geopolitical imperatives, ‘China Dream’, China’s strategic direction post the 19th Party Congress, determinants of Sino-India relations and drivers of contests between the two countries. In the Indo-US relations, the gambit of issues presented included, Indo-US strategic calculus in the evolving world order, determinants of bilateral relations and points of convergence and divergence. The crux of the two

presentations was to portray India as a leading power, capable of steering its relations with the two world powers in consonance with its worldview and expanding nature of strategic interests. The underlining message was that India will prove to be a reliable strategic partner for Vietnam.

(d) Lieutenant Colonel Tran Minh An, Deputy Head of Asia-Africa Division and Colonel Le Trac Vuong, Head of US-EU Division, Vietnam, spoke on the topic *“The Relationships between Vietnam- China and US”*. He elucidated that China-Vietnam relations have shown a steady progress. China is Vietnam’s largest trading partner with a bilateral trade of \$ 72 billion (2016). In last one year, the bilateral state visits were pitched at the highest leadership level. High-level meetings such as the 10th Meeting of Vietnam-China Steering Committee on Bilateral Cooperation, 4th Round of Border Defence Cooperation Exchange and 6th Vietnam-China Defense Dialogue paved the way for multi-faceted cooperation between the two countries. The two sides have signed a “Joint Vision on Defence Cooperation” till 2025. The two countries have reached an agreement on “Basic Principles Guiding the Settlement of Issues at Sea”. Commenting on the flip-side of bilateral relations, he flagged strategic mistrust, poor strategic communications, South China dispute and difference over Vietnam’s participation in “Belt and Road Initiative”, as some of the contentious issues. Vietnam’s perception of US role in the Indo-Pacific and South China Sea dispute is in consonance with the Indian views, wherein, they perceive that Washington will play a major role in balancing China and maintaining a rule based order in the region. They believe that the US will work towards strengthening the primacy of ASEAN and build up strategic partnership with regional countries to balance China. His presentation, however, reflected some skepticism on the behaviour of Trump Administration to deal with strategic challenges and mounting uncertainties. He said, Vietnam and US are working assiduously to invigorate their economic cooperation under the ambit of “Framework Agreement on Trade and Investment”. Vietnam-US defence relations are guided by Memorandum of Understanding on “Advancing Bilateral Defence Cooperation” (2011) and “Joint Vision

Statement on Defence Relations (2015)". The core areas of defence cooperation are intelligence sharing, maritime security, UN Peacekeeping, denuclearisation, space and humanitarian assistance.

(e) Lieutenant General Anil Kumar Ahuja spoke on "*Achievement and Prospects of India-Vietnam Relations*". He highlighted that India-Vietnam relations are based on strong fundamentals of shared values, strategic autonomy, and commonality of security threats. With the upgradation of relations in 2016 to "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership", new vistas have opened to broaden the bilateral cooperation. Declaration of "Common Vision on Defence Ties" (2015-2020) encompasses a wide array of mechanisms for comprehensive dialogue and meaningful defence cooperation. The defence relations between the two countries is a shining model worth emulating by other countries. He suggested a slew of measures to upgrade the defence cooperation in the hi-tech fields and in the arena of maritime security and asymmetric warfare. He proposed that the two countries should re-fashion their defence cooperation on the Indo-US model framing it as "India-Vietnam Defence Equipment, Training, Technology and Trade Initiative (DETTTI)".

(f) Lieutenant Colonel Tran Van Quan, Deputy Head of Asia-Africa Division, spoke on the topic "*Vietnam-India Relation: Situation and Solution*". He termed Vietnam as a strategic bridge to ASEAN in the context of India's Act East Policy and stressed on the early operationalisation of connectivity between India- Myanmar-Laos-Cambodia-Vietnam. With the signing of 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement' and Prime Minister Modi's recent visit to Vietnam, the bilateral relations have received a major fillip. India's offer of US \$500 million line of credit has opened new avenues of meaningful cooperation between the two countries . Bilateral trade is well poised to jump from US \$ 5.5 billion (2016) to US \$15 billion (2020). The two countries cooperate at a number of multinational fora such as ASEAN Defence Minister's Meeting (ADDM) Plus. India's assistance in supply of high-speed patrol vessels, Information

Technology, coastal surveillance, renewable and atomic energy, co-production of Akash missiles, upgradation of Pechora system, research in new generation missiles, production of light helicopters and ship building will go a long way in strengthening the bilateral cooperation. Likewise, initiatives in the fields of education, software development, and cultural exchanges are deepening people to people contact. In his concluding remarks, he focussed on the areas that merit attention to boost bilateral trade and ensure timely implementation of other agreements as per laid down timelines. He also stressed the need to upgrade the cooperation at multilateral forums such as UN, ARF and East Asia Summit (EAS) and in the domain of emerging niche technologies.

(g) Major General PK Goswami, spoke on the topic *“Evolving Frontiers of Warfare in Cyber and Space Domain”*. He touched upon the growing salience of cyber space and outer space as new strategic frontiers of technological advancement and asymmetric warfare. China’s military strategists perceive cyber and counter space capabilities to be more credible and flexible deterrent vis-à-vis nuclear and conventional capabilities. He dwelt upon China’s growing capabilities in the outer space and cyber space, and also how India and Vietnam should cooperate in the outer space and cyber space.

Meeting with Director IDIR

On 29 Nov, the delegation in an exclusive meeting discussed areas of future cooperation with Major General Vu Tien Trong, Director IDIR. Both sides acknowledged that the USI-IDIR dialogue has proved very useful in sharing strategic perspectives in areas of common interest and in providing valuable inputs for formulating policy framework. The Indian side proposed that USI and IDIR should publish a book containing papers presented during the meeting. It was also suggested that the two institutions should conduct scenario based strategic discussions, revolving around strategic brinkmanship and flashpoints in the Indo- Pacific. The Vietnamese side agreed ‘in principle’ to jointly progress these proposals. The Indian side extended an invitation to IDIR for a

bilateral dialogue followed by participation in the National Security Seminar, scheduled in November 2018 at Delhi.

Overall Impressions

The IDIR is a Ministry of Defense 'Think Tank', staffed with serving officers of Vietnam People's Army (VPA). It performs the function of 1.5 Track diplomacy very effectively. The views expressed by the Vietnamese scholars in essence were the views of Government of Vietnam. Likewise, the views of USI delegation were bound to reach the highest level in the Government.

It emerged from the discussions that Vietnam is following a 'two-prong' approach in its relations with China i.e cooperation and hedging. Vietnam will not compromise sovereignty over Spratlys and Paracel Islands, but at the same time will continue to enhance its economic cooperation with China. The two sides have embarked upon substantial 'Confidence Building Measures' (CBMs). China's import of goods from Vietnam has gone up and people to people contact has seen a significant rise. In the security arena, Vietnam is trying to 'keep its head low and bide time to build its capability'. Vietnam is extremely cautious in its dealings with India, US, and other countries, lest it provokes China. They admitted that the younger generation is getting influenced by the glitter of Chinese culture. This proclivity in youth is currently moderated by the older generation, who have greater experience of dealing with China. The harsh reality, however, is that the 'older generation' with the likes of 'General Vo Nguyen Giap', are waning fast.

Vietnamese believe that East Sea (South China Sea) is not a mere 'territorial dispute' but an inflexion point in a wider 'Big Power' 'strategic competition'. The overall situation in 2017 can be described as 'calm', but certainly not 'stable', it is just a 'tactical adjustment' by China on account of the 19th Communist Party of China (CPC) National Congress and because of the ongoing negotiations on the 'Code of Conduct' with other stakeholders. However, barring some minor stand offs, it is assessed that current situation is likely to prevail in the coming year. China is apt at converting non disputes into disputes, creating precedence and defining (unilaterally) rules for the players and thereafter 'slicing

advantage' and consolidating 'new *status quo*' (using tools of physical occupation, diplomacy, legal action, and soft power).

Vietnamese were of the opinion that China is wooing economically weak and unstable member states of ASEAN. The remainder ASEAN members are either aligned with the US or do fine balancing without taking any position on contentious issues. Consequently, the role of ASEAN in resolving the South China Sea dispute has weakened. Vietnam believes that disputes in the South China Sea should be resolved peacefully and in accordance with the international law. They consider dispute over the Paracel as distinct from the Spratlys, as the former is a bilateral dispute between China and Vietnam. In their opinion, the possible answer lies in strengthening multilateral cooperation, and developing more 'practical mutual cooperation', which may reduce China's aggressiveness. They also mentioned building a greater 'ASEAN-India Cooperation' to create a secure environment in the Indo-Pacific. Despite propagating 'multilateral cooperation' it is unlikely that Vietnam will get into any multilateral arrangement which is even remotely perceived to be directed against China (Malabar, "Quad" bloc etc).

In regard to the US, the Vietnamese, despite being circumspect about the role of Trump Administration, felt that Washington will continue to maintain pressure on China to observe rule of law and respect core concerns of smaller countries in the region. The region will witness high profile military exercises by the US and its allies. US seriousness towards the region is substantiated by its continued Freedom of Navigation Operation (FONOPS) and by efforts in keeping South China Sea on the global agenda in the International and Regional conferences. Despite China's economic growth, it is accepted that China cannot compete militarily with the US. However, it was also equally clear that no other nation of South East Asia can match the military capabilities of China. Therefore, the US is considered a major balancing player and Japan the only country in the region which sizes up to China.

Vietnam seems to be 'in a hurry' to build its defence capabilities and develop an indigenous defence industrial base. It wants Indian assistance in hi-technology training, procurement of equipment, and co-production. These aspirations, however, are

tampered by a consideration that Indo- Vietnam ties should not antagonise China. The Indian policymakers should factor in peculiar 'balancing' nature of Vietnam's behaviour in their expectations from the other side. India will have to show patience to build upon existing relationship with Vietnam, making it a bulwark of our 'Act East' policy. Despite long standing and multifaceted defence relations with India, Vietnam perceives certain functional problems-mainly due to varying organisational structure, limitations of language, and inadequate comprehension of each other's system. India needs to heed such concerns and take course correction, where needed.

On questions related to China, Vietnamese were generally evasive in criticising China. They stressed on multilateral cooperation to create an environment to protect Vietnam's interests, advocated to resolve issues by peaceful means within framework of Code of Conduct 2017 and use of international laws e.g. United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982.

Interaction with the Indian Embassy

The USI delegation was accompanied by the Defence Attaché and Second Secretary from the Embassy of India in Hanoi. Subsequently, the delegation interacted with the Indian Ambassador to Vietnam, Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish at the dinner hosted by him and communicated the aforesaid impressions. The Ambassador underscored 'China factor' in Vietnam's domestic, security, and foreign policy. He attributed defence cooperation as a prime mover in India-Vietnam relations and reiterated the need for utmost patience and deftness in steering Indo-Vietnam relations.

Conclusion

USI-IDIR interaction over the years has proved to be a useful platform in sharing perspectives on issues of mutual concern, gauge and shape perceptions. Vietnam harbours excellent goodwill towards India and looks at Delhi as a leading player with a major role in the Indo-Pacific region. Vietnam perceives itself as a strategic bridge between India and ASEAN and is highly supportive of India's Act East Policy. Vietnam sees great opportunities in developing multi-dimensional strategic relations

with India, particularly in high-end technology and defence sector. However, China factor weighs on Vietnam's strategic engagement with India. This aspect will have to be considered in our Vietnam policy and our expectations will have to be accordingly tailored.

On the whole, the visit to Vietnam was very useful in developing rapport with the IDIR and paving the way for enhanced cooperation between the two Think Tanks.

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Role of the Indian Armed Forces in Strategic Decision Making and Reclaiming the Strategic Space*

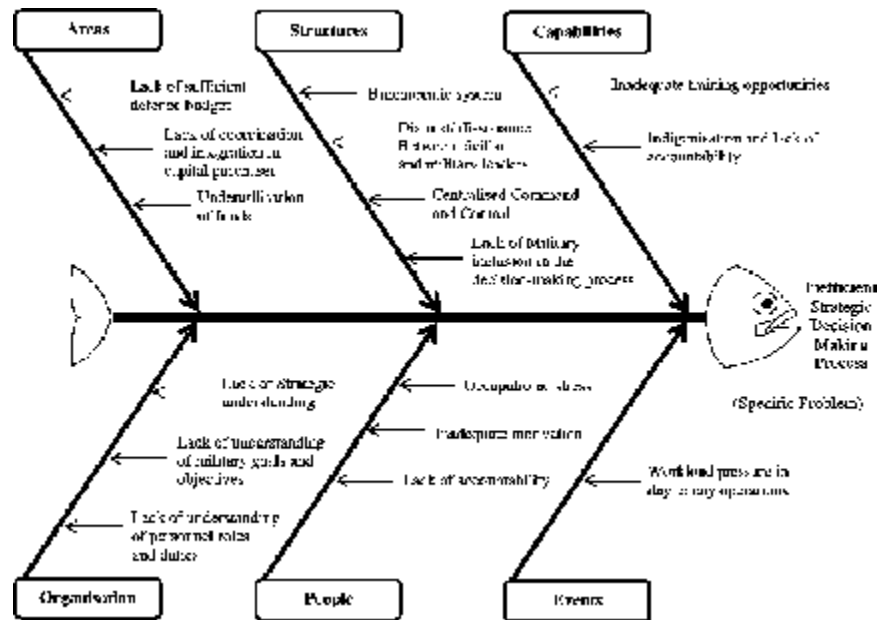
Commander Pankaj Kumar®

Introduction

National security remains the top most agenda for every country in the world today. Some nations, especially the developed ones, have well established and functioning military systems, while some other nations, in the developing world, lag behind in its national security structures. India is among those countries, that lacks a clear strategic management for the matters concerning national security, despite an urgent need for it.

India's military operates under an ill-structured strategic management system that has seen under-performance, despite attaining independence from the British rule and inheriting British system of parliamentary structure, judiciary, police, bureaucracy, and higher defence management (HDM). During the First and Second World Wars, Indian Army had an opportunity to participate in the war alongside British soldiers. However, there lacks evidence of a promising progress on strategic decision-making processes.

This calls for an urgent assessment of the national security framework to help in building a robust military system that is guided by informed strategic decisions. The article analyses the existing strategic environment of India and current situation of the military in the strategic decision-making process. Further, a brief comparison of the national security structures with other nations has been undertaken towards formulating recommendations that could be adopted to enable the Indian Armed Forces to play a greater role in strategic decision making.



Analysis of the Existing Strategic Environment

The national security in India is managed by the National Security Council (NSC), comprising Strategic Policy Group (SPG) and the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB). Despite these organisations, the management of national security, from formulation of strategies to their implementation, is found wanting.

For Armed Forces to play greater role in strategic decision making, it becomes critical to understand the current shortcomings. Towards this, a fishbone analysis has been carried out to identify the aspects that have resulted in inefficient strategic decision-making process in India.

Fishbone Analysis

A fishbone diagram, also called a cause and effect diagram, is a visualisation tool for categorising the potential causes for a specific problem or effect in order to identify its root causes. For the purpose of this article, the fishbone analysis is conducted using the areas, capabilities, structures, organisations, people, and events (ACSOPE) approach, which is an analysis affecting

the scope of strategic decision-making process in India. Various causes under the ACSOPE approach are discussed in the subsequent paragraphs and broad frame is depicted in **Figure** below:-

Issues Ailing the Strategic Decision-Making Process Structure.

(a) Bureaucratic System. The ineffectiveness of the strategic management process of the Indian Armed Forces is mainly caused by a bureaucratic system exercised by the political leaders and high-level bureaucrats. Sufficiently senior Armed Forces officers are not included in organisations and structures charged with the responsibility of working out strategy and policy formulation for ensuring national security. Military professional inputs do not find adequate emphasis for evolving proper strategies and policy framework,

(b) Distrust between Civilian and Military Leaders. The political leaders seek to enhance their political gains at the expense of the people, without considering the potential repercussions adversely affecting the national security strategy over a prolonged period. There has been a rise in civilian and military distrust. Lack of harmony in relations is evident.

(c) Centralised Command and Control. India has a highly centralised command and control structure. Even though the country's strategic decision-making process is critical, the leadership in decision-making is centralised with few or no consultations regarding the decisions being undertaken. Differing opinions are usually suppressed with prohibition for management interrogation being placed for specific projects.¹ For instance, the command and control of the nuclear weaponry clearly indicates the absence of military involvement and input of their preferences in the nuclear weaponry programme; isolating the military personnel for implementation only.

(d) Lack of Military-Inclusion in the Decision-Making Process. According to General VP Malik, PVSM, AVSM (Retd) former Chief of the Indian Army, the political

leadership continues to segregate the Army in the decision making processes claiming that a 'lack of trust' exists between the civilian and the military officials. With the military being a major stakeholder in the strategic operations of the country, a lack of involvement of the military leadership has led to fractured and flawed decision making in matters of defence management and strategic policies leading to crippled military operations.²

Organisation.

(a) Lack of Strategic Understanding. Despite the existence of the NSC, the strategic management gets compromised due to personal interests of political leaders and lack of military inclusivity in decision making processes.³ This has crippled the strategic management of the country, as decisions are being implemented in a sub-optimal and ambiguous manner.

(b) Lack of Understanding of Role, Goal and Duties of Military Personnel. The internal operations of an organisation determine the achievement of its strategic decisions. In the case of the Indian Armed Forces, most civil personnel suffer from lack of awareness concerning their role, vision, and strategy. There is also role conflict in the assignment of duties among the personnel.

Areas.

(a) Lack of Sufficient Defence Budget and Integrated Approach. India's defence budget is less than two per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It should be minimum three per cent of the GDP. Compared to China, India's defence budget is mere 33 per cent. Lack of sufficient funds has led to degradation in operational capabilities of the three Services. Further, the decision-making process lacks integration and coordination in capital allocation and acquisition of weapon systems for the three Services.

(b) Underutilisation of Funds. An analysis of the capital acquisitions during the Financial Years 2009-10 and 2015-16 indicates perpetual under-utilisation of the budgeted

amounts.⁴ It is bound to erode operational capability of units and formations of the three Services in the long run.

Capabilities.

(a) **Lack of Opportunity for Collective Training.** A large number of units and formations are deployed for countering militancy and terrorism involving sub unit operations. Training at unit and formation levels is suffering which adversely affects readiness for war.

(b) **Indigenisation and Lack of Accountability.** India needs to develop and produce indigenous military hardware to be self-reliant as well as exercise economy. Some of the defence establishments are not performing optimally. The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), has not been meeting targets set for them and there appears to be lack of accountability. The scenario needs to change in the interest of promoting efficiency.

People. The military personnel form the core group for achievement of strategic security. Notwithstanding the fact that there exists discord between the military and the civil bureaucracy, the military personnel suffer from low motivation and occupational stress. This emanates from lack of state of the art weapons and equipment as well as military support from higher management.⁵

Events. The military personnel face workload pressure as they are required to work for long hours. They get insufficient rest and often have to achieve difficult targets.⁶ Coupled with their inability to express grievances to the management, their stress level goes up considerably.

Comparison of National Security Decision-Making Model with Other Nations

The decision-making models in various countries are sculpted to meet the national security needs of the country which is usually developed for roles such as joint assessment in evaluating decision-making, policies, resource allocation for dealing with threats, oversight roles, prioritising security needs and coordinating emergency actions by the designated bodies.⁷

Basis for Formulation of Security Models. For developed nations, the main concerns for the national security revolve around the well-being and the stability of the nation. On the contrary, the developing nations have their national security concerns around the socio-economic matters. More so, for the jurisdictions recovering from past conflicts, the national security is also concerned with promoting culpability and transparency in the national security systems and building the public confidence in the security system. The strategic decision-making structures and processes, therefore, are formulated to meet the needs of the countries.

Developed Nations' Security Model. Developed nations such as the US, the UK, and Canada have centralised structures, which are entrusted with decision making. The mandate of the offices could be coordination, implementation or assessment of policy. The NSC in the US is an example of the policy initiator independent of the implementation role. In the UK, Canada, and South Africa, the bodies are entrusted with both initiation and implementation of security policies.⁸ In India, the role of decision-making is centralised in the Office of the Prime Minister.⁹ The effectiveness of the centralised structures, as seen in the developed countries, is lacking in India. On the contrary, India's centralised structure has devastated the national security system as many a time, decisions are made and carried out for selfish political gains.¹⁰

Sierra Leone Model. Sierra Leone, a small developing country, has been successful in establishing a national security structure that deals with the backbone of the security concerns, which are poverty and national development. The decision-making process is under the Office of National Security, which is apolitical in nature. The office has built transparency and accountability in the national security system by coordinating the civilian and military roles in decision-making. The aim is to build an enabling environment for development.¹¹ On the contrary, India's strategic decision-making system lacks transparency and accountability as power oscillates around specific circles of individuals.¹²

Recommended Security Model. On matters regarding the involvement of both the civilian and military input in the decision-making process, the US remains an outstanding example of

successful integration. The US NSC incorporates the viewpoints of both the civilian and military.¹³ This has enabled the US to formulate and implement the strategic decisions concerning the military with fruitful results. On the other hand, India has been lagging behind by excluding its military from the decision-making process, leading to under-performance of the military sector.¹⁴ The segregation has created a disparity between the military, the political leaders, and the civilian bureaucrats. There is a lack of coordination in executing decisions, which is a peril to the national security that can be exploited by the adversaries.

Recommendations for Conclusive Strategic Decision-Making Process

Civil-Military Inclusivity. Based on the long-term goal of having India as a self-reliant nation in the field of security weapons, the decision-making process will require input from different angles to have an all-encompassing, detailed structure and processes. The strategic decision-making process in India stands to gain if it incorporates civil-military inclusivity in the decision-making process. One of the benefits of an inclusive structure is that the process will benefit from diverse ideas from the two distinct groups and enhance the efficiency of strategic decision-making process multi-fold. Besides, the inclusivity will augment an environment for building trust, amongst the stakeholders in particular, and the citizens of India at large.

Establishment of an Oversight Body over the Strategic Decision-Making Process. The national security decision-making system should also establish an oversight body to oversee the formulation and implementation of the strategic decisions being made. The oversight body, partly comprising of Armed Forces personnel, will act as an audit mechanism to delineate the merits and demerits of the policy making and implementation system. The decision-making bodies will also gain tremendously from these oversight bodies by segregating and restructuring the beneficial policies and processes. Also, the oversight body will reveal the discrepancies of the strategic decision-making programmes and streamline them to derive full benefits. This will aid in removing the bottlenecks from the strategic decision-making process that impede effective alignment with the ultimate security goals of the country. The set-up would also keep a check on the

net results obtained by civilian agencies like DRDO and defence Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) thereby, contributing towards enhanced transparency and accountability that would promote confidence.

Establishment of a “Tri-Services Joint Think Tank”. To further fortify the role of Armed Forces manifold, in strategic decision-making process, institution of a “tri-services joint think tank” within the defence organisation is considered essential. The think-tank will help in promoting jointness and integrated decision making in the Armed Forces providing qualitative strategic decisions through the Chiefs of Staff Committee. It will encourage dissemination of ideas from all across the Forces. Further, the think tank will facilitate enmeshing the military view point into the national security decision-making process.

Operational Efficiency. Besides having a civil-military inclusive structure, the decision-making structure should also develop mechanisms enhancing the operational efficiency of the military. Some of the approaches are proper training of the military leadership and the personnel. The leaders should be well-trained for proper management of the various security operations. Not only will the exercise build confidence in the leaders, but they will also be better positioned to identify and forecast threats early. The leaders will also be equipped with the capacity to handle their subordinates, improving which will aid in reducing occupational stress for them, hence, their performance. The military leadership and personnel should also be well trained to have a proper articulation of the military's goals and objectives, as well as their respective roles and responsibilities. A proper understanding of the goals and objectives will go a long way in easing implementation of the laid out strategies as well as create a platform where the personnel can have inputs in decision-making system. A clear understanding of their respective roles and duties will help in efficient and effective execution of strategy worked out for conduct of operations.

Training and Exposure of Civil Bureaucrats Involved in National Security Policy Formulation. Bureaucrats involved in national security policy transformation should have sufficient knowledge about functioning of the Armed Forces. Their training should encapsulate mandatory aspects of strategy formulation,

policy development, risk management and control. This will help in identifying and forecasting threats promptly and boost their confidence in decision-making.

Resource Allocation. The national security decision-making system should incorporate policies outlining the criteria for resource allocation for military purpose. It should be linked to need of operational capability desired. The policies will aid in optimal procurement of military hardware and division of resources to the different sectors. Besides, the policies will help in prioritising tasks involved in the strategic decision-making process.

Strategic Partnerships with Other Countries. Another consideration for the strategic decision-making is the significant role played by the Armed Forces towards developing beneficial strategic partnerships or in enhancement of the already existing partnerships. These partnerships coupled with development of appropriate foreign policies, will propel India towards achieving national respect across the globe and will help India in dealing with potential threats especially from China and Pakistan. The Armed Forces could thus play a crucial role in strategic-decision making process as the participating bodies will be keen to ensure that the requirements of the partnerships are met.

Consideration of the Political and Security Environment. The nature of the environment has an impact on the decisions that can be made at a particular time. Priorities during decision-making are important to distinguish how long each decision will take to be implemented. The Armed Forces need to make strategies on short-term and long-term basis that need to be handled based on the security and political conditions in the country during the decision making period.¹⁵ The defence forces should ensure that their ideas or decisions are not influenced by external parties or any political groups.

Conclusion

While India boasts of having a high power rating index of the military in the world, the strategic decision-making process of the nation suffers a great deal due to manipulation of the process adopted by India's polity and civil bureaucracy. A major grievance is the lack of involvement of the military in the decision-making process, despite being an important element of national security.

The dissonance is based on the civilian view that the military is an agency that ought to act on the policies formulated and need not be part of the strategic management process, including formulation of strategy and policies.¹⁶

The recommendations brought out in this article will assist in greater role being played by the Indian Armed Forces towards strengthening the position of India's national security and strategic management, both in the short-term and in the long-term. It would establish inherent strategic stability in the national security system and aid the country in building a suitable and efficient strategic decision-making process.

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An Enlarged Partnership

Mr Claude Arpi®

To grasp the intricacies of Indo-French relations in the field of

defence and security, it is necessary to first have a look at the historical background; it may help to grasp the deepening of the relations over the last decades and provide clearer perspectives for the future of the partnership.

Historical Background: The Colonial Factor

A factor which weighed heavily in the Indo-French relations is the hangover of the colonial era. The British left the subcontinent in August 1947, while the French remained present in five tiny Establishments. For several reasons,¹ Paris could not follow the British example at that time, and over the years it became increasingly difficult to come out of the entrenched positions and find an honourable exit for France by returning to India the suzerainty over the French Establishments in India. Only the wisdom and the determination of the French Premier Pierre Mendès-France saved both nations from a longer and even more unpleasant conflict in 1954.

It is also important to note the parallel between the fate of the French Establishments in India and the situation in other French colonies, particularly in Indochina and North Africa. The *de facto* (1954) transfer of the French Establishments was linked with the fate of the Geneva Conference on Indochina and the *de jure* (1962) transfer was ratified by the Parliament soon after the Evian Agreement on Algeria. These elements, external to the bilateral relations between India and France played an important historical role.

First Phase of the Defence Relations: 1947-1962

Historians usually consider the period between 1947 and 1962 as the first phase of the Indo-French relations. Year 1962 was for France the year it departed from the subcontinent constitutionally and also sorted out the Algerian conflict; for India, it marked the end of the dream of a *Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai* relationship.

Though the relations between France and India were not too cordial, as early as January 1947, the French Government asked for a ten-year extension of the 1945 agreement permitting military air ferries to fly across India.² Nehru, the Interim Prime Minister noted: "Public opinion in India is very much against the use of force by the French Government against the people of Indochina and anything which we do to facilitate the use of this force is bound to be resented and vigorously criticised."

However, on 16 Jul 1947 an Agreement on Air Services between India and France was signed, allowing French planes to fly to Indochina. The French armament sales during this first phase were relatively large despite the political tensions.

Though the Indian Air Force did not directly take part in the conflict with China, 49 *Ouragan* (toofanis) fighter planes (produced by Dassault Aviation), 110 *Mystère* and 12 *Alizée* (of Bréguet Aviation) were in service in 1962. Further, 150 AMX 13 light tanks were sold to India after an agreement signed in 1957. The total arms sales from France between 1950 and 1962 amounted to US\$ 794 million according to SIPRI database,³ which made it the second most important supplier after UK (US\$ 4,612 millions), before USSR (US\$ 612 millions) and the US (US\$ 248 millions)

On 22 Sep 1962, General de Gaulle received Nehru in Paris. After congratulating the General for the settlement of the Algerian crisis, Nehru expressed his satisfaction for the ratification of the Treaty of Cession of the French Establishments in India.

De Gaulle replied that he was happy to see that India had dealt successfully with some of the issues on which the West had doubts at the time of Independence. At the end of the meeting, Nehru pointed out the danger coming from China "which spent most of its resources for preparing the bomb. ...It is for them a question of prestige" explained a worried Indian Prime Minister who, however, did not request the French President for armaments. Four weeks after this encounter in Paris, the Chinese attacked India.

Phase 2: 1963-1971

On 31 Jan 1964, de Gaulle declared: "China, a great people, the most populous of the planet, a race patient, industrious, hard-

working ...a State more ancient than history, steadfast and proud of its ageless continuity; that is China of the ages." Though the Americans were deeply unhappy, the French President decided to recognise the People's Republic of China. France had found a new friend.

This 'independent' attitude of the French Government was in many ways similar to the one advocated by Nehru, minus of course, the *Force de frappe*.⁴ Unfortunately, for the two nations, this did not translate into a significant improvement in the Indo-French relations.

France remained a friend, not an ally. Arms supplies from France reached nevertheless US\$ 323 million between 1963 and 1971, while the tally of the Soviet Union touched US\$ 7,100 million (US\$ 76 million for the US). Paris's approach was businesslike and restricted to arms sales. During the period between 1962 and 1971, the French sales mainly pertained to *Alizé* aircraft, AS-30 air-to-surface missiles, *Entac* and SS-11/AS-11 anti-tank missiles. The 'commercial' attitude of the French Government was not always appreciated by its Western allies, but it enhanced France's image in Delhi, who probably considered France as the most reliable Western partner.

Phase 3: 1971-1991

During this period, France continued to remain just a 'friend'; this translated into moderate arms sales during the next twenty years. From 1971 till its collapse in 1989, the Soviet Union supplied US\$ 33,622 million worth of armament to India, while France was only the third exporter with US\$ 2,113 million (after the United Kingdom US\$ 7,001 million).⁵ One thousand short range air-to-air missiles *R-550 Magic-1* and 40 PA-6 diesel engines for offshore patrol vessels were ordered in 1979 as well as thousands of *Milan* anti-tank missiles in 1981.

Although the purchase of 150 Mirages 2000 was announced in December 1981 to counter the American F 16 ordered by Pakistan, the final agreement was for 40 planes only. A preferential credit rate of 9.25 per cent had been offered to India.⁶ Since India needed the fighter aircraft quickly, the first part of an initial batch of 26 single-seaters and 4 two-seaters was shipped in 1985.⁷

The second part of this initial batch consisted of 10 more single-seaters with the M53-P2 engine, with these aircraft designated Mirage 2000H. A second batch of six Mirage 2000H single-seaters and three Mirage 2000TH two-seaters was shipped in 1987-1988. In 1986, 9 more planes were ordered.⁸

By the end of 1982,⁹ India had received its first *Milans*, the reputed Franco-German anti-tank guided missile. Bharat Dynamics Limited started manufacturing them in January 1985 under French license.¹⁰ Before President Mitterrand's visit in February 1989, France concluded a contract for the feasibility study of the construction of an aircraft-carrier in the dockyards of Cochin for the Indian Navy; this project never fructified.

1991-1998 - India Becomes a Power to Reckon With

Year 1991 witnessed a new birth for India. After more than 40 years of planned economy patterned on the Soviet model, Narasimha Rao, the Prime Minister had the courage to open up the economy; the results can be seen today. It was as if the genius of the Indian race, bottled up during all those decades, suddenly sprang forth again. On the international stage, this period corresponded to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the chaos in Afghanistan which eventually led to the advent of the Taliban regime.

Despite the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the world turning unipolar, the Russian Republic remained India's main armament supplier during the period 1992-2006 with 13,751 USD. France was fifth (US\$ 797 million) after the Netherlands (US\$ 1,004 million), UK (US\$ 801 million) and Germany (US\$ 898 million). With the economic liberalisation in India, all efforts were focussed to make the local economy vibrant; the percentage of defence expenditure came down from a maximum of four per cent in the 1980's to less than three per cent in the nineties (2.6 per cent in 1996 and 2004).

The Strategic Partnership

The most interesting aspect of the 1990s was the tremendous boost in bilateral relations given by the visits of President Chirac to India in January 1998 and Prime Minister Vajpayee's trip to Paris later in the year.

The striking feature was the setting up of a framework for a strategic partnership. Before reaching Delhi, the French President had declared that he was keen on an 'ambitious partnership'. Using de Gaulle-like language, Jacques Chirac saluted India, "a nation which has affirmed its personality on the world stage". He said that he had come to show that "France wanted to accompany India in its potent march [towards the future]."

Inaugurating a Seminar in Vigyan Bhavan, the French President elaborated on the nuclear deal. While reminding that "certain conditions are to be met", he suggested to: "reflect together with those of our partners involved, on the ways to reconcile our common will to cooperate and the necessary respect for the rules the international community has set itself".

Chirac's words were not mere political niceties. When India conducted its nuclear tests in Pokhran in May 1998, France was one of the few countries which did not condemn Delhi (or impose sanctions). This was greatly appreciated in Delhi and when Prime Minister Vajpayee returned Chirac's visit in October 1998, the new strategic dialogue could take its first concrete steps. These events set in motion a closer collaboration. From the friendship mentioned by de Gaulle, the relation had become a partnership.

Though President Chirac's visit to India in February 2006 was marred by the *Clémenceau* controversy, it further cemented the close relations between the two nations. On the eve of the visit, France's ambassador Dominique Girard had summed up the relations: "Our two nations now more than ever before have a major responsibility in relation to the rest of the international community and the promotion of peace and development. The strategic partnership that they have forged with one another must be based on sound and coordinated defence systems." The following visits of Presidents Nicolas Sarkozy and Francois Hollande cemented the partnership, but it needed to be taken to a new height.

Macron's Maiden Visit to India

Twenty years after Chirac's historic visit, it is what was expected of President Emmanuel Macron's trip to India (9-12 Mar 2108). Macron indeed opened a new front in the relations, a sea front. His visit touched upon two aspects of the bilateral relations, the ancient and the modern (and strategic) one. To symbolise the first aspect, Macron offered to Prime Minister Modi, an original copy of the Bhagavat Gita translated from Sanskrit into French in the early 20th Century by the great French scholar Émile Senart. The strategic angle was no less important.

The partnership was for the first time expanded to the Indian Ocean. Addressing the French Community in Delhi, the young President explained: "geopolitical context is deeply changed. India rightly fears the reorganisation of the world; she fears forms of hegemony in the region and in particular in the Indian Ocean and the Pacific. And why not name it, she fears a Chinese hegemony."

He reminded his countrymen: "France is a power of the Indian and the Pacific Oceans; we are present at the Reunion, we are also there in French Polynesia and New Caledonia. And we are a maritime power, it is often forgotten but France is the second maritime power in the world. We have a strong Navy, we have nuclear submarines equipped like few other powers in the world; a maritime surveillance capability through our satellites and technologies; it is obvious we are a military and intelligence power ranking us among the first nations in the world."

This power, France is ready to share with India. He concluded, quoting the Australian Prime Minister, who spoke of 'freedom of sovereignty': "This renewed strategic partnership is reflected by the confirmation of a defense link that has already materialised in some very important contracts, be it in the naval or aviation domain, in the engine industry ...a coming generation of a new partnership on development of engines [the Kaveri for the Tejas], but also enhanced cooperation in terms of spatial surveillance or in terms of intelligence." Though we shall not deal with the collaboration on the Kaveri here, it could indeed be a game changer for the partnership.

Deepening the Partnership

In an article for Carnegie India, C Raja Mohan and Darshana Baruah wrote about *Deepening the India-France Maritime Partnership*: “Faced with growing geopolitical turbulence and more aggressive maritime manoeuvring, India and France are eager to expand their strategic engagement in the Indo-Pacific.” The authors elaborated: “As maritime security acquires greater salience in India’s foreign policy, New Delhi is increasingly looking to leverage its strategic partnerships, particularly with Paris. Although India and France have joined forces on a number of issues since 1998, regional cooperation in the Indo-Pacific has never risen to the top of the agenda. However, this may be about to change.”

The study cited a series of high-level discussions between New Delhi and Paris which focussed on the prospects of a stronger maritime security partnership: “Central to the recent discussions has been the creation of a framework for strategic coordination in the Indo-Pacific. ...As they explore their bilateral cooperation on regional security, the Indo-Pacific offers ample potential for such an enterprise.”

A highpoint of Macron’s visit was not only in the fourteen bilateral agreements signed at Hyderabad House, which should strengthen the bilateral economic, political and strategic ties between the two countries, but the following sentence of the Joint Statement: “The leaders reiterated that this cooperation will be crucial in order to maintain the safety of international sea lanes for unimpeded commerce and communications in accordance with the international law.”

It may translate into a logistics accord allowing India access to the strategically important French base in the Reunion Islands near Madagascar. Another possibility is the opening to India of the French facilities in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa where India’s rival China has already a military base.

This could be part of India’s new maritime strategy. In a commentary entitled *Pact with France boosts naval reach*, *The Deccan Herald* commented: “This will provide a huge shot in the arm to India’s naval reach in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. France retains control over the Reunion and Mayotte Islands in the Indian Ocean and New Caledonia and French Polynesia in the

South Pacific. It also has a permanent military presence in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa and in the United Arab Emirates. The recent agreement will enable Indian vessels access to facilities here. Indian naval vessels are already visiting the southern Indian Ocean.”

The article further asserted: “Access to French bases would enable our Navy to deploy there for longer periods. It is evident that Delhi and Paris have firmed up the arrangement with China in mind. With submarines and warships of the People’s Liberation Army Navy increasingly venturing into the Indian Ocean, the threat to India’s national security and economic interests is growing.”

A maritime deal with France, when finalised, could enhance India’s capacity to counter challenges from China and help protect the sea lanes used for India’s oil imports.

Raja Mohan and Baruah had noted: “India can support France’s full membership of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (Paris is currently a dialogue partner). France is already a member of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium. Paris, in turn, could help strengthen New Delhi’s engagement with the Indian Ocean Commission, as well as its maritime cooperation with the European Union.”

In the coming months, we shall see how this will translate. The scholars had added: “The range of potential agreements between India and France in the Indian Ocean is vast, and negotiating and implementing them will not be easy.”

And there is of course the Rs 59,000 crore deal for 36 Rafale fighters in September 2016; it will soon prove to be a game changer, mainly due to the offset clauses forcing the French to reinvest in India 50 per cent of the total deal’s amount, but also for India’s western and northern fronts.

Whether on the oceans or for the offsets, there is no doubt that the collaboration will not always be smooth, but trust seems to be present; it is the basic foundation of any special partnership.

Endnotes

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² To Indo-China in particular

³ See <http://www.sipri.org/contents/armstrad>

⁴ 'Strike Force' in French, for dissuasion or deterrence.

⁵ The Franco-British *Jaguar* aircraft purchased in 1979 is part of the British tally.

⁶ ISNARD Jacques, (La France s'est engagée à livrer quarante Mirage-2000 à l'Inde), *Le Monde* 17 april 1982.

⁷ As a bonus, Indian engineers received a six-month training in France with Dassault and Dassault-Systems. In 1984, they were the core group who started the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) in Bangalore. The ADA was to oversee the development of India's Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) programme.

⁸ On 17 March 1998 an agreement was concluded between HAL and Dassault Aviation authorizing HAL to offer over-hauling facilities for Mirage and global customers.

⁹ *Le Monde*, 22 December 1982

¹⁰ *Indian Milan under way*, Jane's Defence Weekly, Londres, 22 Mar 1986, page 503.

Chinese Culture and Democracy - Chalk and Cheese

Colonel Sanjay Kannothe, VSM®

*'Economic freedom creates habits of liberty. And habits of liberty
create expectations of Democracy...Trade
freely with China, and time is on our side.'*

George W Bush, November 1999¹

Gordon C Chang, a Chinese-American author shot to fame in

2001 due to his famous book 'The Coming Collapse of China'. Far more than the contents, the book's greatest draw was its title. Its appeal was so strong among China watchers in the West that many readers swallowed Chang's arguments hook, line and sinker. Chang's ethnicity assured the authoritative appeal and as an American educated individual, he knew precisely how to present his case to a Western audience that was raised on ideals of democracy and capitalism.

Gordon Chang's inspiration for the book were the seminal events in China and the Soviet Union between 1989 and 1991. Years of student protests had culminated in June 1989 Tiananmen Massacre that was telecast live on television. Over the next two years, the USSR unravelled and was reduced to a Russia that had 80 per cent of its former territory but half of its GDP and less than half of its population.² These events confirmed Western perceptions that democracy and capitalism were the enduring political and economic beacons for mankind. The Soviet Union had collapsed, and it would be just a matter of time before China metamorphosed into a democracy.

There were other compelling indications to suggest that this was indeed the case. Taiwan, South Korea, Japan and other South East Asian nations such as Singapore and Malaysia had burgeoned as a result of their capitalist systems. In stark contrast, years of Communist rule had left the masses in China - and those in Laos and Vietnam - at the bottom of global economic indices. This triumph of capitalism led the American Social Scientist

Francis Fukuyama to make confident predictions in his book 'The End of History and the last Man'. He speculated that the worldwide spread of liberal democracy and free market capitalism of the West and its lifestyle may signal the end point of humanity's socio-cultural evolution and become the final form of human government.³

When one takes a look at the history and future of world geopolitics, today may appear very similar to yesterday. The same would be said for weeks and months, and a little less convincingly so in the case of years. But when it comes to decades, the changes become far more pronounced and discernible. The world today is clearly a changed one from 2008 and markedly different from the one in which Fukuyama propounded his theory in 1992.

For much of the latter half of the 20th Century, China remained insulated from the rest of the world. This was attributable to the barriers posed by Communism and language. Both these obstacles are becoming less daunting in the 21st Century. The narrative on China was once driven by a handful of people who had served in China or in East Asia either as journalists or diplomats. This was also the time when Western focus - and their best resources - were directed towards the more pressing challenge posed by the Soviet Union.

Today, however, there is far greater clarity on developments within China. The media coverage of the 19th National Party Congress was instructive of how less an enigma China is today. Theories and speculations about the eventual outcome of the Congress largely proved accurate, thus confirming that there is an improved understanding by the rest of the world of what is happening within China and how it perceives its place in the world.

As China welcomes the year of the Earth Dog, certain aspects are becoming increasingly undisputable. The Communist Party of China is in absolute control of the economy, the people and the military. Secondly, the process of reforms commenced by Deng four decades ago was directed at the economy. Political freedom is nowhere on the horizon. Some of the steps initiated in the 80s to infuse freedom have been rolled back.

China has never been farther from becoming a democracy over the past 40 years than it is today. Why does China successfully beat the trend of economic development linked with Democracy? How does it remain an exception to the failure of Communist states elsewhere? This article seeks to answer some of these questions, through threads that lie in Chinese history, the Oriental culture and possibly, a flaw in our world view.

A Unique Historical Legacy

China has the distinction of having achieved political unification earlier than any other nation in the world. In 221 BC Qin Dynasty focussed on integration of Chinese empire and it continues to be the heartland of Han China even today. Differences among the ethnic groups in this vast region were ironed out in a just manner under the patronage of the Emperor. While China's North-South gradient retarded crop diffusion, the gradient was less of a barrier than in the Americas or Africa, because China's North-South distances were smaller. China is transacted neither by a desert, as is Africa, nor by a narrow isthmus as is Central America. Instead China's East-West rivers - the Yellow in the North and the Yangtze in the South - facilitated crop diffusion and technology between the coast and inland areas. These two river systems have been joined by canals which has facilitated North-South exchanges. These geographic factors facilitated early cultural and political unification of China. In contrast, Western Europe with a similar area but a more rugged terrain and no such unifying rivers has resisted cultural and political unification to this day.⁴ Common language also facilitated unification. Of China's 1.3 billion people, over 800 million speak Mandarin. Some 300 million speak seven other languages similar to Mandarin and to each other.

Another distinguishing factor is China's value system that is based on precepts of filial piety. While geography facilitated trade, cultural exchanges and movement of people within the empire, the analects of Confucius provided a literary foundation for common education and value system across the vast Chinese empire. The emphasis on education and ideals of meritocracy were founded on a common syllabus that transcended all corners of the Empire. Proficiency in learning the analects by rote was essential to rise in status and prestige. Confucius laid emphasis on four main relationships - ruler and minister, father and son, elder brother and

younger brother, and husband and wife. In each, the former was expected to protect the latter, while the latter was required to be obedient to the former. The benevolence of one party was to be reciprocated by deference by the other in each of these dyads. Social order was threatened when people failed to act as per their prescribed roles.⁵ People in the privileged classes were, therefore, viewed with awe and respect by the masses.

This unquestioned subservience to higher authority has contributed significantly to China remaining a unitary state over the centuries. This is not to suggest that social upheavals did not occur. The Chinese empire changed hands under various dynasties. It was believed in imperial times that a ruler would come to power after he received a Mandate of Heaven due to his virtuosity. His successors would constitute his dynasty. Over a period of time, his successors would become less mindful of the welfare of their people and the dynasty would gradually lose their mandate of heaven. Indications of this would become visible through tangible events such as floods, famines and solar eclipses. In time, the decadent dynasty would be replaced through rebellions by another dynasty, thus continuing the Dynastic Cycle.⁶

Some of these political upheavals failed too. More people died during the Taiping Rebellion than during the First World War.⁷ Mao's infamous social engineering experiments resulted in seven crore peace-time deaths.⁸ Yet, Mao's official legacy is supposedly 70 per cent Right and 30 per cent Wrong!⁹ The kind of human tragedies these events translated into are uniquely Chinese in scale. However, the common thread in these upheavals was that they occurred under the stewardship of the top echelons of society. The common man never enjoyed any degree of freedom in deciding what was good for him or for the collective good of the people.

It may thus be seen that the average Chinese citizen does not necessarily fancy or crave for political freedom or human rights as people in democracies such as India would take for granted on a daily basis. The primacy of filial piety in Confucianism is ingrained since childhood into a natural unquestioned subservience to higher authority. Resultantly, the Chinese people have remained largely reverent of individuals at the helm of affairs irrespective of their conduct, be it the emperors,

the Great Helmsman or the red-tied leaders of the Party of the 21st Century.

The argument goes that the advent of economic freedom and modern technology notwithstanding, the Chinese are simply not attuned to seeking political freedom from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) just as the divine right of emperors to lord over them was not questioned. It was also suggested in the late 1990s that the CCP was simply another dynasty in the Dynastic Cycle which would eventually be replaced by a new dispensation, arguably a democratic one.¹⁰ It was a very convincing viewpoint then. But few would hedge their bets on it in 2018.

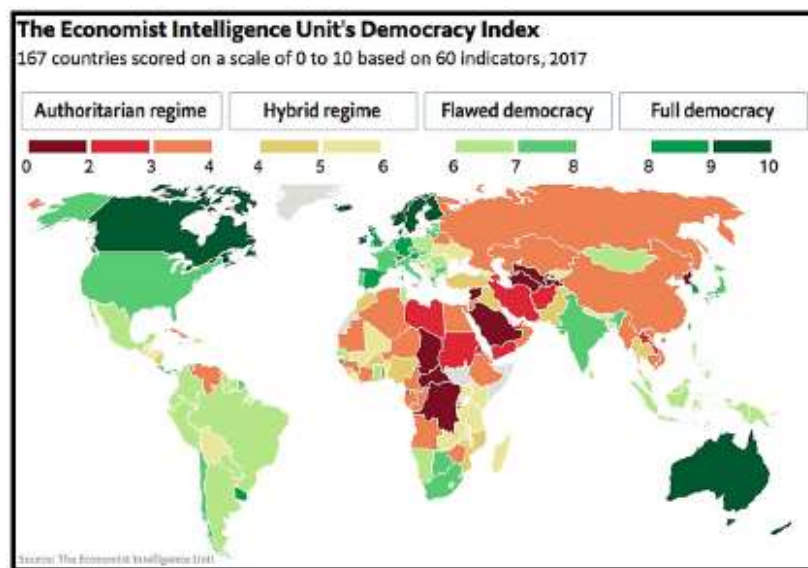
Evolution of Socio-Political System

Another contributing factor is the evolution of socio-political systems in Asia. The 1648 Treaty of Westphalia introduced the concept of modern nations that enclosed within its borders a population with commonalities of ethnicity, history or religion. The degree of political control within these physically defined borders was as strong at the fringes as it was in the centre.

Oriental societies, however, have historically adhered to a different system. Political control in Asian empires was strongest in the capital and reduced in direct proportion to the distance from the imperial capital. Local kings and chieftains would swear allegiance to and accept suzerainty of the power that was closest to them. When distances increased, the Emperor was content with seeking a formal acceptance of allegiance instead of full control. This was true of Chinese, Mongol and Indian emperors. A famous Chinese saying goes 'The Mountains are high and the Emperor is far away'.¹¹

With specific reference to China, the repeated triumph of conservatism over reform is one of a number of interlocking strands that link present-day China with a heritage going back more than two millennia.¹² In general, Asians have largely submitted to whichever power centre was able to exercise maximum sway over them. Cut to the 20th Century, the Asian political landscape offers an interesting mosaic of polities. There are the Communist states of China, North Korea, Laos and Vietnam; Authoritarian regimes preside over Iran, Cambodia and Myanmar; Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria are undergoing tumultuous

times for now; Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Qatar, UAE and Brunei are governed by monarchs; Pakistan, Bangladesh, Philippines and Indonesia have had long spells of military rule in their recent history and their militaries continue to flex political muscle in the chaotic democracies that they currently are; South Korea, Japan, Taiwan and Singapore are democracies but their single-party domination does not fall within the classic definition of a democratic framework.¹³



It may be seen, therefore, that Asia does not have flair for classic democratic framework, despite India being a bright exception. Indeed, China is now employing its vast array of hard and soft tools to actively promote the Chinese model and provide hope to Authoritarian rulers that active modernisation can be achieved with Authoritarian rule. The Chinese state and its agencies have been actively involved in undermining the democratic process and rule of law in countries as far away as Zimbabwe, Angola and Ethiopia.¹⁴

The Chinese Version of Democracy

The lexicon of democracy can also be interestingly employed. The Chinese Communist Party emphasises on 'Democratic Centralism', a euphemism for the concept of debate within its own ranks, and unquestioning adherence to final decisions.¹⁵ As Mao Zedong put it, in practising Democratic Centralism, "Our aim is to create a political situation in which we have both centralism and democracy, both discipline and freedom, both unity of will and personal ease of mind and liveliness". The Party claims to have always been committed to its mass line of 'from the masses, to the masses'. It claims that in essence, the mass line is an approach to democracy, and democratic centralism represents the application of the mass line the political affairs of the Party and the state.¹⁶ One school of thought argues that the Western insistence on democratic values loses face in light of their aversion to enfranchise a bulk of their own populace on grounds of skin colour or gender until late into the 20th Century itself. The Chinese notions of democracy are distinct from those outside China. They have instituted elections in certain lower levels of governance. They believe that their system is directed at the collective well-being of the Chinese people and they have succeeded to that effect more than 'Democracies'. The Party is convinced that the current Chinese system is ideal for the unique socio-cultural landscape obtaining in China. Liberal democracy in China would be like pasting a fake western painting on top of an authentic work of calligraphy.¹⁷ Those who prescribe Democracy for China do not bode well for it, the argument goes. It is also argued that when it comes to the comity of nations, China is most democratic and believes in equality of all nations with none of the hegemonic tendencies that Western nations displayed during their heydays in the 20th Century.¹⁸

Exporting Democratic Centralism

As the centre of the world shifts decisively back to Asia, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the 21st Century will be an Asian one. Globalisation, educated work-forces and huge markets have driven this change and China is at the vanguard of this change. China has already arrived. Just as New York's pop-culture and fashion were benchmarks for humanity for most of the

last century, Chinese perceptions and biases will have a major impact on the world in the near future.

Many of these trends are already visible in varying measures. The Chinese will first seek to equate Mandarin with English as the *lingua franca* of the world. Mandarin is already introduced as a subject in Japan, South Korea, Pakistan and many parts of Central Asia.¹⁹ China has opened up its universities for foreign students at rates that are cheaper than those offered by the US or the UK. Such programmes ensure a steady outflow of youth who are conversant with Mandarin. Confucius Institutes are being established around the world to encourage the spread of Chinese culture.²⁰ In the year 2017, there were 525 Confucius Institutes in 146 countries around the world aimed at spreading Chinese culture and language.²¹ It is now highly fashionable in Western countries to speak Mandarin, as a result of plethora of Mandarin courses and institutes.

A future world order imagined to be dominated by the Chinese would be based on tacit presumptions of centrality and hierarchical superiority that are inherent in the tributary system. As in the past, China's relations with the world will be based on bilateralism. There can be only two protagonists, the tamed barbarian bearing tribute and the benevolent Emperor ready to reward his homage with valuable gifts. The one thing rigidly prohibited was the ganging up of chiefs of various barbarian bands. The Emperor would never receive them as a group since tributary rituals were inherently bilateral. Evidence of this behaviour is clearly visible in Chinese strategy with ASEAN nations in the South China Sea disputes. Chinese behaviour with equal powers would be to entangle them in webs of material dependence that reduce their original vitality and strength. When the formerly superior power has been weakened enough, withdraw all tokens of equality and impose subordination. The Chinese also believe that long-unresolved disputes with foreign countries can be resolved by deliberately provoking crises, to force negotiations that will settle the dispute.²²

The Chinese also harbour very strong racist tendencies. Perceptions among the Chinese relating to matters of skin colour are strong. White people are respected as superior, and treated with considerable deference. In contrast, darker skin is

disapproved of: the darker the skin, the more pejorative the reaction.²³ People from East Asian countries are also considered inferior, as is visible in the treatment of Filipino and Indonesian maids in Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia by Chinese or the Chinese diaspora.²⁴

Conclusion

There were an estimated 138 million civilian deaths during the 20th Century under Totalitarian regimes. Of these, 110 million deaths occurred under Communist regimes while Authoritarian regimes accounted for the remainder 28 million. In comparison, Democracies accounted for only two million deaths which included deaths in colonies and due to war bombings.²⁵ Democracies have, thus, been very effective in protecting rights of individuals. But China is proving that this argument cannot be further extended to assuring economic growth. The Chinese state looks upon any mention of 'Mínzhǒ' (democracy) as sacrilege. It is employing its massive internal security budget to impose its own version of human rights on the Tibetans, Uighurs or anyone who disagrees with the Party's political views.²⁶ The Great Firewall of China is yet another tool in imposing the concept of 'Socialist Consultative Democracy'.²⁷

In summation, the Chinese have resisted the widespread notion that modernisation and Democracy are intricately linked to each other. As a confident China emerges at the world scene, not only would it seek to abrogate the rules-based order that acted against its interests over the last 150 years, but it will also hardsell the Chinese economic, social and political model in order to advance its own interests. China remains immune to the immigrant problem faced by Democracies of the West or the scourge of Islamic fundamentalism. It is the lone beacon of economic growth amidst social stability, so what if human rights be damned.

Dealing with the Chinese model is the major challenge for India today. India has been forced to play catch-up with China on the economic, military and strategic fields. China's head-start allowed it to chart its own insulated course.

It is time we accepted that China is not going down the liberal democratic path anytime soon. The more pressing issue at hand

is how to prevent nations across the globe from walking wide-eyed into the Chinese world order. That is the challenge that confronts the world today.

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Japan's Expanding International Engagements And Alignment with India

Commander Subhasish Sarangi®

Introduction

The Indo-Pacific is witnessing a complex interplay of competition

and collaboration driven by the requirement for maritime connectivity and security. Two discerning trends that have emerged in this tumultuous multitude are the increasing international engagements of Japan and its strategic alignment with India.

Japan's engagement with independent India commenced with the signing of a peace treaty on 09 June 1952. Japan was one of the earliest foreign aid contributors to India with its Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) that commenced in 1958 and has consistently provided financial assistance to India over the decades. The bilateral relationship suffered a setback with the 1998 nuclear explosions undertaken by India. However, the relationship has since been restored and has traversed a remarkable trajectory due to the confluence of mutual strategic interests.

Restoration of Bilateral Relationship

The restoration of India-Japan ties, post the nuclear explosions by India in 1998, occurred with Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori's visit to India in 2000 when the countries reached an agreement to establish a "Japan-India Global Partnership in the 21st Century"¹. The next major watershed in the bilateral relationship occurred with the visit of Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visit to India in April 2005 when the two countries announced an "India-Japan Partnership in a New Asia Era"². It was agreed that summit-level (Prime Minister-level) talks will be held annually alternating between New Delhi and Tokyo.

This commitment has been adhered to till date except in 2012 when Japan held unscheduled parliamentary elections.

Since 2005, the India-Japan partnership has enjoyed bipartisan political support in both countries. The bilateral relationship has moved in tandem with the India-US relationship and it is not a coincidence that it has flourished with the increased US interest in India as a stabilising factor in Asia. The security relationship between India and Japan has also been driven by shared concerns about the rise of China.

In December 2006, Prime Ministers Manmohan Singh and Shinzo Abe elevated the relationship to a “strategic and global partnership”.³

Japan’s Expanding Strategic Horizon

For Japan, the post-war period has been characterised by two constants – consensus on a pacifist foreign policy and a security guarantee provided by the USA. However, in the last two decades, Japan has perceptibly shifted from its reticent posture to pursue a more proactive foreign policy and create wider defence response options. A turning point came in 2001 when Japan provided troops for logistic support during the US campaign in Afghanistan. The shift may not be decisive but the contours of an incremental evolution are clearly visible.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has consistently sought to set the agenda with concepts such as the “arc of freedom and prosperity” proposed by his foreign minister in 2006.⁴ During his visit to India in August 2007, he delivered a speech on ‘The Confluence of the Two Seas’ to a joint session of the Indian Parliament in which he spoke of the “dynamic coupling” between the Pacific and the Indian Oceans as seas of freedom and of prosperity, and the idea of a “broader Asia”.⁵ He also spoke of the need for the two countries to “ensure that it broadens yet further and to nurture and enrich these seas to become seas of clearest transparency”. He mentioned about incorporation of USA and Australia in this endeavour “spanning the entirety of the Pacific Ocean”. He urged the “two democracies, Japan and India, to carry out the pursuit of freedom and prosperity in the region”. For security of sea lanes, he mentioned the need to “together bear this weighty responsibility by joining forces with like-minded countries”.

During Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Japan in October 2008, a "Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation between Japan and India" was signed.⁶ Japan has signed such a security declaration with USA (April 1996), Australia (March 2007) and United Kingdom (August 2017).

Japan's Initiatives under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has endeavoured to further alter the post-war *status quo* with a more robust policy with internal reforms and greater engagement with the world. In 2012, he mooted the idea of a "Democratic Security Diamond" to "safeguard the maritime commons stretching from the Indian Ocean region to the western Pacific"⁷. Under his leadership, Japan created a National Security Council (NSC) in 2013. Two strategic documents were adopted on 17 Dec 2013 – National Security Strategy (NSS) and National Defence Program Guidelines (NDPG). The NSS identifies India and China as the primary drivers of change in the balance of power. The NDPG reiterates that Japan will strengthen its relationship with India "in a broad range of fields, including maritime security".⁸

In April 2014, Japan amended policy, by declaring the 'Three Principles on Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology', to enable it to export military hardware and technology⁹.

On 30 May 2014, in his address at the Shangri-La Dialogue, Prime Minister Abe stated that "Japan intends to play an even greater and more proactive role than it has until now in making peace in Asia and the world something more certain"¹⁰.

In 2015, the Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) Charter was replaced with the Development Cooperation Charter that seeks to provide ODA on a strategic rationale¹¹. The Partnership for Quality Infrastructure (PQI) initiative was launched in May 2015 with a commitment of \$110 billion funding by the Japanese government and Asian Development Bank for international infrastructure development over the next five years¹².

In September 2015, Prime Minister Abe managed to push legislation through Parliament that authorised overseas combat missions for the military under limited circumstances when all peaceful options are exhausted and not intervening would

threaten “the lives and survival of the Japanese nation”¹³. Military cooperation with ASEAN countries has been enhanced through the Vientiane Vision of 2016¹⁴. The activities undertaken include provisioning of equipment and maintenance support, training of personnel, joint exercises and anti-piracy measures. On 03 May 2017, in a video message delivered on the 70th anniversary of the Constitution, Prime Minister Abe reiterated his plan to revise Article 9 by 2020¹⁵. The constitutional provision, however, by all accounts, has widespread public support and amending it will not be easy.

Strategic Alignment with India

During Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to Japan in September 2014, the relationship was elevated to a “special strategic and global partnership”¹⁶. Both sides also agreed to establish the ‘India-Japan Investment Promotion Partnership’. As part of this “special strategic and global partnership”, during Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s visit to India in December 2015, the Vision 2025 for the Indo-Pacific region was unveiled¹⁷.

Japan and India have sought to counter the assertive behaviour of China by mobilising opinion on values such as “peaceful, open, equitable, stable, rule-based order”, “open global trade regime”, “freedom of navigation and over-flight”, compliance to international norms and laws and peaceful settlement of disputes. As part of this move, Japan announced the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy” in April 2017¹⁸. The India-Japan Vision 2025 for the Indo-Pacific region unveiled in 2015 also presents these values.

Maritime Security Cooperation

The maritime security cooperation is driven by economic and strategic factors. With its energy sources located in West Asia and dependence on sea-borne trade, the security of the Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOCs) is of utmost importance to Japan. However, the assertive behaviour of China in the South China Sea, non-traditional security threats and the extended lines of its sea lanes has created anxiety in Japan. India’s east-bound sea trade has been increasing over the years and hence, India too is concerned about its sea lanes to the Pacific.

The catalyst for maritime cooperation was provided by rescue from hijackers of the Japanese freight ship MV Alondra Rainbow by the Indian Navy and Coast Guard in 1999. The Coast Guards of the two nations concluded an agreement for cooperation in 2000 and have conducted bilateral exercises since then. Both countries are also involved in the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP).

The first trilateral naval exercise between USA, Japan and India was held in April 2007 in the western Pacific Ocean. The India-US naval exercise 'Malabar' is conducted annually and Japan was included in it in 2007, 2009 and 2014. In 2015, it was decided that Malabar would henceforth be a trilateral naval exercise between USA, Japan and India. The bilateral Japan-India Maritime Exercise (JIMEX) has been conducted annually since 2012. Bilateral and trilateral maritime security dialogues are also conducted between USA, Japan and India.

This bonhomie has, however, not translated in transfer of any defence technology or equipment till date. Stalemate continues over India's procurement of Japanese US-2 amphibious aircraft and diesel engine submarines.

Connectivity and Infrastructure Development

The unbridled ambition of the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has necessitated a response to provide an alternative to the nations of the region. The Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC) is one such alternative announced jointly by India and Japan in May 2017¹⁹. Both countries have also affirmed their commitment to infrastructure and connectivity projects with a special emphasis on the development of India's northeast region and increased connectivity between India and Southeast Asia.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is supporting construction of highways in North East India²⁰. The India-Japan Act East Forum was launched on 05 Dec 2017 to provide a platform for India-Japan collaboration under the rubric of India's "Act East Policy" and Japan's "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy"²¹. The Forum will identify specific projects for economic modernisation of India's North-East region including those pertaining to connectivity, developmental infrastructure, industrial

linkages as well as people-to-people contacts through tourism, culture and sports-related activities.

Japanese ODA has financed numerous major infrastructure projects in India that include the Bombay High Deep Sea Drilling Project, Visakhapatnam harbour, Cochin Shipyard and New Delhi Metro. The visit of Prime Minister Abe in September 2017 saw the unveiling of the high speed rail project, incorporating *Shinkansen* technology, between Mumbai and Ahmedabad being undertaken with Japanese assistance. The other major infrastructure projects being undertaken with Japanese assistance include the Mumbai-Delhi Dedicated Freight Corridor, Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC), Chennai-Bengaluru Industrial Corridor and development of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Trade and Investment

Intuitively, India and Japan seem complementary to each other for trade and investment. India is a developing country that requires capital infusion and technological know-how for infrastructure development, prosperity and growth. With its large and young population, it provides a ready availability of labour and market for consumption. Japan is a developed country that is capital surplus and possesses cutting edge technological know-how. Its ageing and declining population means that it requires new markets to sustain its economy. However, trade and investment has not matched this potential although Japan is the fourth largest foreign investor in India.

A Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) was signed on 16 February 2011 and came into effect from 01 August that year. It covers trade in goods and services, investments, intellectual property rights and other trade related issues. Although it seeks to reduce tariffs and provide Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status to each other, numerous barriers still remain.

Cooperation in Restricted Sectors

In May 2012, both countries agreed to jointly extract rare earth minerals in India²². Rare earth minerals are essential for manufacturing electronics products and Japan is heavily dependent on China for it. During the diplomatic row of 2010,

China had restricted the supply and hence, Japan desires to diversify its sourcing.

The India-Japan Civil Nuclear cooperation agreement was signed in November 2016 and came into force in July 2017. This will enable foreign nuclear reactor manufacturers to enter the Indian nuclear energy market. All the major manufactures are either owned by Japanese companies or source technology from them.

Conclusion

One of the primary factors in the trajectory of India-Japan relations has been the increasing international engagements by both nations in recent decades. Japan, especially under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, has become more proactive in its foreign policy. With economic development, India's radius of strategic interest has also been expanding. The greater engagement between India and Japan has also become imperative due to the concurrent phenomenon of the rise of China. India and Japan are important players in the evolving security architecture of the Indo-Pacific region. Their bilateral relationship is a significant factor in maintaining the Asian power equilibrium.

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Reflections on Indo-Bangladesh Relations

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Introduction

Caesarean birth of Bangladesh in 1971 was indeed unique

in many ways. It marked the success of first armed separatist struggle in post-1945 and post-colonial Third World¹ and demonstrated decisive application of India's Comprehensive National Power, commencing with establishment of a favourable external environment with astute diplomacy outsmarting US-China combined support to Pakistan and backing it up with equally smart, swift and punitive blow to Pakistani forces on the battlefield. Result was a dwarfed Pakistan, a fatal blow to the very premise of 'Two Nation Theory'² and a friendly Bangladesh replacing hostile East Pakistan wedged between mainland India and its Northeastern Region (NER). Paradoxically, victory euphoria did not last too long as gains of battlefield could not be converted into concrete outcomes at Shimla by India and philosophy of birth of Bangladesh was put to an abrupt end on 15 Aug 1975 by a bloody military coup leading to assassination of Bangladesh's Father of the Nation, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family members.

Two consecutive terms of Awami League (AL) Government under Prime Minister (PM) Sheikh Hasina have not only rekindled bilateral relations but also enabled unprecedented bonhomie after a rather long hiatus. PM Hasina's 'Zero Tolerance' policy on terrorism enabled decisive actions against resident and transiting Indian insurgent groups including its key leadership in Bangladesh. Similar decisiveness and cooperation on part of the Indian Government enabled successful resolution of one of the most complex and longstanding border issue in 2015 through the signing and implementation of the 'Land Boundary Agreement' and resolution of long-standing maritime boundary dispute in the Bay of Bengal. Notwithstanding the current bonhomie in bilateral relations; a nuanced evaluation of trajectory of Indo-Bangladesh

relations makes one conclude that Indian policy seems to lack a Plan 'B' in its approach which can lead to equally dramatic reversals with change of guard in Dhaka. While Indian ethos and values are naturally aligned with AL and need to be nurtured; concurrently, India needs to ponder upon how to sustain positive relations even in absence of AL dispensation. Since lack of continuity in relations is largely related to internal complexities of Bangladesh leading to a 'love-hate relationship'; this article seeks to flag socio-political and economic paradoxes of the Country and outline suitable recommendations for Indian foreign policy approach.

Socio - Political Environment

Ideological Polarisation. Politics permeates every walk of life in Bangladesh. While on one hand political parties have led struggle for independence and restoration of democracy, they have also vitiated the political culture that is marred by ideological polarisation, politicisation of religion, confrontational politics and political violence.

Democratic process is yet to mature as executive dominates most institutions and other organs of the state. Party system inherited by Bangladesh at birth underwent significant changes over the years. During first three years of elected civilian rule (1972-1975), country moved from one-party dominant to a single-party system. Following fifteen years of military rule (1975-1990), Bangladesh witnessed return of multi-party system, as also emergence of state-sponsored political parties or *Sarkari* Parties through which military dictators legitimised their continuance in politics. Period after the restoration of electoral democracy in 1991 is marked by a two-party system which later evolved into two electoral alliances led by the two major parties. Root causes of polarisation are issues related to identity and pro and anti-liberation belief system based on the same. Religion based identity was brought to fore both by Zia and Ershad for political consolidation. In April 1977, General Zia, a day after becoming President, through a martial law ordinance, dropped Secularism as State principle and replaced with the words "absolute trust and faith in Almighty Allah". Later, through 8th Amendment on 09 Jun 1988, General Ershad made Islam the State religion. Self-described ideologies of the leading political parties are³:-

(a) AL. Bengali nationalism, democracy, secularism and non-communal politics and socialism – establishment of exploitation-free society and social justice.

(b) Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). Bangladeshi nationalism, democracy, free market economy, preserve teachings of Islam, religion of the majority and other religions.

(c) Jatiya Party. Independence, sovereignty, Islamic ideology and freedom of all religions, Bangladeshi nationalism, democracy, social progress and economic emancipation.

(d) Jammāt. Establish Islamic way of life, exploitation-free society and state, Faith and trust in Allah, democracy, economic and social justice, ensure basic needs of all citizens irrespective of religions and ethnicity, fraternity with world Muslims and friendship with all states.

Secularism. Supreme Court restored ‘secularism’ as one of the basic tenets in the country’s 1972 Constitution in 2010. However, it remained silent on the issue of state religion⁴. It is pertinent to note that fundamental principles of State Policy, laid out in Part II of the Constitution mentioning ‘Secularism’, are not enforceable through legal recourse. Besides, Islam is the State religion and ideologies of all political parties except AL profess the same. Even AL, to guard their political turf has chosen to dilute their original beliefs. In April 2017, AL Government recognised Qawmi Madrasa degree (Dawrah-e-Hadith certificate) as equivalent to post-graduate degrees (Master’s) and also gave in to demand of Hefazat-e-Islam for relocation of statue of the Greek Goddess of justice, Themis, from Supreme Court compound. Clearly, secularism in Bangladesh is questionable. Empirically, evidence points at persecution of minorities. Share of Hindu population in Bangladesh has consistently gone down in every census (see table below).⁵

Bangladesh Demography

Census	Share in % of Total Population			Total (Million)
	Muslims	Hindus	Others*	
1961	80.4	18.4	1.2	50.8
1981	86.7	12.1	1.2	87.1
1991	88.3	10.5	1.2	106.3
2001	89.7	9.2	1.2	123.9
2013	90	09	01	160

Promulgation of Enemy Property Act in 1965 by Pakistan and its subsequent continuance in name of Vested Property Act in Bangladesh created an endemic deprivation amongst minorities. Similarly, population inversion is altering the demographics in Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT) due to mass migration of ethnic Bengalis. An uneasy peace currently prevails in CHT after Peace Agreement of 1997. Notwithstanding, it is also a fact that syncretic Bengali culture abhors violence. In fact, Sufi and spiritual Islamic traditions of Bangladesh have many similarities with ethos of most Indian Muslims. Crucial challenge actually is dilution of these values due to politicisation of religion as a symbol of identity leading to growth of ritualistic Islamic culture. This, in turn, offers a fertile ground for radical ideologies to creep in.

Strained Social Homogeneity. Bangladesh has a homogenous social matrix with 98 per cent of the population being ethnic Bengalis bonded by common culture and language. However, growing ritualistic Islamic outlook has created misgivings amongst communities and linguistic nationalism has taken a back seat. Majoritarian religious arrogance often surfaces in society and minority community is often targeted with violence and treated with contempt.

Terrorism and Violent Extremism. Altering societal fabric has enabled Islamic radicalism to make inroads in society. Horrific incident of Holey Artisan Bakery in July 2016 brought the cruel reality at global horizon. Iron fist approach of current Government has crippled terrorism infrastructure but ideological roots persist. Two main causative factors for this are the politicisation of religion

and inroads by inimical elements like the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan who are much too eager to pull in Bangladesh into mess of radicalisation and violent extremism. Rohingya influx, territorial losses and setback to ISIS and Al Qaeda in the Middle East and Afghanistan may force it to seek newer frontiers like Bangladesh.

Human Capital. Bangladesh is seventh most populous country in the world and ranks 139 out of 188 countries in Human Development Index (HDI). Multiplicity of education system including religious education, universal health care system, smuggling, drug and human trafficking are societal challenges looming large on Bangladesh.

Economic Environment

Basket Case to Show Case. On its birth, Bangladesh economy was classified as Malthusian. Derided as a 'basket-case' and 'test case for development' only four decades ago; over the years, Bangladesh has emerged a development miracle, gradually moving from an aid driven to a trade driven economy. Goldman Sachs classified it as one of the 'Next Eleven' most potential economies and Moody's affirm Bangladesh's rating at Ba3 with stable outlook. With an exemplary performance on Millennium Development Goals (MDG), country has embarked on its journey of implementing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. It also has ambition of being a middle income country by 2021 and a developed country by 2041. In fact, the current government is being credited for heralding a 'Development' oriented narrative in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has eight Export Processing Zones and government plans to establish 100 Economic Zones of which six are functional already.

Drivers of Economic Growth. Competitive labour is the single most important driver that has enabled growth of select labour intensive industries viz readymade garment (RMG) in which Bangladesh is the second-largest garment-exporting country in the world. RMG accounts for around 80 per cent of its exports and 13 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). Other sectors include ship building, pharmaceutical and jute. Self-sufficiency in agricultural production with adaptive technologies including genetically modified (GM) seeds is a landmark achievement for a

country that was marred by famine not too long ago. Inward remittances from close to 10 million Bangladeshi expats contribute to about 11 per cent to gross national income (GNI). Democratically formed governments, since 1991, have performed immensely better vis-a-vis military regimes of the past. Since 2007, Bangladesh has had more people of working age than non-working. Currently, more than 65 per cent of the population is of working age, between 15 and 64. Window of this demographic dividend is expected to last till 2040 and can help to accelerate economic growth.

Challenges. Two most critical challenges to Bangladesh economy are infrastructure (including energy) and skill deficit. Other areas of concern are poor investment climate, mainly arising from political uncertainties and corruption. In World Bank's Ease of Doing Business report 2018; Bangladesh ranked 177 among 190 economies. Among the eight South Asian countries, Bangladesh is only ahead of Afghanistan that ranked 183. Similarly, it ranked 145 out of 176 countries in Corruption Perception Index of Transparency International. Due to inadequate investment in human capital (education and health), Bangladesh has not been able to harness full potential of its demographic dividend. On the contrary, unless education sector is overhauled and investment in economy picks up substantially, Bangladesh may well face a 'middle income trap' and 'jobless growth' signs of which are already discernable. According to World Bank, between 2003 and 2016 an average of 1.15 million net jobs were created in Bangladesh each year whereas around two million workers entered labour market each year.

Opportunities. Shifting global economic centre of gravity to Asia, location of Bangladesh between two economic power houses of Asia, regional connectivity dividend accruing from the Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN), Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) and India's Act East Policy (AEP) are crucial opportunities which Bangladesh can exploit in order to realise its visions 2021 and 2041.

Indo-Bangladesh Relations

Bangladesh Foreign Policy. Bangladesh follows foreign policy dictum of 'friendship to all, malice towards none'. It also promotes

interests of Islamic Ummah and seeks to benefit from the same. As a least developed country (LDC), it enjoys Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) from European Union (EU). The US suspended GSP for Bangladesh in 2013 on account of labour safety standards. On the global horizon it's a leading voice amongst LDC and its contribution towards UN Peace Keeping Operations has been significant. In the regional context, while, it is keen on sub regional connectivity, it concurrently desires to join One Belt One Road (OBOR) with a view to balance India-China relations. Rohingya crisis is the single most critical challenge to its foreign policy today. It is a multifaceted crisis which has brought Bangladesh on crossroads. Never before has Bangladesh got as much global spot light post its liberation. Choices it makes will certainly have long term impact on its future. It felt betrayed by India and China for lack of their support over the issue. Despite India rendering immediate humanitarian aid and abstaining from UNHCR resolution on Rohingyas (China voted against); Bangladesh feels more disappointed with India. Some sections in strategic community even advocate a whole hog embrace of China, even shunning its golden foreign policy dictum. Fringe analysts also advocate arming and training of migrant Rohingyas on lines of Indian support to Bangladesh's liberation war⁶ and also talk of military option⁷. Key issue though is the ineffectiveness of its Myanmar policy or lack of a policy over the years marked by absence of any worthwhile bilateral engagement and leverages.

Perceptions about India. Bangladesh espouses mixed feelings towards India. AL cadres and intelligentsia is overwhelmingly positive. Unfortunately, owing to events of history; Bengali nationalism could not flourish in true sense and negative perceptions of India have also grown. Writers like Mr MBI Munshi opine that Indian support for Bangladesh emanated from its negative approach towards Pakistan as it wanted to eliminate later as a regional competitor based on its irredentist concept of 'Akhand Bharat'. In the book titled '*India Doctrine*', he outlines that this concept regards South Asia as a single unit to be controlled and managed according to Indian order of things. Bangladesh has been particularly affected by 'India Doctrine' and Bangladesh-India relations are a case of 'absentee landlordism' especially when AL is in power and any other party coming to power is considered mere squatter by India.⁸ Clearly such writings are motivated and

may again gain prominence if current dispensation suffers a setback in 2019. Indian intervention was triggered due to humanitarian crisis which, if not addressed, would have been a hugely unaffordable burden. Besides, Mukti Bahni could not have achieved its aim without Indian intervention. A favourable strategic poise for India accruing from liberation was mere incidental and certainly not the *casus belli*. It is also a historical truism that India has never been expansionist or imperialistic.

Indian Policy Approach

Bangladesh considers itself India locked; therefore, anxieties about Indian approach are understandable. India on the other hand is anxious with growing footprint of China in South Asia coupled with Bangladesh's desire to play China Card. China sees Myanmar and Bangladesh as means to access Bay of Bengal somewhat like access to Arabian Sea through Pakistan. Bangladesh considers itself sandwiched between two giants; a dilemma around which opinions keep swinging.

Salience of Bangladesh stems from the fact that Indian NER is semi landlocked by it. Five Indian States share boundary with Bangladesh. The border is porous with homogenous population on either side having historical and cultural affinities which has unfortunately negatively manifested in illegal influx of Bangladeshis causing internal security concerns⁹. On the positive side, it has geographical and economic contiguity with NER and emerges as a natural pillar of India's AEP. Under the ambit of AEP, cooperation on bilateral and regional connectivity, power and energy, trade and commerce, and management of water resources is gaining momentum. In April 2017, India announced a US\$5-billion loan to Bangladesh and signed 22 pacts and business deals worth investments of US\$9 billion. The line of credit was the biggest offered to any country at one go by India. This took India's total line of credit to Bangladesh to US\$8 billion in the past six years. However, India cannot match the deep pockets of China which in Oct 2016 secured 27 deals (worth US\$ 24.45 billion in soft loan) in various sectors. Good part though is that Bangladesh is not as gullible as some other regional countries who are getting enslaved into Chinese debt trap. India on its part must trust its historical, cultural and societal bonds with Bangladesh which China can never match. Therefore, two sides

need to shelve anxieties in building relationship. On its part Bangladesh must realise that it is only through sub-regional connectivity epitomised in true spirit of BBIN and Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) that its economic potential can fructify for which India holds the key. Given the level of disparity between economies, a hop-stop-jump over sub-regional connectivity in favour of BCIM may not be a good economic sense.

Bangladesh is growing economically but political and social philosophy of liberation has taken a back seat. While Chinese inroads are economically driven; Pakistan spearheads its agenda based on hard-line religious fraternity which is increasingly finding a fertile ground. This does not augur well for India. Trajectory of future bilateral relations will be more impacted by developments in socio-political domain. However, Indian approach seems to be focussed more on greater economic integration. India needs to strengthen its bilateral cooperation in such a way that radical and extremist ideologies do not gain ground in Bangladesh. Inter and intra-faith exchanges in form of conferences and seminars propagating spiritualistic Islamic values must be encouraged. Over 20 Indian television channels have access in Bangladesh which can facilitate Indian outreach. Our outreach must also include BNP leadership at track 2 level. People to people connectivity must be facilitated and made seamless. On its part, India must embrace Bangladesh in spirit of elder brother and not big brother. Measures to address trade imbalances and other unresolved issues must also be adopted.

Conclusion

Ideological drift of Bangladesh is indeed paradoxical. Causes rest more in its socio-political domain than economic environment. 'India Doctrine' syndrome is more psychological than empirical. The issues need to be addressed holistically by reinforcing Indian Soft Power which can never be matched by China.

Endnotes

¹ Mizanur Rahman Shelley, *Emergence of a New Nation in a Multi – Polar World: Bangladesh*, (Academic Press and Publishers Library, Dhaka, 2007), p.3.

² It is noteworthy that during 1946 Provincial elections; 96 % Muslims Reserved seats were won by AIML in Bengal as against mere 75 % in West Pakistan. See <http://danasurdanu.blogspot.com/2014/07/1945-1946-elections-who-voted-for.html>. Accessed on 19 Dec 17.

³ Professor Rounaq Jahan, *Political Parties in Bangladesh : CPD-CMI Working Paper 8*, (Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Dhaka, 2014), p.19.

⁴ http://zeenews.india.com/news/south-asia/bangladeshs-court-restores-secularism-in-constitution_644258.html, Accessed on 21 Dec 17.

⁵ <https://scroll.in/article/847725/interview-hindus-in-bangladesh-have-faced-ethnic-cleansing-since-1947>. Accessed on 20 Dec 17 and Barkat et al, *Deprivation of Hindu Minority in Bangladesh: Living with vested Property*, (Pathak Shamabesh , Dhaka , 2008).

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⁷ <https://www.bdmilitary.com/bdmilitary-blog/exercise-military-option-against-myanmar/>, Accessed on 21 Dec 17

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⁹ <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/bdesh-poses-security-threat-besides-pak-china-mos-home/1/1091064.html>, Accessed on 20 Dec 17.

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Morals and Ethics – How to Teach, Imbibe, Implement and Enforce Desired Standards in the Indian Armed Forces*

Major Sushant Rai®

“The moral and ethical value system in the forces is not an abstract concept. It is the very foundation, upon which, the entire edifice of the service organisation has been built”

General VK Singh, PVSM, AVSM, YSM (Retd)

Introduction

Morals and Ethics have always been placed at the exalted position of being the spine of a successful and organised society or culture. While morals constitute the innate knowledge of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’, ethics relate to conscious reflection of morality, in behaviour and application in conduct. To judge these aspects, we refer to the accepted standards or principles that we call ‘values’. Psychologists claim that no values are negative; there are values and anti-values and humans are born with five inherent values of care, fairness, loyalty, respect to authority and self-control and restraint.¹

From the battle of Megiddu, fought in 1479 BC, to the contemporary era of perpetual war against terrorism, the profession of arms has been considered as the most revered in the world. The citizenry has always appreciated the Armed Forces when they engage in conventional wars, fight terrorists and insurgents, keep peace on foreign lands and when they undertake operations in consonance with societal and military ethics. However, as in any other organisation, some ethical transgressions occur in the Indian Armed Forces as well, that are directly or indirectly linked to the moral decline of the society at large – the intake base of all ranks. Nonetheless, these incidents render it imperative for us to analyse whether they are isolated

acts of human misdemeanour or there is a general moral decline in the Forces.

Morals and Ethics in the Indian Armed Forces

Concept

While the Indian Armed Forces still maintain some British traditions, mainly social etiquettes and graces, from the Imperialist Raj of over 200 years, they have promptly distanced themselves from imbibing the subjugating British techniques (infamous Jallianwala Bagh Massacre of 1919, ignorance towards the Bengal Famine of 1939, the failure to save lives of innocents during Muslim League's Direct Action Day and the disinclination shown during catastrophic mutual killings by Indians and Pakistanis during partition).² The cultural ideals of '*Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam*' (the world is one family) and '*Maa Kashchid Dukh Bhaag Bhavet*' (may no one suffer) are well supplemented by the core military values of courage, honesty, integrity, loyalty, respect and selfless service, that have been ubiquitous amongst the three Services. This is also evident from the fact that the Indian Army gave proper burials, as per Muslim rites, to over 270 disowned Pakistani dead soldiers during the Kargil War.³

The Civilian Support

When Major Leetul Gogoi tied a hostile stone-pelter, on 09 Apr 2017, on the front of his vehicle, he was widely criticised by horde of pseudo-liberals.⁴ But, the unbiased Indians who earnestly attempted to fathom the dilemma of a soldier, caught between saving human lives and accomplishing the assigned mission, appreciated him. His decision prevented disruption of an essential democratic activity (elections in Badgam) and also saved the lives of seven Paramilitary Forces personnel, one Jammu and Kashmir Police Constable, four Polling Booth staff and 17 of his own men against the violent mob. Also, it is pertinent to mention that there are allegations that the stone pelters are continually paid by anti-national elements for disruption of democratic and counter terrorist operations in Jammu and Kashmir. Major Gogoi did not open fire at the 1200 plus mob and prevented the lynching of those threatened by the mob. Even under the abundance of negative criticism and information propaganda on Whatsapp and Facebook groups, Indians stand with the belief that the Armed Forces are

the epitome of fundamental Indian values of humanity and selflessness. Thus, it is the responsibility of the forces to uphold these virtues at all times.

Moral Erosion in the Forces: Imaginary or Real

The hierarchical structure in the Forces has always ensured punitive actions against the morally guilty personnel in harsh, swift and timely manner. But, in the era of Target Rating Points (TRP) hungry news channels, the 'thumb strong' smart phone typists and free internet connections, the transgressions within the forces are recurrently brought to light. Some recent cases are:-

(a) In reply to a Right To Information (RTI) petition (*filed by Mr Venkatesh Nayak of Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative*), Ministry of Home Affairs supplied the data that from 2012 to 2016 a total of 186 Human Rights violation cases were registered against the Indian Army.⁴

(b) Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) arrested Army officers in Delhi for seeking monetary gratification in lieu of getting favourable postings to officers serving in field locations.⁵

(c) On 18 July 2017, a Jawan fired two bursts from his personal weapon and killed an officer when the latter had pulled him up for using phone during duty hours and had confiscated his phone.

Some other cases include the notorious Sukna land, fratricides, suicides, soldiers running amok and espionage. Statistics highlight that the cases are few, but they are enough to question the moral fibre of the organisation.

Causes of Moral Decline

By and large, the well-established military culture, regimental systems and disciplined realms of military cantonments have insulated personnel from the influence of ever present maleficent and unethical acts in the society. However, in recent times, societal realities have begun to reflect in the thinking and conduct of service personnel too. Nevertheless, some ethical wrongdoings can also be attributed to causes emerging inherently in the

organisation. Some societal and organisational realities that have led to the gradual decline in ethical conduct are:-

(a) **Declining Societal Culture.** From its unique beliefs of selflessness and integrity, the Indian culture has moved gradually towards consumerism and materialism. From being austerity driven, the society has adopted wealth, comfort and pleasure targeted lives. The breaking of the joint family system has contributed substantially to this change. And hence, being a part of the society, the shift is seen among military personnel too. The challenge for the Armed Forces today is to be able to maintain their value systems in the face of the changed societal culture, which has got degraded over a period of time.

(b) **Misplaced Loyalty and Careerism.** In 1944, when the Soviet Army (then called the Red Army)⁶ was advancing towards Germany and Hitler had ordered his Waffen SS battalions⁷ not to give up an inch of ground, the soldiers followed the order with impeccable loyalty till the last man died while fighting.⁸ Obviously, they showed exemplary loyalty to an evil dictator who was running over one thousand extermination camps or death factories. This is a case of misplaced loyalty. Today, in the Services, cases have often come up where subordinates try to cover up the misdeeds committed by their seniors showing misplaced loyalty. There is also the fear of getting 'fixed' for promotions which has led to encouragement of officers who subdue their gut feeling about decisions, even unethical ones, of their seniors. The root of most of the unethical behaviour amongst the officer cadre, especially seniors, generate from the blind drive to achieve success. Sycophancy to get attention, 'going along to get along' while following even illogical directions of the superiors and the infamous 'Zero Error Syndrome' are all by-products of careerism.

(c) **Aversion to take Responsibility.** Lately, a trend is visible of grant of credit of 'success to the boss and failure to those under command'. This originates from careerism, but becomes an involuntary habit.

(d) **Lack of Personal Example.** The military adage of 'lead and serve by example' is slowly losing its relevance. Authoritative behaviour in asking for 'five-star treatment' from the subordinates has become a norm. On the contrary, asking those under command to give up their basic expectations from the organisation is considered righteous.

(e) **Conduct when not in Uniform.** A military man is always on duty, even while on leave. His conduct is expected to be exemplary at all times. But, incidents like lewd behaviour towards ladies, sexual harassment of colleagues and altercations with civilians over trivial issues depict the missing sense of respect that each individual owes to the profession. The proud feeling of being emissaries of the organisation when interacting with civilians is fading away.

(f) **Financial Understanding.** Often due to unawareness about management of funds at regimental levels, officers tend to rely excessively on the portrayed proficiency of clerks dealing with the subject. While, it cannot be denied that major misappropriation cannot take place without involvement of an officer, the incompetence or ignorance of the officer in charge of funds often leads to creation of money swindling clerks.

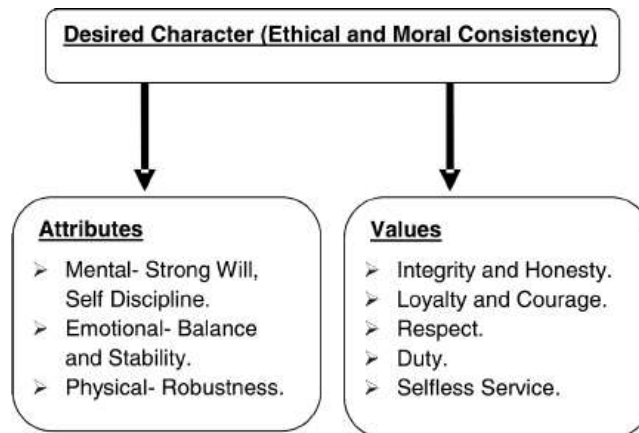
(g) **Ends Justifying the Means.** With desire to be recognised in the fraternity and expedite climbing the ladder, an individual aims at achieving success and often follows the concept of *Sam, Dam, Dand, Bhed* in an organisation that should run on values like 'honesty' and integrity' and manages to succeed sometimes.

(h) **False and Non-Reporting.** When a subordinate observes his superior lying to his superior to avoid embarrassment for a failure; he imbibes a habit called 'The Positive Reporting Attitude'. It involves informing the superior only about things that he would appreciate, and nothing else, thereby creating a false impression in the senior's mind. Complemented by the superior's comfort seeking nature of not checking back personally, this attitude takes a more prominent dimension. This can ruin the basic structure and values that the Indian Armed Forces are built upon and can lead to greater falsification in the future.

(j) **Closeness and Magnanimity.** Often the junior leaders tend to choose the path of 'cheap popularity' to maintain a happy team. Passing inappropriate comments against other service personnel, presenting the fallacies of the system over drinks and sharing and forwarding of messages on Whatsapp are considered to be methods to cultivate a sound professional culture in the organisation. Somewhere down the line, the old practice of participation in sports and games together with men seems to have got diluted. Showing magnanimity in dealing with offenders has not done good to the organisation which should run on a value system.

Creating and Nurturing Moral and Ethical Strength

On 21 February 2015, former Chief of the Army Staff, General Bikram Singh PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM (Retd) spoke on 'Character and Competence' amidst a gathering of students at Pune. The talk reflected the exact concept of desired character in the Armed Forces and the important part of it is depicted below.



The desired standards of ethics and morals should include the following:-

- (a) Continued development of individual attributes that will provide strength to face adversities and stay undeterred.
- (b) Maintain the nobility of the profession of arms by imbibing an amalgamation of core military values and the concept of 'right' and 'wrong' as defined by the *Dharma*.

The first step towards improvement would be to accept that the Service culture is facing an alarming downfall in moral and ethical standards. We cannot afford to ignore acknowledging this and the possibility of the ailment becoming an epidemic. If we recognise and accept this, we can frame an institutional response to it at the earliest.

Recommendations to Achieve Desired Standards

- (a) **Character Development.** Increased and sustained emphasis should be laid on character development of the personnel both for the officers and the junior ranks. 'Situation Reaction Tests', purely on the concept of 'accepted' ethical standards in peace and in operations should be conducted in various courses of instructions.
- (b) **Training to be Imparted by Experts.** The training at Pre Commission Training Academies (PCTAs) for Gentlemen Cadets and for other ranks in the respective training establishments should have dedicated capsules on ethical training. Instead of relying on the personnel who are untrained on the subject to impart this training, experienced psychologists should be placed at all training centres. Another option would be to make the chosen instructors to undergo a module based on psychological training before they take up the position of 'Gurus'.
- (c) **Informed System of Promotions.** Junior Leaders should be advised and explained the importance of quantitative and qualitative assessments in appraisal reports, so that there is a shift in perception towards the mechanics of reports. Detailed promotional procedures should be explained to all ranks, once or twice every training year,

which will abolish the speculative misconceptions prevalent amongst all ranks. Importance of professionalism and correct conduct should be emphasised upon consistently.

(d) **Replace Accountability by Responsibility.** The negative sense that is often associated with the word 'accountability' should be replaced with 'responsibility'. Not with the fear of repercussions but with the aim to accomplish the task, with responsibility, needs to be inculcated.

(e) **Imbibing the Desired Conscience**

(i) Leaders should stand inviolably facing the degrading societal ethics and maintain the dignity of responsibilities entrusted to them. They should be assertive and communicate the desired standards expected from subordinates and should take serious cognisance of transgressions while preventing them from recurring by enforcement of discipline.

(ii) Expressing blunt truths and posing logical questions should be encouraged and appreciated by the seniors. In the present scenario of irregular engagements and rising indulgence of the media in defence affairs, it is imperative that the culture of 'unquestionable decisions' be done away with at the earliest. Controversial issues should be addressed before giving the final decision.

(iii) For a long time now, a perception has been prevailing in lower echelons of the Forces, that only units and formations that give quick and tangible results are considered for recognition by the hierarchy. Individuals serving in difficult areas should be rewarded in some way, monetarily or in terms of amenities. Distinct appreciation should only be expressed for the most conspicuous of acts.

Methods to Implement and Enforce Desired Standards

These days many candidates who apply for the Defence Services do so due to lack of employment in other sectors. They are already privy to the comforts of modern lifestyle and face difficulty in

adapting to the military life and value systems. Hence, instead of only concentrating on the physical and written tests at the time of recruiting, Defence Institute of Psychological Research (DIPR) should formulate a test that assesses the inherent capability of an aspirant to adopt the core values of the Forces.

As a practice, officers responsible for handling funds and executing projects in the organisation should be trained extensively at all levels. Probes, into financial dealings, should be carried out at higher levels and lower echelons by multiple agencies.

Owing to constraints of time before and after operations, briefings and debriefings are conducted comprising of only operational matters. During field as well as peace tenures, likely ethical contingencies along with the prescribed reactions should be driven into the thinking of a soldier, enabling him to act appropriately, even under stress of combat. War gaming and discussions on these eventualities should be included in training programmes of units and formations.

Instead of flashing flex boards in cantonments and carrying laminated cards on code of conduct during operations in the front pocket, the expected and appropriate behaviour should be carved into personalities of all ranks. Every activity, training or otherwise should be directed at imparting some essential lessons on morals and ethics. Good conduct shown should be commended in Sainik Sammelans etc.

All ethical misdemeanours should be punished with severity to create deterrence for future breaches. Magnanimity should only be displayed while giving reformatory periods to individuals committing of minor offences.

The rigidity of the 'need to know' clause while conducting operations, deny the media even minimum of details required by them. This leads to speculations. We should have qualified spokespersons at all levels and vetted information should be provided to the media. This will usher in transparency without compromising security of classified information.

Conclusion

There is no exaggeration in stating that leaders in the Forces will have to make the most crucial contribution to achieve the near

perfect state, by their personal examples and by enforcing impeccable discipline on those under command. It is imperative that intransigent values are inculcated in the Armed Forces so that the organisational and individual consciences remain intact, even under most complex circumstances. The Indian Armed Forces have the ability to imbibe high standard of moral values and courage through training and discipline.

Endnotes

¹ Dr Jonathan Haidt, *The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in ancient Wisdom*, (Basic Books publications, 2006). pp.

² Shashi Tharoor, *An Era of Darkness*, (Aleph Books publication, 2016). pp.

³ Naam, Namak, Nishaan translates into “Reputation of the country and organisation, duty/ fidelity to the salt partaken and pride of the Flag, Ensign or Standard”

⁴ “Human Rights Violations”, report available at NHRC website. The statistics also point out that 49 per cent of the cases were from Jammu and Kashmir alone and only 3 per cent of those were proven to be correct.

⁵ “CBI arrests Army Officers running racket of favourable transfers for money” Article on m.indiatoday.in aired on 03 June 2017.

⁶ In February 1946, the Red Army along with the Soviet Navy amalgamated to form the Soviet Armed Forces, with the official name of ‘Soviet Army’.

⁷ The armed Wing of the Nazi Party's SS (Schutzstaffel) organization. It included volunteers and conscripts from both occupied and unoccupied territories.

⁸ Alasdair C MacIntyre, *Routledge Handbook of Military Ethics Edited by George Lucas*, (Routledge Publications, 2015), pp. 7-8.

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Re-Learning the Lessons from the 1962 Conflict

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*“No nation can have a sure guide as to what it must do and what it
need not do in foreign policy without accepting
the national interests as that guide”*

Morgenthau, 1951

Introduction

Wars or conflicts are not stand-alone events but are products of their contexts. No clear answers seem to be available as to why two great civilisations with no baggage of history or animosity, within a decade and a half of their existence as nation states, decided to exchange blows on the Himalayan Frontier. The extant circumstances of that era and the dynamics that would have influenced the thinking of the leadership on either side may provide some answers to why negotiations foundered which led to the conflict in 1962. Three books on the 1962 conflict have been released since 2015 – ‘1962: A View from the Other Side of the Hill’ by PJS Sandhu, ‘The War That Wasn’t’ by Shiv Kunal Verma and the recent ‘China’s India War’ by Bertil Lintner. They attempt to fill up essential voids in the one-sided and binary narratives of the conflict that so far had dominated the mind space of the military and civilian reader alike. Most of the earlier accounts have been from military protagonists who have justified their respective actions. Bertil Lintner in his book, *China’s India War*,¹ has challenged and tried to demolish the one-sided construct of Neville Maxwell in his book ‘*India’s China War*’ that laid the blame for the conflict at India’s doorsteps. ‘1962: A View from the Other Side of the Hill’ and ‘The War That Wasn’t’ provide different perspectives to round up the understanding of this controversial conflict. If conquering territory was not part of the Chinese plan, as has been alluded to by Bertil Lintner, then the motive for war needs to be found elsewhere. The account by Shiv Kunal Verma

also points towards the shortcomings in the Indian statecraft that led to this debacle.² Interestingly, there has not been a book, so far, by any of the protagonist from the “Establishment” that ran the policy of the day, explaining all compulsions of our Tibet policy starting from our Independence till the conflict of 1962. The focus of this article is to isolate the regional geo-political context to understand the far more complex relationship.

War is an Instrument of Policy

War is an instrument of policy, but the relationship is reciprocal.³ The military mind must differentiate between war and warfare. Warfare is just one subset of war and definitely not its only facet. It needs to be understood that policy, strategy and war are multi-domain, multilayered, complex and nuanced undertakings and too often have interlinked contexts. While war remains the contest of political will, warfare too is non-linear, chaotic and has its own grammar. War, of course is an option to solve problems of the state, but usually and rightfully is the last choice amongst many that are available to the policy makers. Wars are expensive undertakings and this so-called dialogue of Kings, works at a price.⁴ That price is extracted in several currencies – blood, honour, influence and money. War is a grave affair of the State and, therefore, States must remain prepared for it always.⁵ The distinct historical experiences of India and China have coalesced into different understanding of the relationship between policy and military effort. China, under Mao and given its history prior to 1949, possibly looked at war as political actions to break entrenched *status quo*. On the other hand non-violence and *Dharma* were very much part of Indian strategic outlook in the formative years after its Independence. In matters of the state, it is essential that policy must guide strategy. War must necessarily serve the larger ends of policy and not become an end in itself. In the run-up to 1962 conflict, this dictum seems to have been disregarded and the entire onus of finding a solution to the situation seems to have shifted from the political realm to the military domain. The words of General George C Marshall “A *political problem thought of in military terms eventually becomes a military problem*” captures the disarray we possibly found ourselves in the closing years of 1950s and early years of 1960s.

Statecraft and Strategy

People's Republic of China (PRC), under Mao was a revolutionary enterprise involved in carving out a nation-state after a "Century of Humiliation" and after having defeated the Nationalists. An ingrained and collective sense of victimhood resulted in post-imperial ideology to consolidate its territorial sovereignty and restore its status as the Middle Kingdom. The consolidation of PRC required settling the vexed issue of ethnic minorities on its borders to ensure national defence. The Communist ideology provided it with the cement for its coherence and readily made it acquiesce with the Soviet Union. The consolidation of Xinjiang in October 1949 as part of PRC seems to have been an event that the decision makers missed. The same was a harbinger of what was to follow. Of course, at that time we had just emerged after fighting Pakistan and did not have the advantage of hindsight. The declared liberation of Tibet or rather its annexation in 1950 was done by PRC even as they were mobilising for the Korean War. The implications of the annexation of Tibet were not lost on our decision makers who entered into treaties and defence arrangements with Bhutan (August 1949), Nepal (July 1950) and the then Kingdom of Sikkim (December 1950).⁶ In fact, General Himmatsinghji Committee to study the problem arising from Chinese aggression in Tibet was ordered by the Prime Minister (PM)⁷ in response to the letter by Sardar Patel in November 1950, warning of the peril generated by the Chinese occupation of Tibet. The committee had recommended expansion, concentration and redeployment of Assam Rifles. In the meantime, Major Bob Khating (Retd), in February 1951, had unfurled the Tricolour at Tawang.⁸ By 1951 we had accepted Chinese suzerainty (mistakenly conveyed as sovereignty)⁹ over Tibet. In the minds of our leadership there was a trade-off between Tibet and the border. PRC, however, saw no co-relation between the imperial borders (unjust in their perception) and Chinese sovereignty over Tibet.

Reversal of the Century of Humiliation. During the Korean War (1950-53), PRC mobilised 2,50,000 troops within a month, even before the Inchon landing of September 1950. Pandit Nehru had written to the Chinese PM Chao Enlai, as well as the US and British representatives, regarding the prospects for limiting the Korean conflict. The Indian Ambassador was summoned on 03

October 1950 by Chao Enlai and told to report to the Indian PM that PRC cannot sit idle if the Americans crossed the 38th Parallel. The purpose of this communication was to make a record of Chinese attitude and how it would react to events on their periphery. The dots, however, could not be connected and the salience of the communication was not interpreted to decipher China's strategic behaviour. PRC, by 1953, had emerged from the war exhausted but redefined in its own and the world's eyes. An under-equipped Chinese Army achieved stalemate against one Superpower of the world and this fuelled a sense of spiritual rejuvenation and marked the reversal of the Century of Humiliation. The first Taiwan Strait Crisis, which followed quickly in 1954-55, reinforced the Chinese belief that power does grow from the barrel of the gun and that the same rule was applicable in the international arena. By 1954 historic re-unification of China was gaining traction in their internal discourses and Chinese Secondary school textbooks had started showing maps of 18 Chinese territories taken by Imperialism.¹⁰

Two Fronts. In the sub-continent; Pakistan had become part of Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) in 1954 and joined the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO) in 1955. For Pakistan, the appeal of the pacts was the potential for receiving support in its struggle against India. Pakistan's foreign policy was crafted with the aim of acquiring a bulwark against India. This development needs to be seen in light of the findings of the Kulwant Singh Committee set up in 1953 which sensitised the leadership of a possible Chinese aggression between 1959 and 1961.¹¹ The dilemma of a two front problem and the choice between a military response and a peaceful resolution, unquestionably, would have gripped the minds of the decision makers.

Panchsheel and the Doctrine of Necessity. Our agent in Gartok had, by 1950, given indications of road building in Tibet which was later also reported by Director of Intelligence Bureau in 1952.¹² This issue was, however, not taken up with the Chinese at that point in time. In fact, the Chinese continued to use the Calcutta Port facilities till the Aksai Chin road was a *fait accompli*. The complexities of nation building, economic rejuvenation, infrastructure development, problem of influx of refugees, severe

food shortage, limited military muscle and the stated policy of *Ahimsa* would have been legitimate considerations in evolving a response to deal with the situation unfolding on the borders.. The borders at that time were the responsibility of the Ministry of External Affairs. That portfolio was solely with the Prime Minister who issued the directive to the Army to focus towards Pakistan and that China would be handled diplomatically. This decision seems to have been borne out of a doctrine of necessity but paid little heed to the strategic and demonstrated behaviour of the PRC. Politics is the master of the strategy it can afford; and how much it can afford is both an economic and political question.

The Panchsheel Agreement signed on 29 Apr 1954 was seen as a diplomatic highpoint in Sino-Indian relations and was presented as the panacea to insulate one frontier. In fact the statement made by the PM in Lok Sabha on 15 May 1954 vindicates this trust placed in the good behaviour of China. While the agreement was essentially a trade agreement, the mention of the six passes helped perpetuate the self-belief that China does not challenge the Indian alignment of the McMahon line which *ipso – facto* was neither mutually agreed upon nor demarcated. While in all fairness the issue of the boundary and the incorrect maps were taken up by Pandit Nehru in October 1954, and later in November 1956, it was brushed aside by PM Chao En Lai as being a relic from the Kuomintang era which would be subjected to revision in due course.¹³ With the signing of the Panchsheel Agreement we gave up all our extra territorial rights and privileges we had enjoyed in Tibet. In fact in November 1956, PM Chou En - Lai informed the Indian PM that in case of Burma they had accepted the formalisation of boundary based on the McMahon line and proposed to accept it with India also.

Realpolitik and the Neighbourhood

The Aksai Chin Highway. The construction of the Aksai Chin road and its completion in September 1957 altered the trajectory of the relationship. The deceit and Chinese intrusions started with the detaining of Indian patrol in September 1958 at Haji Langar. The PRC, during the second Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1958, again gave an account of its strategic behaviour which should have informed the polity of her steadfastness and reaction in dealing with borders and issues of reunification. The Indian reaction had

been to treat these intrusions as irresponsible behaviour of local Chinese authorities.

The Repressive Chinese Regime in Tibet. The Khampa rebellion and the Chinese reaction in crushing the rebellion led to the Dalai Lama escaping to India in March 1959. The CIA involvement in fomenting the rebellion coming close on the heels of the second Taiwan Strait Crisis could not have been missed by the decision makers in China.¹⁴ The Chinese mind believes in the concept of “*Shi*”. It is premised on the belief that there are no isolated events and that all happenings are woven into a pattern. The asylum given to Dalai Lama was perceived by China as Indian malfeasance which was reflective of further nefarious designs.

The Escape of Dalai Lama. The months of March 1959 and August 1959 were two turning points that need to be clearly understood. The Dalai Lama entered India from Khinzemane in March 1959. On 07 August 1959, about 200 Chinese troops pushed our Assam Rifle Party at Khinzemane to Drokung Samba. This was followed by the Longju incident on 25-26 August 1959 in the Subansari Valley further to the East. In the Longju incident firing, blood was spilled for the first time on the borders. This was also the time when in the domestic context the PM was questioned in the Parliament regarding the developments on the borders and the matter spilled out into the wider arena of public debate. The escape of Dalai Lama to India in the Chinese conception undermined their efforts of resolving the problem of its minorities. An unstable Tibet also translates into an unstable Xinjiang and Mongolia. This, inadvertently and inextricably, tied the destinies of the two most populous nations in the world. By September 1959 the Chinese government laid claim to 50,000 sq kms of Indian Territory.

Teaching India a Lesson. The account by Bertil Lintner believes that the decision to teach India a lesson was taken by the Chinese leadership in March 1959 immediately after the escape of Dalai Lama. The preparations for the same were to follow and the plan enacted at an opportune time. The Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 provided just the correct setting when much of the world was focussed on the Caribbean where the second major

Cold War confrontation was played out from 20 October to 20 November 1962.

Sino–Soviet Split. The Chinese were also having trouble with their ideological brethren i.e. USSR after the death of Stalin and the Sino-Soviet split was in its infancy. The lack of support from Khrushchev¹⁵ in the growing rift between India and China also worried the Chinese leadership and underscored the growing stature of Nehru, who was increasingly being seen as the leader of the Non Aligned Movement. This too was an irritant for Mao and jeopardised his ambition of dominating the political space in Asia. Mao had tried to organise the Non Aligned Movement into a safety net against the Soviet hegemony.¹⁶ A historic Middle Kingdom could well do without an ardent competitor bent on undermining its consolidation in the immediate neighbourhood. Nehru's insistence of not accepting any dialogue or negotiations till restoration of the *status quo* ante was justification enough for Mao to use force to try and get him back to the negotiating table.

The failure of the Great Leap Forward. The Great leap forward was the signature campaign started by Mao in 1958 to modernise China's economy to rival that of America's. The failure of the campaign brought into question the legitimacy of Mao's rule. With 20 million deaths¹⁷ and no worthwhile or tangible progress, his political credentials were under severe strain. He called on the Communist Party to take him to task over his failures but also asked his party members to look at themselves and their performance. He was popular with the people but he still had to resign from his position as Head of State. A winnable war could provide the necessary distraction domestically to resurrect his authority and re-establish Mao as the leader of the State.

The play of events from 1960 onwards followed the classic Chinese stratagems. The Chinese claim lines varied as per their bargaining convenience affording them the much needed time to prepare for the offensive. The falsehood and deception which followed was the warp and woof of the peace offensive which lulled the Indian leadership to believe that there was sincerity in the talks at the highest level. The simultaneous major offensives in three widely separate theatres of Eastern Ladakh, Tawang and Walong are testimony that the conflict was a well-conceived and a pre-planned activity with adequate time devoted for military

preparations. It was not a reaction to local and defensive Indian actions of setting up flag posts to prevent surreptitious Chinese advance on Indian Territory.

The Fallacy of Coherence

The Indian reaction to the Longju incident was to mobilise 4 Infantry Division from Ambala and order its movement to Eastern India. The responsibility of the borders was shifted from the Ministry of External Affairs to the Ministry of Defence and the Indian Army was committed to a policing role. There was not much change in force levels on the ground as logistic and administrative constraints severely restricted the number of troops that could be committed in the forward areas, especially Tawang, which did not have a road axis ahead of Dirang.¹⁷ The policy of patrolling continued with not many changes being made to the overall defence architecture to synergise the actions of the Army and the Assam Rifles. The Assam Rifles remained under the Ministry of External Affairs and sometimes acted independent of the Army. The establishment of the Dhola Post in June 1962 is a classic example where 7 Infantry Brigade was not entirely in the loop for the developments that were taking place in their area along the Namka Chu.

The handing over of the situation to the Army of course made the political temperatures to cool down, but did little to reverse the strategic direction in which the situation was headed. The leadership remained shackled to the Intelligence Bureau assessment that China would not use force. The battle indicators were not taken seriously. The last ditch effort by the military to sensitise the leadership was Exercise LAL QILA.¹⁸ It was conducted in March 1960 at Eastern Command Headquarters by Lieutenant General SPP Thorat. It elaborated on the magnitude of threat from China and the Indian vulnerabilities. It suggested a three tier defensive layout and was later called the “Thorat Doctrine”. However, deployment of additional troops did not take place. Unfortunately, in the given context we were neither prepared for war, nor were able to avert it.

In the run-up to September-October 1962 the tyranny of smaller things and toxic pathologies in civil-military relations were allowed to ride roughshod over genuine security threats and

ground realities. After the Chinese patrol came to Dhola Post on 08 September 1962, the Army decided to beef up its presence in the area opposite the Thagla Ridge. The incident of 08 September 1962 also activated the corridors of South Block which saw frenzied activity. The Army Headquarters ordered move of additional troops to the Namka Chu. The unprepared and underequipped troops responded to their call of duty. The Defence Minister on 12-13 Sep 1962 after consultations with the Chief of the Army Staff General Pran Thapar and the Eastern Army Commander, Lieutenant General LP Sen, ordered Operation LEGHORN to evict the Chinese. It is of little surprise that the decision to commit forces was not taken by the Cabinet but by the Defence Minister who had earlier promised to sort out the issue single handedly using his diplomatic clout. The events that unfolded were a recipe for disaster wherein the political leadership was seduced by the idea of using military force without due thought process, intelligence appreciation and preparation. The Army has to shoulder part of the blame for the debacle. The inputs from ground troops were disregarded. The military hierarchy was found wanting in discharging their professional roles which led to the disaster.

With the PM and the Defence Minister away from the country, the Minister of State for Defence, Shri Kota Raghuramiah presided over a meeting on 22 September 1962 and the orders for throwing the Chinese out from Thagla Ridge were issued in writing signed by Shri HC Sarin, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Defence.¹⁸ Nonetheless, the understanding of the nuances of war and warfare were shallow and what followed was an abject failure of statecraft and a military debacle.

The role of military commanders in chain has been written about in numerous accounts. The tactical actions were mere reactions, lacked doctrinal coherence and operational direction. There was no higher direction and firm plan. 7 Infantry Brigade at Namka Chu was left to face the consequences. The flip flop and replacement of key commanders during the operations only added to the confusion. Not only was the politico-military synergy a failure, the strategic military management of warfare proved to be a disaster. Why the Air Force played only a limited role remains unexplained and fuzzy.

The Indian soldier deserved better. If body count and casualties are indicators to go by then the soldier did not fail the nation. The Army at the end of the war was left to bear the burden of the ignominy it had little part in scripting. The people who ran the policy owed much more than resignations and apologies to the soldiers who chose to fight and die in safeguarding the honour of the motherland. Civilian supremacy undoubtedly must reign but has to be earned and paid for in terms of accountability and commitment. The defence budget is but the price for the nation's foreign policy. The latter deserves to be well crafted. Tactical brilliance cannot offset strategic lunacy.

Conclusion

International Politics is about power. It is not about doing good or being right. The exercise of power, however, is almost always linked to values. Statesmen and military leaders are obliged to protect the vital interests of their nation and state. The strategy is to be jointly forged by the policy maker and the military leadership. For a student of Military History the singular important lesson is to understand that policy would ask its military instrument accomplishments which are within its means. And when such advice is sought it needs to be balanced, pragmatic and cost effective.

Endnotes

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- ¹¹ Shiv Kunal Verma, op.cit. p.15.
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- ¹³ Bertil Lintner, op.cit. p.22.
- ¹⁴ Bertil Lintner, op.cit. p.73
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- ¹⁶ Henry Kissinger, op.cit, p.163
- ¹⁷ Henry Kissinger, op.cit, p.184
- ¹⁸ Shiv Kunal Verma, op.cit. p.114
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Partition of India 1947 : Military Evacuation Organisation for Refugees

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Introduction

Consequent to the decision of partition of the country in 1947

into India and Pakistan, the two bordering provinces of Punjab and Bengal were also divided according to majority areas of Muslim and non-Muslim population. The Radcliffe Award demarcated the boundaries where East Punjab with a non-Muslim majority and West Punjab with Muslim majority population went to India and Pakistan, respectively. Likewise the boundary of Bengal into East and West Bengal was demarcated.¹ The partition, however, gave Muslims the option to stay in India or move out to Pakistan. Likewise Non- Muslims also could stay in the newly formed Islamic Pakistan or migrate to India. However, the violence following the partition led to the mass migration of minorities on either side of the border. Consequently, within a period of four months, over four million non-Muslims migrated from West to East, while a similar number of Muslims moved in opposite direction.² Never before, in the history of the world had such a vast migration taken place. The law and order had broken down with collapse of civil administration on both sides of the border. The large scale killings and pillage necessitated army intervention. This Paper analyses the role of the Army in evacuation of refugees from West to East Punjab.

Raising of Punjab Boundary Force

In order to maintain law and order, the Partition Committee set up a Special Military Command in July 1947 called the Punjab Boundary Force (PBF). It was a joint military force consisting of both Indian and Pakistani troops commanded by Maj Gen TW Rees. The PBF was responsible to the Supreme Commander through the Joint Defence Council. Indeed, the PBF was not

designed to control such a massive explosion of communal frenzy. Consequently, it failed in its mission and both countries decided to disband it on 31 August 1947.³

Subsequently, the responsibility of internal security was entrusted to the troops of the respective dominions. East Punjab Area Headquarters (HQ) Jalandhar and Lahore Area were made responsible for maintenance of law and order in East and West Punjab respectively. The Area Commanders occasionally conducted limited operations against armed gangs in order to protect the refugee camps and their moving convoys. In fact, the responsibilities were twofold:

- (a) To maintain law and order.
- (b) Safe evacuation of refugees.

‘Military Evacuation Organisation’ Constituted

Law and Order was looked after by Headquarters East Punjab Area but for the evacuation of refugees from West Punjab to East Punjab, a new department called Military Evacuation Organisation (MEO), India, with its Headquarters at Amritsar was constituted on 01 Sep 1947.⁴ Similarly, evacuation of Muslim refugees from East Punjab to West Punjab was looked after by MEO (Pakistan) raised for the purpose. The evacuation programme involved setting up of Transit Camps for collecting refugees, transporting them either on foot or by rail/motor transport, and finally settling them in relief camps established in the country of their destination.⁵ The MEO thus was to evacuate as many refugees as possible in shortest possible time by safest means. To carry out the task, some Indian units were placed under command of Commander Lahore Area (Pakistan Army) to protect non-Muslim convoys and refugee camps in Pakistan side of Punjab. Some Pakistani troops also worked under Commander East Punjab Area for a similar task. By the time MEO was raised over 12 lakh non-Muslim refugees had left West Pakistan for India with an average of 30,000 people every day. But millions of refugees had yet to be evacuated. The MEO was tasked to protect refugees in the concentration camps, arrange for their evacuation across the border and also protect them enroute.⁶

There were big concentration camps of refugees in Lyallpur, Sialkot, Montgomery, Lahore and Sheikhupura. In addition, many refugees were held in smaller camps all over West Punjab. In fact, there were some 20 big camps each with over 20,000 refugees and 40 small camps each with 5,000 or so refugees in Pakistan. Many refugees were still making their way to these camps from the hinterland. Still many were waylaid and subjected to brutalities of the worst kind. Police almost remained silent spectators and at times joined the looting and kidnapping of refugees. Refugees were neither safe in their homes nor in refugee camps. Young girls became easy prey.⁷ There was neither food to eat nor water to drink. People were dying of starvation and fatigue. At times, refugees paid hundred rupees to purchase one kilogram Atta (flour) and rupees fifty for a single glass of water in Pakistan.⁸

Organising the Refugees

Assessing the situation, which was indeed distressing, Commander MEO made his appreciation. For evacuation, he divided the Punjab into two sectors - the Near West and Far West. Near West sector included Lahore, Gujranwala, Sheikhupura, Gujarat, Shahpur, Jhang, Lyallpur and Montgomery districts, while the Far West sector included remaining districts of West Punjab. The evacuation from Near West within a radius of 150 miles, was planned on foot or mechanical vehicles while evacuation beyond this limit was envisaged by rail, road or air.

To facilitate evacuation, MEO also set up its Tactical HQs at Lahore. The officers there made efforts to identify the non-Muslims scattered in villages and move them to Subsidiary bases. MEO was, however, constrained by the shortage of manpower. It, therefore, sought the help of local civilian officers acquainted with the area. To facilitate the task, a chain of such local Liaison Officers generally amongst evacuees was created. Wherever possible, local ex-soldiers amongst the evacuees were identified and given uniforms to wear. These Liaison Officers went around from village to village to find out non-Muslims and brought them to nearby Subsidiary bases under military escort. The task of Liaison Officers was indeed difficult as it involved threat to their lives. It was also difficult to identify the non-Muslims in villages as many had converted to Islam or had left the villages to save their lives and modesty of their women folk.⁹

Sometimes transfer of refugee groups from hinterland to nearest refugee camp also turned risky. During their movements, they were mauled, looted and their women abducted. When the refugee groups of two communities crossed each other on the way, the situation turned precarious. It was, therefore, decided that different communities should follow separate routes to reach their destinations.

From subsidiary bases, the evacuees were moved to nearby concentration camps. The staff of MEO stood guard at these camps. From Concentration Camps in Pakistan, refugees were brought to India under protective cover of MEO personnel. The movements of the refugees were generally organized in large groups of Foot Columns or Motor Transport or Train.

Refugees in Foot Columns

The length of Foot Columns organized in blocks of 20,000 to 30,000 or more evacuees often stretched for miles. A 25 mile long column, moving along the road in packed formation, with bullock carts loaded with household items and children, and members of the family walking alongside on foot was common. Both sides of the road were crowded with men, driving cattle, sheep, donkeys and camels, their backs bent with heavy loads, raising a cloud of dust. Whenever the Columns passed alongside a pond or a well, there was rush for water. If fodder was seen, there was a scramble to get it. Leaves and branches of all trees along the road were cut to feed animals and for cooking food, leaving behind naked stems portraying the tragedy of the millions of unfortunate human beings.¹⁰

Each column was generally escorted by military personnel of MEO moving on foot and jeeps, into camps arranged at convenient places. The camps too were protected by military piquets. It is notable that some people in the columns carried food but others who left in haste had nothing to eat. Earlier, the Joint Conference had decided that the Dominion from which the evacuees were moving out would be responsible for providing food, water, fodder and protection until they crossed the boundary. Subsequently, they were to be taken care of by the Dominion receiving them. But the rule was hardly observed. MEO personnel had, therefore, to arrange food for them and made efforts that no

one in the columns was left to starve. They also supplied water in military trucks to the moving columns. Efforts were also made to provide transport to the physically infirm, pregnant women, small children and old people who were unable to walk. The movement of the Columns was organised properly. It halted at four O' Clock in the evening at a suitable place and the time of departure for the next day was announced. This process was repeated day after day.

Indeed, communal frenzy was so deep that even amidst such security measures, there were many attempts of attack on the moving Columns. After an attack on a Foot Column (from Sargodha) at Lyallpur where large number of casualties were suffered, special security arrangements became paramount. The villages located on the route of the Foot Columns were placed under curfew. Armoured cars, wheeled carriers and tanks were deployed when Columns passed through towns. Watch from roof tops were also arranged by military personnel. Similarly curfew was also imposed in Amritsar along the route when the Muslim refugee columns passed through the city.

The groups or convoys of refugees initially moved under command of JCOs. But when Pak security forces started taking them lightly, commissioned officers were engaged on the job. It yielded desired result. The MEO personnel thus saved many lives and saved many girls from the clutches of goondas.

After crossing the boundary line, the refugees were first received in Transit Camps near the border. From these Camps, they were sent to bigger camps in India. The work of the MEO stopped at the Transit Camp. Thereafter, the responsibility of refugees lay with the East Punjab Government and Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation. However, one of the large refugee camps with over three lakhs refugees (at Kurukshetra) was manned by the Army.¹¹

The task of MEO in evacuation of refugees was very difficult. The vagaries of nature further tormented the people making conditions more difficult. In late September and early October 1947 floods in Central Punjab badly affected refugees on the move. MEO with the help of Engineering branch of the Army erected Bailey Bridges and repaired the roads and bridges to

facilitate evacuation.¹² The Royal Indian Air Force (RIAF), too came to the rescue. Its pilots took grave risk in flying the aeroplanes every inch of which, including the cockpit, were fully packed by refugees. The RIAF also did a good job in dropping cooked food and food grains for marooned refugees when floods in October 1947 rendered the routes unserviceable.

MEO worked for about a year and was closed down on 23 August 1948 by which time most of the refugees had been evacuated.

Indeed the officers and jawans of the Indian Army deputed with the MEO were working in extremely difficult conditions. Many of them had just returned from their overseas assignment after the Second World War. Some had not gone on leave for a long time while others were looking forward to demobilisation. Still some soldiers themselves were displaced persons and had no information of their families.¹³ Nevertheless, they stood for saving the lives of their people. In this venture some soldiers also died.¹⁴ The Army too was facing the crunch of resources. Its manpower was divided between India and newly created Pakistan. The Army mostly comprised of British officers who had left India after Independence. Also the attack on Jammu and Kashmir by Pakistan in October 1947, further needed mobilisation of troops to the war front.

Conclusion

In conclusion it may be stated that though the MEO had limitations, the evacuation of refugees on both sides of the border became smoother after its inception. It maintained the law and order situation to safeguard the refugees once they joined the Columns. They countered hostile people on the way. MEO, however, took the help of Engineering branch of the Army and erected Bailey Bridges to facilitate evacuation. The soldiers of MEO themselves had numerous problems and some even did not know of the well-being of their own displaced families. But, it in no way affected their zeal for work. In its one year tenure, MEO evacuated over four million refugees from West to East Pakistan. The Organisation also helped the Pakistan authorities in evacuation of even greater number of Muslim refugees from

Indian side of the border. Thus, despite numerous constraints, the soldiers of MEO did their best to achieve desired results.

Endnotes

¹ In June 1947, Britain commissioned Sir Cyril Radcliffe to head the two Boundary Commissions (one for Punjab and the other for Bengal), to determine which territories will be assigned to which nation. The Boundary Commission had representatives, both from the Congress and the Muslim League. The Commission's report was published on 17 August 1947, two days after Independence.

² Ian Talbot, *Punjabi Refugees' Rehabilitation and the Indian State: Discourses, Denials and Dissonances*, Modern Asian Studies, Vol 45, No. 1, Jan 2011, pp. 109-130. The number of migration of the people differs in various sources. According to an estimate a total of about 14.5 million people migrated between India and Pakistan due to partition. See Prashant Bhardwaj & Others, *The Big March: Migratory Flows after the Partition of India*, Economic and Political Weekly, 30 August 2008.

³ Pallavi Chakravarty, *Post-partition Rehabilitation of Refugees in India*, (History and Society- NMML Occasional Paper New Series 46, 2014), p. 15.

⁴ MEO was headed by Brig (later Maj Gen) SBS Chimni.

⁵ Pallavi Chakravarty, op. cit., p. 15.

⁶ Rajendra Singh, Brig, *The Military Evacuation Organisation, 1947-48*, (Manager Press, 1961), pp. 14-15.

⁷ In a refugee camp at Arya School in Layallpur, about 500 non-Muslims were killed and more than 200 girls were abducted in first week of October 1947.

⁸ BH Mehta, *Refugees Plight at Kurukshetra*, in Times of India, 21 Dec 1947, p. 7.

⁹ Rajendra Singh, op. cit., pp. 24-25.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 41-42.

¹¹ BH Mehta, op. cit., p. 7. There were 10,000 tents of the Army for refugees. Each tent was meant to accommodate 16 persons but because of huge rush there lived 30 persons in each tent.

¹² *India's Debt to Armed Forces*, in TOI, 15 Aug 1947, p. 27.

¹³ War Diary, 2 Dogra Regiment, INF/33/H, 1947, HD, MoD.

¹⁴ War Diary 2 Bihar Regiment, INF/18/H, 1947, HD, MoD. The unit suffered 74 casualties included many dead while escorting the refugees train from Mari Indus (Pakistan) to Ambala (India).

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Short Reviews of Recent Books

Strategic Stability in South Asia Challenges and Implications for India. By Zubin Bhatnagar, (New Delhi, Vij Books India, 2017), 201pp, ISBN 978-93-86457-35-36

This comprehensive study by the author takes into account various geopolitical, economic, social and ideological factors of nation states that impinge upon the stability in South Asian Region, as also the challenges it poses for India to thwart the same. The study is well structured and is carried out in nine chapters. The author has taken a mature approach by discussing the concept of hard power and soft power at the very outset. Painsstakingly researched, the author has, in general, analysed the repercussions of international politics exceedingly well. An indisputable fact is that there has been a global power shift.

China and India are the principal players for stability in the region. The three chapters that follow analyse the Afghanistan-Pakistan Region, India-Pakistan relations and the Littoral States of Indian Ocean Region. Subsequently the author deliberates upon the Himalayan Kingdoms and the security environment in Bangladesh and Myanmar.

The Afghanistan-Pakistan Region remains vulnerable. The 'unpleasant stability' in the area is likely to continue because of a lack of transformational leadership. Of special interest are the China Factor and the role of major powers that are examined at considerable length thereafter. Finally, the author discusses the options for India making some rather unique suggestions. The inter-se relationship between growth and stability, pluralism, democracy, youth unrest, institutional imperatives, transitional dynamics, military and civilian rule as applicable to different nations has to be seen in its correct perspective to make any informed judgment. The author rightly recommends that India increase its presence in Afghanistan. However, even though the author states in the opening chapter itself that "China's foreign and defense policy will continue to be designed to reduce India to the status of a sub-regional power" he recommends India "to offer (China) connectivity to the Bay of Bengal along Nathu La-Kalimpong-Siliguri- Kolkata Corridor"! India has not supported

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and has reservations on OBOR as there are hidden costs with permanent Chinese footprints. Again on Pakistan, the author's suggestion appears to be ambivalent. On the one hand he recommends that India should open doors, interact at NDC level, sports, delink Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan and Durand line issue, yet he recommends increased hostilities along LC to bleed Pakistan Army including cross border raids!

A commendable effort, the present volume adds to the existing knowledge on the subject and the author deserves to be congratulated on compiling voluminous data and discussing the subject in a precise manner with considerable insight.

Major General Ashok Joshi, VSM (Retd)

The People Next Door: The Curious History of India's Relations with Pakistan. By TCA Raghavan, (Noida: HarperCollins Publishers, 2017), 348 p., ISBN: 9789352770908

A welcome addition to the USI library is former diplomat and Pakistan-specialist TCA Raghavan's history of relations between India and Pakistan. The author has chosen to focus on the cyclical pattern of dominance between the hawks and doves, which he feels contributes to the "curious history" of India-Pakistan relations.

Written in a crisp style, using broad brush-strokes, the book is extensively referenced. In addition to official documents, the author has woven into his narrative the distilled wisdom of some of the most perceptive interlocutors from both countries who have dealt with India-Pakistan relations, including Badr-ud-din Tyabji, Afzal Iqbal, Rajeshwar Dayal, YK Gundevia, B K Nehru, Abdul Sattar, JN Dixit, Kewal Singh, Iqbal Akhund, Rikhi Jaipal, Jamsheed Marker, PN Dhar, Jagat S Mehta, Shahid Amin, Mani Shankar Aiyar, MK Rasgotra, K Natwar Singh, Sartaz Aziz, Kuldip Nayar, IK Gujral, K Srinivasan and Jaswant Singh. This adds significantly to the authenticity of the narrative, despite the broad approach taken by the author.

The book is written with authority and appreciation of the nuances of controversial issues such as the accessions of Junagadh, Jammu and Kashmir, Kalat and Hyderabad. The

author's use of personal examples (such as the family histories of Azim Husain and Mohammad Yunus) to illustrate the complexities of the Partition of India for individuals and families is a welcome addition to the historiography of India and Pakistan, bringing in a human dimension to the dilemmas caused by the Partition of India. Similarly, Raghavan's portrayal of how pre-Partition relations between Ayub Khan and Rajeshwar Dayal played out when the latter was accredited as India's High Commissioner to Pakistan during Ayub Khan's dictatorship, is fascinating.

The book's significance is due to Raghavan's deft portrayal of the major issues that have confronted India and Pakistan following Partition in 1947, and how the elected political leadership of both countries attempted to resolve these issues. This topic is of special interest during the "pragmatic" period of India-Pakistan relations of the early 1950s.

Raghavan's book provides an interesting insight into the ascendancy of the Pakistani Army in Pakistani politics, which has culminated in military adventurism against India from time to time, including the 1965 and 1971 wars, and Kargil in 2001. The book is very useful for understanding the current state of relations between South Asia's two largest neighbours.

Shri Asoke Mukerji, IFS (Retd)

Strategic Balance in the Indo-Pacific Region, Challenges and Prospects. *Edited by Commander MH Rajesh and Dr Raj Kumar Sharma, (Vij Books India Pvt Ltd, Delhi, 2017), pp..158, Price- Rs 850, ISBN 978-93-86457*

The book is a record of one and a half day international seminar on the above topic organised by United Service Institution of India (USI), New Delhi, in 2016.

The aim of the seminar was "To identify reasons for the world powers to dominate the area and seas between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Oceans". Specifically, strategic and economic importance of the two oceans (spreading from Straits of Hormus to East China Sea) for the countries of the region as well as world powers were analysed. The existing and potential threats to the Indian Ocean Region, the existing organisations and grouping to

meet the threat were examined. Suggestions for creating new structures, for facing the “security threats” were also made.

In his Welcome Address, Lieutenant General PK Singh, Director, USI, highlighted the importance of Indian and Pacific Oceans as vital sea routes, which impact security, economy and trade. Vice Admiral S Soni gave the Keynote Address, and emphasised the need to maintain freedom of navigation for international shipping through the Oceans. Hereafter, the seminar was conducted in three sessions over two days. A total of 15 papers were presented by experts from China, Russia, South Korea, Singapore, Germany, Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and India.

In the first session six papers were presented on Security Challenges and Prospects in the Indo-Pacific Region. The speakers highlighted the traditional and non-traditional threats faced by the littoral states, specially the threat posed by recent Chinese unilateral actions (militarisation of a few islands in South China Sea and East China Sea). However, the speaker from China stated that his country has not violated any international law, always followed the rule of law and, wants to resolve the disputes peacefully.

Part II of the conference discussed Economic Challenges and Prospects. All the five speakers highlighted the need to ensure freedom of navigation and security of ships, to ensure free flow of energy (Oil) and trade, between countries of West Asia and Asia Pacific. Importance of Blue Economy, challenges of sea bed mining and its impact on coastal economy were highlighted.

The last session was devoted to ‘Emerging Architecture in the Indo-Pacific Region – the Way Ahead’. Presenters brought out the existing trade and economic arrangements and groupings made by countries of the Pacific and Asia Region (like ASEAN, SAARC, TTP). They pointed out that while such bi-lateral and tri-lateral arrangements cover a few threats, they do not have resilience or power to ensure strict compliance of the rules (like SLOC). The need for an international law to enforce such laws was pointed out by all the four speakers.

In his Valedictory Address, Director USI highlighted the interest of big powers in the Indo-Pacific Region, which has

resulted in USA shifting her strategic balance from West Asia and Europe, to the Asia-Pacific. This needs to be realised by the countries of the region, that must create new regional architects for meeting the changing security scenario.

Lieutenant General YM Bammi, PhD

The Bravest of the Brave: The Extraordinary Story of Indian VCs of WW1. By Maj Gen Ian Cardozo, (Bloomsbury Publishing India Pvt Ltd, N Delhi), pp..109, First Published 2016, Price Rs 499, ISBN 978 93-85936-24-1.

The book tells the extraordinary stories of Indian soldiers who won Victoria Cross during the First World War while fighting for the British Indian Army.

Spread over 109 pages in 15 chapters, the author has exclusively covered the “bravest of the brave” Indian soldiers who participated in the battlefields of France, Mesopotamia, Persia, the Middle East, East Africa and China. They fought in these different theatres against the Germans, Turks and their Allies, as part of eleven expeditionary forces sent from India. Though initially, neither equipped nor trained to fight in the varied terrain and climate, they proved that their fighting capabilities were no less than that of the other forces.

In Chapter One, the author has given brief history of Victoria Cross, and points out that though it was instituted in 1855, the India soldiers were not entitled to receive it until 1911. However, pre-1911, acts of bravery and valour were recognised by the award of Indian Order of Merit. Out of the eleven VCs won by the Indian soldiers, five were by those units which went over to Pakistan in 1947.

A brief account of WW1 and the participation of the Imperial Indian Army has been given in Chapter Two, which will enable even a non-military reader to follow the events of the War scene and the gallant actions of each soldier.

Individual stories of all the VC awardees have been covered in a separate chapter. Besides giving details of the acts of valour and the impact of the gallantry award on the sub-unit, the author has also highlighted his post war retirement initiatives.

Photographs of the individual awardees and battlefields add an enormous value to the book. For ease of following the events, a few maps have also been included.

The author needs to be complimented on having carried out detailed research, and presenting an important part of the military history of the Indian Army's contribution during the WW1. The author has not only included the Citations and extracts from London Gazette, but also brief life and record of service have been given, which shows author's commitment to his research.

The book provides a condensed and very well researched account of bravery shown by our soldiers during WW 1 and is recommended for all schools and college libraries too. Its translation in Hindi is recommended, as it would enable a wider readership by Indian youth.

Lieutenant General YM Bammi, PhD (Retd)