

Editorial

The article “Aren’t We Already in Undeclared Third World War with Changed Dimensions and Instruments” by Maj Gen SB Asthana, SM, VSM (Retd), makes interesting reading. The author has brought out that because of mutually destructive capabilities of a large number of powers, full scale declared world war between combat forces may not occur. However, military hardware including nukes will continue to grow for deterrence as well as trade. Reality check as per the author reveals that the present global situation has every element of a world war except that the dimension, instruments and modalities have changed as war has not been formally declared. The world is yet to accept mentally the transition of world war into a new dimension to encompass, economic warfare, trade, diplomatic manoeuvres, space and information warfare including cyber warfare. The conventional war has taken a backseat, but the space exists for such wars at regional level within the overall ambit of undeclared third world war. The battleground for ‘undeclared third world war’ appears to be the Indo-Pacific, and the world has probably already entered the preparatory phase without fully recognising it.

The article titled “The Strategic Dynamics between the US, China and Russia” by Shri Asoke Kumar Mukerji, IFS (Retd) has clearly brought out that over the last five years or so, strategic dynamics between the three powers have been marked by disruptions in their interaction. To assess the complex interplay, the author has looked at the strategic drivers of the bilateral equations between the US and Russia, the US and China and China and Russia. In 2017, the US legislated law called CAATSA allowing the US to increase pressure on Russia for its economic and human rights policies. The law included provisions for targeting countries having strategic relations with Russia. In May 2018, the US announced its withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) Agreement, under which multilateral sanctions on Iran, imposed in 2006, were lifted in return for Iran’s restraint in enriching uranium stockpile. Countering Iran signalled US response to Russia, taking strategic confrontation to Asia. Russia responded by supporting Iran as part

of its JCPOA Agreement. As far as US-China equation is concerned. China is harbouring aspirations to displace the US as the foremost world power in the 21st Century. This has been recognised by the US. As far as China – Russia relations are concerned, the 2003 US-led invasion and occupation of Iraq stands out as the defining moment. Strategic interests of China and Russia vis-à-vis the US converged. The US sanctions on Russia have probably pushed Russia closer into China's economic embrace. The current strategic dynamics amongst the three major powers substantiate the perception that international relations are being propelled by competing national sovereignties. However, complex international challenges require multinational response based on shared values. The strategic battle has been joined.

Article titled “Geopolitical Developments in the Indo-Pacific Region” authored by Shri Sanjay Singh, IFS (Retd) traces the path of development and progress in the Region. The Indo-Pacific Region, with over 3.5 billion people has combined GDP of over US \$ 20 trillion. It has been the fastest growing Region over the past half a century or so. While economic partnership with China is advantageous for its partners, its growing military capabilities constrain the strategic space of other regional countries and increase their threat perceptions. China wants to change the status quo and desires to fashion rules and norms to its advantage. There is increasing stress on regional fault-lines, boundary tension such as between China – India, China -Vietnam, China-Japan, China – US / Taiwan and disputes in South China Sea. North Korean activities continue to be worrisome. These disputes can have adverse effects on sea lanes of communications (SLOC) and on trade and maritime security. Russia under President Putin is now more assertive and is developing new relationship with China and increasing its presence in the Region. Japan has amended its Constitution, allowing its forces to act abroad and is likely to focus more on enhancing its own defence capabilities. The US continues to maintain the largest security presence in the Region. However, its behaviour has been somewhat erratic. China's quest for domination is being challenged by regional powers who see a strategic threat to their interests and wish to safeguard them.

Efforts are on to build an open, multipolar, pluralist and participatory global economic order to enable development and eliminate poverty and inequality.

The article titled “Role of Military Diplomacy in India’s Foreign Policy” by Shri Kanwal Sibal, IFS (Retd) is perceptive and covers a number of grey areas. It is generally felt that India does not make use of “military diplomacy” as an instrument to advance foreign policy interests adequately. There appears to be chariness about projecting military strength to realise national aspirations in full. The author is of the view that behind this feeling and ensuing debate lies a strong sentiment in Armed Forces that their role in formation of security policies is limited. Indian Armed Forces participate in Joint exercises with a large number of countries. They serve the diplomatic purpose of confidence building, improved operational skills, exposure to best practices, demonstration of capability and state of readiness of the Armed Forces. It facilitates power projection, interoperability with forces of friendly countries and also political signalling.

The article titled “Terrorism – The Grey Zone of Chaos” by Lt Gen GS Katoch, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd) focuses on evolution of laws for just way to wage war; necessity to circumvent rules, and need for countries to militarise police for countering terrorism. The requirement of having rules and laws under which war should be conducted on land came about as the “Hague Conventions 1899”. The laws did reign in truant states and permitted trials of war criminals. However; in a period of a century or so after the laws emerged, countries and organisations had learnt to circumvent them in the form of proxy war and terrorism. Conflict is based in a zone where the rules can be twisted in a manner that neither do they follow the law, nor legally do they infringe it. Conflict is opaque, it is in the “Grey Zone”. Nowadays, more states in the world are fighting terrorists than ever before. Police forces often find themselves outgunned, if asked to operate against terrorists. This has resulted in militarisation of police all over the world. According to the author, counter-terrorist operations require either a militarised police or a constabularised military. The former is better for gaining actionable intelligence. The latter is better for bringing in destructive fire power. The Army, with its ethos,

discipline, unit cohesion, esprit de corps and élan will remain the sword arm of the nation.

Article titled “Evolving Scenario in Afghanistan : Implications for India” authored by Maj Gen BK Sharma, AVSM, SM and Bar (Retd) traces the hardships that Afghanistan as a nation has been subjected to for decades. Instability and violence have turned Afghanistan into a very fragile state. The National Unity Government is facing intense tension due to persistent factional politics of warlords and high intensity of terrorism launched by Taliban. The international community has espoused support to “Afghan led Afghan owned Peace Process”. However; major players are adopting contradictory approaches to deal with the problem. The US President Donald Trump asserts for renewed effort in combating terrorism, building Afghan National Security Defence Forces including special forces and Air Force, putting pressure on Pakistan to dismantle terrorist infrastructure and solicit Indian support in peace building and development in Afghanistan. Moscow opposes Taliban, calling them terrorists. However, Zamir Kubalov, Putin’s special representative for Afghanistan termed ISIS a bigger threat than the Taliban. China perceives security in the region essential for mitigating ETIM threat to Xinjiang province, protection for BRI project; securing investments in mining in Aynek and oil exploration. Iran had supported Northern Alliance; against Taliban, but is now engaging Taliban. India’s strategic interests in Afghanistan, besides combating terrorism, revolve around gaining access to Central Asia, economic engagement in Eurasia and energy security. A stable Afghanistan is vital for operationalising of Chabahar – Zaranj – Delaram axis. India should work towards a regional grouping for peace building in Afghanistan. There is need to seek a stable, prosperous Afghanistan that is fully integrated with global trading network.

The article titled “The Pakistan Elections 2018 : An Overview and the Road Ahead” authored by Shri Tilak Devasher focuses on the Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan and Tehreek-i-Insaaf (PTI) party. In 2013 PTI had 30 seats in the National Assembly (NA) and after 2018 elections, it has 116 general seats. Though PTI does not have majority in 342 members NA, Imran Khan has

cobbled together Government in Islamabad with support of 27 members from seven parties. PTI has become a national party, winning seats from all the four provinces. Imran Khan campaigned relentlessly to end endemic corruption in Pakistan. He also has support of Pakistan Army. His success has introduced third national party into electoral calculations instead of two party system of PML-N and the PPP and their dynastic politics. An important takeaway of elections was lack of seats that religious parties won, reflecting disconnect of voters with hardline narrative. As Imran Khan settles into governance, he has to face myriad challenges. He is an untested politician and an untried administrator. He has to keep the flock together, both at the Centre and in Punjab. With a simple majority in the NA and only 12 out of 102 seats in the Senate, to get legislations passed will not be easy. Revival of economy is bound to be the most daunting task. Soaring external financing requirements, repayment of debt and mounting import bill are immediate issues. Defence spending is high; foreign currency reserves are barely sufficient to cover less than two month's imports. An IMF bail out (if it materialises) is bound to be accompanied by stiff conditions. Imran Khan will have to convince the Army that finances required to sustain military engagements on eastern and western fronts concurrently are no longer available. Pakistan must be at peace with its neighbours in the region. Pakistan Government will have to quickly get out of the campaign mode, shun politics of vengeance and tackle a broad range of challenges quickly.

Article titled "Pakistan – Crystal Gazing Beyond Elections" by Lt Gen PC Katoch, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SC (Retd) is second pertaining to Pakistan being published in current Issue of the Journal. Points having commonality of 2018 elections in Pakistan; and challenges being faced; commented upon in previous paragraph are not being repeated. Imran's links with Taliban and his funding Haqqani seminary known as the 'Oxford of Global Jihad' is well documented. There were hopes that the economic quagmire and new Prime Minister would bring change of course by the military and the ISI. However, recent indicators point otherwise. In August 2018, Taliban attacked Ghazni in Afghanistan. Taliban were supported by foreign militants including Pakistani, Chechenya and Arabs. 194 militants were killed and

167 wounded. According to a report Imran could be expected to persuade Afghan President Ashraf Ghani to include Taliban into the core of governance mechanism in Kabul. Once ensconced, Taliban would push out other elements, topple Ghani and replace him by a Taliban commander. If plan succeeds, Taliban would rule Afghanistan again. Exit of US forces from Afghanistan will be facilitated. The next objective of Pakistan is bound to be Jammu and Kashmir. The US estrangement with Russia and Iran and trade war with China have made these three countries to support the Taliban. US pilots in Afghanistan are facing laser attacks in addition to Middle East. Source is bound to be China or Russia. The US is finding it more and more difficult to operate in Afghanistan. The trade war, global awareness of China's 'debt trap' policy, Malaysia cancelling Chinese projects and hiccups in China's BRI project have imposed caution on China and her major concern is success and security of CPEC. China - Pakistan aims vis-à-vis India are likely to remain unchanged. Pakistan is likely to try and induct more foreign terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir for Jihad, given the boost that the JeM is getting under Imran's dispensation.

The article titled "Strategic Significance of Chabahar for India and the Region" by Professor Nirmala Joshi focuses on strategic and economic issues of the region. As globalizing trend of the 21st Century gained momentum with trade and economic engagement among nations; connectivity projects also moved to the centre stage of international politics. Opening of land locked Eurasian landmass after break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991 gave more stimulus. Eurasia is rich in natural resources and vital minerals. Against this backdrop centrality of Iran both for sea and land options appears very significant. Iran accorded due importance to Chabahar port, which received priority in the economic agenda. Chabahar offered an alternate option to landlocked Afghanistan and the Central Asian Republics (CARs) to reach the Indian Ocean. Chabahar is poised to emerge as a major centre for trans-shipment to the shipping industry as well as link to the hinterlands. In May 2016, Trilateral Transport and Trade Agreement between India, Iran and Afghanistan was signed. From Chabahar a road link 600 km or so connects Zahidan on the Iran-Afghan border. India has built a 217 km road link that connects Zaranj (Afghan-

Iran Border) with Zahidan on the one side, and Delaram on Afghanistan's Garland Highway on the other side. From Delaram, cargo is transported by road to Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif and thence to Uzbekistan. Chabahar's location on the Makran Coast is highly advantageous because of its accessibility by sea and by transport corridor to Afghanistan and Central Asia. For India, Chabahar enables to overcome the road block imposed by Pakistan and, therefore, is a strategic asset. India will also be able to cement its partnership with Iran. Chabahar is likely to emerge as a competitor to Gwadar Port. Chabahar connects regions and nations as far away as Russia through the International North South Transport Corridor; whereas Gwadar connects only with China.

The article titled "Defence Reforms in India Need Strategic Direction" by Brig Narender Kumar, SM, VSM (Retd) focuses on vital issues of Indian Armed Forces acquiring credible and visible operational capabilities. The political leadership has to decide whether the country should have threat based force structure or threat - cum - capability based forces. Connotation of adopting either of the models is completely different. Threat based force structure is capable of dealing only with the threats that are already known and are on the horizon whereas threat-cum-capability based force is structured to deal with the threat that is on the horizon and also the threat that could manifest in future whose contours are not yet defined or known. Considering that China is likely to be our major adversary and is in the process of modernisation of its military with clear mandate that People's Liberation Army (PLA) should be ready to fight and win wars with regional and extra regional powers; India must adopt the model of threat-cum-capability based military forces. Given the volatile nature of threats, Higher Defence Organisation (HDO) should be an apex body that is able to take quick decisions, create inter-ministerial coordination to build capabilities and leverage them during war. HDO must meet periodically to review national security and preparedness of all organs of state to deal with the threats. It assumes greater significance in the multi-domain threat scenario since all domains are not military in nature; however; other domains should ideally be developed around military organisations so that they dovetail seamlessly with the military operations during war. The three pillars of national security –

political leadership, military and bureaucracy have to be on the same page to carry out defence reforms. Political leadership is to give directions and determine what capability the nation must possess, military is required to then formulate nitty gritty of capability building; and bureaucracy is to ensure desired quality resources are made available by agencies responsible, and in time. This process is conspicuous by absence in India. Reforms are required to reset this process and develop synergy for securing vital national interests.

The article titled “Agni I to VI – Not Just a Number Game” by Lt Gen AK Saxena, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd) focuses on how the qualitative requirement of each type of missile is based on meeting the operational needs of the Armed Forces and it is not merely a function of increase in range. Integrated Missile Development Programme (IGMDP) was started in 1982-83. Agni was conceived as a technology demonstrator (TD) or prototype. In 1998, India carried out nuclear tests, making the nuclear boosted fission weapon available. However, after the nuclear tests, Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) imposed technology denial on India preventing us from importing missile related technologies. All systems and sub-systems were to be developed indigenously causing some delay. **First launch of Agni 1 having range less than 2500 km was carried out on 25 January 2002.** This was followed by several successful launches including one on 06 Feb 2018 by the Strategic Forces Command. Agni II was developed from the TD version and achieved range of 2500 to 3500 kms. Agni III has a range of 3000 to 5000 km falling in the category of Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM). With miniaturisation of components, progressively missiles have become more compact as well as more accurate. Agni IV has been technology driven, having range of 3000 to 4000 km. It has cutting edge features of improvement in flight of missile technology and reduction in weight. Agni V has range of 5500 to 8000 km. It does not need pre-built launch site and can be quickly launched from pre-surveyed location. It can be developed into anti-satellite (ASAT) capable missile. Agni VI ICBM is under development. Each new version is driven by specific operational needs and new security challenges as they develop.

The article titled “Re-energising Indian Intelligence : A National Imperative” authored by Lt Gen Kamal Davar, PVSM, AVSM (Retd) focuses on strengthening defence intelligence. Acquisition of Intelligence, accurate interpretation, analysis and seamless flow to government institutions in time, is a compelling challenge for the intelligence agencies. India has land borders with assertive and powerful China and nuclear armed terror-exporting Pakistan. The two countries also have strategic partnership and good understanding. The scenario gets further compounded due to internal security challenges in Jammu and Kashmir, Northeast and left wing extremism. A major restructuring of Indian intelligence came in the aftermath of the 1999 Kargil War. Based on the recommendations, an apex inter-services agency – Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) and National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO) have been raised. The government also established National Security Council and National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) for management of intelligence in a more cohesive manner. After Mumbai Terror Attack in 2008, National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID) and National Intelligence Agency (NIA) were established. NIA is the sole agency legally mandated to supersede state Police Forces in investigation and prosecution. With growing technological advancements, issues pertaining to satellite imagery, cyber intelligence and monitoring of space need to be addressed in a professional manner. Security challenges will continue to deter the nation’s rise unless all the constituents of Comprehensive National Power including intelligence are addressed with alacrity, resources, and a long term perspective.

The article titled “Emerging Chinese Aerospace Capability and its Impact on Regional Balance” authored by Air Cmde AS Bahal, VM (Retd) focuses on modernisation of People’s Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) and widening technological and operational capability differential as compared to the Indian Air Force (IAF). PLAAF modernisation encompasses doctrinal, strategic, organisational changes and acquisition of appropriate hardware for operations. The creation of Western Theatre Command by merging two former Military Regions (MRs) is likely to ensure better synchronised operations against India. China’s Air Force has improved significantly during the last decade or so.

PLAAF has 1693 combat aircraft. Its fighter strength is 700 aircraft comprising SU-27, SU-30, J-10 and J-11 class - fourth generation aircraft. By 2020 PLAAF is likely to field about 1000; 4th / 5th generation fighters. Prototypes of J 20 and J 31- fifth generation have been tested. On the other hand India's fifth generation fighter aircraft development with Russia has had a set back. The Tibetan airfields, potentially can render Himalayan barrier ineffective. China's military space capabilities are in areas of launch, tracking, telemetry and command network in space orbital systems. These provide connectivity to military operations and counter space technologies. China's navigation system (Bideou) is operational since 2011. These are complemented by surface to surface cruise and ballistic missile capability. China thus has the capability to strike any vital asset of India with limited warning, coupled with nuclear weapons, this capability portends serious connotations. India is developing ballistic missile defence (BMD) shield. However, system is quite some distance away from deployment. Comparison between the IAF and the PLAAF indicates that PLAAF has significant superiority in terms of fighter aircraft. This asymmetry is likely to increase with China's indigenous production in the near future. At the current pace of modernisation of PLAAF; capability differential is likely to be such that by 2025 Chinese regional dominance is likely to become a reality.

The article titled "Ladakh Marathon - Short of Breath and Full of Pride" has been authored by Maj Sonali Gupta (Retd). She participated in the Marathon in Leh on 09 Sep 2018 and has described her experience in a very interesting manner. While covering challenges of high altitude, she has set about it in a logical manner. Before participating in marathon, focused regular training and strict discipline to complete the distance in a reasonable timeframe are essential. To run at 11,500 ft is not easy and physical fitness and robust heart are pre-requisites.

Review of the following books has been published in this Journal:-

- (a) China's Faultlines : Implications and Lessons.
- (b) The Tartan Turban : In Search of Alexander Garden.
- (c) Tryst with Perfidy – The Deep State of Pakistan.
- (d) United Nations Peacekeeping and Conflict Resolution.
- (e) The Information Game in Democracy.

- (f) Indian Recipients of the Military Cross Vol. I and II.
- (g) Karan Singh : Jammu and Kashmir (1949 – 1967).

Major General YK Gera (Retd)

Aren't We Already in 'Undeclared Third World War' with Changed Dimensions and Instruments?

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

In the era of intense Trade War between various world powers,

use of multinational forces (even without UN sanction), Proxy war by nations using irregulars, use of terrorists supported by militaries, terrorism, information warfare (including perception management, cyber attacks, and use of media including social media), military posturing through military exercises, expansion of military bases, diplomatic pressures and technological threats, there is a need to give a fresh look at the definitions of War, World War, Cold War and analyse if we have already entered the Third World War or otherwise. It may well happen that because of mutually destructive capabilities of a large number of powers, the full scale, declared World War like First or Second World Wars between combat forces may not occur, as it will be economically devastating for all major powers, as none of them can afford it. The military hardware (including nuclear weapons) however will continue to grow as an instrument for deterrence, as well as trade.

New Parameters of Comprehensive National Power (CNP) Necessitate Redefining World War

There are different factors considered by different agencies trying to measure CNP, the most commonly accepted ones are: economy (including energy security), military strength (including nuclear capability), strategic positioning, foreign policy/diplomacy, governance Human Development Index (HDI), technological capability, knowledge and information, geography natural resources, national will and leadership. Out of all the factors mentioned above, economic power has the over-riding factor dictating the rest of the factors. This means that the trade war/economic warfare have emerged as the most predominant factors in future strategic positioning of various countries.

With changing realities there is a need for reality check to gauge whether the world is going through 'Cold War' as most strategists suggest, or it is a modified form of World War. During First and Second World Wars era, use of military forces and declaration of war was basic essentiality to call it a World War. War was defined to be a state in which a nation prosecutes its right by force. Similarly as per Collins English Dictionary; a World War is a war that involves countries all over the world. The strategists all over the world normally call the present global situation as 'Cold War', which as per Cambridge Dictionary, is a state of extreme unfriendliness existing between countries, especially countries with opposing political systems that expresses itself not through fighting but through political pressure and threats. This expression was usually used to describe the relationship between the US and the Soviet Union after the Second World War. The erstwhile Cold War has grown in dimension from oil politics, arms race (including nuclear arsenal) to space, Information War, Cyber and Economic War including sale of arms and technology.

Reality Check of Current Global Turbulences to qualify it as 'Third World War'

Let me attempt to analyse each facet of the existing global scenario and see if the current situation qualifies to be called as 'Third World War'.

- (a) If economy is the most powerful tool of CNP, then a Trade War between the two largest economies (US and China) is spiralling upwards at a very fast rate. US slapped economic sanctions on Russia, Iran, North Korea and some other countries. With Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) in place, a large number of countries also indirectly face sanctions, which are trading with Iran and Russia including China and India, drawing crude oil from Iran and military hardware from Russia. A number of US allies drawing gas from Russia also get added to the list of countries under sanctions. The US has also imposed heavy tariffs on China and European Union countries, adding fuel to trade war flame. The trade war affects the entire world and puts global economy in

turbulence defining the global nature of war. Chinese Belt and Road Initiative to increase its infrastructure reach and strategic footprints almost in all continents and the counter initiatives by US and Japan are also part of economic and strategic war. The ongoing conflicts like Syria and the ones since last two decades are also linked with economy, sale of military hardware to either side including sale of weapons to terrorists. Military posturing in South China Sea is due to likely obstruction to seamless flow of global trade and exploitation of global commons like international water and resources besides other reasons. The wars are good news for arm manufacturers lobby, and creation of threat is a strategy being adopted for arms sale.

(b) The military force has been physically used in Syria, Crimea where the US and Russia stand on opposite sides, although they have been cautious enough not to attack each other to up the ante to 'Declared War'. In Indo-Pacific the combat forces of US and China are being used for strategic posturing, deterrence and messaging to all stakeholders. China has used combat forces to occupy and develop features in South China Sea, also claimed by others to convert international water into Chinese lake. The combat exercises being conducted in Indo-Pacific are show of force and alliances, besides the optics. The North Korean threatening missile tests, nuclear tests to demonstrate its capability to strike US mainland and US military exercises with South Korea to moderate it, also display the posturing of combat forces.

(c) The military intervention of US and allies in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan without UN sanction amounts to war. The military intervention of Saudi Arabia and multinational force in Yemen also qualify to be called as war.

(d) Terrorism and Cyber is an omnipresent threat for all countries. The global war on terrorism is a common slogan but divides the world into various groups depending upon their individual country's perception of terrorist groups. The theory of 'Good and bad terrorists' and individual interests of countries have overtaken the unified global cause and have

got mixed up with major powers fighting some terrorist groups and closing eyes towards others.

(e) The changes in global situation have also impacted the outdated concepts of war fighting. Expecting a nuclear war between major nuclear powers is unlikely because of being mutually destructive. This has been replaced by countries trying to increase nuclear and missile capability using safety as an excuse. The most dangerous and doable component is the threat of usage of tactical nuclear weapons, and a danger of tactical nukes or dirty bombs getting into the hands of the terrorists either by default or design or coercion of scientists. Related with it is a wild card entry like North Korea and Pakistan using nuclear blackmailing to avoid conventional war.

(f) The allegations of use of nerve agents in Syria and by North Korea also bring in the UN banned element of warfare amongst the adversaries. Despite a ban by UN, this arsenal is being prepared and selectively used.

(g) The technological competition is an added dimension to warfare. The space was initially exploited for welfare of mankind, but now the space warfare has also taken a dangerous turn with each side taking preparatory actions to destroy each other's satellites and other space infrastructure.

(h) There is very little doubt that use of all elements of information war, to include misinformation campaign, election meddling, cyber war, hacking of economic and crucial military network are already in progress. US President Donald Trump has signed National Defence Authorisation Act (NDAA) into law on 13 Aug 2018 a new US defence bill that, among other provisions, prioritises a "long-term strategic competition with China" and calls for an evaluation of propaganda, economic tools, hacking and "defence installations," that Beijing allegedly uses against Washington.¹ This clearly gives out the kind of activities which are alleged to be increasing from so called 'Cold War' to next level in the dimensions explained above.

(j) Diplomatic wars to include formulation of alliances like QUAD, enlarging scope of Shanghai Cooperation

Organisation (SCO), expelling diplomats and counter diplomatic offensive by other side, joint military exercises are new instruments of expression of collective power.

(h) The number of casualties suffered in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, and other areas, and the number of refugees displaced due to these conflicts surpasses the total casualties as well as refugees of both the earlier World Wars put together. In Syrian War alone 3.5 million people have been killed.

The reality check brings out that the present global situation has every element of a World War except that the dimension, instruments and modalities have changed, and the war has not been 'Formally Declared'.

Grouping and Alliances

The reality check also brings out change in new emerging grouping of countries for the World War. The first possible grouping seems to be China, Russia, North Korea, Turkey, Iran, Qatar and Pakistan. The second possible grouping emerging seems to be USA, Israel, UK, Saudi Arabia, Australia, Japan, Egypt and some of the Gulf states. The G-7 meeting showed that the classical West seems to be weakening, calling it to be a G 6+1 alliance, with everyone unhappy with 'America First' attitude of US. While the G7 includes two thirds of the world economy, the SCO only represents 20 per cent of the world economy and 40 per cent of the world population. With India getting full membership in the SCO and Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa (BRICS) and relative differences emerging amongst members of the G-7, a shift to the Asian pivot is expected. The erstwhile allies of the USA and NATO countries are relatively old alliances, but do not mind shifting sides on issue based economic interests, like some NATO allies joining Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and drawing gas from Russia. The majority of western countries, however, still have convergence of ideas, concerns and thoughts.

With Chinese global ambition, strategic and economic expansion designs through BRI and a more confident Russia under Putin, the western countries may find that their being together in organisations like NATO, EU and G7 is more of

compulsion than a choice. There will also be a group of countries like India following independent foreign policies, and may be part of issue based multiple alliances and strategic partnerships. The reality is that the world has become so interdependent, interconnected and multi-polar, with numerous groupings and alliances, that a 'First and Second World Wars' style of world war in future is less likely. It can also be argued that unlike earlier world wars, the Third World War may be of much longer duration which could last for decades, and what we are witnessing is the preparatory phase of the war, which itself may last for a decade. Michael Pillsbury has already pointed it out in his book 'The Hundred-Year Marathon: China's Secret Strategy to Replace America as the Global Superpower'². The only component missing from defining the existing global situation as 'Third World War' is declaration of it as a war; hence it may not be wrong to call it 'Undeclared Third World War'.

Key Players of the Undeclared Third World War

USA versus China: The US and China are into the most fierce trade war, strategic and military posturing, diplomatic and information war of recent times, despite being the largest economies and having heavy economic dependency on each other being the biggest trading partners. China made best use of the US relative inaction in Indo-Pacific Region during their elections period, to make irreversible progress in South China Sea, correctly appreciating that any major standoff was unlikely during that time. China managed to convert features/atolls to artificial islands with infrastructure build up, ended up constructing military bases, thereby increasing its strategic space. China managed to deploy powerful anti-aircraft and anti-missile systems to all seven of its new artificial islands in the Spratly archipelago, along shipping lanes that carry USD 5 trillion worth of global trade per year.³ The deployment of China's weaponry and infrastructure in various artificial structures in South China Sea (SCS) has continued to increase, despite intense military posturing, and optics of coining Indo-Pacific terminology, and naming 'The United States Central Command' as 'Indo-Pacific Command'. The diplomatic swinging of Philippines stance/leadership on SCS, or influencing consensus of ASEAN (exploiting their varying

individual interests) on their outlook towards SCS by China, which is bandwagoning smaller neighbours by “infrastructure diplomacy” and “Purse Diplomacy” and now by “Debt Trap Diplomacy” are part of the economic war. The biggest gain China has made is in Pakistan, by exploiting receding US interest there, to get warm water access through China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and getting space for commercial/ potential military base at Gwadar.

The saber rattling in South China Sea is on since last two years or more. President Trump has allocated financial resources to defence almost three to four times as that of China, which displays his determination of not losing superpower status to China. US has lifted arms embargo on Vietnam, is issuing latest weaponry to Taiwan (despite Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi asserting that no country is exempted from ‘One China Principle’ (SCMP, 16 Dec 2016)). President Trump has signed the Taiwan Travel Act, which encourages more official meetings between Taiwanese officials and their US counterparts, and has commenced such visits there, indicates how keenly the strategic space in Indo-Pacific is going to be contested by US and China.

The economic war between these two economic giants is in dangerous stage with US imposing heavy tariffs commencing from the released list of USD16 billion worth of Chinese goods on 07 Aug 2018, subject to increase of 25 per cent import tariffs later. China responded immediately with a vow to impose retaliatory duties on an equivalent value of imports. The spiral moved up with President Trump proposing tariffs on USD 200 billion of Chinese goods from 10 to 25 per cent, and also a threat to consider imposing tariffs on all USD 500 billion of Chinese imports.⁴ China also retaliated putting a brave front with some counter tariffs, along with other measures to include efforts to push Yuan as global currency, tricks of devaluation of Yuan. The strengthening of AIIB and making efforts to launch BRICS Bank are some visible indicators of heated economic war. Against the backdrop of such dramatic escalation, resolution appears to have distant prospects.

US support to India on certain issues like Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), followed by the recent visit of President of Taiwan, Tsai Ing-wen to USA, where she was allowed to give a speech as

she travelled through Los Angeles, is a burning example of Washington's recent moves to promote ties with the self-governing island, which is the most sensitive issue in Beijing's relationship with the US. It has irked China out of proportion and has posed a serious challenge to its claim and bravado of regional strategic dominance, giving a readable signal that US is in no mood to be pushed out of Indo-Pacific Region.

US versus Russia: The age old Cold War of capitalists *versus* communists steered by the US and erstwhile USSR, is being followed up by Russia shifting it to Ukraine and Crimea from heart of Asia. Economic sanctions of West on Russia, adversarial stance in dealing with IS in Syria (for and against Sadat), the latest news of alleged Russian role in election process of US (Cyber Warfare), and the controversies surrounding President Donald Trump's relationship with Russia, indicate extension of the same war defined earlier. These moves, to some extent, have increased mutual interdependency of Russia and China, for mutual convenience. When President Trump's National Security Strategy 2018 was released it was clear that he was aiming at Russia and China both as competitors, as he is conscious of Russian nuclear and technological power. It is interesting to speculate whether Trump's remark was aimed at Russia or China or both. The unprecedented trend is Russia's growing interest in Pakistan, be it through arms sale, military exercises or recent interest in Afghan Taliban, has caused concerns for India. It may also be relevant for US in terms of prolonging their stay there, to prevent loss of strategic space. Notwithstanding the moves mentioned above, Putin has come out much stronger after his re-election. He demonstrated his threatening arsenal and technological power to signal that Russia is still a strong military power to reckon with. His recent success of edging out US from Syria and negotiating with Israel, supplying gas to US ally Germany, and standing up with Iran are signals that it is unlikely to give a walk over to US. It now remains to be seen as to how both calibrate their relationship in near future to avoid any catastrophe, as Russia still has the largest stockpile of nuclear arsenal, has competitive technology and above all, a strong leadership.

Can India Avoid Taking Sides?

India has a set of convergences and divergences of interests with each of the key players namely China, USA and Russia. India has so far been able to keep these relations exclusive of each other, and hence, has been able to successfully manage an independent foreign relationship without any bias. In the turbulent complex environment of today, our convergences and divergences have started impacting each other. India's differences with China on certain aspects of Sino-Pak nexus, use of global commons in South China Sea and Indian Ocean, and obstruction to Indian entry in NSG can also be viewed as convergence of interests with US. India's differences with US on trade, tariff, and CAATSA in context of Russia can be seen as convergence of interests with China. Russia despite being India's long term strategic partner and major supplier of defence equipment, is showing a recognisable tilt towards Pakistan; as Jeff Schubert in his publication indicates that, Russia's priority in upcoming relations will be China ahead of India and Pakistan, which fits in their idea of Eurasia.⁵ Russian offer of training Pakistani military officers immediately after US closed the same, gives credentials to this theory besides, military exercises and supply of hardware to Pakistan. Despite such complexities, the silver lining is that the US, as well as China want better relations with India and vice versa. Russia also will not like to give up the largest purchaser of military hardware and a strategic partnership which stood the test of time even in Cold War era, hence, with smart diplomacy, India should be able to manage an independent foreign policy in current global environment.

New Paradigm, Dimensions and Instruments of Third World War

The dimensions of war have grown from erstwhile conventional wars under nuclear hangover (barring nuclear strike on Japan) to Cold War, arms race (including Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defense (CBRN) arsenal), with political bouts interspersed with few offensive actions. The world is yet to mentally accept the transition of World War into a new dimension to encompass economic warfare, trade, diplomatic manoeuvres, technological, space, and information war including cyber warfare.

The conventional war has now taken a back seat, but the space exists for such wars at regional level within the overall ambit of Third World War. The new paradigm will be that unlike earlier World Wars, all countries will not be at war, because all of them may not agree to common narratives of key players, hence some countries would be at hot war like Saudi Arabia and Yemen, some countries will be in heated Cold War, and some will be using other dimensions and instruments of war like economic warfare, trade, diplomatic, technological and information war including cyber warfare. Capturing territory may not be the aim of war, unlike earlier World Wars, but economic interests will override other factors. The other recent additions to instruments of war could be strategic and economic alliances, strategic posturing, joint military exercises like Malabar Exercises, but the most discouraging part is the entry into a dirty domain like double gaming with respect to terrorism, despite everyone claiming to be together in global fight against terror. Unfortunately, despite humanity suffering heavy losses, the theory of 'good and bad terrorists' is still being followed by some powers, because individual national interests are overshadowing global interests. The space dimension is not yet fully explored; hence with recent advancements in this field, the world may see former President Ronald Reagan's fancy dream of 'Star Wars' to new potential. The strategic power of water is the next dimension likely to get added in future, besides oil politics.

The unwritten rules of war have also changed, to an extent that the arch competitors continue to engage commercially, irrespective of the strategic situation like US-China, China-Taiwan, Japan-China etc, despite using other instruments to fight the differences between them. It is expected that in a multilateral world of today, no one country will be able to dictate the strategic choices of others or force any country not to act in its national interest in future; hence the idea of everyone accepting one country as superpower or global leader may soon be outdated. It also proves a point that any country, which thinks that it can rule the world all by itself, is sadly mistaken in the future world, which is overly interlinked. All countries, big or small will protect their national interests even in ongoing heated trade, diplomatic, technological and information war including cyber warfare.

US and China the two largest trading partners are putting a brave front in the trade war. Both sides have dug their heels, while seriously looking at some resolution, which seems to be difficult, as China and Russia are perceived to be a threat by US, having been pushed out from Pakistan and Syria. South China Sea standoff, North Korea's changing gears, and China's pro Iran stance together with BRI is likely to be perceived as struggle for global strategic space, which US is unlikely to give up so easily, after boosting its defense budget three to four times as that of China. The economic as well as population fulcrum is definitely shifting towards East; hence it is well on the cards that the next few decades will see the pivot shifting towards East, as it has fastest growing economies as well as population centres. It can, therefore, well be argued that the battleground for 'Undeclared Third World War' is Indo-Pacific, and the world has already entered in preparatory phase of it, without recognising it to be so.

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The Strategic Dynamics between the US, China and Russia

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Introduction

A new strategic dynamic between the United States (US), China and Russia in contemporary international affairs has emerged over the past few years. The process began more than five years ago with the US applying new domestic laws extra-territorially to impose sanctions against Russia (on account of alleged corrupt practices) and Crimea. The emergence of a new assertive China under President Xi Jinping catalysed this process further.¹ With the election of President Donald Trump in the US Presidential elections in 2016², the strategic dynamic between the three powers has been marked by disruptions in their interaction. This has resulted in a gridlock in international relations, with each of the three powers acting within their individual strategic frameworks to derive advantage over the other. Inevitably, this interaction has major ramifications for the system of international relations founded on the principle of international cooperation established almost a century ago after the First World War. To assess this complex interplay, it would be useful to look at the strategic drivers of the bilateral equations between the US and Russia, the US and China, and China and Russia.

US-Russia

During the Cold War (1946-1989), the US and the former USSR were engaged in an ideological battle for supremacy between capitalism and communism. Today, there is no ideological framework for the current confrontation between the US and Russia. Ironically, the downturn in US-Russia relations began with the decision in 2012 by the Obama Administration to revoke a Cold War era piece of domestic legislation known as the Jackson-Vanik Amendment to the 1974 US Trade Act. This law had

allowed the US to impose sanctions on the former USSR for alleged human rights violations, primarily obstacles for migration of Soviet Jews. The revocation of the legislation was expected to result in a renewed US-Russia business relationship. US companies were projected to gain full access to the Russian market and generate revenues worth US \$22 billion by 2017 under World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules.³

However, when rescinding the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, the Obama Administration simultaneously announced the enactment of a new US domestic law, the Magnitsky Act⁴ of 2012, to allow sanctions to be imposed on Russia for corrupt practices. The Magnitsky Act was triggered by the death in custody of Russian tax accountant Sergei Magnitsky, who worked for a US investment company called Hermitage Capital Management. This company had been established by a US-born British financier, William Browder, who alleged that he had been forced out of Russia by the Russian Government, after more than two decades of conspicuously successful business activities which had made his company the most prominent foreign investor in Russia.⁵

The policy of restricting economic relations with Russia has resulted in a significant constriction of US-Russia economic relations, removing a major strategic driver from any future US attempts to cooperate with Russia. According to an academic study by a major US think-tank, US-Russia trade relations in 2017 stood at US \$20 billion and were projected to roll back to 2005 levels.⁶

In strategic terms, the fall-out of the bilateral US-Russia estrangement became visible following the events in August 2014, which resulted in the separation of Crimea from Ukraine and the beginning of the ongoing Ukrainian civil war in western Ukraine. The Obama Administration imposed sanctions on Russia for its “aggression”. These events brought into focus US support for the steady eastward expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) to the borders of Russia, as well coordinated efforts by the US and European Union (EU) to integrate the region to the west of Russia more closely into the EU’s trade and human rights structures. Russia opposed the “eastward expansion” of

NATO, arguing that it contravened the core agreements reached between the USSR under Mikhail Gorbachev and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and other Western leaders⁷ which led to the re-unification of Germany and the end of the Cold War in 1989. Russia's response to these developments began on a low-key. The Magnitsky Act of 2012 was countered by Russian legislation disallowing the adoption of Russian children by US parents.⁸ The 2014 US sanctions (coordinated with several Western countries) relating to Crimea and the Ukraine civil war were countered by a Russian ban on import of foodstuff from these countries.⁹ It was only in September 2015 that Russia came out with a major strategic response of attempting to isolate it by a dramatic deployment of its military assets in Syria, following a request by the Syrian government.¹⁰

The perception that he was "soft" on Russia despite Russia's alleged undermining of the US Presidential elections of 2016 made President Donald Trump more assertive in imposing sanctions to isolate Russia. In his National Security Strategy issued in December 2017, President Trump adopted a belligerent policy towards Russia, calling it a "revisionist power" while asserting that "Russia seeks to restore its great power status and establish spheres of influence near its borders."¹¹

Building on the domestic political support in the US for the Magnitsky Act, the Trump Administration legislated an omnibus US law called "Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act" of 2017 or CAATSA¹², allowing the US to increase pressure on Russia for its economic and human rights policies. This law included provisions for targeting countries and entities having strategic relations with Russia, although it also provided for an exemption waiver authority to be exercised by the US Administration. The extra-territorial application of US domestic law relied on the military and economic power of the US to force countries and entities to comply with CAATSA's provisions.

Donald Trump, during his Presidential election campaign in 2016, had vowed to undercut the strategic connections between Iran and the Syrian Governments.¹³ As part of this strategy, the Trump Administration announced in May 2018 its withdrawal from

the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPOA agreement, under which multilateral sanctions on Iran, imposed in 2006, had been lifted in return for Iran's restraint in enriching its uranium stockpile.¹⁴ The US also co-opted Israel¹⁵ and Saudi Arabia¹⁶ into its overall strategy against Iran. The focus on countering Iran signaled a broadening of US response to Russia, carrying over the US-Russia strategic confrontation into Asia, and forcing Asia's emerging powers including China and India to recalibrate their own strategic planning.

Russia has responded strategically to these US initiatives. It reiterated its support for Iran as part of the JCPOA agreement, which was endorsed by Russia in the UN Security Council.¹⁷ It hosted Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, a major US ally, as chief guest on the significant occasion of the Victory Day Parade in Moscow on 9 May 2018.¹⁸ Despite the perception that the US had enlisted the new Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman (MBS), in its Middle East policy, it is apparent that Crown Prince MBS and President Putin have established a working relationship during the 2018 FIFA World Cup hosted by Russia, focussed on ensuring higher returns from the world market for their oil production.¹⁹

US-China

Following the US rapprochement with communist China in 1972,²⁰ the strategic equation between the US and China had been more stable than between the US and Russia. The major outcome of the rapprochement was the abandonment by the US of its Second World War military ally, the Republic of China, in the United Nations. This brought communist China into the select circle of five Permanent Members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). By inheriting the right of Veto, China became empowered to play a disproportionate role in international affairs (The first Veto cast by communist China was in August 1972, against the application of newly independent Bangladesh to become a member of the United Nations).²¹

For the US, the new alliance with Maoist China enabled it to widen the canvas for its strategic conflict with the Soviet Union. At a time of emerging globalisation through the WTO, the US

successfully negotiated the accession of China into the WTO on 11 Dec 2001, whittling down several Chinese trade barriers in the process. One consequence was closer economic links between the US and China. Between 1980 and 2004, for example, US-China trade rose from US \$5 billion to US \$231 billion. By 2008, China surpassed Japan to become the largest holder of US debt at around US \$600 billion. By the beginning of 2010, China's GDP was US \$5.88 trillion, surpassing Japan's GDP of US \$5.47 trillion.²²

China's vigorous economic growth fuelled its strategic aspirations to displace the US as the foremost world power in the 21st Century. This was recognised by the US, which acknowledged the "renewal of great power competition" and the emergence of "potential great powers" including Russia, India and China in its 2002 National Security Strategy.²³ By the time the US published its 2015 National Security Strategy under the Obama Administration, its vision had already taken into account the strategic dynamic between Russia, China and India. The Strategy stated that "India's potential, China's rise, and Russia's aggression all significantly impact the future of major power relations."²⁴ This perception of the US hardened in the National Security Strategy issued in December 2017 by the Trump Administration. It asserted that "China and Russia want to shape a world antithetical to US values and interests. China seeks to displace the United States in the Indo-Pacific region, expand the reaches of its state-driven economic model, and reorder the region in its favour."²⁵

China-Russia

The strategic relationship between China and Russia has been influenced by the developments in their bilateral relations with the US. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the ideological confrontation (since 1962) between the two countries over leadership of the global Communist movement came to an end. President Boris Yeltsin's visit to China in 1992 laid the foundations for the convergence of Russia-China interests. The two drivers for the relationship were economic cooperation, involving export of Russian energy and raw materials to China in return for Chinese investments and trade; and defence

cooperation, dominated by the sale of Russian military equipment to China. The decade following this visit saw the elevation of bilateral relations to a strategic level, with an agreement to structure bilateral exchanges on a regular basis at all levels to ensure “strategic coordination” for the 21st Century.²⁶ This structured interaction has been in place since Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng’s visit to Russia in 1996.

The 2003 US-led invasion and occupation of Iraq stands out as the defining moment for a convergence of strategic interests between China and Russia vis-à-vis the US.²⁷ The objective of this strategic convergence is the denial of a “unipolar” world dominated by the US. One outcome of the strategic engagement between China and Russia has been the resolution of their long-standing border dispute in July 2008.²⁸ This agreement, taken together with the resolution of China’s land boundaries with the Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, has provided vital strategic space for China in its aspiration for global leadership in the 21st Century. China’s hosting the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) has received a boost from its consolidation of its land boundaries with Russia and Central Asia.²⁹

Russia’s strategic engagement with China remains dominated by the economic sector. China is currently Russia’s largest trading partner, with bilateral trade worth US \$86 billion in 2017.³⁰ The economic driver has prevented China-Russia strategic relations from playing a larger geo-political role, with the two countries competing rather than converging on critical strategic issues. The divergence of approach between the two countries over Syria illustrates this, with China preferring to abstain on UNSC resolutions since October 2016, rather than casting its Veto together with Russia (as had been the case since the Syria issue was placed on the UNSC agenda in 2011).³¹

While the joint targeting of Russia and China as “revisionist powers” by the Trump Administration may have implied a convergence between China’s and Russia’s strategic interests against the US, it is more than likely that US pressure on Russia may have pushed Russia closer into China’s economic embrace,

especially because of the impact of unilateral US sanctions on Russia.³²

Counter-balancing Strategies

Indo-Pacific: Faced with China's evident objective to displace it as the foremost power in international relations, the US has pushed forward the strategic framework of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" (FOIP). In its National Security Strategy published in December 2017, the United States defined the Indo-Pacific region as one that "stretches from the west coast of India to the western shores of the United States."³³ The only objective of this strategy is to contain China's rise to challenge the US.

The definition of the Indo-Pacific is the existing area of responsibility of the Pacific Command of the United States (now re-named Indo-Pacific Command). In the diplomatic structure, this narrow definition retains the primary role of the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Department of State on Indo-Pacific issues, although there are other Bureaus in the State Department dealing with Asia, such as the Bureaus for South and Central Asia and the Middle East. In essence, the primary drivers for the United States in pursuing the Indo-Pacific framework are to keep the sea and air lanes of communication in this region free from Chinese domination, if necessary through the display of military force; and to generate greater market access for companies headquartered in the United States in this region, particularly in the digital economy, infrastructure and energy.³⁴

BRI: On its part, China has moved to expand its influence on a wider scale, encompassing Asia, eastern Africa and Europe. The strategy adopted by China to achieve this is the US \$100 billion Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) or One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative.³⁵ Connecting "China and some 65 other countries that account collectively for over 30 per cent of global GDP, 62 percent of population, and 75 per cent of known energy reserves",³⁶ this ambitious strategy was unveiled by President Xi Jinping in 2013. It is scheduled for completion by 2049, when the Communist Chinese state marks its centenary. The focus of the BRI is connectivity, with Chinese capital being deployed to construct or acquire the infrastructure needed to project Chinese economic

(and strategic) interests. The US has already announced its intention to counter the BRI through its Indo-Pacific strategy on infrastructure development, for which it has allocated just US \$113 million.

Greater Eurasia: Russia has also increased its efforts to create strategic space, in which it can continue to exert influence. The concept of “Greater Eurasia” was unveiled by President Putin at the 2016 St. Petersburg International Economic Forum. Using the building block of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the Russian President has called for a “more extensive Eurasian partnership involving the EAEU and countries with which we already have close partnership – China, India, Pakistan and Iran – and certainly our CIS partners, and other interested countries and associations.”³⁷

Although the Greater Eurasia strategic framework has not been accompanied by a Russian diplomatic initiative like that of the US on the Indo-Pacific and of China on BRI, it represents an option for Russia to assert its influence and relevance to counter the US and China.³⁸

Conclusion

This brief overview of the current strategic dynamic between the US, Russia and China substantiates the perception that international relations are being propelled by competing and assertive national sovereignties. The emergence of a similar phenomenon within the EU resulted in the United Kingdom’s June 2016 “Brexit”³⁹ referendum to leave the EU.

However, trends to assert sovereignty over international cooperation by the four permanent members of the UNSC (China, the Russian Federation, the UK and the US) have already provoked a counter-response. This response was first articulated by Germany at the UN General Assembly in 2017. Rejecting the worldview that saw the globe as a battleground in which everyone fought against everyone else to assert their national interests, Germany said that in “international cooperation, no-one loses sovereignty. Rather we all gain new sovereignty which we could no longer have as nation-states on our own in today’s world.”⁴⁰

The reiteration that effective multilateralism should prevail over assertive sovereignty was reiterated by Germany with France jointly in August 2018, when they asked the US to return to the multilateral framework, stating “Today’s complex international challenges require a multilateral response based on a shared understanding and common values.”⁴¹ The strategic battle has been joined. This challenge provides an opportunity for emerging global powers like India to assert their vision of international relations in the 21st Century.

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Geopolitical Developments in the Indo-Pacific Region

Shri Sanjay Singh, IFS (Retd)[®]

A decade back Asia-Pacific and South Asia defined two separate

regions. The growth of India and its relevance to Asia-Pacific was perhaps first recognised by the Japanese Prime Minister Abe when speaking at the Indian Parliament in August 2007. He said, *“My friends, where exactly do we now stand historically and geographically? To answer this question, I would like to quote here the title of a book authored by the Mughal Prince Dara Shikoh in 1655. We are now at a point at which the Confluence of the Two Seas is coming into being. The Pacific and the Indian Oceans are now bringing about a dynamic coupling as seas of freedom and of prosperity. A “broader Asia” that broke away geographical boundaries is now beginning to take on a distinct form. Our two countries have the ability and the responsibility to ensure that it broadens yet further and to nurture and enrich these seas to become seas of clearest transparency.”*

India has always had through centuries a broad organic linkage with East Asia, be it through trade or through the exchange of ideas and especially through Buddhism. The new confluence today is being powered by the forces of Globalisation, which accelerated growth through both increased trade, connectivity and regional interaction and led to a geographic contraction and the creation of a composite Indo-Pacific Region. This is generally understood to include South Asia, East Asia, Australasia and South East Asia with Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) being both, its physical as well as institutional fulcrum. But as the Indian growth story continues, the Indo-Pacific may well come to mean as being from the shores of Africa to that of the Americas as defined by the Indian Prime

Minister Modi at the Shangri-La Conference in Singapore on 01 Jun 2018 with India being another fulcrum.

The Indo-Pacific Region, with over 3.5 billion people and a combined GDP today of over USD 20 trillion, has been over the past half a century the fastest growing region in the world, partly as a consequence of globalisation. This has led to a steady shift of the global economic and political centre of gravity towards the region. This process has been aided by foreign investment as well as transfer of know-how and technology, creation of regional and global value chains and access to markets in the developed world.

Japan was the first to take off, followed by the Asian tigers South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Malaysia. China and other ASEAN countries followed and finally India and South Asia became part of the growth story. The Indo-Pacific today contains six of the world's largest economies and members of the G-20 – China, Japan, India, South Korea, Australia and Indonesia. As Asia takes centre stage, the Asian way of doing things comes more into focus and its attendant effect on behaviour around the world.

China is today the largest economy in the region. It leveraged geopolitical conditions resulting from East-West rivalry to aid its own exponential growth. It is today the largest investment and trading partner of nearly all the Indo-Pacific economies and an important member of regional and global value chains. Given the enormous investment it is making in developing science and technology, it will soon become a global technological hub. Chinese actions have increasing effect on regional economies and even afar given the enormous amount of capital that China employs, the size of its market and the goods and services it provides.

While economic partnership with China is advantageous for its partners, at least in the short term, its growing military capabilities and reach constrain the strategic space of other regional countries and increase their threat perceptions. China clearly desires to change the status quo and wants to fashion the rules and norms to its advantage. Its discussions with ASEAN countries on the code of conduct in the South China Sea and its

island building and fortification activities there are indicative of this. Similarly, its Belt and Road initiative, through which it is strengthening linkages with its periphery and its major trading partners, its setting up of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) have the same purpose.

After the Second World War, it was largely the US and its Western Allies that put in place the rules governing the relations between states, of conduct in global commons, trade and finance. Asia has been by and large a beneficiary of the stability this order provided, even though these norms and rules were put in place to protect the interests of those making the rules especially in the area of trade, services and finance.

Today, as a consequence of their own faster economic growth, multiple centres of power are emerging around the world and are challenging the existing geopolitical order, China being the most important, given its growing economic and military capabilities. This is leading to increasing competition around the world and in the Indo-Pacific for rule setting and creation of new norms and the consequent re-ordering of global economic and security architecture. This will challenge US hegemony. The Trump-Kim meeting and developments in the Korean peninsula are perhaps a manifestation of this and also indicative of reordering of the US priorities in the region.

As the control of global institutions and governance increasingly slips out of the US hands there seems to be a backlash against globalisation and greater recourse to nationalism and unilateral behaviour. Brexit and the election of President Trump are indicators of this trend.

President Trump has signalled an “end of the west” as it stands by questioning its ideological and geo-political relevance both in the economic and security domains. He is also making it clear that America does not want to sustain Pax Americana. US is not willing to pay the price for it in terms of troops or financial commitments as it did previously. His arrangement with North Korea indicates that his priority is American security. Importantly, he is putting America first, and rolling back on post-Cold War

globalisation and has initiated a trade war with the rest of the world.

As the US withdraws, a rising China is attempting to fill the breach. China's dreams are that it aspires to be a prosperous society by 2021, the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and a developed country by 2049 a century after the establishment of the People's Republic.

Then there is a more assertive Russia under President Putin developing a new relationship with China and increasing its presence in the region. As technology makes the oil and gas resources of Siberia more accessible as well as opens the Arctic route more and more, the logic of geography will accelerate this process.

Japan has amended its constitution under Prime Minister Abe, allowing its forces to act abroad under certain conditions. It has begun testing its own defence export potential starting with coastguard vessels and amphibious aircraft. Its Navy now participates in the Malabar exercises along with the US and Indian Navies. It must have drawn its own lessons from the Trump-Kim summit and it will not be surprising if it focusses more on enhancing its own defence capabilities. Regional developments underline for it the logic of strengthening ties with India.

The rapid growth in the Indo-Pacific has not been even. Some countries started growing faster earlier than others leading to a redistribution of comprehensive national power. There is now an increasing competition between Asian powers especially for resources and markets. China whose growth has been more rapid in the last three decades is perceived as trying to dominate the region, especially its economic space. The new China centred connectivity, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a unilateral initiative is an important component of this effort. It is a quest for domination which is naturally being challenged by other regional powers who see a strategic threat to their own interests and wish to safeguard them and preserve their own strategic economic space. This is especially true of the members of the 'Quad', and within the 'Quad', of India.

Economic growth in the region has been accompanied by rising defence expenditures and acquisition of arms. China today has the largest at around USD170 billion; Japan has considerably increased its own to around USD 60 billion; India's is around USD 50 billion. US's remains much larger at around USD 750 billion. The increasing Chinese defence spending coupled with uncertainty over Chinese behaviour has its effect on peace and stability. There is increasing stress on regional fault-lines, boundary tensions, such as between China-India, China-Vietnam, China-Japan in the East China Sea and China-US/Taiwan as well as disputes in the South China Sea. The activities of North Korea continue to be worrisome. Regional differences and disputes could have deleterious effects on sea lanes of communication (SLOCs) and consequently on trade and maritime security.

The present situation is that the US continues to maintain the largest security presence in the region. However, its behaviour has been somewhat erratic of late and transactional. Its focus on 'making America great again', could impinge on the interests of regional countries.

The US and China strategic competition in the region is putting pressure on the order, which obtained in the region for the last three decades. This order, based to a large extent on the US being the only hegemon present, is coming under increasing stress from the rise of China, its growing economic, military and maritime power. There will consequently be a reordering of the Asian economic and security architecture. Chinese President Xi Jinping has suggested a 'new model of Great Power relations' with the US, saying 'both countries must accommodate each other's core interests, avoid strategic miscalculations and properly manage differences'. The developments in the Korean peninsula are perhaps a manifestation of this and of the reordering of the US presence in the region. But just a bilateral US-China accommodation even if it happens will not meet the requirements of the other regional powers.

There is consequentially a requirement for the creation of fora and institutions to help bridge differences and create an architecture which will be inclusive and promote regional peace and stability and economic prosperity. It would be desirable not to

follow traditional balance of power through alliances but to harness countries together for the creation of an open, inclusive and rule-based structure in the region.

The structures and processes created by ASEAN could be supported and built upon as they provide the basis for achieving this objective. ASEAN today has become the nucleus for the confidence building economic and security structures and institutions that are emerging in the region such as the East Asian Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting plus (ADMM+) and in the negotiations for the creation of a region wide free economic space – Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

Such cooperation would also better address the slew of non-traditional threats, narcotics, terrorism, pandemics, natural disasters, etc. which afflict the region, and provide security to SLOCs crisscrossing the ocean and in protecting global commons from piracy. It is through these SLOCs that trade, the life-blood of the region, flows and through which China, Japan, South Korea and India import over 70 per cent of their oil and gas requirements and around 80 per cent of that from the Gulf.

India, which has a strategic partnership with ASEAN accepts ASEAN centrality in the evolving economic and political architecture of the region. India has declared that it will cooperate in building open, inclusive, rule-based structures that safeguard peace and security, respect international law, United Nations Conventions on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), freedom of passage in high seas and global commons. Sitting atop the Indian Ocean with a modernising Navy, India by itself and through organisations like Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) seeks to create a collective community to deal with contemporary challenges and promote cooperation.

Speaking at the Shangri-La Conference in Singapore on 01 Jun 2018 this year, Prime Minister Modi said *“India’s own engagement in the Indo-Pacific Region – from the shores of Africa to that of the Americas - will be inclusive.we will promote a democratic and rules-based international order, in which all*

nations, small and large, thrive as equal and sovereign.....we will work with others to keep our seas, space and airways free and open; our nations secure from terrorism; and our cyber space free from disruption and conflict. We will keep our economy open and our engagement transparent. We will share our resources, markets and prosperity with our friends and partners. We will seek a sustainable future for our planet”.

India has made special efforts to reach out to the countries of the region through its “Act East” policy and especially to the US, Japan, Australia and its ASEAN neighbours. In this context, note should be taken of the India-US Joint Statement as well as the US-India Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region issued during President Obama’s visit to India which envisaged India and the US building on their partnership to support sustainable and inclusive development in the region, the subsequent US-India joint statements and the recent renaming of the US Pacific Command as the Indo-Pacific Command.

Nevertheless in keeping with its multi-vectored foreign policy and its efforts for building a collective community based on consensus, India has also reached out to China. The decisions arrived at by the leaders at the India-China Informal Summit at Wuhan in April 2018, are equally important and were reported as being that the two leaders “believe that the simultaneous emergence of India and China as two large economies and major powers with strategic and decisional autonomy has implications of regional and global significance; peaceful, stable and balanced relations between India and China will be a positive factor; and, (they believe) in the importance of building an open, multipolar, pluralist and participatory global economic order which will enable all countries to pursue their development and contribute to the elimination of poverty and inequality in all regions of the world.

The region looks toward peaceful rise of China and this will require it to respect the sentiments it expressed at Wuhan. This will also require India, US, and other major powers in the region to do likewise. This course of action will best satisfy the aspirations of the people of the region. The need of the hour is for all to join

hands to create an Asia with large and small nations as cooperative partners.

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22nd Colonel Pyara Lal Memorial Lecture

Role of Military Diplomacy in India's Foreign Policy*

Shri Kanwal Sibal, IFS (Retd)[®]

I am deeply honoured to be invited to deliver the 22nd Colonel

Pyara Lal Memorial Lecture. The topic chosen for the lecture is of considerable current interest, which is why I value the opportunity given to me to share my thoughts on the subject. I would like to clear some conceptual points, have a broad look at how some major powers and some in our neighbourhood use the military arm of their diplomacy to further their national interest, the reason why there is debate in India about our insufficient use of the military instrument in our foreign policy, the limitations we have in this regard, the evolution of our attitude towards a military role in our diplomacy and, finally, how the overall picture is much more nuanced than what may be commonly believed.

The concept of “military diplomacy” might suggest that it can be distinguished from “civilian diplomacy”, and might have an autonomous space in the conduct of India's foreign policy. “Military diplomacy” might also imply that in conducting relations between states in their many dimensions, which is the core function of diplomacy, the military has a role that goes beyond security and defence of the country against external threats and spills into avoidance of conflict and promotion of peace, building sustainable cooperative relationships and trust, perception management, changing mind-sets, clarifying elements of our foreign policy to interlocutors and generally improving understandings with those they interact with externally. “Military diplomacy” also assumes that the three Services, the Army, Navy and Air Force, have a coordinated view of their diplomatic role and mechanisms exist to produce a shared and coherent perspective. For all these reasons, it might be conceptually more appropriate to speak of the role of the Armed Forces in India's foreign policy, the

use of the military arm to make our diplomacy more effective and how Indian diplomacy can better integrate our military assets into policy making, rather than “military diplomacy” as such.

The military is, in actual fact, a powerful instrument of advancing a country’s foreign policy interests. The international system is still based on power politics and rapport of force despite the rhetoric of a values-based and rules-based international order, with the strong dominating the weak and largely having their say even as the international community has evolved norms and established institutions to control and temper the arbitrary exercise of power, albeit with limited success. Even when actual military power is not used, the possession of a compelling military capacity gives a country great advantage as others will seek to accommodate its demands, adjust their own policies accordingly and avoid a frontal challenge as much as possible when interests clash. The international stature and role of a country in the international system has a correlation therefore, for better or worse, with its military strength, though economic muscle, technological capabilities, human resources and such non-military attributes are relevant factors too.

As a general proposition it can be said that the military strength of a country bolsters its diplomatic posture. The US, as the strongest military power in the world, with a defence budget that is larger than that of the combined budgets of the next seven countries, has the capacity to intervene across continents. The US provides the most illuminating example of use of its military capacities as a powerful instrument of its foreign policy. This it has done through alliance systems such as NATO through which it dominates Europe and alliances with individual countries which gives it, as the stronger partner, considerable influence over their foreign policies. Through arms sales and military aid, training of foreign military officers, joint exercises, military to military contacts, exchange of top-level visits, periodic publication of strategic and defence reviews, reports prepared by Pentagon-related think tanks, the US gives large space to the military in its external relations. This gets strength from institutionalised involvement of its Armed Forces in foreign policy decision making. Its National Security Advisers, Secretaries of State and Defence, Homeland Security and CIA Chiefs, and even regional diplomatic envoys and

so on have often been military officers, and this is not seen as anomalous in an established democracy.

Russia too relies on its military assets to expand the room for its diplomacy despite its fall from super power status. The massive military exercise it has just held in the Vladivostok area with large Chinese participation, military exercises within the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) format, its military outreach to Pakistan that has sent uncomfortable signals to us, the establishment of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) to maintain its influence in some of the erstwhile constituent states of the Soviet Union, the resumption of long distance military flights close to the US coast, as well as naval exercises along with China in sensitive areas like the Baltic and Mediterranean Seas and the Sea of Japan, the unveiling of highly advanced weaponry by President Putin himself, are all instances of sending powerful political and diplomatic messages abroad.

China, with its growing military strength, is broadening its diplomatic foot-print across the globe, the demonstration of its capacity to sustain its naval forces far away from its shores, the appearance of its submarines in the Indian Ocean and especially in Colombo Port, its increasing arms exports, participation in UN peacekeeping operations, financial contribution to Organisation of African Unity (OAU's), peace keeping operations in Africa, arms supplies to our neighbours, especially Pakistan, the close ties between its armed forces and the Pakistani military, military exercises with Nepal (which is a matter of great sensitivity for us), the manner in which it has conducted itself militarily in the South China Sea with major diplomatic gains, are all examples of an active use of the military instrument in advancing foreign policy goals.

Pakistan too has been adept at advancing its diplomatic goals through its Armed Forces, be it in building strong ties with the Pentagon, sending large number of officers for training in US institutions, providing troops for protection of some Gulf monarchies and now its former Army Chief Raheel Sharif heading the Islamic anti-terror task force set up by Saudi Arabia, and its military underwriting the establishment of an all-weather friendship

with China. This has been made possible, of course, by the Pakistan Army's broad control of the country's foreign policy, which is not the case with proper democracies or even states like Russia and China.

All these instances are relevant for understanding and expatiating on the subject of the role of the Indian military in the country's foreign policy. India has one of the largest armies in the world and well equipped, even if largely with arms either imported or manufactured under license. It has a credible nuclear deterrence, one that will become even more so with the further development of its sea-launched nuclear capability. Its missile capability is well-established. India possesses the most powerful Navy amongst the Indian Ocean littoral states. In Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) activities the Indian Navy distinguished itself at the time of the devastating Tsunami in 2004. Our Army is ably defending the country's northern and western borders. In 1971 India broke up Pakistan into two. More recently, it stood up to the Chinese at Doklam. In the earlier instances of Depsang and Chumar, military firmness on the ground helped in diplomatic efforts to avoid a clash.

The debate in India whether we use what we loosely call "military diplomacy" sufficiently as an instrument to advance our foreign policy interests has been longstanding. Our military circles feel strongly that our system has not yet evolved enough to capitalise in a coordinated manner on the country's military arm to further our external objectives. These objectives, it is argued, could be better achieved if we gave a greater role to our military in the formulation and implementation of our foreign policy. The grievance is that we continue to rely primarily on conventional approaches to diplomacy to deal with foreign powers. If we have today clear great power ambitions, not necessarily modelled on those of the West of seeking to dominate others but more in terms of establishing a position for ourselves at the international level that is commensurate with our geographic, demographic and economic size, our civilisational and cultural heritage, our human resources and our scientific, technological and military strengths, reliance primarily on soft power and chariness about projecting our military strength would not enable us, it is argued, to realise

these aspirations in full. A more visible participation of our Armed Forces in securing our position on the international stage would seem necessary.

Behind this debate lies a strong sentiment in our Armed Forces that their role in the formulation of our security policies is limited. This is at the root of the growing malaise that is affecting civil-military relations in India, especially at the bureaucratic level. The present situation between the Service Headquarters and the Ministry of Defence is considered functionally unsatisfactory. That Service Chiefs have limited access to the political leadership is considered a functional handicap. On top of that, the inadequate coordination between the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of External Affairs is widely commented upon as a systemic deficiency.

There is some truth in these frequently made judgments. Our international posture for many years has been essentially non-military in character even if we have been embroiled in several armed conflicts with our neighbours. We have been since long active internationally in supporting disarmament, calling for peaceful resolution of disputes, opposing the use of force in international relations as well as military alliances, added to which has been our reluctance to project power and follow interventionist policies (with an exception or two), not to mention our philosophical commitment to non-violence rooted in our heritage and embodied by Mahatma Gandhi in modern times. We won our independence through a non-violent struggle against an imperial power, and this has also contributed to a lack of appreciation of the role of the Armed Forces in achieving national political objectives. Notwithstanding this, the actual position with regard to giving space to our military in our external relations is more nuanced.

We may not have used the military arm of our diplomacy sufficiently, but we have used it. The military arm that we speak of has many dimensions. Besides exchange of visits at the level of Defence Ministers and Service Chiefs, appointments of Military Attaches abroad who work in a diplomatic environment, involvement of retired military officers in Track 2 and Track 1.5

discussions, visits abroad by National Defence College teams, seminars organised by defence-linked think tanks such as the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) and United Service Institution of India (USI) and so on, the military arm of diplomacy includes defence alliances, military bases, arms exports, arms aid, licensed arms production, co-development and co-production of equipment, joint exercises on land, air and sea, patrolling in the air and sea, maritime cooperation, military training, and so on. Such links bring countries together strategically.

In India's case, the content of our military outreach abroad cannot be as wide-ranging as those of the principal big powers given our relatively limited military capacities and our general political outlook. We are traditionally against military alliances and establishment of military bases on our territory or seeking them abroad, though some evolution of thinking with regard to a more active maritime policy and access to ports for our Navy has taken place. We have been very restrictive in giving arms aid as a matter of policy, partly because our means are limited and partly because of reluctance to pursue this approach to relation-building, but here too policy changes are taking place. Political factors have been an inhibiting factor in the past, especially in our neighbourhood, where, in some cases, we did not want to be seen to be arming the government in a civil war situation. This policy has cost us politically in some countries as it opened the doors to China and Pakistan to move in as defence equipment suppliers and forge ties with local defence forces at the cost of Indian influence. We have given arms assistance, non-lethal or essentially defensive, to some of our neighbours, but in a limited way. Sri Lanka has been a recipient. With Nepal, our military diplomacy has a special dimension, with Gurkha soldiers from Nepal serving in the Indian Army and retired soldiers receiving pensions delivered locally in Nepal that help sustain the livelihood of significant numbers, which establishes unique bonds and earns goodwill, though in diplomatic terms this has not yielded adequate returns, with Nepal continuing to pursue unfriendly and insensitive policies towards India and deliberately using the China card against us. We have used the military dimension of our relations with Nepal at the ceremonial level by making the Nepalese Army Chief an Honorary General of the Indian Army and vice-versa and establishing a convention that

the first visit abroad by the Nepalese Army Chief is to India, though this practice has been breached in the past. Beyond this, we have not succeeded in generating resistance within Nepal to its often provocative outreach to China.

As has been brought out already, leveraging our military to achieve foreign policy objectives has not been a blank space. We have provided military equipment to Myanmar in the past and now to Afghanistan, but after considerable hesitation and delay. The suppression of democracy by the military junta in Myanmar distanced us from them till this policy became counterproductive in security terms because of the massive inroads China was able to make into that internationally isolated country. The supply of arms to Myanmar was intended to build bridges with the military and government and retrieve lost ground to some extent. The overall situation has evolved with the restoration of democracy in Myanmar. To manage our troubled northeast, military to military ties between India and Myanmar are most important and we have seen some cross-border operations in the area that required Myanmar's cooperation and understanding. In Afghanistan's case, US disapproval of arms supply in deference to Pakistani sensitivities held us back in the past, but our strategic partnership agreement with Afghanistan provides for India's cooperation in building the combat capability of the Afghan Armed Forces. We have supplied some helicopters but Afghanistan seeks more assistance. We are training Afghans in our military institutions but have not taken any decisive step to boost supplies of military equipment to Afghanistan. The reality is that India is in no position to assume the responsibility of building the combat capability of the Afghan National Security Forces except in a very limited way. Where the Americans have failed India cannot succeed.

Unlike in the past, we are now willing to look at opportunities to export arms as a means of strengthening our diplomatic footprint abroad. We have in the recent past exported light helicopters to Nepal and Namibia and sonars to Myanmar. In December 2014 we supplied the 1300-ton offshore patrol vessel (OPV) *Barracuda* to Mauritius. Our Goa Shipyard Limited is currently building two OPVs for the Sri Lankan Navy, as well as eleven fast attack craft and two fast patrol vessels for Mauritius.

We are looking to export interceptor craft, corvettes, and frigates. We are keen to export the Akash surface-to-air missile (SAM) system to countries in Asia and Africa. We are looking at countries like Vietnam, Bangladesh, Philippines and Oman to export defence material such as bridging equipment, missiles, warships, OPVs and Self Propelled Artillery Guns. We have gone as far as Latin America, supplying armoured vehicles to Guyana, 4x4 trucks to Honduras, Argentina, Uruguay and Belize, two *Dhruv* helicopters to Peru, seven *Dhruv* helicopters to Ecuador and three *Chetak* helicopters to Suriname. Unfortunately, the sales of *Dhruv* helicopters to Ecuador and *Chetaks* to Suriname have become a source of controversy. A range of spares, mechanical components, and electronic assemblies are also being supplied to global majors as a result of offset agreements. In 2016, Indian defence equipment exports stood at INR 2060 crore, which is as yet a very modest figure. We have had problems of product support for our defence supplies from major arms producing countries such as Russia. We have ourselves to make sure that we can provide the requisite product support for the equipment we sell, as otherwise we will compromise our prospects for exports in the future.

As another instance of activism on the military front in our diplomacy, we have in the past helped set up military academies and provided military training to many countries in Africa. A large number of African military officers have been trained over the years in our military institutions. We have military to military cooperation with about 18 African countries. We could increase military to military engagement, especially in the training area, with countries like South Africa, Nigeria, Angola, Ghana, Kenya, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Lesotho through institutionalised defence cooperation mechanisms. Actually, our military training teams are deployed in Botswana, Zambia, Lesotho and Seychelles, and were deployed earlier in Nigeria and Tanzania. We could and should become more proactive in this area both with regional groups and individual countries, as this would help consolidate our ties with Africa, especially when China has stepped up its military engagement with African countries. We could help build capacity of the African Union forces especially in the fields of logistics and communication and information systems.

Combined exercises with a focus on peacekeeping would be important. In the area of maritime security, a system of regional cooperation with the Indian Ocean littoral countries to combat threats emanating from non-state actors, particularly those related to terrorism and piracy could be explored. We are one of the largest contributors to peacekeeping in Africa, with sizeable contingents currently in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Southern Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea, which gives us the credentials to scale-up our military engagement with the continent.

A major factor in India's inability to export arms in any significant way is a very weak indigenous defence manufacturing base, and the limited production capacity that essentially caters to the needs of our own Armed Forces. Former Defence Minister Manoj Parrikar had announced that India was considering defence exports by offering lines of credit so that recipient countries could depend on India for their defence and this policy has been reiterated by the present Defence Minister. In June 2018, we offered a second line of credit of US \$100 million to Seychelles for defence infrastructure and maritime security cooperation. In September 2016 we announced a new Defence Line of Credit of US \$500 million for Vietnam, with L&T set to supply 10 fast interceptor craft. India has reportedly offered a US \$500 line of credit to Bangladesh for purchase of defence equipment from India.

We have used training as part of our military outreach quite well. We have trained, and are training, a large number of Afghan officers. Foreign military officers from several countries attend and participate in our higher level defence courses, especially in the National Defence College. At least 38 countries are sending their defence personnel for training in India. More slots can and should be provided. As part of our Act East policy and Singapore's consistent support for a larger Indian role in Southeast Asia, India allowed for the first time in October 2007 a foreign country to use Indian airspace for training as part of an agreement on joint military training between the IAF and the Singapore Air Force. In July 2018 India and Singapore resolved to boost overall defence cooperation, with a pact on naval cooperation providing for increased engagement in the maritime security sphere, joint

exercises, temporary deployments from each other's naval facilities and logistics support. The 25th anniversary of the India-Singapore maritime bilateral exercise will be commemorated next year. In May 2018 Indonesia and India have agreed to boost defence and maritime cooperation, including regular bilateral naval exercises, with plans to develop a strategic Indonesian naval port in the Indian Ocean at Sabang. If and when this materialises, the port would, in principle, grant the Indian Navy a well-positioned base for supporting operations in the eastern Indian Ocean and the Malacca Strait.

In the area of joint military exercises the military arm of our diplomacy has been particularly active. We do naval, land and air exercises with a whole host of countries. On the naval side, the annual bilateral Malabar exercise with the US which began in 1992, with three such exercises held before 1998 when they were suspended by the US after our nuclear tests. This exercise, which includes activities ranging from fighter combat operations from aircraft carriers to Maritime Interdiction Operations Exercises, resumed in 2002, and has been held regularly since, with ad-hoc participation of Japan, Australia and Singapore in 2007 when the exercise was held outside the Indian Ocean for the first time off Okinawa. The declared purpose of this exercise is to enhance interoperability for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions, as well as issues of maritime security and piracy. In 2015 Japan was included as a permanent participant in the exercise, making it trilateral. Japan's inclusion is a significant development with geopolitical connotations. Australia's bid to join the exercise and make it quadrilateral has not met with success so far despite US support because of India's reservations. We participate in the biennial Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC), the world's largest international maritime warfare exercise, hosted by the US Navy.

Other than military exercises, we have begun deepening our overall defence ties with the US with the earlier signing of the logistics agreement (LEMOA) and most recently the interoperability agreement (COMCASA). Our military has been closely involved in concluding both these agreements which signal a deepening of the India-US strategic partnership with a geo-

political message to our two principal adversaries- China and Pakistan. India is now looking at the third foundational agreement- BECA- for which we have asked the US to propose a text. The Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Regions signed with the Obama administration in 2015 implies much closer cooperation between the Indian and US naval forces in what is now termed as the Indo-Pacific. At the recent 2+2 dialogue between the Indian and US Foreign and Defence Ministers a new tri-service exercise at sea has been agreed to. Exchanges between the Indian Navy and the US Naval Forces Central Command will be instituted to facilitate coordination in the western Indian Ocean, which is outside the jurisdiction of the US Indo-Pacific Command at Hawaii. India will also post a liaison officer at CENTCOM.

India also conducts naval exercise with other countries. We are holding the joint INDRA bi-annual military exercise with Russia since 2003. With France we hold the annual Varuna naval exercise since 2001, either in the Indian Ocean or the Mediterranean sea for better coordination. Maritime cooperation with France has acquired a new dimension with an agreement on a Joint Strategic Vision for the Indian Ocean Region as well as a logistics agreement. Detailed understandings have been reached with France on specific areas of cooperation in the domain of maritime security.

We also do naval exercises with the British Royal Navy, the Singapore Navy and those of Sri Lanka, Australia, Vietnam, Philippines, New Zealand and South Korea, as well as a joint exercise of Coast Guards with Japan. We did an exercise with the Brazil and South African Navies in 2008. We also conducted a PASSEX exercise with the Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy in 2003 and 2007 and naval drills off Shanghai in 2012. The Indian Navy has been active in the Gulf region in the understanding that our maritime security interests in the Indian Ocean extend from the Straits of Hormuz to the Malacca Straits. In February this year, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between India and Muscat on the provision of facilities for the visit of Indian military vessels to Duqm Port covering services and the use of the dry-dock for maintenance. The maiden

India-UAE naval exercise was held in March this year. The last two are significant milestones in developing better defence understandings with key Gulf countries. The UAE is willing to look at investments in our defence sector.

Since 1995, the Indian Navy conducts the biennial Milan exercise with navies of the Indian Ocean region in the area of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The 10th edition of the exercise was held in March this year in the Andaman Sea with participation from India, Australia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Myanmar, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Myanmar, New Zealand, Philippines, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Thailand. India launched the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) in 2008 with a view to providing a forum for all the littoral nations of the Indian Ocean to co-operate on mutually agreed areas for better security in the region. As part of naval diplomacy, Indian naval ships have made port calls in a host of countries. The first Atlantic Ocean deployment of the Indian Navy occurred in 2009 during which the Indian fleet conducted exercises with the French, German, Russian and British Navies.

The Indian Air Force too is active in participation in joint exercises with Russia, UK and France, not to mention the US. India has participated in Exercise Red Flag, the advanced aerial combat exercise hosted by the US Air Force at Nevada. With the US we have the Cope India exercises conducted in Indian air space. The first such exercise was conducted at Gwalior in 2004 and was repeated in 2005, 2006, and 2009, and abandoned after that. The exercise was revived in 2017.

With the US we hold army exercises in India since 2005, with one such exercise held in the US. We do such exercises with France, Sri Lanka and Nepal. We have done exercises with Mongolia, and Seychelles. We do the Hand-Hand joint military training exercise with China, with the fifth such exercise conducted over 12 days in October 2015 in Yunnan, with emphasis on joint handling of counter terrorism and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief. During the Chinese Defence Minister's visit to India in August this year it was decided to expand the

“engagement between their armed forces relating to training, joint exercises and other professional interactions”. A seven-day Exercise Force Eighteen, involving 400 personnel from 18 ASEAN Plus countries, including Japan, China, South Korea and the US, took place in March this year in India with a focus on humanitarian action and peacekeeping operations. Most recently we have taken the lead to organise The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) military exercise in India this month with a view to giving an additional dimension to the grouping.

Joint exercises serve the diplomatic purpose of confidence-building, improved operational skills, exposure to best practices, demonstration of capability and state of readiness of the armed forces, power projection, interoperability with the forces of friendly countries and, not the least, political signalling.

Our attitude towards establishing base facilities abroad for access and use has evolved. We had some years ago negotiated with Tajikistan to develop the Aini base. Apart from the logistics agreement that we have signed with US and France and agreements on access to ports signed with Oman and Singapore, we had negotiated an agreement with Seychelles to develop the Assumption Island for providing maritime security to the archipelago, but the project has got derailed because of political opposition to it in the Seychelles Parliament. In Mauritius, India will improve the sea and air transportation facilities in Agalega Island. India has an agreement with Maldives in the area of maritime awareness and security, though it has run into trouble because of the hostile policies of the Yameen Government towards India.

To promote more synergy between our defence and foreign policies towards countries considered important we have instituted 2+2 dialogues. These are at Foreign and Defence Secretaries level with Japan and Australia, but with the US the dialogue is at the level of Defence and Foreign Ministers, with the first such dialogue being held earlier this month. This format necessitates closer consultation and coordination between the MoD and MEA in India in dealing with key external relationships and brings in a

stronger military dimension to the country's foreign policy. But 2+2 dialogues by themselves will not lead to optimal levels of coordination between our foreign and defence policies to best pursue our national interests. Regular institutionalised coordination mechanisms are required, and we are far from establishing it yet.

To conclude, I would say that it will be more appropriate to speak of the military component of India's foreign policy rather than military diplomacy as such. The security challenges that India faces require a much closer association of our military in assessing them and devising a comprehensive strategy to deal with them. Progress has been made in this regard by positioning military officers in the National Security Council Secretariat. Some military officers have been appointed to positions in the Ministry of External Affairs. The Ministry of Defence should have more officers in position from the MEA for better synergy between the two Ministries. Even if optimal levels have not been reached, the role of the Indian military in India's foreign policy has expanded. The change in the strategic outlook of India expressed in its Indian Ocean and Indo-Pacific strategy implies an inevitable expansion of the role of the Indian Navy in securing our strategic objectives. The freedom given to the Army to respond at will to Pakistan's cease-fire violations in J&K as well as the green light given to conduct surgical strikes across the LOC was intended to further our political objectives. The decision to stand up to China at Doklam militarily signified the use of the Armed Forces to deliver a strong diplomatic message. The Army is fully involved in managing the confidence building measures (CBMs) on the border with Tibet and developing more border management mechanisms to stabilise the LAC. On diplomacy related to access to bases, maritime security in the Indian Ocean, export of arms, military exercises and so on, our policies have evolved in a way that expands the room for our Armed Forces to contribute to the achievement of our foreign policy objectives.

*This is the text of 22nd Colonel Pyara Lal Memorial Lecture delivered by Shri Kanwal Sibal, IFS (Retd), former Foreign Secretary to the Government of India on 19 Sep 2018 at USI.

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Terrorism – the ‘Grey Zone’ of Chaos

Lieutenant General GS Katoch, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd)®

Introduction

The requirement of having some rules and laws under which war should be conducted emerged consequent to the Geneva Convention of 1864 which was basically about the “Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field”. It was only in the 1899 Hague Conference that codification of the laws of war on land, as the “Hague Conventions 1899” was undertaken. The wars post that convention used the rules that emerged, to interpret the “*Jus in Bello*” concept or the “Just way to wage war”. While these were infringed many times, however, the laws did rein in truant states and permitted trials of war criminals. In a short period of less than a century since the laws emerged, countries and organisations had learnt to circumvent the rules in the form of proxy wars and terrorism. In this milieu conflict is waged in a zone where the rules can be twisted and misinterpreted or waged in a manner that neither do they follow the law, nor (legally) do they infringe it. Conflict is no longer black or white, it is opaque, it is in the “Grey Zone”.

The Changing Shape of Conflict and Security

Between 1648 (when the Treaties of Westphalia were signed) and 1949,¹ written international law gradually brought in rules to wage war. These included restrictions upon persons who were not uniformed members of armies from taking part in wars.² If the people took up arms it was an insurrection. Those who did not wear uniforms and participated in war were treated as criminals (or terrorists) who could be killed without compunction. Conversely, those in uniform could expect quarter as per the laws of war. Only the State had the right to use organised violence. However, violent acts by non-state enemies are classic terrorist

actions. Here, the enemy does not wear uniforms, has no rigid organisation, operates within the population and does not adhere to the laws of war. Nowadays, more states in the world are fighting terrorists than ever before. These enemies can be religious zealots (ISIS, Al Qaeda, Al Shaabab, Boko Haram, etc.), separatists (various Pakistan sponsored groups in Kashmir, Chechens, Kurdish groups, Ukrainian groups etc.), revolutionaries (Naxalites, FARC, etc.) or just criminal gangs (Mexican, and South American drug cartels). The last two conventional wars – 1991 and 2003 wars in Iraq, were also not so ‘conventional’ as they were totally one-sided wars.³

Some describe conflict in the Grey Zone as “competitive interactions among and within states and non-state actors that fall between the traditional ‘war’ and ‘peace’ duality”.⁴ Conflict in this region is characterised by ambiguity about the nature of conflict, opacity about the parties involved and uncertainty about the relevant policy and legal frameworks within which the war should be fought. One example of the ambiguity of conflict in the Grey Zone is India and Pakistan who since their last major conventional war in 1971 have had a recognised international border where they are at peace and a Line of Control (LoC) which is not a demarcated border on which they are at war. This is the sort of paradoxical situation that exists in the Grey Zone, a situation which the Indian Army officially refers to as NWNP (No War No Peace), not quite war and not quite peace.

Another example is the “Little Green Men”⁵ in Ukraine. They were clearly part of a State army but denied being that. By circumventing this distinction, they could wage a proxy war enabling a secessionist non-state to have an army. The ISIS was another manifestation of conflict in the Grey Zone, a terrorist organization which unlike previous similar groups was also a proto-state. Grey Zone conflicts are not a new phenomenon. They have existed in the past in the form of various manifestations and our interpretations of it. Guerrilla war, Low Intensity Conflict (LIC), Irregular War, Unconventional War, Asymmetric War, 4GW, Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW), Unrestricted War and Hybrid War are all in various measures, in the Grey Zone. Presently, all of these forms can be identified by the overarching

term “terrorism”. Terrorism is not only used by non-state actors, it is also used by state actors, contrary to the accepted laws of war. Formal declarations of war are considered essential in traditional war as they make ‘the prosecution of war a shared responsibility of both the government and the [.....] people.’⁶ Terrorism in the Grey zone enables war without a formal war. If the spectrum of conflict ranges from peaceful interstate competition on the far left to nuclear war on the far right, Grey Zone [...] fall(s) left of center.⁷ A terrorist does not announce his presence by the traditional markers of armies or a uniform. He wages war in the guise of the population. He has injected chaos in the ordered environs of war regulated by the Rules of War.

Operating in Terrorism’s Grey Zone

Responses to wars in the Terrorism’s Grey Zone are increasingly being recognised as resting on political and police coordination and a coordinated interagency response. The military may not be the ideal instrument to fight terrorism, as terrorists take recourse to Grey Zone conflicts because they want to circumvent traditional military power. Yet military capabilities will remain an essential part of the response, because success for the proponent of Grey Zone War is based upon being superior to the police forces. Police forces, therefore, need to be made superior to the terrorists through backing by military power.

It is important that in this war some conventional military units must be organized, equipped and trained to conduct military operations at the lower end of the conflict spectrum. So far within the military the best force for that are the Special Forces which have high efficiency and a light footprint. In counter-terrorism operations in the Grey Zone, boots on the ground are also an essential component. You need numbers. Therefore, a larger force which combines the functions of the army and the police is required for this war. The French Gendarmerie and Italian Carabinieri exemplify this concept as they are military forces with police powers.

Other Factors

Nuclear Weapons. Nuclear weapons have made it nearly impossible for nuclear weapon armed states to fight with each other or for non-nuclear weapon states to dare to fight nuclear weapon armed states. If fighting is to take place, then it can only be with Grey Zone terrorist actions with its cloak of plausible deniability.

Private Security. The State has had a monopoly in providing security both through the army and police. As the requirement of security has increased; governments have been unable to provide all encompassing security. As a result, private security providers have stepped in, with the government getting involved only after a serious security situation occurs which is beyond the capability of the private security providers. Certain figures in respect of USA are illustrative of the growth of private security. In 1972 the ratio between US spending on armed forces and private security was 7:1; in 1999 it had declined to 5:1 and is still going down.⁸ Presently in some countries personnel engaged in private security have exceeded the numbers of the police or the military. According to a US Department of Justice study, 46 per cent of personnel providing private security services in USA were guards (2008 figures). In numbers that was more than a million personnel of whom 110,000 were armed⁹. In India the private security industry was expected to cross a worth of INR 40,000 crore in 2015¹⁰. This is approximately six billion US dollars. The private security guards of Hotel Taj were the first ones to encounter the terrorists during the 26/11 Mumbai attacks. Many security experts have opined that had the guards been trained and armed to face the situation, the story would have been much less tragic.

Police or Army?

Often terrorists are the nationals of the country that they are fighting against. Since they can effectively hide within the population, use of the military against them results in collateral damage. This makes it more suitable to use police forces against them, with “softer-hard-power”. However, in a world awash with automatic weapons (there are more than 100 million AK-47 rifles alone in the world),¹¹ police forces often find themselves

outgunned if asked to operate against terrorists. This has resulted in a militarization of the police all over the world. Most countries especially when afflicted by terrorist activities have seen the police becoming more akin to the army. Nowadays a common sight in urban areas is police in camouflage fatigues more suitable to blend with the background in tropical jungles than in an urban environment.

When a conflict is intra state, intelligence to differentiate the adversary from among the population should be excellent. Local/beat (state/provincial) police forces are to that extent more important than the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and State armed police forces as they can provide the best grass roots intelligence. They are the foundation on which the complete security structure in counter-terrorism in the Grey Zone must rest. The employment methodology of the CAPFs is based on being placed at the disposal of the local police in sub units. This facilitates their integration in the local police's chain of command, but it leaves CAPF commanders above the company level with no command responsibility.¹² This also means that the sub unit commanders have no authority and consequently no accountability. This is a serious shortcoming because organisations in the dynamic Grey Zone conflict situations are most effective when they are fully integrated with the same operational culture and have leaders who have the training and authority to take initiative and act upon fleeting opportunities.

The attack at Mumbai on 26/11 of 2008 showed glaring shortcomings in civil-military integration which is an imperative in Grey Zone conflict. The angst of this shortcoming is clearly visible in the writing of the noted columnist Vir Sanghvi in the introduction to a compilation of writings on 26/11 where he derides the lack of coordination and the confusion which prevailed regarding responsibilities in a Grey Zone situation.¹³ The role of the armed forces becomes ambiguous in the Grey Zone and hence accusations against their ineptitude surface during conflict situations. In the same introduction Vir Sanghvi writes 'armed forces chiefs [...] were responsible for so many of the screw-ups'.¹⁴ His views would be no different from most Indians who miss out that constitutional and governmental controls do not allow Service chiefs from taking initiative in a conflict situation like

26/11. In India's federal structure, Public Order a responsibility of the states which make up the Union of India. In counter-terrorist operations, the affected State (province) must ask for assistance which will need to be agreed to by the Union government. Or alternately, the Governor of the state can "with the consent of the Government of India, entrust either conditionally or unconditionally to that State Government or to its officer's functions in relation to any matter to which the executive power of the State extends"¹⁵. This was not done during 26/11.

Conclusion

Civil control over the armed forces is widely accepted as a key constitutional principle for a modern liberal democracy¹⁶. The same is the case in India. The military and police establishments are subject to constitutional and statutory limits on their powers. However, in the chaotic situation in the Grey Zone, the same civilian control becomes a stumbling block for speedy response in conflict situations. Writing about 26/11, Sanghvi also writes, "the NSG¹⁷ is the one force which emerged with credit from the crisis"¹⁸. Again, the common man is not expected to know that the two most potent and proactive units of the NSG which are its essence are the 51 and 52 Special Action Groups (SAGs). These are composed entirely of army personnel on deputation. In their operational chain of command only the Director General is a police officer. During the Mumbai attacks 51 SAG meant for counter terrorist operations formed the spearhead for the elimination of the terrorists. To that extent the NSG is a unique CAPF which has both militarised police and a constabularised military, wearing the same uniform. This may be a model for the nature of armed forces to operate in the Grey Zone. This article believes that Grey Zone counter-terrorist operations require either a militarised police or a constabularised military. The former is the better instrument for gaining actionable intelligence, while operating within the population. The latter is the better instrument for bringing in destructive firepower. As the world sees more of Grey Zone conflicts, it is inevitable that the size of the conventional army will decrease while at the same time the nature of their weapons will become more precise and more destructive. Conversely, the size of the police forces and private security

providers will increase. However, in this construct the army with its organisation which breeds ethos, discipline, unit cohesion, esprit de corps and élan will continue to remain the sword arm of the nation, the “Ultima Ratio Regis”— the ‘Kings Final answer’.

Endnotes

¹ The fourth Geneva convention was signed in 1949.

² Martin Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (The Free Press, New York, 1991) p. 193.

³ Combatant casualties First Gulf War: Coalition – Killed 292, wounded 776. Iraq Killed 20,000 to 30,000, wounded 75000+ . Second Gulf War: Coalition – Killed 196+, wounded 551. Iraq- Killed 13500 to 45,000, wounded- NK. All figures from Wikipedia.

⁴ *The Grey Zone*. White paper published by the US SOCOM, 15 Sep 2015.

⁵ *Little Green Men* is the stereotypical portrayal of extraterrestrials. In this context this is a colloquial expression used by the media while referring to masked unmarked soldiers in green army uniforms wielding Russian military weapons and equipment within Ukraine. Clearly, they appeared to be Russian military but it could not be legally proved.

⁶ Col Harry Summers, *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War*, (Ballantine Books, New York, 1982) p. 22.

⁷ David Barno, and Nora Bensahel, Fighting and Winning in the “Grey Zone”. 19 May 2015. *Fighting on the Rocks*. <http://archive.fo/nQ94Z> Accessed 21 Aug 2018.

⁸ Martin Van Creveld, *The Rise and Decline of the State*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999) p. 404.

⁹ Kevin Strom, Marcus Berzofsky, Bonnie Shook, Kelle Barrick, Crystal Daye, Nicole Horstmann and Susan Kinsey, *The Private Security Industry: A Review of the Definitions, Available Data Sources, and Paths Moving Forward*. Report Prepared for the US Department of Justice by RTI International, North Carolina, Dec 2010. Available at <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/bjs/grants/232781.pdf> . Accessed on 10 Aug 2018.

¹⁰ FICCI Report. *Private Security Industry in India*. Available at http://www.ficci.com/sector/91/Project_docs/PSi-profile.pdf. Accessed 12 Aug 2018.

¹¹ Phillip Killicoat, (April 2007). “Weaponomics: The Global Market for Assault Rifles”. (World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 4202, Post-Conflict Transitions Working Paper No. 10). Oxford University. p. 3. http://www.wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSCContentServer/WDSP/IB/2007/04/13/000016406_20070413145045/Rendered/PDF/wps4202.pdf. Accessed on 01 Aug 2018.

¹² Rostum.K Nannavatty, *Internal Armed Conflict in India*. (Pentagon Press, New Delhi, 2013).

¹³ Vir Sanghvi, 26/11 The Attack on Mumbai (*Penguin Books India New Delhi, 2009*), pp. v- xii.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. ix.

¹⁵ *Article 258A of the Constitution of India.*

¹⁶ Sudhir Krishnaswamy & Madhav Khosla, *Military Power and the Constitution*, Seminar. http://www.india-seminar.com/2010/611_sudhir&_madhav.htm, Accessed 12 Aug 2018.

¹⁷ The National Security Guards (NSG) is one of the CAPFs – others being CRPF, BSF, ITBP, SSB, RPF, CISF and the SPG.

¹⁸ Sanghvi, op sit, p.xii.

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Evolving Scenario in Afghanistan: Implications For India

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

Introduction

From the dawn of history Afghanistan has remained at the centre-stage of peace and conflict in the Indian subcontinent. The 'Old Silk Route' formed the crucible of trade, science, spirituality and cross-fertilisation of civilisations, connecting the Indian sub-continent-Central Asia-West Asia and China. On the flip side, many invasions; notably led by Alexander, Tamerlane, Ghauri, Ghaznavi, Babur, staged through Afghanistan into India thus redrawing the sociopolitical landscape of the region. Afghanistan was the fulcrum of the first Great Game of the 19th Century between the British India and the Russian empire. The two great powers realised the futility of subjugating Afghanistan and settled for creating it as a buffer state. The 2nd Great Game in the Eighties (1979-1989) between the US - Saudi Arabia - Pakistan alliance against the Soviet Union legitimised the use of Islamist Jihad as an instrument of state policy. Post the US exit, the Af - Pak region emerged as the epicentre of international terrorism. In the fall of eighties, Pakistan military establishment directed Afghan trained Jihadists to wage a proxy war in Kashmir. The 3rd Great Game began in the wake of 9/11 which saw the ouster of Taliban regime and onset of Democracy in Afghanistan, albeit in the middle of a virulent conflict unleashed by Pakistan sponsored Taliban and hosts of other militant groups, including Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP). Talibanistan of Afghanistan or spread of rabid Wahabi – Salafi ideology does not bode well for regional peace and stability.

Afghanistan is at the crossroads of its strategic destiny. Geostrategically, Afghanistan is a landlocked country with access to the outside world through the North Distribution Network to the North through Central Asia, Bolan and Khyber Passes to the

South in Pakistan and Chabahar – Zaranj – Delaram Axis or International North South Transit Corridor (INSTC) to the west in Iran. At the same time, it enjoys a distinction of being a strategic bridge for inter regional connectivity and energy corridors that, if successful can potentially alter the politico-economic landscape of the region, transforming it into a zone of co-prosperity. But if Afghanistan fails, it will become a major source of regional instability and dampen the prospects of smooth operationalisation of Belt and Road corridors, China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Lapis Lazali transport corridor, Persian Gulf Corridor, Ashgabat agreement, Afghanistan-Pakistan- Tajikistan Trade and Transit Agreement and Pan- energy grids such as Turkmenistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan–India (TAPI) pipeline and the Central Asia – South Asia (CASA) - 1000 power grid. The aforesaid trade and energy corridors are extremely important for India's access to Eurasia and to diversify sources of energy imports. India aspires to see transformation of conflict-ridden Afghanistan to a stable and democratic state under an Afghan owned and Afghan led peace process that is duly supported by the regional states and the international community. It would, therefore, be in order to examine the evolving scenario in Afghanistan, analyse its impact on India's strategic interests and dilate on India's strategic engagement with Afghanistan.

Evolving Scenario in Afghanistan

Decades of instability and violence have turned Afghanistan into a very fragile state ranking 9th lowest in fragility and at 169 in HDI out of 188 countries¹. According to the UNFPA, 63.7 per cent of the population is below 25 years with very high unemployment levels². The UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates at least two million Afghans are at risk of starvation³. The economy is in regression, with foreign aid contributing to 90 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP)⁴. Afghanistan's parliamentary and district council elections are scheduled on 20 October 2018 and the Presidential elections are scheduled in 2019. The National Unity Government is facing intense tension within its ranks as is seen from spate of resignations of ministers holding high portfolios.⁵ The political

stability has further deteriorated by the persistent factional politics by warlords.

Afghanistan ranks very high in the terrorism index (2 out of 163)⁶. Out of 98 globally recognised terrorist groups, about 20 such groups are operating in the Af-Pak region. They want to create a Caliphate based on Sharia or Nizam e Mustafa. Taliban have launched operation KHANDAQ to target major communication centres, government installations, foreign nationals and voter registration centres⁷. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) report claims that 13.8 per cent of Afghanistan's districts are under insurgent control or influence, whereas, Government controls 58.5 per cent⁸, the remainder being contested. ISKP is active in about 30 districts and it mostly indulges in sectarian killings.

Pakistan's complicity in cross border terrorism remains unabated. Pakistan based terrorist groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and Haqqani network were categorically named for regional instability at the 'Heart of Asia' conference in December 2016 and in the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) declaration on 04 Sep 2017^{9 10}. In the meanwhile, Pakistan and Afghanistan have renewed Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity (APAPPS) that seek non use and non violation of each others territory, avoid blame games and institutionalise system of joint working groups, joint check posts and exchange of liaison officers at the headquarters for coordination of efforts. Nonetheless, these initiatives have yet to render any tangible results on ground as is evident from Pakistan's direct involvement in recent Taliban attacks in Ghazni province. Taliban has spurned President Ashraf Ghani's ceasefire offers under the Kabul Peace Process. They do not recognise the Afghan constitution or the elected government and harp on the withdrawal of foreign troops as a precondition for talks¹¹. Likewise, Taliban have remained indifferent to appeals made at the Jakarta Trilateral Religious Scholars Conference, or the Fatwa issued by Afghan clerics or urging at Mecca religious conference to shun violence and join the negotiation process. Taliban intransigence, however, persists.

The Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) despite serious constraints have resisted Taliban onslaughts in southeastern and northern provinces of Afghanistan. The underlining aim of Operation KHALID 2017 and Operation NASRAT 2018 has been to prevent capture of communication centres, secure roads and developmental projects. ANSF has been fairly successful in defeating Taliban offensives in Kunduz and Ghazni provinces; however, their success against Fedayeen attacks has been lacklustre. On the whole, put in the words of Gen Nicholson, a state of strategic stalemate prevails in Afghanistan.

Zero Sum Geopolitics in Afghanistan

The international community has espoused support to 'Afghan led Afghan owns Peace Process'. However, major players are adopting contradictory approaches to deal with the problem. President Trump in his South Asia policy asserts for renewed effort in combating terrorism, building Afghan National Self Defence Forces (ANSDF), particularly the Afghan Special Forces and Air-Force, putting pressure on Pakistan to dismantle terrorist infrastructure and solicit Indian support in peace building and development in Afghanistan. The US alleges that Russia, China, Pakistan and Iran are scuttling the US endeavours by hobnobbing with Taliban. Moscow has for years opposed the Taliban, calling them terrorists, and supported the anti-Taliban 'Northern Alliance'. However, Zamir Kubalov, Putin's Special Representative for Afghanistan termed ISIS in Afghanistan a bigger threat than the Taliban.¹² China perceives security in the region from the perspective of mitigating East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) threat to Xinjiang, Belt and Road / energy corridors, securing investments in mining in Aynek and oil exploration in North Amu Darya. China is known to play the role of an interlocutor between Afghanistan and Pakistan and hobnobbing with Taliban. Iran had supported Northern Alliance and the US against Taliban but is now in favour of engaging with Taliban.

Strategic Implications for India

Afghanistan assumes the status of a buffer and bridge in India's strategic calculus. Talibanisation of Afghanistan and spread of Jihadi terrorism is a major trans-national threat that has

ramifications for regional peace and stability. India favours Afghanistan to be a rallying point of fight against terrorism. Indian Defence Minister Smt Nirmala Sitharaman addressing the 'VII Moscow Conference on International Security' from 03 to 05 April 2018 raised concerns over instability in Afghanistan and urged the international community to adopt a policy of zero tolerance towards terrorism, She also urged to consolidate capacities of the Afghan Government and security forces in the face of newer provocations and terrorism.¹³ India is gravely concerned at the recent escalation of terrorist violence in Afghanistan, which demonstrates that safe havens and support systems continue to be available to the terrorists from across the border. Recently, unidentified armed men in Baghlan province in Afghanistan abducted six Indians. On 6 June 2017, a Taliban rocket had hit the Kabul home of India's top envoy to Afghanistan, fuelling security concerns. After 2009 attack on Indian Mission in Kabul, then Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao had said that Indo-Afghan relations are impermeable to such attacks and India has "unwavering commitment to pursue our bilateral development partnership and assist the people of Afghanistan in realising a democratic, peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan¹⁴." The Indian Mission, Consulates and about 150 personnel working on various projects are vulnerable to Taliban attacks. Pakistan is wary of India's growing footprint in Afghanistan and is trying to offset with strengthening its strategic depth in Afghanistan through its proxies. Lieutenant General Vincent Stewart, Director, US Defence Intelligence, during a hearing on Afghanistan at the Senate Armed Services Committee in 2017 stated, "They (Pakistan) view all of the challenges through the lens of an Indian threat to the state of Pakistan. So they hold in reserve terrorist organisations, so that if Afghanistan leans towards India, they will no longer be supportive of an idea of a stable and secure Afghanistan that could undermine Pakistan interests.¹⁵"

India's strategic interests in Afghanistan, besides combating terrorism, devolve around gaining access to Central Asia, expansion of economic engagement in Eurasia and energy security. Therefore, a stable Afghanistan is vital for early operationalisation of Chabahar – Zaranj- Delaram axis, INSTC and TAPI gas pipeline.¹⁶ India is facing an inimical geopolitical

alignment in Afghanistan, wherein, the interests of Russia – China – Iran and Pakistan coincide vis a vis India and US. It is worrisome, that the new US sanctions could slow or even bring India's plan to develop berths at Chabahar Port to a halt. The new US National Security Adviser, John Bolton, has a much tougher line on Iran and any further restrictions they place will make India's Chabahar plans more expensive and even unviable.¹⁷ India needs to consider long-term scenarios of its political, diplomatic and military options. India should work diplomatically towards the creation of a "concert of powers" — a regional grouping including the US, Russia, the EU, India, Iran, Central Asia and China¹⁸ for peace building in Afghanistan.

Role of India in Afghanistan

India and Afghanistan share strong historical and cultural ties since ancient times. India's engagement with Afghanistan is guided by Strategic Partnership Agreement 2011, which is steered by a council of foreign ministers. At the multi-lateral level, India actively participates in deliberations at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Contact Group on Afghanistan, Russia – India - China (RIC) , BRICS, Heart of Asia Conference, Moscow format, Indo-Iran-Afghanistan trilateral agreement and India, US, Afghanistan trilateral dialogue and other international forums. At the 2nd meeting of SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group in Beijing held on 28 May 2018, India extended firm support to the Afghan led reconciliation process and role of SCO in peace building.¹⁹ India has agreed to undertake joint projects with Russia²⁰ and China²¹ in Afghanistan. The Pentagon titled 'Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan' underlined that "India is Afghanistan's most reliable regional partner and the largest contributor of development assistance in the region,"²². India can leverage its rich experience in combating terrorism by exchanging data with the SCO and share its counter terrorism exercises.

India has invested US \$2 billion for civil capacity building, such as, construction of Salma dam, roads, power lines, parliament building and telecommunication infrastructure. Assistance is provided by way of developing TV industry, agriculture sector, irrigation, health, transport and grant of gratis

vacancies to Afghan students in academic institutions in India. Liberal medical visas for treatment in Indian hospitals are being issued. India has successfully completed Small Development Projects (SDP) scheme designed for border districts of Afghanistan.²³ The inauguration of the Dedicated Air Cargo Corridor in June 2017 between Kabul-Delhi and Kandahar-Delhi has provided a fresh impetus to bilateral trade.²⁴ Mazar-e-Sharif and Herat were also connected to New Delhi by air in October 2017.²⁵ The Afghan side has appreciated India's timely assistance of 170,000 tonnes of wheat and 2,000 tonnes of pulses when the country was facing drought.²⁶ India has agreed to build a 500-km railroad from Chabahar to Zahedan, close to the Afghan border.²⁷ Under the enhanced India-Afghanistan-US partnership, India organised "Passage to Prosperity", the India-Afghanistan Trade and Investment Show,²⁸ In 2017, the Indo-US-Afghan trade and investment show in Delhi, was attended by 200 Afghan, and 800 Indian businessmen.

India has pledged US \$ 1 billion aid to Kabul for construction of 116 high impact community development projects to be implemented in 31 provinces. In addition, six new projects in low cost housing for returning Afghan refugees in Nangarhar province, road connectivity (to Band e Amir in Bamyan province), national park, economic development, water supply schemes (Shahtoot Dam and water supply for Kabul and Charikar city in Parwan province), establishment of gypsum board manufacturing plant in Kabul, construction of polyclinic in Mazar e Sharif are being undertaken.²⁹ Some of the ongoing projects India has undertaken are development of communication infrastructure (optic fibre) and Surobi 2 hydropower plant with capacity of 180 Megawatt (MW). The inflow of medical tourists from Afghanistan has reached 55,681.³⁰

India has supplied non-lethal military equipment, and four-helicopter gunships. Request from Afghanistan to repair MI 35 helicopters, transport planes and supply of other military hardware is under consideration. About 1000 military personnel and a fair number of civil servants, policemen and other specialists are being trained in India. Beds are earmarked for battle casualties in multi - specialty military hospitals. India will also provide 500

scholarships for graduate studies in India for the next of kin of ANSF martyrs for the academic year 2018- 2019. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Afghanistan on technical cooperation for police training and development will help in capacity building of Afghanistan National Police.³¹

Conclusion

India seeks a stable, prosperous Afghanistan that is fully integrated with global trading network. Afghan people have strength, wisdom, courage and perseverance to start a new and peaceful life for the sake of future generations. India is against zero sum mentality and does not favour Afghanistan being used as a chessboard for proxy conflicts. India strongly favours that the neighbouring countries and the international community at large should join hands in defeating terrorism and supporting Afghan owned Afghan led peace process for global peace and security. India has live operational experience in combating cross-border terrorism and undertaking civic action programmes with Afghan characteristics. India, therefore, can be a partner of choice in peace building in Afghanistan, be it part of the UN, SCO or any other multilateral mechanism that is based on a win-win paradigm.

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The Pakistan Elections 2018: An Overview and the Road Ahead

Shri Tilak Devasher®

The past 22 years have been quite a journey for the
22nd

Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan and his Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI). In 2002, the PTI had one seat (that of Imran Khan himself) in the National Assembly (NA); it boycotted the 2008 elections; in 2013 it had around 30 seats. Now it has 116 general seats. In the process, its vote bank increased from 1,60,686 votes in the 2002 elections to 7.6 million in 2013 and 16.8 million in 2018 (approximately 31.87 per cent of the votes), an increase of over 100 per cent. With the joining of nine independents and allocation of 28 reserved seats for women and five for minorities, its tally has gone up to 158. However, after vacating six seats that were won by its candidates in more than one constituency its net tally, till by-elections are held, would be 152. It has thus, become the largest national party at the Centre.

Though the PTI does not have a majority in the 342 members NA, Imran Khan has cobbled together a Government in Islamabad with the support of 27 Members of National Assembly (MNAs) from seven parties. It has retained its government in Khyber Pukhtunkhwa (KPK), a historic first. It has replaced the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in Punjab, the largest and the most dominant province in Pakistan. In Sindh, it is the second largest party after the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), while in Balochistan it is part of a coalition government. In effect, the PTI has become a truly national party, winning seats from all the four provinces.

This success story is one of Imran Khan's belief in himself, his single-minded focus, stamina and determination. Imran has had the added advantage of not only being an outsider

campaigning relentlessly to end endemic corruption in Pakistan, but also the Pakistani Army's favourite. He has a corruption-free image and has inspired hope for change in large swathes of the electorate. Perhaps the most significant element in Imran Khan's victory is that he has managed to storm the Sharif bastion of Punjab and has broken through the patronage or '*thana-kutcherry*' politics that they had established and refined for three decades. With a PTI Government in the province, it will take the Sharifs a long time to rebuild their politics. His success has also introduced a third party into the electoral calculations instead of the established two-party system of the PML-N and the PPP and their dynastic politics.

Pakistan Muslim League- Nawaz (PML-N)

The PML-N has 82 seats after the addition of 16 reserved seats for women and two for minorities. It had bagged 3.2 million votes in the 2002 elections for the NA, 6.8 million in 2008, 14.8 million in 2013 and was reduced to 12.89 million in 2018 (approximately 24.40 per cent of the votes).

The PML-N campaign was handicapped due to Nawaz Sharif-Maryam Nawaz having to rush to London in view of the deterioration of the health of Kulsoom Nawaz (Nawaz Sharif's Wife). They also extended their stay till the sentencing by the Accountability Court in the Avenfield property case. Quite possibly, their return on 13 July 2018 to go to jail was motivated by the necessity of filing an appeal against the verdict without which Maryam's political career would have been stymied even before it began. As a result they were not able to campaign during a critical period.

The PML-N worker and voters were also confused by the mixed signals coming from the Sharifs: Nawaz's taking on the establishment and Shahbaz pushing the conciliatory line. 'Good cop-bad cop' may be a useful tactic while in power but when seeking votes, such a tactic only served to puzzle the cadres and the voters. Shahbaz compounded this by being unwilling or unable to capitalise on Nawaz-Maryam's return to Pakistan. Clearly, Shahbaz, who has proved to be a good deputy to Nawaz and an

able administrator, will take time to mature as a leader in his own right.

For the PML-N, losing Punjab has been as big a blow as not being able to form a government at the Centre. For any agitation against alleged rigging, it would have needed the resources of the province. It would also have needed to be in power to handle the corruption investigations that are underway against its leadership. While Nawaz and Maryam Nawaz are already behind bars, Shahbaz Sharif is facing National Accountability Bureau (NAB) probe into the affairs of 56 public sector companies started by him that could embroil him. Traditionally, the PML-N has not done well in opposition. If Shahbaz continues to lead the party, it may do even worse and he may have a difficult time in keeping his flock together, especially if a resurgent Pervaiz Ellahi, the Speaker of the Punjab Assembly starts poaching on the PML-N for his own PML-Q.

Pakistan People's Party

The PPP tally is 53 seats with the addition of nine reserved seats for women and two for minorities. It had secured 7.3 million votes in the 2002 general elections, 10.66 million in 2008, was reduced to 6.91 million votes in 2013 and 6.90 million in 2018 (approximately 13.5 per cent of the vote).

The PPP has retained its presence in Sindh, and marginally improved its overall national numbers. However, it has not been able to stage a come-back in Punjab. Many have written off the PPP in Punjab. However, Bilawal Bhutto's rallies in Punjab did generate hope for the party that it could stage a comeback in the future. It would take Bilawal Bhutto at least another one or two elections to develop a new identity and programme for his party beyond its present position as a regional party that makes occasional guest appearances in the rest of the country. He will have to make a fresh start in south Punjab and move upwards.

The PPP is likely to play its cards cautiously in supporting the PML-N in any protests that it may want to launch against the government. Its instinct for self-preservation would be to protect its own Government in Sindh.

Religious Parties

Most commentators have highlighted that an important takeaway of the general elections was lack of seats that the radical parties won for the NA showing disconnect of the voters with hardline narrative. This issue, however, is far more complex. For one thing, irrespective of seats won, just by contesting, radical elements have been 'mainstreamed' and brought into the political milieu.

The religious parties collectively polled 5.2 million or 9.58 per cent of the total votes polled. In 2002, the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) had achieved over 11 per cent and had managed to lead a provincial government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

A further analysis reveals a more complex situation. The religious parties received the largest number of votes in Punjab (2.7 million) that constituted 7.98 per cent of overall votes in the province. In Sindh the religious parties received 1.1 million votes or 10.57 per cent of the total votes polled; in Balochistan they polled 16.78 per cent and in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa they received 18.84 per cent of the votes polled.

Among the religious parties, the performance of the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) was remarkable. Campaigning on a single-point agenda of *khatm-i-nabuwat* (finality of the prophethood) it secured 2.2 million votes for the NA out of the 5.2 million secured by all the religious parties. This has been unprecedented for a new religious party making its entry into national politics. In the Punjab Assembly elections, the TLP secured 1.8 million votes that were more than the 1.7 million votes won by the PPP. In the Sindh Assembly, the TLP secured 400,000 votes, almost double those of PML-N that secured just 230,000. In the process, the TLP won two provincial assembly seats. It is also significant that the TLP contested the elections on its own strength and did not either join a coalition or enter into any seat adjustments with even the MMA. This undoubtedly provides a good idea of their strength.

In Punjab, its 1.8 million votes out of the 2.7 million polled for all the religious parties constituted 69 per cent of the votes polled for such parties clearly showing the trajectory of support. In Sindh,

its candidates gave prominent leaders like PPP's Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari and Dr Farooq Sattar of Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM-P) a tough challenge. Overall, the TLP ate into PML-N's votes since Barelvi voters had traditionally been loyal to the PML-N.

The participation of Hafiz Saeed's Milli Muslim League (MML) Party on the platform of the Allah-o-Akbar Tehreek (AAT) was significant. Saeed had all along been opposed to participation in western-style democracy, calling it un-Islamic. Clearly, there were other forces at work that 'persuaded' him to change his stance against elections and democracy. The prospects of being 'mainstreamed' into the politics was perhaps too good an opportunity to be missed. Though the party did not win any seat, it got 1,71,356 votes for the NA and 2,36,386 votes for the Punjab Assembly. One reason for not being able to win has been ascribed to the fact that their supporters had not got registered as voters due to confusion about participation in elections.

Given the kind of vote share that these parties managed, it is certain that such 'mainstreamed' parties will only grow in strength from here on. In fact, their election management in terms of positioning sufficient volunteers at the polling stations and facilitating voters indicated the presence of solid constituency-level machinery. Based especially on the TLP's performance in Punjab and in Karachi, the message is that its radical ideology does resonate with millions in the electorate. It would be interesting to see how the PTI Government deals with these extremists. The concern expressed by many observers is that given Imran Khan's soft stance towards the religious right, such groups may get greater space in a 'Naya' Pakistan.

In terms of seats, the revived five-party MMA won 12 seats and 2.5 million votes for the NA. In 2002, the MMA had emerged as the country's third largest party with 3.1 million votes and 59 NA seats. Their best bet of doing well was in KPK but here the dominant party Jamait-Ulema-e-Islam-Fazal (JUI-F) ran into Imran's charisma and the achievements of his party during the past five years. There was also no new programme that the alliance was able to project to dent the PTI's support base. The

MMA unity, too, is under threat as a key component, the Jamaat-i-Islami (JI), is considering leaving the alliance.

Like other mainstream parties who lost, the TLP too claims that its mandate was robbed due to rigging. Chief of TLP, Khadim Rizvi has alleged that the 2018 general elections were the most rigged elections in the country's history. It has warned that the party will contest the results at every forum, even on the streets and will participate in the by-elections. It would be interesting to see if the mainstream opposition parties invite the TLP to join their anti-rigging campaign.

The Challenges before Imran Khan

Imran Khan faces myriad challenges as he settles into governance. First and foremost is the fact that he is an untested politician and an untried administrator. His career, especially in the past five years, shows that he and the PTI have had more experience of agitating outside the Parliament than using Parliament effectively. His record as a Parliamentarian is worse than that of even Nawaz Sharif, having attended Parliament for less than ten per cent of its sessions. He has not participated in any parliamentary committee and thus does not know the inner workings of a parliamentary system. Not surprisingly, the performance of the PTI lawmakers has been below par.

The second challenge, now that a coalition has been stitched would be to keep the flock together, both at the Centre and in Punjab against the backdrop of a highly acrimonious and polarised environment. Infighting within the PTI between two stalwarts Shah Mehmood Qureshi and Jahangir Tareen could adversely impact the party's functioning. Imran will also have to satisfy the large number of 'electables', independents and allies from smaller parties on whose support he is dependent and who will claim their pound of flesh. Likewise, seeking the support of the MQM-P and the PML-Q, both of whom Imran Khan has been extremely critical of in the past, would have been a bitter pill to swallow. The PTI has eroded MQM-P's traditional vote bank in Karachi and so the moot point would be if the MQM would allow the PTI to consolidate its gains there. Managing the party and the coalition thus will require a lot of maturity and patience. Imran's

choice of key appointments at the Centre and the provinces would be critical in this regard.

The third challenge for Imran Khan would be to deal with an opposition that has been badly stung in the elections and has alleged rigging. The combined strength of the PML-N, PPP and MMA is 150 only two less than the PTI's own strength. They, especially the PML-N, are unlikely to forego any opportunity to pull Imran Khan down. Quite likely, they would pay him back using the same confrontational tactics that he had indulged in against the PML-N during the last five years. The difference would be that the opposition has a much stronger presence in the NA than the opposition had during the term of the PML-N Government. Undoubtedly, it would use its parliamentary strength to attack Imran Khan's Government. With a simple majority in the NA and only 12 out of 102 seats in the Senate, Imran would have to deal with the challenge of governing Pakistan with a thin parliamentary majority. He would have no option but to work with the opposition to get legislation passed. The silver lining for Imran is that the 11 party opposition unity may not last long. Already cracks have appeared on the issue of the PPP not supporting Shahbaz Sharif as the combined candidate for the Prime Minister. It would be quite an achievement if the PML-N and the PPP could work together for a sustained period.

The fourth challenge would be to deliver on the election promises and to fulfill the heightened expectations of his supporters for 'Naya Pakistan'. The thrust of the 'Naya Pakistan' is a country free from corruption and injustice. This is a hark back to the reason he entered politics in the first place: his one-point agenda of eradication of corruption from the country. Over the years many had scoffed at his single-point campaign but he pursued it with determination. However, in his bid to become PM he has collected politicians of different shades and hues in the PTI. These so-called 'electables' carry a baggage of corruption that contrasts with the kind of clean image that Imran is seeking to instill. People will be looking closely at his actions to see whether those in his close circle would be subjected to scrutiny or not and whether the promised '*tabdeeli*' (change) will take place or not. Managing these expectations would be a major test.

Some of the key points of his promises and a 100-day plan include generating 10 million jobs within five years; complete autonomy to south Punjab; building five million houses; transformation in governance, revitalisation of economic growth and ensuring the country's national security. There has been talk about setting up a national security organisation and a detailed national security policy. A key element of this would be to deal with the various terrorist organisations in the country, ensure implementation of the National Action Plan, curriculum reforms in schools, bring madrassas into the national mainstream and tackle the radicalisation in society. How Imran would balance these issues with his own pre-disposition of being soft on the militants and his reputation of being 'Taliban Khan' would be interesting to watch.

The fifth critical challenge for him would be to repair the distorted civil-military relations under Nawaz Sharif. In an interview Imran had stated "A democratic government should sit down and form its policy and then get the Army on board. If there is any impediment by the Army, I should be able to say, 'Look, I'm the Chief Executive'. And then, if I can't implement my policy, I should be able to say, 'Look, I can't do it, and I resign'." Being their favourite, the Army is bound to allow Imran space to govern, especially in the domestic arena. In areas that the Army considers its preserve, Imran Khan will find his freedom of action being constrained. A moot point is the extent to which the Army wanted to see Imran in power per se and how much it wanted to get rid of Nawaz Sharif and the PML-N. Most observers favour the latter viewpoint.

The sixth, and clearly the most daunting, challenge for the PTI would be the revival of the economy. Imran Khan has inherited an economy literally on a slippery slope. Soaring external financing requirements in the shape of re-payment of debt and a mounting import bill are the immediate issues that would need to be tackled. In fact, the grim reality facing the new government would be that debt servicing and defence account for about 55 per cent of the total Federal Government spending. Foreign currency reserves have declined to between USD 9-10 billion, covering less than two months of imports. The rupee has been devalued four

times since December 2017, fuelling inflation. Pakistan needs around USD11 billion to cater to its external financing gap in the on-going fiscal year and another USD 9.5 to USD 10 billion next year. With mounting debt payments in the coming months and years, handling the economic mess will not be an easy task.

An approach to the IMF for a USD 10 to 12 billion bailout seems on the cards. If Pakistan does approach the IMF and gets a bailout this year, it would far exceed its quota (based on the size of the economy of the country and its voting power in the IMF). Despite this, it will run into similar problems next year unless stringent and unpopular measures are taken to boost the economy. The US has already opposed any large IMF bailouts that would end up servicing Chinese loans. An IMF bail-out is expected to be accompanied by stiff conditions that could include: further devaluation of the currency, spending cuts, withdrawal of subsidies as well as tax reforms and removal of tax exemptions. The implementation of such measures would come up against PTI's election pledges that include increasing social spending, reducing taxes and lowering the cost of energy.

A central challenge for Imran Khan would be to seize the power of formulating and executing foreign policy. Both Asif Zardari as President and Nawaz Sharif as PM had burnt their fingers trying to make such efforts. To the extent that he has some space and time, will Imran Khan be able to convince the Army that the kind of financial investments required to sustain Pakistan's trajectory of being at odds with its eastern and western neighbours is no longer in Pakistan's interests?

Here the key challenges would be the relationships with Afghanistan, India and the US. A key point made by Imran in his victory speech was that for Pakistan to achieve its social and economic potential it must be at peace with its neighbours in the region. Though he appeared to be conciliatory calling for a dialogue with India, he also highlighted human rights violations in Kashmir and called it the 'core' issue. The PTI manifesto had linked the Kashmir issue to the United Nations Security Council resolutions. So the signals are mixed. In any case, the Army will

be looking over his shoulders to ensure that he does not step out of line.

Imran's assertion that "Peace in Afghanistan will mean there will be peace in Pakistan" and speaking about an open border with Afghanistan was well received. However, this is something that the Army would not be comfortable with since it is already building a fence to seal the border.

Ever since Donald Trump has become the US President, Pak-US relations have been on a downslide. The US has already signalled its opposition to any IMF bailout. Places for Pakistani military officials in the International Military Education and Training programme (IMET) have been closed. More than anything else, this symbolically represents a turning-point in the military-to-military relationship that has all along been strong. For his part, Imran has been openly critical of the way the United States has handled the war in Afghanistan and had opposed the use of drones. It will take a lot of sagacity on his part to rescue the relationship. How Pakistan deals with Afghanistan, especially in bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table, would be the key.

One way of improving relations with both India and Afghanistan would be for Imran to allow the transit of Indian goods to Afghanistan through Pakistan. Not only would this satisfy a long-standing Afghan demand but would create jobs in the service sectors of the Pakistan economy besides generating transit fees. The Army had previously opposed trade with India suspecting that Nawaz Sharif was looking for personal benefits and could use this as a means of sidelining the Kashmir issue. Imran Khan would have no such issues. Therefore, it would be interesting to see if there is forward movement in this area.

Conclusion

Elections 2018 were according to most observers, one of the most controversial elections in Pakistan with allegations of pre-poll rigging and rigging on the election-day. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and the European Union election observers held that the polls were less fair than in 2013.

The elections were billed as a contest between Imran Khan's 'Naya Pakistan' and his anti-corruption narrative and Nawaz Sharif's narrative of 'vote ko izzat do' and Shahbaz's narrative of development. In reality, however, it was contest between the Army's political engineering and the entrenched politics of patronage of the Sharif brothers. The Army's engineering proved to be more successful. Now that the elections are over and a new government is in power, the crucial question is whether Pakistan will see political stability against the backdrop of a wafer thin majority and a polarised polity.

Overall, Imran's honeymoon period may not last very long. His government will have to quickly get out of the campaign mode, shun politics of vengeance, deal with allegations of rigging elections maturely and ensure the legitimacy of the electoral process and of his own government. If Imran Khan's slogan of a 'Naya Pakistan' is to mean more than mere change of faces in the administration, he would have to tackle a broad range of challenges and that too quickly.

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Pakistan – Crystal Gazing Beyond Elections

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The recent elections in Pakistan, with Imran Khan installed as

Prime Minister, is in the backdrop of increased internal strife, a looming economic crisis that may force Pakistan seek bailout package from the IMF for the 13th time, continuing insurgency in Balochistan, public realisation of China's looming debt trap and discontent over lack of governance. With the Pakistani military directly and indirectly ruling for 30 and 40 years respectively of Pakistan history, questions arise whether Imran Khan really wants peace given his own radical background, what freedom of action will he be permitted by the military and will détente be temporary till Pakistan tides over the immediate economic crisis?

2018 Elections

Pakistan's military-ISI orchestrating elections in Imran's favour was a foregone conclusion; effort over months by way of intimidation, coercion and buying support, not necessarily rigging of elections that observers would notice. Imran's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) not getting *ab initio* clear majority didn't matter since the military knew that the required shortfall could be made up through 'others' and defections, to enable Imran to form the government. The Military didn't favour PML-N and PPP since Nawaz Sharif and Asif Ali Zardari were considered difficult to manipulate.¹ Zardari as President had ordered the ISI to be brought under the Ministry of Interior, albeit military made him withdraw those orders. Nawaz Sharif came in the military's crosshairs when he began asserting himself and indicated he wanted better relations with India. Therefore, ISI favoured Imran Khan despite Imran having never held a government post.

The most disturbing part of this election was extremists including those designated "terrorists" being permitted to contest

elections and campaign. The military ensured Nawaz Sharif and his daughter remain in jail during elections. Islamabad High Court was given the diktat, “We do not want to let Nawaz Sharif and his daughter come out [of the prison] until elections”.² Aside from the aforesaid, military favouring Imran possibly had other reasons, like:

- (a) The economic mess in Pakistan, could be blamed on Nawaz Sharif government even as Pakistan is falling into China’s debt trap because of military’s ‘yes Beijing attitude’ even at the expense of bartering Pakistan’s sovereignty.
- (b) In April 2018, Imran endorsed the demands of the Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement (PTM) but Imran’s support is more from the radical segment of Pashtuns, unlike Manzoor Pashteen, PTM Chief who draws large crowds but is against violence. Imran’s elevation would help the military manipulate the Pashtun uprising.³
- (c) Imran Khan and his political party Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) were opposed to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which had alarmed China. Installing him as Prime Minister automatically negates that resistance with the military holding all the aces, and concurrent added security of the CPEC.⁴
- (d) In the event, that the military wants to curb terrorist groups operating from Chinese soil (that being a big ‘if’), Imran was the preferred choice because of his radical background.

Imran Khan’s Radical Links

Imran’s links with Taliban and his funding of the Haqqani seminary known as the ‘Oxford of Global Jihad’ is well documented. It has earned him the sobriquet of “Taliban Khan”.⁵ Even Fazlur Rehman Khalil, who was put on US-designated global terrorist list along with both his terrorist organisations – Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and Ansar-ul-Ummah, is openly supporting Imran. Khalil is linked with Al Qaeda and terrorists have been active in both Kashmir and Afghanistan.⁶

Pakistan-based terror outfit Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) is secretly building a 15-acre complex on outskirts of Bahawalpur (Pakistan) to train thousands of young children for Jihad.⁷ JeM supported Imran, calling Nawaz Sharif traitor to Pakistan and Islam. Indian efforts to get Masood Azhar, JeM chief designated terrorist because of multiple terrorist acts in India, including the December 2001 attack on Indian Parliament, and January 2016 attack on Pathankot airbase were blocked at the UN by China. Masood Azhar and JeM operate freely despite Pakistan having been placed on FATF 'grey' list and agreeing to 26-point action plan to check financing terrorist groups.⁸ Former PM Nawaz Sharif tried to curb JeM and ordered arrest of Azhar, but now with Imran Khan in the hot seat, JeM operations will likely go in overdrive. Jaish leaders have fanned in rural Punjab, addressing mosque congregations to raise funds. During a sermon in Farooq-e-Azam mosque in Pattoki, Maulana Ammar, a Jaish leader urged hundreds to make cash donations, asserting that "jihad was a mandate of the Shari'a".

Pakistan – Crucible of Terror

In 2007, Pakistani military's private-business-corporate enterprise was over £10 billion. Terror became an essential tool of Pakistan's foreign policy; for the military to retain its stranglehold; proxy wars with India and Afghanistan became essential. While Pervez Hoodbhoy wrote in 2008 that militant jihad had become part of culture in educational institutions with armed groups inviting students for jihad in Kashmir and Afghanistan, Najam Sethi had written in 2012, "The ISI has walked into GHQ and seized command and control of the Armed Forces".¹⁰

The Bible of Pakistani military is the book 'The Quranic Concept of War' published in 1979, authored by Brigadier SK Malik of Pakistan Army.¹¹ The preface of the book is written by Allah Bukhsh K Brohi, the former Pakistani Ambassador to India, and Zia-Ul-Haq, former President of Pakistan. The book focuses on the concept of jihad within Islam and explains that it is not simply the domain of the military. Most significantly, it justifies terrorism, which amounts to distorting the teachings of Quran.¹² The teachings of Quran have been debated in multiple

international forums discussing countering transnational forums including in Iraq and Afghanistan between Muslim scholars and clerics, with the latter stating that it is the distorted interpretation of Quran which is causing the violence. Using its own interpretation of Quran, Zia-ul-Haq institutionalised radicalisation of Pakistan, assiduously preparing the whole population, particularly youth, for holy jihad. Quran is presumed to reveal words of God as spoken through his chosen prophet, Mohammed.

As per SK Malik, “As a complete Code of Life, the Holy Quran gives us a philosophy of war as well. . . . This divine philosophy is an integral part of the total Quranic ideology”.¹³ Malik’s book ‘The Quranic Concept of War’ is a treatise with historical, political, legalistic, and moralistic ramifications on Islamic warfare. It seemingly is without parallel in the western sense of warfare since the “Quran is a source of eternal guidance for mankind”. All Muslims play a role in jihad, a mainstream concept of the Quran, that jihad in terms of warfare is a collective responsibility of the Muslim *ummah*, and is not restricted to soldiers. This is the “only pattern of war,” or approach to war that an Islamic state may wage.

Recent Indications by Military-ISI

With the type of radicalisation, philosophy of jihad and proxy wars that Pakistan has been waging against India and Afghanistan for the military to retain its power over Pakistan, there were hopes that the economic quagmire and a new Prime Minister would bring change of course by the military and the ISI. Three recent indications, however, point otherwise, which are described as under:

- (a) **ISI’s Operation ‘Express’**. In a clandestine operation code-named ‘Express’, ISI is funding and promoting the “Sikh Referendum 2020” campaign. This has been intercepted digitally and conclusively confirmed thorough social media chatter.¹⁴ Referendum posters were displayed at Pakistani Gurdwaras during pilgrimage of Sikh *jathas*. A Sikh radical leader based in Germany, known to be an ISI operative, is linked to these 2020 campaigners. Another strong ally of the 2020 organisers involved in murder of a Rashtriya Sikh

Sangat chief and other terror incidents is believed to be funded by the ISI.¹⁵ ISI is also reportedly trying to revive Sikh Separatist movement in Punjab.¹⁶

(b) **Taliban Attack on Ghazni.** The Taliban attack on Ghazni during August 2018, replay of Taliban attack on Kunduz in 2015, killed more than 200 Afghan security forces personnel in the heavy fighting, with some 1000 Taliban attacking the city on four fronts.¹⁷ The Afghan Defence Minister confirmed that the Taliban were supported by foreign militants, including Pakistanis, Chechens, and Arabs; 194 militants killed, 167 injured, and dead bodies of Pakistanis being shifted to Pakistan, although number of Pakistanis killed was not specified.¹⁸

(c) **Rocket Attack on Presidential Palace in Kabul.** The Ghazni attack was on eve of Imran Khan's oath taking as Prime Minister. Then Taliban fired rockets close to the Presidential Palace in Kabul as the city was preparing to celebrate the festival of Eid and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani was delivering his holiday message for the celebrations of Eid al-Adha. It prompted a ferocious aerial response with helicopter gunships bombing the house from where the rockets were reportedly launched.¹⁹ The first rocket landed near the Presidency building while the second hit the US Embassy but no one was hurt. The area where the rockets hit is one of the most secure in the Afghan capital.

The Military and Imran

There is no doubt that the foreign and defence policies of Pakistan are being defined and dictated by the military and not by the political authority – and that is unlikely to change. On the contrary, the radical character of Imran could actually be used by the military to progress its agenda against India and Afghanistan, while outwardly Imran calls for peace. Pakistan military's aim is to ensure control of bulk of territory of Afghanistan through the Taliban, and exploit Imran's Taliban links to achieve this.²⁰ According to one report, Imran could be expected to persuade Afghan President Ashraf Ghani to include Taliban into the core of the governance mechanism in Kabul. Once ensconced, Taliban

would push out other elements and expand their reach, to topple Ghani and replace him with a Taliban commander. Sources close to Imran say that US policy makers are on board in this plan, and that Imran has promised the US side that Taliban would not target US soldiers in Afghanistan.²¹ All this may not be wholly true but if Pakistan succeeds in this game, it would mean return to Taliban rule in Afghanistan, possibly enabling exit of 'majority' US forces in the process – akin to Iraq. Move of additional 60,000 Pakistani troops to the Afghan border could be a part of the above overall strategy for boosting support to the Taliban.²²

The next objective of Pakistan is obviously J&K, which can be kept on the boil till the time Kabul can be wrested indirectly and the US-NATO can be kept pacified.²³ US estrangement with Russia and Iran and the trade war with China has cumulatively made these three countries support the Taliban, while Pakistan is boosting the muscle support, as can be witnessed from the Ghazni attack and increased attacks in Kabul and rest of Afghanistan. China too has stepped up support.²⁴ If US pilots are facing laser attacks in Afghanistan in addition to Middle East, the obvious source is China or Russia. The US will likely find it more and more difficult to operate in Afghanistan, even after the alleged promise by Imran to minimise American casualties.

The China Factor

Aims of the China-Pakistan nexus coalesce in respect of both Afghanistan and India. India is to be kept constrained within South Asia; shrinking its strategic space and grabbing as much of its territory as possible. In Afghanistan, US-NATO forces must exit and a regime installed in Kabul totally subservient to China-Pakistan. The trade war, global awareness of China's 'debt trap' policy, countries like Malaysia cancelling Chinese projects, and hiccups in China's BRI project have imposed caution on President Xi Jinping. China's major concern is success and security of the CPEC. That is why Luo Zhaohui, Chinese Ambassador at New Delhi, who 'threatened' India during the Doklam standoff, wore a turban recently, paid obeisance at Golden Temple, witnessed flag-lowering ceremony at the Attari-Wagah border and tweeted hope for "peace, friendship and cooperation" between India and

Pakistan. But despite the visit, the Modi-Xi Wuhan Summit, visit of China's Defence Minister to India and resumption of India-China hand-in-hand exercises, the China-Pakistan aims vis-à-vis India will remain unchanged.²⁵

Challenges Facing Imran

Pakistan has spent 22 of the past 30 years under multiple IMF bailout programmes, which in turn have undercut Pakistan's productivity and growth potential, by eroding governance and state capacity, and creating conditions for ever more rent-seeking and corruption.²⁶ Economic growth and development require sound governance and ample state capacity. Those criteria can be met only through extensive, well-considered reforms over the long term. The question is whether the IMF will encourage that, or have Pakistan keep doing the same thing while expecting different results. The country has had three currency devaluations since December 2017, and its external debt and liabilities of 31 per cent of GDP is the highest in last six years. Pakistan took USD1.2 billion from China before March 2018, another USD3.7 billion in commercial loans from Chinese banks and another USD 2 billion loan was announced in July 2018.²⁷ Overall, Chinese loans to Pakistan amount to USD7 billion. Pakistan seeks USD12 billion bailout from IMF but US has warned such bailout means aiding China. Besides addressing the economic mess, Imran faces the uphill task of improving governance, fighting corruption and tackling religious militancy.²⁸ Imran's celebrity status may not prove enough to deal with Pakistan's myriad challenges.²⁹

Crystal Gazing - Future

As PTI Chief, Imran's foreign policy advisors Shireen Mazari and Shah Mehmood Qureshi are staunchly anti-India. Several members of Imran's cabinet are individuals who served in the military dictatorship of General Pervez Musharraf – old wine in new bottle.³⁰ In his victory speech, Imran had said he wants good relations with India and if India took one step, Pakistan would take two.³¹ But this is plain gibberish because the first step must be Pakistan turning off the terror tap. Imran has talked of 'Naya Pakistan' but with no indication that he would curb terrorist groups that are tearing Pakistan apart. With infiltration and terror attacks

in J&K continuing, the only change may be more foreign terrorists inducted for jihad, given the boost that the JeM is getting under Imran's dispensation.

Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Pakistan's Foreign Minister says Pakistan wants "uninterrupted" dialogue with India.³² Significantly, Qureshi was also Pakistan's Foreign Minister during multiple terrorist attacks in Mumbai in November 2008 by Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).³³ Prime Minister Narendra Modi has sent a congratulatory letter to Imran Khan, expressing commitment towards "constructive engagement", but for Pakistan to interpret this even as an "indication" to initiate talks was at best presumptive on Pakistan's part.³⁴ It is entirely possible that prophecy by Bruce Riedel, former CIA Director, that Pakistan is set to become even more dangerous with Army-Imran at helm, may come true.³⁵

Notwithstanding the above, India has always believed in giving peace a chance. This is not the first time that Pakistan seeks financial bailout. But with the severity of financial constraints this time, can Pakistan go for course correction? The experiment of 'mainstreaming' global terrorists like Hafiz Saeed and his Milli Muslim League having failed, can the ISI clamp down on their terrorist activities, curb financing and fuelling terrorism in J&K and bring peace astride the border? It appears quite unlikely with Imran having been happy with these elements supporting him during elections. Besides, will the military permit this at all with its aim to consistently internationalize the Kashmir issue and harp on human rights? Without such course correction, any talks including on trade-commerce are unlikely to change the *status quo*.

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Strategic Significance of Chabahar for India and the Region

Professor (emeritus) Nirmala Joshi®

As the globalising trend of the Twenty First Century gained a

new momentum with trade and commerce and economic engagement among nations, the issue of connectivity projects also moved to the centre stage of international politics. What gave a further stimulus to connectivity projects was the opening of the vast Eurasian landmass after the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991. The Eurasian space is extremely rich in natural resources and vital minerals, but the Eurasian landmass is landlocked. Eurasian region's landlocked status spurred the construction of overland transport corridors in order to secure and if possible, to control the natural resources. The opening of this region also resulted in the reinvention of the British geographer Halford Mackinder's theory of "Heartland of Eurasia" and the "Pivot of History". In the process the world witnessed an evolving interplay of economics and geopolitics in Eurasia both by the developed and developing countries. In this context the connectivity issue acquired immense significance. It was one of the key issues on the agenda of those powers involved in Eurasia.

Against this backdrop a look at the map easily brings out the centrality of Iran both for the sea and land options. After the lifting of sanctions in view of the nuclear agreement by P5+1, Iran accorded prime importance to infrastructure development. In this regard further development of its second port – the Chabahar received priority in Iran's economic agenda. Chabahar, located on the Makran coast on the Persian Gulf occupied a unique location as ships, tankers etc. avoided the "chicken neck" on the Gulf of Hormuz. Chabahar offered an alternate option to landlocked Afghanistan, the Central Asian Republics (CARs) and others to an opening in the southern direction on the Indian Ocean. It may be noted that the Indian Ocean Region, in recent times, has emerged as the hub of trade and economic engagement among the

countries. Afghanistan and the CARs can interact with countries in the Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia, East Asia and Africa, and *vice versa*. This will enable the region to become part of the world economy. Hence, Chabahar is poised to emerge as a major centre for trans-shipment to the shipping industry, as well as link to the hinterlands.

For India, Chabahar option came at an opportune time. It coincided with India's "Look West" policy, as it was keen to not only enhance its engagement with Afghanistan and the CARs, but also with Iran, which it perceived to be an important regional player. The broadening of India's policy and interest led to Indian involvement in the development of the Chabahar Port. The Indian decision to increase its involvement in the development of the Chabahar led to a flurry of diplomatic parleys and subsequently became a precursor to expansion of India-Iran ties. Moreover India's association with the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) and the likelihood of being given a Free Trade Area will make the Chabahar link even more crucial for India.

Significance of Chabahar for India

On the road map to connect with Chabahar, the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Teheran in May 2016 was a path breaking one. The high point was the signing of the Trilateral Transport and Trade Agreement between India, Iran and Afghanistan. The Agreement opened up prospect of land connectivity for India with Afghanistan and the CARs and is considered as a milestone in Indian foreign policy initiatives. As observed by Prime Minister Modi "It could alter the history in the region".

It must be noted that Chabahar opens directly into the Indian Ocean, and is a deep water port. Moreover, it is a mere 1000 km from Kandla on the Gujarat coast. Another major advantage that would accrue to India is its ships can bypass Dubai and reach Chabahar directly. From Chabahar a road link of about 600 km connects the port with Zahidan on the Iran-Afghan border. India's Border Road Organisation has built a 217 km road link that connects Zaranj (on the Afghan-Iran border) with Zahidan on one side, and Delaram on Afghanistan's Garland Highway on the other

side. From Delaram the cargo is transported by road to Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif and thence to Uzbekistan. As part of the Trilateral Transport and Trade Agreement, India has signed a MoU on the construction of a railway line from Chabahar to Zahidan. India will provide the requisite services for the railway which is 500 km long. Presently, Chabahar has a capacity to handle 2.5 million tonnes of cargo per year and Iran would like to raise the capacity to 12.5 million tonnes. Probably in the second phase of development, which began in November 2017 the tonnage is likely to increase.

An equally landmark development was the operationalisation of the Indian berth at Chabahar. India shipped the first consignment of 1.1 million tonnes of wheat to Afghanistan. The Ministry of External Affairs added "The shipment of wheat is a landmark development as it will pave the way for the operationalisation of the Chabahar Port as an alternative reliable and robust connectivity to Afghanistan".¹ The first phase of work on Chabahar was completed by November 2017. The completion phase was marked by a ceremonial inauguration. On this occasion President Rouhani said "... the port will enhance trade in the region with a final aim to connect not just Afghanistan via rail but also to the 7200 km International North-South Transport Corridor to Russia".² India was represented by the Union Minister for Shipping and Transport Shri Nitin Gadkari. India's commitment to further involve itself in the development of Chabahar was evident, when President Donald Trump of the United States of America unilaterally revoked the nuclear agreement, and stated American intentions to re-impose sanctions on Iran. Initially in India there were apprehensions both, in official and non-official circles about the impact the US withdrawal would have on India's involvement in Iran. All these concerns were put to rest, when Indian Foreign Minister Smt Sushma Swaraj met her Iranian counterpart Mr Javid Zarif. In her statement Smt Swaraj said "India will not accept sanctions imposed or to be imposed by the United States on Iran". Further she said "our foreign policy is not made under pressure from other countries We recognise UN sanctions and not specific sanctions"³

India's firm position on its ties with Iran reflected that it was truly promoting its regional interests. Over the years India has

developed deep and abiding interests in the Central Asian region. These interests have grown phenomenally. India's prime objective is stability and security of Afghanistan; an objective shared by Iran as well. In the opinion of both the countries, stability can be ensured through economic development in a sustained manner and Afghanistan's capacity to engage with countries in the Indian Ocean Region. With the management of Shahid Behesti Port in Chabahar, India will be able to circumvent Pakistan's refusal to allow transit rights through its territory.

Another dimension is that Indian strategic interests in Iran have also grown substantially. It is the third largest supplier of oil, and Indian interests in the energy sector could also expand in areas such as exploration and development of new oil fields. Besides, at this juncture Iran is also focussing on its development and would like to shape its relations with India on a partnership basis. Even at the regional level India recognises Iran as a player of consequence in the region, as there is a degree of compatibility of security interests between the two countries.

From the geopolitical perspective for India, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) whose important component is the Gwadar Port, probably a dual use one is of immense concern. Gwadar provides China a key post to monitor Indian naval activity. From the security perspective, presence in the Chabahar is useful. Moreover, an element of competition between India and China at the commercial level is latent at present that could assume active dimension at the strategic level in future. A commentary in Chinese media wrote "... Both Chabahar and Gwadar Ports are strategic footholds in northern Indian Ocean. India does have the intention to hedge against the CPEC using the Chabahar project Neither the government nor the media in each country should view the cooperation of the other side with a third party in a zero sum context".⁴

In view of increasing interests in developing Chabahar in order to access the Central Asian region and beyond, it is essential that implementation of India's agreements, particularly the Trilateral Transport and Trade Agreement, should not be tardy. In this regard India's track record is not good. A timely

fulfilment of its commitments will strengthen trust as well as ties in other areas and gradually pave the way for a strong partnership on regional and global issues of common interests. It will enable India to build leverages in the region. A successful implementation of the Chabahar project will also pave the way for joint cooperation, which could be a harbinger for game changer in the region. It is necessary that regular interaction with Iran at the official as well as non-official levels will help in dispelling earlier mutual distrust. A joint mechanism can be set up to review the progress of projects, especially the Chabahar, resolve problematic issues before they spiral into controversy. A successful implementation of the Chabahar project will pave the way for benefits that accrue from joint cooperation. The Trilateral Agreement is the road map for the future.

Perspectives from the Region

Iran

Iran has been trying to promote the development of Chabahar as an alternative destination for commercial purposes. It was designated by the Iranian Government as a Free Trade and Industrial Zone in the early 1990s to attract foreign and domestic investment.⁵ Its stated aim was to prepare Chabahar as the third major hub for petrochemical industries in Iran (the first two are in Bandar Imam and Assaluyeh). A large area around the port spread over about 1100 hectares was earmarked as a huge petrochemical complex.⁶ Iran is also keen to connect with the business growth centres of South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and East Asia. Iran's priority is to overcome the stagnation that had crept into the economy. In its roadmap to rejuvenate the economy, Iran has highlighted specific areas such as infrastructure development – rail, and transport networks, airports and ports – increasing energy production. These are some of the core areas of its developmental strategy. India offers the best hope for Iran to achieve these goals. These shared vital interests were amply reflected in the Trilateral Agreement and the slew of agreements that followed. President Rouhani aptly observed “The path to progress for regional countries goes through joint cooperation and utilising regional opportunities. At

this juncture India should seize this opportunity and accord priority to economic cooperation with Iran in its developmental strategy. In the sphere of energy the relationship should go beyond 'buyer-seller' one to a partnership level.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan's quest for a steady corridor opening on the Indian Ocean has been one of its top most priorities. These aspirations were shared by both India and Iran, who were of the view that enhanced Afghan economic interaction with other countries would lead to peace, stability and prosperity. Afghanistan's landlocked status had stymied its economic development. On the regional connectivity issue and joint cooperation, President Ashraf Ghani opined "ours will start from Chabahar, but its end will be an all-out comprehensive development and economic-cultural cooperation".

Undoubtedly the Trilateral Agreement offers immense hope of an uninterrupted route to the Indian Ocean. Reportedly Afghanistan's access through Karachi is erratic, causing delays and hardships. According to Pakistan's media sources Afghanistan's exports *via* Chabahar would rise phenomenally. According to Pakistani newspaper *Dawn*, the Chabahar Port could emerge as a competitor to Gwadar, a mere 70 km away. The newspaper noted that Afghan transit trade dropped by 54 per cent in 2012-2013 partly due to Chabahar Port. Afghanistan's engagement with other countries will lead to development and stability. Economic integration will also strengthen Afghanistan's cultural links with Iran which in turn would add to stability in the region.

China

The flurry of diplomatic initiatives between India and Iran which culminated in Prime Minister Modi's visit to Teheran in May 2016 with a focus on the development of Chabahar Port was viewed in China as an Indian attempt to outflank the CPEC and to limit the significance of Gwadar. In a commentary in *Global Times*, it was noted "India harbours suspicion and anxieties – that Gwadar provides China a key post to monitor Indian naval activity in the

Persian Gulf and a dual use base for Chinese ships and submarines".⁷

Chabahar is likely to limit Gwadar's commercial prospects for the former is not only advantageously located, but it can also connect with countries in the northern eastern and western directions. It has the potential to emerge as a transport and trade hub; whereas Gwadar connects only with Kashgar in China. The Indian involvement in Chabahar is irksome to China. She would like to bring Iran, especially its infrastructure, within the ambit of its Silk Road Economic Belt and the Maritime Silk Road. India's enhanced presence is viewed as a limiting factor to expand China's presence in the region; more so, when it is aware that the CARs look to India for support in the sphere of economic development.

Pakistan

Broadly, Pakistan has viewed Indian involvement in Chabahar in an inimical manner. The military establishment has taken an alarmist position. It perceives Chabahar as a security threat, an emergence of a bloc. A cautious perception views Chabahar as a counter to Gwadar, and hence Pakistan should intensify its interaction with Iran. A sanguine view, though a minority feels that by raising the bogey of a security threat, the military establishment would like to ensure a huge budgetary allocation to the forces at the cost of social needs.

In fact, Pakistan had hoped that the CPEC would act as a counter to the activities of the Indian Navy in the Arabian Sea. Indian presence is viewed as an attempt to restrict Pakistan's political and economic influence in the region. Lieutenant General Nadeemi Lodhi (Retd) opined that in order to break out of this encirclement, use China's influence in the region. At the economic level Pakistan fears a big drop in the volume of trade through Karachi. As mentioned, media reports suggest a drop in the volume of trade from Afghanistan dashing Pakistan's hopes of emerging as a transport hub.

Conclusion

The Trilateral Transport and Trade Agreement of May 2016 and its subsequent operationalisation is undoubtedly a milestone in the recent history of the Persian Gulf region. Chabahar's location on the Makran coast is highly advantageous because of its accessibility by sea and further by transport corridor to the landlocked region of Afghanistan and Central Asia. For India Chabahar provides an uninterrupted access to the Central Asian region and enables it to overcome the road block imposed by Pakistan. India's growing involvement in Chabahar's development has proved to be a strategic asset. It will enable India to play a more active role in its strategic neighbourhood. Apart from its enhanced engagement with the region, India will also be able to cement its partnership with Iran.

Meanwhile, a prevailing opinion among certain observers and analysts of the regional scene is that the Chabahar Port has the potential to emerge as a competitor to the neighbouring Gwadar Port, a mere 70 km away, which is an integral part of the CPEC. The significance of Chabahar lies in its central location connecting regions and nations even as far away as the Russian Federation through the International North South Transport Corridor; whereas Gwadar connects only with China. However, a sticky issue could arise, if President Trump imposes sanctions on Iran and warns European business companies not to do business activities. It remains to be seen the kind of impact it would have, if the sanctions are imposed. India's determined stand (at present) to ignore US warnings and continue its relationship with Iran, is a welcome augury. Hopefully Indian stance should not come under too much pressure.

Endnotes

¹ Times of India (New Delhi), 30 October 2017.

² The Hindu (New Delhi), 29 November 2017.

³ Ibid., 29 May 2018.

⁴ Global Times, 25 May 2016. http://www.globaltimes.ch/content/984990_shtm, accessed 17 July 2016.

⁵ Mahtab Alam Rizvi and Ashok Behuria, *"Importance of PM Modi's Visit to Iran: Opportunities and Challenges for India"*, Strategic Analysis (New Delhi), vol. 40: 5, 2016.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Global Times, June 5, 2016. <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/986945.shtml>. Acc. 17 July 2016.

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Defence Reforms in India Need Strategic Direction

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Introduction

Is there a clarity about what exactly is required from the Armed

Forces in a changing regional and global security environment when national interests are spread across the continent? Big question is that, have we developed capabilities to secure India's interests that are so varied and dispersed strategically and geographically? If India has to break out of the claustrophobic confines of South Asia, it needs certain capabilities that can propel it to be a net security provider at least in Northern Indian Ocean Region.¹ However, the defence reforms or absence of these tells a different story; that India may desire to be there but the capabilities are not commensurate with the desired mandate. The Government of India has appointed the Defence Planning Committee (DPC) that would be a permanent body mandated to prepare a draft national security strategy, undertake a strategic defence review, and formulate an international defence engagement strategy.² It will be premature to pass the judgement on DPC but a doubt remains that is it duplication and add-on to the existing cumbersome national security structure? Appointment of DPC should not be confused with the defence reforms as these are two different aspects.

Is the current structure of national defence adequate to protect vital national interests of India? Is political leadership conceptually aware about their role and need to give new direction in line with the changing security paradigm? Political leadership is expected to have strategic awareness and tolerance for ambiguity so that there is no conceptual divergence between political and military viewpoint. Patrick Mileham cautions that moral considerations of future wars are much beyond the rules of engagement and the destruction may not be by nuclear exchange but by mass

destruction of communication technology.³ Thus, have we looked at the changing character of warfare, vulnerabilities and the existing structures to fight technologically enabled wars? These are larger questions that must force policy makers to take a holistic look and examine if we need defence reforms or Armed Forces reforms? Scales and trajectory of these reforms are different as one is top down and another is somewhere in the middle without touching top and lateral stakeholders. Before examining the reforms per se there is a need to look at why does India need defence/ Armed Forces reforms?

Defence reforms can only be executed in a holistic manner if the emerging contours of conflict are defined or identified. If the contours of conflict are ambiguous and there is no forecasting of scenarios, it is difficult to determine what capabilities are required to secure a nation. Defence reforms is a subject of conceptual vision and these issues require deep understanding of strategic defence and security review (SDSR), threat perception and military doctrines. A military must be prepared to fight a full spectrum conventional war, but it should also develop resilience and capabilities to fight sub-conventional and hybrid wars that have become a neo-normal. Future wars are likely to be multi-domain and threats could be to military and nonmilitary targets. Cyber, information, and space warfare would add another dimension to the way future wars will be fought. Probability of conventional war may be less but cannot be ruled out. Credible conventional deterrence, or dissuasion can only come by demonstration of military capabilities. Thus, preparation for war is imperative to avoid war. Will the DPC fill the vacuum and become a bridge between political leadership and military professionals on the issues of defence preparedness? At the same time to expect that DPC will bring deeper understanding of national security between the political leadership and bureaucracy may be farfetched. However, it is imperative for policy makers to understand that military commanders and soldiers will need to develop a new moral toughness and better intellectual grasp of the issues than in the past because information and knowledge revolution is increasing and soldiers are developing reliance on virtual reality exponentially that infact can cause divergence from reality.⁴

Understanding Military Culture

Defence reforms are principally to prevent explosion of violent conflict by deterrence and dissuasion. Capabilities and capacities can impede escalation of conflict and prevent wars. As a prognosis defence policies and military capabilities should always move in tandem. It can happen if the political and bureaucratic leadership is aware of the military culture and have understanding of strategic environment and defence planning process, so that there are no gaps between capabilities and vulnerabilities. Understanding of military culture is bedrock of military effectiveness and without the profound knowledge of this aspect among the political leadership no nation can bridge the gap between vulnerabilities and capabilities that are required to secure vital national interests. Unfortunately military leadership in India has no leverage to affect change in political behaviour, especially towards the development of military capabilities.

The question is what is military culture that political leadership ought to understand to bring in defence reforms so that Armed Forces of today are prepared and oriented to fight future wars for the nation? Understanding military culture is vital to bring ideological convergence among the policy makers and executioners of the policy (Armed Forces). Convergence is required on defence policy objectives, policy instruments (national security strategy (NSS), SDSR and capability determination), defence planning process and temporality of the capability building. The divergent views on process of capability building among the politicians and military occurs because of lack of understanding of the military culture and strategic awareness. Unfortunately, divide is further fuelled by the bureaucracy that is ill-equipped to understand the nuances of defence planning process. Such a situation is detrimental to the national security, if the political leadership at apex level fails to bridge the fracture between military and bureaucracy urgently. Similar fracture exists between the Defence Public Sector Undertaking (DPSU), Ordnance Factories Board (OFB) and Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) with the military. This fracture appears to be manufactured because Ministry of Defence (MoD) want these organisations to be accountable to them instead of

military, where as, these organisations should be accountable to military since the output and efficiency of these organisations directly impacts military capabilities. More often, the complaint from the military has been quality control, over pricing and unreliability factor of the systems supplied to the Armed Forces. Case in point is the failed experiment of INSAS rifle that has been proved unreliable in combat. Arjun tank is another story that has little or no strategic mobility and as a result these tanks are restricted to a theatre and during war it is near impossible to side step the Arjun tank formations for major offensive. Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) continues to remain a concern for the forces and missile in question is not yet ready to be introduced in service even after two decades of development process. Anti-tank Nag missiles and Tejas are being inducted into service, however, the operational effectiveness will be known once it is evaluated in service. Ajay Lele has argued that what is the responsibility of Indian Armed Forces towards ensuring Indian defence industry advances? Central role of the Armed Forces is to safeguard the security interests of the nation. Thus, Armed Forces should not be obliged to ensure success of Make in India⁵ because the role of Armed Forces is to defend and secure the nation. Unless the political leadership and bureaucracy understand the military culture, holistic defence reforms are unlikely to see the light of the day. The bottom line of understanding military culture by political leaders is to define and personify the moral responsibilities of actions and consequences⁶ that will determine the benchmark of capability building to deal with the emerging threats.

Defence and Armed Forces Reforms

Defence reforms are significant transformation that reflect the political ideology in a changing regional and global security environment. Defence reforms are called for when current structures are inadequate and ill prepared to secure vital national interests, technological revolution, change in character of warfare, conceptual changes in military doctrine, economic constraints and the emergence of new threats. It warrants restructuring of the higher defence organisation (HDO), MoD, Armed Forces, Defence and Research Organisations, Defence Intelligence Agencies, Cyber and Information Warfare Agencies and all other tools that

are associated with national defence (including border defence forces and communication infrastructure).

Armed Forces reforms are brought in when there are doctrinal changes, change in war fighting strategy of adversary, change in character of warfare, technological revolution, changes in enemy military capabilities and changes in national security strategy. Technology, doctrines and capabilities of adversaries warrant Armed Forces reforms because that would warrant changes in organisational structure, command and control and need for new organisations. India needs to examine the Russian model to determine what we really need for Armed Forces and how should we achieve symmetry with our northern neighbour. Russian Army is conscious of the fact that economic constraints will not allow Russia to match Western militaries in hardware and state of the art weapon systems to equip its Army. Russia is also aware that Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven autonomous warfare will increasingly put the Russian military at a disadvantage.⁷ Thus, it has embarked upon achieving excellence in areas that would have enduring impact in war fighting capabilities. The Russian Army is looking to future where the trend will be towards greater automation, including the use of autonomous weapon systems (AWS), asymmetric warfare and hybrid warfare.

Defence Reforms for What?

There are fundamental doctrinal and conceptual issues that need clarity to find a road map and a plausible answer to the question “Defence Reforms for what”? Arun Prakash, the former Naval Chief had said, “We have an energy crisis of serious proportions looming over us. If you, as a nation, invest such vast amounts of national resources in locations as far afield as Middle East, Africa, Central Asia and South East Asia, it is essential that we take adequate security measures to safeguard our assets and interests in those extended regions”.⁸ Later his successor, Sureesh Mehta, argued that, “to protect the country’s economic and energy interests - this task has extended our area of operations. This might necessitate our operating in distant waters.”⁹ Prime Minister Vajpayee on 01 Nov 2003, made some significant observations on record on India’s strategic priorities. While addressing Combined

Commanders Conference he said, “As we grow in international stature, our defence strategies should naturally reflect our political, economic and security concerns, extending well beyond the geographical confines of South Asia.” He further said, “Our security environment ranges from the Persian Gulf to the Straits of Malacca across the Indian Ocean, includes Central Asia and Afghanistan in the North West, China in the North East and South East Asia. Our strategic thinking has also to extend to these horizons.”¹⁰ If this is the political direction given by a Former Prime Minister, then why is it that MoD is still not able to define military capabilities and answer the big question, defence reforms for what? There is still ambiguity whether India wants to develop capabilities to deter Pakistan and to dissuade, deter or contain China; or are we satisfied with deferring and delaying capability building and prepared to play a subordinate power to China. India cannot afford to adopt ‘strategy of hope’ to deal with a hegemonic rising power with whom India has unresolved border dispute. Therefore, military capabilities must be credible and visible. In fact, preparation for war indeed is a step towards prevention of war. It needs no explanation that India’s military capabilities are on the decline and hollowness is increasing. Contrary to this decline in India’s capabilities, China has restructured and is in the process of modernisation of its military and the mandate is clear from the Chinese leadership that People’s Liberation Army (PLA) should be ready to fight and win wars with regional and extra-regional powers.

Thus, either India should continue to remain claustrophobic to South Asia or decide to break free and protect vital national interests even beyond the territorial boundaries. Unfortunate part is that a subcontinental mindset that had virtually confined India to a small portion of the Afro-Asian region, the so-called South Asia has denied India its rightful place in the extended neighbourhood beyond South Asia”.¹¹ If India has to secure its vital national interests, within and beyond territorial boundaries, then the next question is, where to start? Is restructuring of individual Service enough (Shekatkar Committee Report) without looking at HDO and MoD (allied departments including DPSU and DRDO)? There is a need to carry out reforms at all levels including HDO, MoD and Armed Forces.

Defence Reforms in Indian Context

Defence reforms are meaningless if they do not cover all levels i.e. HDO, MoD, Armed Forces and border management forces. Everyone today is talking about defence reforms but who would initiate it? Do we have Goldwater Nicholas in India that can look at holistic defence reforms that are acceptable to the government and will be implemented in totality? Kargil Review Committee Report is one of the most comprehensive reform studies carried out post-Independence but it continues to gather dust because some of the recommendations are either blocked by bureaucracy or deferred by political leadership because that will make them more accountable to the nation. Thus, the bureaucracy and political leadership is happy to let it remain ambiguous. In addition to the above, the problem is largely due to lack of understanding of conceptual and doctrinal issues of national security by the political leadership. MoD is predominately staffed by bureaucrats who lack basic understanding of strategic issues and defence planning process to prepare the Armed Forces for the future wars. DPC is now mandated to put up draft NSS or carry out SDSR to determine what capabilities are required to deal with the emerging threats and what is expected by the political leadership from the military. The political leadership that has to decide whether they want threat-cum-capability based force or are content with threat based force structure. However, the connotation of adopting either of the models is completely different. Threat based force structure is capable of dealing only with the threats that are already known and on the horizon but threat-cum-capability based force is structured to deal with the threat that is on the horizon and also the threat that could manifest in future whose contours are yet not defined or known. One is futuristic in nature and other contemporary. Given the spectrum of the threats from traditional to nontraditional, India ideally should adopt the model of threat-cum-capability based force.

Given the volatile nature of threats, HDO should be an apex body that is able to take quick decisions, create inter-ministerial coordination to build capabilities and leverage them during war or crisis. HDO is supposed to meet periodically to review national security and preparedness of all organs of the state to deal with

the threats. It assumes greater significance in the multi-domain threat scenario since all domains are not military in nature, however, other domains should ideally be developed around military organisations so that they dovetail seamlessly with the military operations during war. Adding layers on existing obsolete structure is not an ideal method to restructure and reform. Multi layered cumbersome advisory committees will only lead to delay in decision making process. The National Security Adviser (NSA), the Strategic Policy Group (SPG), the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) and the NSCS together constitute the NSC. Yet, in spite of such an elaborate system of committees and advisory bodies, the defence planning process is mostly left to the Services Headquarters.¹² HDO should be lean and must avoid adding additional layers of committees and advisers. In the current form, CCS and NSC is duplication and created by an executive order and CCS is formed by an act of Parliament. NSC can only advise and CCS is decision making body. Both are headed by the Prime Minister. The big question is who is advising whom? Happyman Jacob a Professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, writes that, "Indian Administrative Service officers whose expertise in defence matters is questionable have a major say in the country's defence planning and decision-making."¹³ Unless such unprofessional add-ons are removed, Defence Reforms are unlikely to head in the right direction.

MoD, with current staffing pattern is unlikely to add value to the decision making process. It takes a lifetime to understand the defence planning process and relate it to the threat perception. Thus, only a professional can comprehend the process of capability building to secure vital national interests. DRDO and DPSUs have failed to meet the aspirations of the defence and have also failed to compete with the best in the business because there are no professionals who can question the DRDO and DPSUs for their repeated failure to deliver on time and with promised quality. Why is that a work force of 30000 employees are unable to produce what 240 scientists of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) of the United States Department of Defense are able to achieve and support the most advance military force in the world. Incidentally, the budget of DARPA and DRDO is almost same but what DARPA has

achieved is something that DRDO must introspect about. It is high time that recommendation of Kargil Review Committee Report to merge MoD with Service Headquarters be implemented. It will make DRDO, DPSU and OFB accountable to users rather than to bureaucrats. It will be resisted by bureaucrats but government can bring in this merger through an act of Parliament.

The US took decisive steps, especially during Bill Clinton and GW Bush period to use potential of RMA as a corner stone for military reforms. India needs to examine that if not the modernisation of conventional military capabilities then what must be developed to maintain the military balance? Though there is no alternative to capability building, India should look at niche technology to get an edge or a parity with the adversaries. India should attempt to build capability through artificial intelligence, cyber and space. Electronic warfare is vital, but ironically India continues to rely upon foreign equipment from Israel and erstwhile Soviet Union. No nation will part with the critical technology and India will get only the systems that are already in the second phase of service globally. However, India should take two steps to develop electronic warfare capabilities, first by domestic research and development and second, by joint venture with Japan and Israel.

There is no denying the fact that future wars are likely to be multi-domain and thus, theatrisation is the only way to build Armed Forces to fight and win future wars. This is the easiest part if HDO and MoD are reformed and restructured. However, theatrisation is not enough if Armed Forces are kept at low technological threshold.

The priority at this stage is creation of cyber and information command because war in this domain is already going on and targets will be the command and control networks, cyber space and even the cognitive domain. Lani Kass, a Special Assistant to the US Air Force Chief of Staff, four months after the digital assault on Estonia said, "The first battle in the wars of the future will be over the control of cyberspace, and if we don't dominate cyberspace, we won't be able to dominate air, space, land, or sea domains."¹⁴ State on state wars in cyber domain are already on

and Russia and Estonia are engaged in every day war. Tanel Sepp says, "Cyber has become a really serious tool in disrupting society for military purposes."¹⁵ The US Army is conducting Cyber operations under Cyber Command that functions under National Security Agency. Similarly in the UK, National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) functions under GCHQ, (the UK's signals intelligence and cyber security agency). Peculiarity of both the set up adopted by US and UK is that all critical appointments in NSA and GCHQ are held by uniformed personnel and Cyber Command is entirely staffed by military personnel. The reason is simple because it requires discipline, loyalty and integrity of a very high order. Civilian employees may be more professional but when it comes to discipline, secrecy and loyalty to the flag; it requires uniformed professionals. It is time that Indian security must cast aside police mentality and let the Combined Arms Cyber Command be raised at priority. Political leadership may not be aware that entire military hardware can be rendered unusable if cyber and information defensive and offensive capabilities do not exist.

Civil-military relationship in India has never been at its best including during crisis. Lacklustre political response and inhibition of political leadership to directly interact with the military to build capabilities has allowed bureaucracy to develop a master and servant relationship with military. Civilian leadership is risk averse because structural and cultural barriers persist between political leadership, bureaucracy and military professionals. Whereas, military and bureaucracy are co-equal and in fact bureaucracy is supposed to serve the Forces to ensure that they remain fit for war. During crisis Mrs Indira Gandhi ensured that she dealt directly with the military and she found it convenient and best way to handle 1971 war in most efficient manner. She ensured bureaucracy was kept out of the entire planning process. The advantage Mrs Gandhi had was that she was privy to what went wrong during 1962 and was shrewd enough not to commit same mistakes that Nehru had committed. It is high time political leadership took a call and merged Armed Forces Headquarters with MoD and set right once for all the turbulent relationship that Indian military has had with bureaucracy. In fact, there is no need to have such a large staff at MoD that has neither professional

expertise nor accountability and more often than not has been seen as stumbling block in capability building.

Defence Reforms and Central Armed Police Forces

Another issue that is normally not debated is militarisation of Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) at the cost of building military capabilities. CAPF militarisation indicates failure of law and order agencies which led to the armed revolt that requiring militarisation of CAPF. The fact is, that since the budget for security (external and internal) is finite and if CAPFs are being militarised, it is certainly at the cost of military capabilities. Militarisation of CAPF and deteriorating law and order situation will directly impact capability building. While making a road map for capability building, government needs to carry out introspection to ascertain the failure that has led to militarisation of CAPF? How can it be restricted so that same budget can be made available for modernisation of the Armed Forces?

Another related issue that needs to be debated is that a big dichotomy exists in border management. Police-led CAPF looks at borders from policing point of view and military looks at creating opportunities during hot war. The border wars will be lost if border defence forces are unable to take proactive measures and deliver secure launch pads to Army during the war. Half the battle will be lost if adversaries are allowed to take control of vital passes along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) or Line of Control (LOC). To fight successful defensive and offensive battles, dominance of LOC, LAC and no man's land is vital. Whosoever controls the borders and critical passes will dominate the initial phase of operations and deny advantage to adversaries. As a result, the command of border guarding forces should be stable and directions should be unambiguous at the most critical period of war when there is transition from peace to war. It can't be in a state of turbulence and change of command at that juncture is suicidal. India needs to resolve this aspect because if border defence forces are unable to secure the tactically important geographical features, holding formations will not be able to bring balance in defensive posture to end the war with military gains.

Conclusion

The three pillars of national security the political leadership, military and bureaucracy have to be on the same page to carryout defence reforms. During peace time, when the focus is on capability building, all the three pillars are required to develop synergy. Political leadership is required to give directions and determine what capabilities a nation must possess to secure national interests and military is required to then formulate nitty gritty of capability building including the process of defence planning. Bureaucracy is required to ensure resources are made available and other agencies responsible for capability building deliver on time with desired quality. Though this process is conspicuous by absence in India, however, the reforms are required to reset this process and develop synergy among the three stakeholders for common purpose of securing vital national interests.

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Agni I to VI – Not Just a Number Game

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Introduction

Often there is a tendency to perceive the journey of Agni ballistic

missiles over the years as merely a function of range escalation, the fact, however, is that each successive missile type is related to a particular need and operational logic. This article tries to make sense of this logic by connecting each successive Agni missile to the felt need and technological challenge that prevailed at that point in time.

When the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP) of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) for research and development of a comprehensive range of missiles, namely *Prithvi*, *Trishul*, *Akash* and *Nag*, was started by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Agni was conceived only as a Technology Demonstrator (TD), which by definition, is a prototype version of a conceivable product of a future system which is aimed to prove a concept or a new technology. This was exactly the status of the first version of Agni.

Need for Re-entry Technology

Well before the second nuclear tests in 1998, when the IGMDP got started in 1982-83, the stakeholders knew it well that for carrying our warheads (both conventional and nuclear), to longer ranges in the land of the potential adversaries, re-entry technology was an essential requirement. Re-entry in the context of ballistic missiles, relates to the end portion of a cycle which starts by missiles going out of the earth's atmosphere (exo-atmospheric) during ascent flight (post boost phase), traversing most of their

flight paths (mid-course phase) in the exo-atmospheric region, flying on a sub orbital trajectory before finally making a “re-entry” into the earth’s atmosphere (100 km/53.9 nautical miles) for striking their intended targets (terminal phase). Since ballistic missiles are not powered all the way like, for example the cruise missiles, specific advantages are gained in pushing such missiles out of the earth’s atmosphere for most of their flight paths. Firstly, during their flights outside the earth’s atmosphere, longer ranges can be achieved since no energy is wasted in overcoming air resistance, and secondly, and as a consequence, comparatively very high velocities can be achieved using the same propellant (boost) charge. These velocities could be of the order of 5000 miles per second or thereabout. Such tremendous velocities enable the ballistic missiles to cover long distances in very short periods of time. This increases their lethality and effectiveness, as such missiles give minimal reaction time to the defenders to employ counter measures. For instance an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) can cover a range of 10,000 km in a matter of 30-35 minutes.

The big challenge arrives at the moment of re-entry, when owing to the atmospheric drag due to air resistance impacting on the missiles, temperatures of the order of 3000° C/5432°F are reached. These temperatures can totally disintegrate the re-entry vehicle. In addition, there are a host of other technological challenges at the time of re-entry related to gas flows, accuracies and more which have not been covered in this article.

Since longer ranges for delivery vehicles were operationally required as an essential component of our deterrence strategy, harnessing the re-entry technology was the starting aim of embarking on the Agni journey. It is also relevant to mention here, that Agni was the only ballistic missile out of the ones being developed under the IGMDP. Others were either surface-to-surface or surface-to-air or anti-tank missiles.

Range and Altitude Capabilities

The period 1982-83 to about 1988 saw Project Agni take its baby steps gradually maturing into its first success. The expertise

brought in by the IGMDP Project Director Dr APJ Abdul Kalam from the Satellite Launch Vehicle (SLV)-3 programme was the starting block. While the basic requirement to provide the delivery means for the carriage of conventional or nuclear warheads into the domain of our potential adversaries remained fundamental to the development of the Agni (and Prithvi) series, the question was to progressively achieve such range and altitude capabilities that made our strategic deterrent credible and effective in the perception of our adversaries.

Development of Agni II Missile

In the timeframe 1982 to 1988, the first of the Agni series (Agni II) was developed starting from the basic design developed in the TD version. The missile had a range capability of 2500-3500 km. The range consideration was obviously driven by the range to be effective in the gut of the adversary's vulnerabilities. Also pertinent to mention here is the fact, that around the same time, Pakistan successfully test fired its Ghauri Missile (Ghauri I range 1500 km, Ghauri II range 1800 km) capable of reaching India's rear areas. The first successful test of Agni II on 11 Apr 1999 achieved a range of 2000-2100 km.



First launch of Agni II Missile 11 Apr 1999

There were two specific target requirements in this very first development. First, the requirement to keep the missile rail and

road mobile so as to keep it quickly moveable/deployable (15 minutes) essentially as a measure of survivability against adversary's first strike. Secondly, the technological challenge to harness the re-entry technology. Both were successfully achieved.

It is to be noted that the approximate time frame of maturing of Agni II also coincided with the Indian nuclear tests of 1998, supposedly making the nuclear boosted fission weapon available.^{1,2} The re-entry vehicle (RV) of Agni II was designed to carry this warhead. As time would roll, another 7-10 years (say around 1995) and lighter nuclear warheads (thermonuclear weapon payloads) would be made available, Agni II would see another technological escalation ushering a new Agni RV Mk II. Since the warhead would be lighter, there would be a room to pack liquid fuel into the pressurised vessels of the RV, making it manoeuvrable (MaRV), thus ushering the cutting edge manoeuvrable re-entry vehicles. Such RVs could be programmed to be manoeuvred to their target.

MaRV was a major milestone achievement. The conventional RV is a passive ballistic load whose accuracy is dependent on the accuracy of its parent missile's insertion into the exo-atmospheric sub-orbital trajectory. MaRV on the other hand, can be manoeuvred to its intended target with its own propellant steam, thus improving its accuracy manifold, and also, making it unpredictable.

Effect of Technology Denial Regime

Getting back to 1998-99, a major setback happened. Soon after the nuclear tests of 1998, the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), then alliance of Group of Seven (G7) nations established in 1987 (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, UK and USA, now 35 member strong), imposed a technology denial regime on India preventing it to import missile related technologies.³ This actually proved to be a blessing in disguise since all systems and sub-systems were then to be home grown; an uphill task but a sure route to developing indigenous capability (read pride).

As the events unfolded within a year or so, India got engulfed in the Kargil War. Besides everything else that happened in the said war, an operational need was felt to have a warhead carrying capability that could cover a huge gap between Prithvi II (250 km) and Agni II (2500 Km) missiles both of which stood developed by then.

Such a capability in the form of a single stage, solid fuel, road and rail mobile SRBM was ready as early as 1989 itself. In fact, the first test firing of this missile in the TD mode was carried out in 1989 itself. The capability, pursuant to the felt need was operationalised post Kargil with its first launch taking place on 25 Jan 2002. Several successful launches have happened after this, including one on 06 Feb 2018 conducted by the Strategic Forces Command (SFC).



launch of Agni 1 missile 06 Feb 2018

Agni III Missile

The graduation from Agni II to III was firstly to conform to the fundamental requirement of range and reach increment as explained earlier, and secondly, to incorporate newer technological features as were available at that point in time. As to range, Agni III with a capability of 3500-5000 km actually ushered the nation into the select group of nations who possess an

Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM) capability. Besides, it made us capable to strike much deeper across our northern borders.

In addition to the above, the miniaturisation of components and their smart placement allowed this missile to be more compact yet have a much larger range (Agni II - 21 m, Agni III - 17 m). Another milestone achieved by this missile was its accuracy. In that, it is no small credit to say that Agni III is the most accurate IRBM in its class in the whole world today having a Circular Error of Probability (CEP) of 40 m in range.⁴ CEP is the measure of a weapon system's precision. It is defined as the radius of the circle, centred on the mean where 50 per cent of all the missiles fired are likely to land.



Agni III more compact, yet longer range than Agni II

Agni IV Missile

The escalation from Agni III to Agni IV was not range-driven but technology driven. In that, while Agni IV retained the range bracket of 3000-4000 km only, it included many a cutting edge features as the flight of missile technology had made available by that point in time. Most importantly, since the era of composite materials had kicked in by then, the same was adopted for missile construction bringing in a huge weight reduction. In that, while Agni III weighed 48000 kg, Agni IV weighed only 17000 kg.

In a bid to carry out continuous improvement in the RV technologies and moving ahead to include multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRVs) as warheads, the missile featured the inclusion of a new heat shield (to ward off the temperature challenge at re-entry, as explained earlier). In addition, new and enabling technologies like the ring laser gyros for precise measurement of angular rotation of the missile, accelerometers for accurate measurements of vibrations in the rotating missile, micro navigation system based on accurate inertial navigation, high performance on board computers, distributed avionics architecture and more, made this missile really a cutting-edge system. Agni IV like its predecessors, was road mobile with a very low radar cross-section signatures (RCS) making it difficult for detection by adversary's sensor systems. A successful firing of this missile was conducted on 02 Jan 2017.



Agni IV - lighter sleek and technology driven

Agni V Missile

The nation knocked at the threshold of having the intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) when Agni V successfully soared the skies on 03 Jun 2018. The most notable feature in this missile is the fact that despite its huge range of 5500-8000 km, the missile is canister launched which means that it does not need any pre-built launch site but can be quickly launched from any pre-surveyed location. A huge plus on the survivability providing much higher operational flexibility keeping the No First Use in mind. Maraging steel has been used in the construction of this missile which provides superior strength, superior toughness without losing on malleability.

Of course the design of the canister is very critical as the same has to withstand huge stresses up to 200-300 tons besides keeping the missile hermetically sealed. Technically, this capability can also be further developed into an anti-satellite (ASAT) capability.⁵



India enters the ICBM club...

Conclusion

The country now looks forward to Agni VI ICBM which, as per open source, is under development. Thus goes the saga of Agni missiles where each successive stage is not just a number game in achieving higher range and reach, but is driven by operational need and technological advancements as these unfolded with the march of time.

Another aspect which also becomes clear is the fact that in ultimate analysis, our range and reach requirements are finite and driven by cold operational logic and security challenges. This will ensure that our number escalation in Agni (1, 2, 3...6) will also be finite. In fact each new version will be driven by specific operational need and security challenge that will present itself as we progress into the future. Such has been the precedent all along.

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Disclaimer: The author has had the opportunity to be associated first hand with the *Prithvi* and *Agni* programmes. The assessments made in this article are the personal views of the author. These have no official endorsement or authority.

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Re-Energising Indian Intelligence: A National Imperative

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Since time immemorial, the art and science of Intelligence

remains an irreplaceable and a central constituent of statecraft. Unquestionably, it is also the first line of defence for a nation and if prudently utilised, a veritable force-multiplier. Among most nations, whenever a security catastrophe, a cataclysmic event or even a major geopolitical setback occurs, opprobrium is heaped on its intelligence set-ups even though such failures could be attributable, among other factors, to systemic shortcomings, faulty analyses, sheer negligence and/or leadership failures within the nation. Though lapses in intelligence acquisition and analyses may result in glaring security shortfalls and grave national embarrassment, on the other hand intelligence successes, normally, cannot be publicly acknowledged as “the practitioners of the art of intelligence have to be silent warriors for there is no place for drum-beating in the business of Intelligence.”¹

Challenges for Indian Intelligence Agencies

The criticality of timely intelligence acquisition, accurate interpretation and sound analyses coupled with a seamless flow of inputs to sister intelligence agencies/ governmental institutions, as required, brooks no elaboration but remains a compelling challenge for the intelligence agencies.

India, situated amidst a politically restive neighbourhood, confronts diverse and formidable challenges to its security and economic well-being. India has land borders with seven nations of over 15000 kms in length, a coastline of over 7683 kms besides 1197 islands and an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of over two million sq kms in size. Additionally, India’s strategic interests span a vast geographical expanse from the Malacca Straits in the east to the east coast of the African continent in India’s west. Bordering an increasingly assertive and powerful China and a nuclear-armed

terror-exporting Pakistan, professional challenges to the Indian intelligence community are indeed mind-boggling. These further get compounded by internal security challenges the nation faces in Jammu and Kashmir, Northeast and from unabating left wing extremism (LWE).

Challenges, in today's troubled world, to the nation's security are not only military oriented or emanating from terrorism but encompass ever increasing multi-faceted threats spanning the entire spectrum of warfare and in the domains of land, sea, air, nuclear, space, cyber, energy resources, demographic changes apart from financial laundering, narco-related terrorism et al. Threats to the nation's internal security also emerge from societal instability attributable to communal, sectarian and caste-based flare-ups off and on.

Thus, it remains for the nation to critically assess whether its intelligence agencies are adequately structured and possess the wherewithal to pre-empt and thwart the myriad challenges to India's security, both in the external and internal dimensions. Reactiveness and knee-jerk reactions are endemic to the Indian psyche and systems and thus, the central government and the intelligence agencies themselves must determinedly introspect, in time bound frameworks, to review and assess the performance and revamping, where required, of the intelligence agencies in the fulfillment of their mandated missions.

Reforms: India's Intelligence Structures Since 1947

At the time of Independence, existed the Central Intelligence Bureau to oversee all intelligence activities and this was reorganised into the Intelligence Bureau (IB). Military intelligence, inherited from the British Indian Army was bifurcated between the two nations and also underwent some restructuring. In addition, each state police also had its own intelligence wing. In 1951, the Himmat Singhji Committee recommended that the IB should also look after external intelligence apart from its main role as the nodal agency for internal intelligence. In the fifties, insurgency in the North East prompted the IB to set-up the Subsidiary Intelligence Bureau (SIB) to handle the peculiar intelligence problems of the North East. For counter-insurgency operations in

Nagaland and Manipur, much needed coordination between the IB, Army and state intelligence was established.

In the initial years, IB continued looking after both internal and external intelligence even during the 1962 conflict with China. After the 1962 conflict, the need to create capabilities for electronic intelligence (ELINT) and imagery from aerial based platforms in airspace was felt. Thus under the Directorate General of Security (DGS), the Aviation Research Centre (ARC) was created and placed under the overall control of the Director Intelligence Bureau (DIB). However, in September 1968, Prime Minister (PM) Indira Gandhi gave the go-ahead to establish an intelligence agency responsible exclusively for external intelligence to be called the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW). The DGS and ARC were shifted to the R&AW which was placed directly under the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) as part of the Cabinet Secretariat. The existing Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) was bifurcated into the internal and external wings but later the split was reversed as it was rightly appreciated that terrorist movements within India drew sustenance from external agencies and countries and thus, intelligence analyses about them could not be assessed in isolation.

After the Emergency, the Morarji Desai government appointed the LP Singh Committee to go into the functioning and misuse of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the IB for political reasons. "The LP Singh Committee carved a legal framework and a charter of duties for the IB which was still functioning as it did before the departure of the British. The Committee also prepared for the consideration of the Government, detailed model chapters for adoption."² However, this committee's findings were shelved with the change of governments at the Centre. PM VP Singh, at the commencement of his tenure, announced the establishment of the National Security Council (NSC) to "take a holistic view of national security issues in the light of the external, economic, political and military situations and their linkages with our domestic concerns and objectives."³ However, the NSC never took off the ground owing to subsequent central governments not overly keen to let the NSC take over the work of the erstwhile Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs (CCPA), later

redesignated as the Cabinet Committee for Security (CCS). The NSC came into existence with PM Atal Behari Vajpayee-appointed KC Pant Task Force in April 1998. The Task Force introduced the concept of the NSC with a full-fledged secretariat that merged the JIC with the NSC. This concept, with minor variations and streamlining continues till today and has been functioning, in its three tiers, effectively.

Kargil Review Committee (KRC)

A major restructuring in the evolution of the Indian intelligence edifice came in the aftermath of the 1999 Kargil War. Indian troops were totally surprised by large scale intrusions by Pakistani troops transgressing across the Line of Control (LC) and occupying some tactically significant heights in the Kargil Sector of Ladakh. The Kargil crisis led to the long required in-depth analysis of India's Higher Defence Management structures including its intelligence architecture by the Kargil Review Committee (KRC). Their comprehensive findings, chaired by the widely respected strategic analyst late K Subhramanyam, were vetted by a Group of Ministers (GoM) headed by the then Deputy PM, LK Advani. The GoM appointed four task forces with the intelligence task force headed by former R&AW chief Gary Saxena. The task force made some admirable suggestions which were accepted by the then Vajpayee Government in 2000-01.

It is pertinent to point out that the KRC had succinctly noted that "..... there is no institutionalised mechanism for coordination or objective oriented interaction between intelligence agencies and consumers at different levels..... nor is there any oversight of the overall functioning of the agencies."⁴ The KRC had also opined that.... "the resources made available to the Defence Services are not commensurate with the responsibility assigned to them..... Indian intelligence structure is flawed since there is little backdrop or redundancy to rectify failures and shortcomings in intelligence collection and reporting."⁵ Another serious observation concluded by the GoM Report was that it was "neither healthy nor prudent to endow, notably R&AW with multifarious capabilities"⁶ for both human intelligence (HUMINT) and technical intelligence (TECHINT) capabilities.

Based on the path-breaking recommendations of the KRC, the four task forces and the GOM Report, the then GOI approved the establishment of an apex inter-services intelligence agency, namely the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA), the National Technical Facilities Organisation, later rechristened as National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO), to which the technical assets were given from the erstwhile Aviation Research Centre which earlier belonged to the R&AW. The Task Force on Intelligence had also recommended the setting up of a Multi-Agency Centre (MAC) and a Joint Task Force on Intelligence (JTFI) to be set up under the IB. The MAC was to collect and coordinate terrorism related information and the JTFI was to share information with the state governments. The government also streamlined and established the National Security Council (NSC), the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) and various coordination for the macro-management of intelligence in a more cohesive manner.

Mumbai Terror Attack: 2008

Notwithstanding the streamlining of the nation's intelligence structure post the Kargil conflict, the dastardly terror attack in Mumbai in Nov 2008, master-minded by Pakistan's sinister ISI, brought to the fore glaring shortcomings in the nation's intelligence preparedness. Consequent to the furore in the nation and the government attributable to this ghastly tragedy, the then UPA Government announced the setting up of the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) and the National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID). However, only the NATGRID saw the light of the day and the commencement of NCTC remains mired in controversy. Nevertheless, an important step taken after the Mumbai terror strike was the government establishing the National Investigation Agency (NIA). The NIA is the sole federal agency legally mandated (by an Act of Parliament) to supersede the state Police Forces in investigation and prosecution of offenders for some specific offences. According to most security analysts, the NIA is carrying its manifold tasks in an effective manner.

Naresh Chandra Committee

In June 2011, the UPA 2 Government had constituted a Task Force under former Cabinet Secretary Naresh Chandra (since deceased) to conduct a holistic review of the nation's security preparedness and higher defence management structures including the appointment of the much discussed Chief of Defence Staff. As regards the intelligence reforms required, this Task Force recommended the creation of a National Intelligence Board for overseeing and coordination of the functioning of all civil and military agencies. It also recommended the appointment of an Intelligence Adviser to the NSA. With the change of government at the Centre in 2014, it appears the recommendations of this Task Force have been put into cold storage.

Shortcomings in Existing System and Suggested Remedial Measures

The Indian intelligence structure, presently, has 14 intelligence agencies in operation, with some involved in intelligence collection and a few having investigative roles. However, most of them work with undefined boundaries and overlapping mandates. Additionally, the absence of a single unified supervisory mechanism has affected the coordination of intelligence acquisition and intelligence assessments at the apex levels. Barring the NIA, all major intelligence agencies are carrying out their roles despite not being legally mandated!

(a) The NSC has a three tier set-up under the Prime Minister and was established in 1999. It concentrates on long term policy and national security policies. However, it is felt by many security analysts that the NSA has far too much work on his plate and thus requires a Director of National Intelligence (DNI) to coordinate the mind boggling intelligence load in the country and present his analyses to the NSA and thence to the NSC. The NSA has myriad strategic responsibilities, beyond defence, and should thus delegate macro intelligence responsibilities to a DNI. The temptation of becoming an "intelligence Czar" also, by the NSA, is best avoided. In addition, the NSC must formalize a long term perspective plan/ doctrinal document which forms the basis for comprehensive intelligence planning cum

acquisition in all domains of warfare across the entire spectrum of conflicts. However, the various tiers of the NSC must interact with greater frequency to ponder over many serious shortcomings in the nation's security preparedness and not be reactive in meeting both geo-political and security challenges to the nation's aspirations and interests.

(b) In many ways, the Joint Intelligence Committee is the apex intelligence assessment set-up of the country and comprises representatives from all intelligence agencies and its own specialists. The JIC does not collect intelligence on its own but its analyses are based on inputs from all intelligence agencies. Though it functions under the Cabinet Secretariat, it should be placed under the DNI if and when such an appointment is established. However, all intelligence agencies must speedily forward their inputs and intelligence analyses to the JIC without holding back information to be 'one-up' on the other sister agencies, a common malaise of some intelligence agencies.

(c) India's oldest intelligence agency, established since 1887, the Intelligence Bureau (IB), since 1968, is responsible for the internal security of the nation and works, more or less, as an appendage of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). India's internal security challenges are vast and varied, ranging from cross border terrorism, insurgencies in NE India, Islamic extremism, sectarian and communal flare-ups, narco-terrorism, money laundering, illegal migration, human trafficking and diverse international based crimes within the country. The IB, having a legacy of predominantly police personnel on its rolls, thus suffers from a shortage of specialists in the areas of IT, languages, cyber analysts, technical personnel and social scientists. The IB does require a cultural change in its modus operandi and needs to be unshackled from the total stranglehold of the MHA. Former Joint Director IB, Maloy Krishna Dhar has expressed that "...the perennial philosophers of the organization, vested interests of the IPS cadre and the political breed have scrupulously maintained the essential 'police culture' of the IB, almost as it were during Imperial days."⁷ In addition, state

police forces must be further strengthened and modernised, on the lines of recommendations made by many committees on police reforms. Such a step will relieve the IB of numerous grass-root commitments which can be dealt with adequately by the state police forces.

(d) R&AW is the sole external intelligence gathering agency in the nation since 1968, though the bulk of its technical intelligence (TECHINT) capabilities from its ARC were transferred in 2003 to the NTRO after many heated debates. Though, reportedly, it has generous budgets for its operations, yet the RAW could do better with direct recruitment of bright youngsters from the civil (rather than bulk transfers to it from police cadres). It needs substantial accretions in specialised linguistic experts, scientists, cyber analysts and military personnel from the three services. Since R&AW is chartered for acquisition of military intelligence as regards neighbouring nations, its military acquisition capabilities and subsequently its military intelligence assessments of external powers need to be further augmented. In addition, R&AW also requires to vastly upgrade its human intelligence (HUMINT) capabilities, especially, for executing covert operations in target countries. This organisation must work to develop its own cadre of highly skillful specialists in the disciplines required.

(e) With rapidly growing technological advancements touching every aspect of human endeavour and consequently impinging security in known and unknown dimensions, India's TECHINT responsible NTRO and the DIA have their work cut out. Though some redundancy is desirable, yet issues pertaining to satellite imagery, cyber intelligence and in the very near future, monitoring of space, should be addressed in a professional manner. Most intelligence agencies display a propensity for secretly developing their own TECHINT capabilities but greater coordination, mutual faith and a cooperative attitude is sine-qua-non for these intelligence agencies. As and when the Inter Services Cyber Command gets established, coordination between it, the DIA and the NTRO will have to

be ensured. The areas of COMINT, ELINT, IMINT and cyber intelligence, all part of TECHINT, will require fine-tuning in tasking, allocation of responsibilities and seamless coordination between all these TECHINT agencies.

(f) Barring the NIA, all other intelligence agencies are operating under executive orders of the government without any legal mandate. It is high time that even in a vibrant democracy like ours, some accountability and governmental oversight on intelligence agencies is ensured by parliamentary legislation as is the practice in many other democratic nations.

(g) The DIA, established in March 2002, as sequel to the KRC recommendations, had taken off to an encouraging start in coordinating the intelligence functioning of the three Services Intelligence Directorates (SIDs) and managing the strategic intelligence assets of the Services, namely the Defence Image Processing and Analysis Centre (DIPAC) and the Signals Intelligence Directorate. Some salient aspects pertaining to the re-energising of the DIA are mentioned in the succeeding paragraphs.

Strengthening Defence Intelligence

In its candid exposition, the KRC had opined that “the resources made available to the Defence Services are not commensurate with the responsibilities assigned to them.” The establishment thus of the DIA was indeed a welcome and landmark step in the field of military intelligence at the strategic level. Though the DIA, by any standards, is doing a commendable job since its raising, yet the MoD, in particular, and the Services Headquarters themselves have to do much more to ensure the optimal utilization of the DIA. Some steps to be speedily undertaken towards this goal are enumerated below:-

(a) The DIA has been assigned the role to coordinate the overall functioning of the three SIDs and prepare integrated military intelligence assessments for national security planners. This will only be largely possible if the SIDs report officially and directly to the Director General DIA. The current

loose arrangement is unsatisfactory and will remain so till the appointment of the Chief of Defence Staff or till the Raksha Mantri so orders as regards the command and control of the DIA and the SIDs.

(b) The charter for acquisition of all military related intelligence including in the external dimension should be handed over to the DIA as R&AW has not been able to fulfill this responsibility adequately since years. The R&AW should continue with acquiring all external intelligence pertaining to the political, diplomatic and economic domains. The DIA thus must build up resources for HUMINT operations abroad specifically for military related missions.

(c) For enhancing the effectiveness of the military intelligence structure, creation of a Defence Intelligence Corps is strongly recommended. This Corps should have personnel from all the three Services and trained to be proficient in the diverse skills of intelligence tradecraft including linguistic skills in languages like Mandarin, Pashto, Dari, Persian, Arabic, Sinhalese, Burmese, Uzbeki, Kashmiri etc. as also in overt and covert operations, Information Technology and cyber warfare.

(d) The role of the Defence Attachés posted abroad from the three Services should be discreetly enlarged. In addition, suitable defence officers must be utilised in defence diplomacy roles, especially, in nations which have military/ quasi-military governments.

(e) The Military Intelligence School, Pune should be upgraded to a Defence Intelligence College for the three Services, the para-military and Central Police Organisations. Expertise should be drawn from all Indian intelligence agencies and also domain expertise in various aspects of intelligence skills from friendly foreign nations be utilised.

Conclusion

The formidable, diverse and complex security challenges to India will continue to deter the nation's rise unless all the constituents which make up our Comprehensive National Power, including in

the realm of Intelligence, are fully addressed with alacrity, resources and a long-term perspective. India, thus, needs to undertake time bound institutionalised reviews of its intelligence structures and undertake transformative reforms as required. To be slipshod in its attention to its Intelligence edifice will be at the nation's peril which India's history of the last seventy years has amply exhibited.

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Emerging Chinese Aerospace Capability and Its Impact on Regional Balance

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Introduction

The Ninth Century Chinese alchemists discovered black powder

while searching for the elixir of life. This accidental discovery led to experiments for weapons such as bombs, cannon, incendiary arrows and rocket-propelled fire arrows.¹ The Chinese were the first to develop a rocket around 1212 AD and used them in a war with Mongols. During the battle of Kai-Keng, they used “arrows of flying fire”. This arrow was a simple form of a solid-propellant rocket.² From development of simple rockets to anti-satellite weapons, China has progressed rapidly in its aerospace offensive capabilities and the anti-satellite test carried out by China in Jan 2007 demonstrated that the development of anti-satellite (ASAT) technologies created an environment in which civil and military satellites increasingly came under the risk of attack. In response, Dr. Saraswat stated that India had “all the building blocks necessary” for an anti-satellite weapon. The propulsion module and kill vehicle existed in principle; the weapon could be developed in totality soon.³ Yet, the moot question is whether India is ready to face the rapid Chinese modernization onslaught?

As regards, modernisation of People’s Liberation Army-Air Force (PLAAF) is concerned, the modernisation begins with doctrinal and strategic changes and continues with organisational transformation and simultaneously, equipment acquisitions. China has pursued all these elements simultaneously, albeit unevenly.⁴ The creation of the Western Theatre Command by merging two former Military Regions (MRs) is leading to more synchronised operations against India. The replacement of the four erstwhile powerful

military departments with 15 'Functional Departments' as part of the restructured Central Military Commission (CMC), has diluted the dominance of the Army over the other Services.⁵ These measures would significantly enhance integration between the different Services as also various arms within the Service and provide more effective control over wide variety of weapon systems deployed at Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR).

China's Air Force has improved significantly in the last ten years. Although the combat aircraft strength has decreased from 3520 in 2000 to around 1693 in 2012, China's inventory of fourth generation aircraft has increased significantly. PLAAF has fighter strength of around 700 aircraft of SU-27/SU30/J-10/J-11 class. By 2020 PLAAF is expected to field about 1000 4th/5th generation fighters.⁶ The PLAAF is also developing significant stealth capabilities and has tested prototypes of J-20 and J-31 with stealth features. On the other hand, India's Fifth Generation Fighter Aircraft (FGFA) development with Russia is floundering and has received a critical setback. The crucial strength of PLAAF lies in establishment of a long range air defence (AD) network.⁷ The People's Liberation Army (PLA) is also equipping itself with fourth and fifth generation fighter aircraft, force multipliers and precision guided long range air defence weapon systems. The development of wide network of airfields in the region close to the Sino-India border can facilitate rapid force mobilisation. The Tibetan airfields have the potential to render the formidable natural Himalayan barrier ineffective.⁸

Regional Space Environment

In the Indian subcontinent, there exist a number of space organisations, launch platforms, space based assets, Space Command and Control Centres and global space tracking networks. The long term plans of China include establishing space based stations, manufacturing reusable space shuttles and developing potent anti-satellite capability. China's military space capabilities currently are focused in five distinct areas. These include space launch capabilities, Tracking, Telemetry and Command Network (TT&C Network), space orbital systems,

providing connectivity to military operations and counter-space technologies.⁹ China's satellite navigation system (Bideou) is operational since December 2011.¹⁰

These abilities are complemented by a robust surface to surface cruise and ballistic missile capability. The ranges of the Chinese missiles extend from 180 km to over 13000 km. An analysis of the ballistic missile capability in the region indicates that China has the potential to strike at any vital asset of India accurately with limited warning. Coupled with potent nuclear weapons, this capability portends serious connotations. India's stated policy of 'No First Use' also makes it incumbent that an effective defence against surface to surface missiles (SSMs) is put in place. It is for this reason that acquisition of S-400 from Russia has assumed crucial significance. Yet, what India needs desperately is a Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) shield.

In the Indian context, flight times of missiles to targets vary from six minutes to 30 minutes depending on the location of the launch site and that of the intended target. Quick detection and interception becomes essential to neutralise these missiles. The major portion of the boost and terminal attack phase of the missiles is endo-atmospheric and cruise phase is exo-atmospheric. The Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) systems acquired need to tackle these missiles in all the three phases of flight and hence would require an integrated Aerospace Defence network that includes fusion of air and space assets.

During missile launch and boost phase, the SSMs have large infra-red signatures. Early Warning (EW) satellites can detect and track their launches. During cruise phase, the target's temperature closely resembles that of its surroundings; hence, detection is not effective by discriminating its Infra-Red (IR) signature. Different forms of surveillance systems are, therefore, required to track the missile's path and these include ground based X Band Radars and Phased Array Upgraded Early Warning Radars (UEWRs). India presently doesn't have either EW satellites or UEWRs.

The 1972 ABM Treaty between the United States of America and the erstwhile Soviet Union was on limiting the use of ABM systems against missile-delivered nuclear weapons.¹¹ The US

Government withdrew from the ABM treaty unilaterally on 13 Jun 2002.¹² This not only opened the path for the development of missile interceptors but also cleared the way for development of anti-satellite weapons.¹³ The advanced space capabilities that are being developed include high technology systems such as the Boost Phase Intercept (BPI) Airborne Lasers (ABL), Kinetic Energy weapons, cruise phase intercept by Space Based Infra-Red Systems/Low Space and Missile Tracking Systems (Brilliant Eyes), High Energy Lasers, mini satellites as ASAT weapons, terminal phase intercepts by BMD systems and advanced BMD systems. It is implausible that China would allow the US to become the only nation that possesses space based weapons. The PLAAF Commander Xu Qiliang, in an interview stated that militarisation of space was a “*historical inevitability*” and it was imperative for the PLA Air Force to develop offensive and defensive operations in space.¹⁴ The Chinese development of parasitic satellites, High Energy Lasers and other ASAT weapons is a precursor to the commencement of such a race. *Space control would soon become an important component of national security even for ensuring commercial operations.*

India is currently developing a two tier BMD system capable of tracking and destroying incoming missiles in both modes; inside (endo) and outside (exo-atmospheric).¹⁵ The system comprise long-range tracking radars picking up incoming missiles approximately 600 km away, a command, control, communications and intelligence (C3I) system and an interceptor surface-to-air missile.¹⁶ The first test of the Atmosphere Intercept System was carried out in November 2006 at an altitude of 40-50 km. This system is similar to Arrow-2 BMD system.¹⁷ In December 2007, an endo-atmospheric interceptor successfully intercepted a Prithvi Missile at 15km altitude; akin to the PAC-3 system. In March 2009, third successful test was conducted. After three successful tests of the BMD programme, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) announced that the first phase of the missile defence shield would be completed soon. In these tests, interception of incoming missiles was carried out both in exo-atmospheric and endo-atmospheric modes. The test using Prithvi Air Defence (PAD) interceptor at 75 km altitude indicated that India could now engage Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles

(IRBM). In Phase-I, capability to intercept IRBMs was tested and in Phase-II, the BMD system would tackle 5000 km range missiles. However, these systems are still a distance away from their operational deployment in the form of a BMD shield.

Emerging PLAAF Capability

PLAAF is the largest Air Force in Asia and is the third largest in the world. PLAAF aims to convert from a limited territorial defence force to a more flexible and agile force, which will be able to operate offshore in defensive and offensive roles. PLAAF also plays a crucial role in *“joint anti-air raid campaign”* as part of *“active defence”* strategy to attack enemy’s air and naval bases.¹⁸ PLAAF is preparing to wage a vigorous, defensive battle in its own airspace. It has acquired advanced fighters such as Su-27/Su-30MKK. The Chinese force is a lethal combination of advanced fighters and effective long-range surface-to-air missiles with advanced surveillance, command and control system needed to integrate them.¹⁹

Current estimates peg the number of fourth-generation aircraft with the PLAAF as around 700-800, with a combination of J-10s, J-11s, Su-27s, and the potent Su-30 MKK multirole fighter jets. The latter is comparable in performance and capability to IAF’s Su-30 MKI. The PLAAF views stealth technology “as a core capability in its transformation from a predominantly territorial Air Force to one capable of conducting both defensive and offensive operations”. With the induction of J-20A low observable aircraft, China’s first fifth-generation fighter jet represents the evolution of this threat to the IAF. The J-20’s radar-evading properties could give China the ability to carry out stealth strikes inside Indian airspace in the opening phase of a conflict.²⁰

The PLAAF has adopted *“light front, heavy rear”* approach, thereby emphasising quick aggressive attacks with strong air defence. PLAAF missions include air coercion, air offence, blockade and close support. Structural reforms have revamped the organisational structure while operational reforms equip them with weapons and firepower needed in new scenarios.²¹ This approach implies that rear bases would be utilised to launch offensive air missions and forward air bases for refuelling and

rearming till the air power of the enemy is degraded to the desired extent.

In defending China's core national interests, PLAAF capabilities, doctrine and training have been developed to support a comprehensive anti-access/area-denial strategy. The Chinese concept of active defence as well as recently modernised PLAAF capabilities, doctrine and campaign planning has predisposed the PLAAF toward this approach.²² New establishments have significantly reduced the earlier weak areas in training and testing. Central Flight Test Establishment (CFTE) has a test centre in Xian-Yanling and undertakes weapons integration testing at DingXin. FTTC tactics too are tested here. The type of aircraft and the complexity of simulated scenarios have increased. Using new tactics of FTTC and simulations at CFTE, PLAAF has learnt to better utilise Su-27s and other aircraft.²³

This has resulted in overall reduction of aircraft and a concurrent increase in the quality of its aircraft fleet. PLAAF is also developing its own fifth-generation fighter, the J-XX and the S-37A, as a possible counter to the advanced Western stealth fighters such as the F-22 Raptor.²⁴ This would significantly enhance their stealth capability and their combat edge over the Indian Air Force (IAF). The short term goal of the PLAAF is to develop a fourth-generation Air Force by 2025 (with integrated command, control, communication, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR) systems for increased battle effectiveness) and the long term goal is global reach through aerospace dominance.

Comparison between the IAF and China's Aerospace Capability

An objective comparison between the IAF and the PLAAF indicates that PLAAF has significant quantitative superiority in terms of fighter aircraft, 3.7 vs. 1. Their modernization process, which is mainly indigenous, highlights that the qualitative asymmetry is likely to increase from 2018-2025 period as majority of its projects bear fruit. It is also likely to have significant superiority in terms of fourth generation fighter aircraft (J-10, JF-17, J-11 and Su-27/30 fighters), Directed Energy Weapons, space

based assets, anti-satellite weapons, network centric warfare and force projection capability, Airborne Warning and Control Systems and strategic air lift assets.

The PLAAF currently maintains around 1700 combat capable aircraft. The PLA Navy has around 300 aircraft, of which about 30 per cent are current generation. The aircraft include 220 J-10, 180 J-11(Su-27), 97 Su-30MKK, 156 JH/FB-7, 516 J-8, and 350 plus J-7. Since 2003-04, the PLAAF has inducted around 220 J-10 fighters, which are of F-16 class. China in the near future is likely to emerge as one of the major producers of contemporary fighters with annual capacity to produce 45 to 50 fighters of J-10 and J-11 class. China is upgrading its air combat capability in terms of developing long range air-to-air missiles. It is now fielding extended range PL-15 that will significantly impact the IAF operations of air-to-air refuelling tankers and Airborne Early Warning and Control Systems (AEW&C)²⁵ in TAR. Coupled with long range Air Defence systems such as S-300, Chinese tactical deterrence has become significantly enhanced.

The development of China's J-20 fighter and fifth generation aircraft pose considerable strategic challenge to India because the Indian Air Forces' existing SU-30, MiG-29, Bison and Mirage fighters match up only to China's fourth generation J-10 and older J-7 aircraft, but would be significantly disadvantaged when the J-20 becomes fully operational with advanced super-cruise and stealth features. This implies that by 2025, the PLAAF would be able to field around 1300 modern aircraft, thereby, bringing in significant combat edge and conventional advantage in addition to the overwhelming lead it has in nuclear and ballistic missile fields. Though the Chinese aerospace industry is making rapid technological progress, but the ability to build modern generation, super cruise-capable engines may be a key issue that would decide whether J-20's real operational capability will be met or not.

China's key deficiencies are lack of development in the TAR, there are limited logistics supply lines to TAR, there are limitations imposed by high altitude operations. IAF suffers in terms of lack of

an effective BMD system, anti-satellite capability, stealth technology and Geographic Information Systems. In addition, lack of integration amongst the three Services and limited number of high technology offensive assets (fourth/fifth generation fighters) would limit India's ability to respond effectively in fast paced high technology integrated operations.

China has built six fully operational air bases, an extensive rail network and over 58,000 km of roads in TAR. The six airfields include Gongga, Pangta, Linchi, Hopping, Hotan and Gar Gunsar. PLA is also upgrading other air strips in TAR and in South China and its Su-27/30, J-11 and J-10 fighters have practiced operations from these airfields. In addition, by 2022, China is building three airports in Lhunze, Shigatse, and in Burang. These airports can aid the Chinese military by acting as launch bases for support of troops as well as replenishment of supplies in Tibet.²⁶

It is estimated that PLA can mobilise around two divisions in TAR in just twenty days as compared to the earlier 90 days. Extension of Qinghai rail services to Xigaze is under completion.²⁷ On the other hand, there are significant infrastructural limitations in Arunachal Pradesh and in the Northern areas of India. Though India is upgrading Pasighat, Nyoma, Mechuka, Walong, Tuting and Ziro ALGs, yet technology differential and poor infrastructure development in the area opposite TAR would play a key role in future operations.

In China, there are a total of 16 airfields in TAR and the nearby regions of the North Eastern part of India that could be utilized against India. Air to air refuelling has enhanced this capability further. PLAAF can deploy around 24 squadrons in these airfields. In Tibet, the airfields lie within 300 to 1,000 km from IAF bases and are at high elevation. The altitude reduces carriage of bomb load; however, PGMs have significantly reduced the need for carrying heavy load. Aerial refuelling and high performance capabilities of Su-27, Su-30 and J-10 aircraft will offset altitude disadvantage to quite an extent.²⁸

China's tools for asymmetric warfare include developing cyber warfare capabilities, anti-satellite weapons, different types of lasers, development of Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicles

(UCAV), advancement of ballistic and cruise missile technologies and refinement of anti-ship ballistic missiles to target aircraft carriers to promote its anti-access area denial strategy. It is here that the asymmetric effect caused by such technologies would play an important role in the prosecution of future wars. Time has come for India to take urgent steps to ensure that our research and development organisations become accountable in quickly developing such technologies.

Since 1990s, the conventional missile component of the PLA's rocket forces has emerged as centerpiece of China's military modernisation programme. This missile force has grown in size and sophistication and China has developed a potent doctrine for its employment. It, therefore, plays an important role in deterrence and war fighting.²⁹ DF-31/31A ICBMs, DF-21s and DH-10 cruise missiles have become operational and China is gradually building such integration that exploits rocket forces as a major offensive arm that can paralyse the functioning of the adversary's combat potential from long ranges. In 2017, China unveiled modern DF-31AG ICBMs, which feature greater mobility. It is also developing DF-41, a road mobile ICBM capable of carrying multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRVs), and hypersonic glide vehicles (HGVs) for strategic deterrence and regional strike missions.³⁰

Sandwiched between two adversaries China and Pakistan that work in close strategic collaboration and confronted with missile threats, if there is any country that needs Ballistic Missile Defence it is India.³¹

In May 2013, China tested a rocket carrying payload over 10,000 km suggesting that the rocket could be designed as an anti-satellite weapon. It has also experimented with green and blue laser weapons with US military accusing China of firing laser beams at their satellites (laser pulses can disrupt/destroy satellite communication).³² This implies that not only has China developed the ability to target reconnaissance satellites operating in Low Earth Orbit (LEO), but they are also developing capability to attack Medium Earth Orbit (MEO) and subsequently High Earth Orbit (HEO) satellites. In MEO, come GPS satellites operating at

around 22000 km altitude and at HEO, are Communication satellites operating at 36000 km.

It is appreciated that China currently has the ability to destroy LEO Satellites, which indicates that our Surveillance and Reconnaissance satellites would be under severe risk. This implies that there is a need to have a number of satellites ready for launch including mini and micro satellites and in the event of our satellites being targeted, we would need to launch them at short notice. It also implies that we need to develop our own anti-satellite weapon technology quickly as well as work towards researching on developing stealth technology features in satellites.

China is developing manoeuvrable hypersonic reentry vehicles, which could be used as weapons to defeat missile defences. Its hypersonic vehicle flew at 30 km altitude reaching Mach 7 speed. The most promising Chinese programme is turbo-augmented rocket-augmented ram/scramjet combined cycle (TRRE), which uses integrated liquid-fuelled rockets to boost performance of ramjet stages and make smoother transition to Mach 10. With key components like engine inlet, cooling and combustion already developed, full-scale TRRE is expected to begin flights by 2030.³³ This would then become a significant challenge for Indian Aerospace deterrence.

Meanwhile, the Indian Defence Research and Development Laboratory's Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle (HSTDV) is aimed to attain Mach 6.5 speed at 32.5 km altitude. Flight testing of a full-scale air-breathing model powered by a 1,300-lb thrust scramjet engine would soon be carried out.³⁴ This would also place India in the hypersonic technology league. However, the development of hypersonic technology in India is very slow. In the missile field, *Shaurya* is a hypersonic surface to surface tactical missile developed by DRDO with a range between 750 to 1,900 km and it is capable of carrying a payload of one ton, either with conventional or nuclear warhead. It has been successfully tested three times. India is developing *Brahmos-2K* (around 600 km range) and *Zircon* based hypersonic missile (tested to Mach 8 speeds). *Brahmos-2K* is likely to be fielded

around 2022-24 whilst HSTDV similar to Boeing's X-51 and Chinese WU-14 hypersonic vehicles³⁵ may take time for operationalisation. Yet our defence research is proceeding at snail's pace and there is an urgent need to completely overhaul the functioning of our indigenous research organisations.

Conclusion

The rate at which the technology differential is increasing between the IAF and the PLAAF aerospace capability, by 2025, China would be placed at a significant aerospace advantage. Since Xi Jinping is likely to remain the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, the modernization and the integration of the Chinese Armed Forces will continue to take place at a rapid pace. This will ensure that the PLA capability differential is enhanced to such an extent that by 2025 Chinese regional dominance will become a reality. On the other hand, modernisation of Indian Armed Forces is bogged down by bureaucratic procedures and processes and lack of accountability of the defence research organisations. There is an urgent need to undertake rapid and significant reforms both in the higher defence management structure as well as in Defence Research and Development organisations.

The IAF lacks stealth capability and an effective Ballistic Missile Defence shield that is effective against preventing both endo and exo-atmospheric threats. In addition, our aerospace capability needs a boost in developing both anti-satellite technologies for counter space operations as well as in developing anti-satellite defence. In all these areas, piecemeal and halfhearted efforts are taking place currently by multiple agencies. Further, an integrated niche technology development strategy needs to be identified and all the multiple agencies involved with its development brought on board under a single control that includes the research organizations, defence forces, industry, scientific society and civilian bureaucracy. Then and then only can we effectively hope to counter an emerging China. Instead of going for acquisition of large scale fourth generation aircraft, there is an urgent need to move quickly towards developing a potent fifth generation fighter aircraft, even if it implies that we need to

contribute more in terms of finance for its development. Sometimes, taking a step back so that we can take two steps forward and a huge significant jump later may be better.

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Ladakh Marathon – Short of Breath and Full of Pride

Major Sonali Gupta (Retd)®

During my visit to Leh in 2017, I saw Ladakh Marathon banners all over the city screaming – “For the Resilient and the Brave”. Having already run over a dozen half marathons (21.097 kms for the uninitiated) in Delhi, I was still skeptical, looking longingly at the banners, if I would ever be brave and resilient enough to run this one – the highest and amongst the toughest marathons in the world in climate that tests the limits of human endurance.

The picture of that banner against the pristine mystical brown barren mountains and a clear azure sky stayed in my mind and would not let me be at peace until, on an impulse I decided to come back the next year and run the half marathon with the realisation at the back of mind that even walking 500 metres in its rarefied air was leaving me gasping for breath; and to add to that, low oxygen levels in the high altitude region were playing havoc with my lungs. While it was alright to get all romantic and sentimental about the run, it demanded focused training and strict discipline to complete the distance in an honourable time and not just finish it somehow. To run at 11500 ft is not the stuff for the faint hearted but the lure of the Himalayas was too great to resist.

Being a member of a prominent running club in Delhi came as a blessing as 25 runners from our club had signed up for the Ladakh Marathon (to be held on 09 Sep 2018 and being organised by RIMO expeditions supported by the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council) that helped us train together and keep us focused. We were training five days in a week throwing in strength training, interval training, Fartlek, hill repetitions and Sunday long distance runs. But we soon realised that no amount of training could prepare us for the unique climatic conditions that awaited us at Leh.

Unlike running anywhere else in India, the Ladakh Marathon requires you to arrive in Leh at least a week in advance to acclimatise for the race day. Leaving two small kids in the expert care of my ever-supportive husband, I landed at Leh on 03 Sep 2018 and was duly handed over a long list of things “Not to be done” at Leh by the Nursing Assistant (NA). The popular adage “Don’t be a Gama in the Land of Lama” was heard more number of times than “Jullay” (the customary greeting of the locals). 03 and 04 Sep 2018 were complete rest days, much to my chagrin as I could see the most beautiful landscapes offering stunning vistas of mountains, rivers and valleys from the large windows of my room but couldn’t venture out; well the incorrigible me did try and after straying for 400-500 metres came right back to the room feeling breathless with the NA standing there with the blood pressure measuring machine and “I told you so” look on his face.

With my health parameters at their best behaviour, I went for a six km slow jog the morning of 05 Sep to test the waters. Feeling exhilarated at surviving three km of steep climb on my way back, I couldn’t help but look at the rugged Himalayas all around and ask for their blessings to let me achieve what I had sought out to. I couldn’t find any official record, but according to some in the Ladakh Marathon management, every year 10-15 people suffer cardiac arrest during the run. Next day again I attempted a five km jog and was pleasantly surprised at how well my body was acclimatising to the climate. With that sorted, and not the one to be confined to the four walls, I went on a day’s trip to Khardungla Pass (40 km from the Leh City), which at 18380 ft is the world’s highest motorable pass and it fitted perfectly in my acclimatisation plan.

With just two days to go before the final run, and a lot of local sight-seeing that remained to be done, I made one last effort at running a 12 km stretch on 07th morning involving steep down and uphill climbs as we were sure to encounter on the final route. Huffing and puffing all the way, I, nevertheless, felt on top of the world on having completed the route when it dawned on me that a day later I would be expected to run almost double the distance and at that moment it wasn’t the most exciting of the thoughts.

Let me not sound so dull to make the readers think that all I did was practice, in the run up to the D Day. We, as a group are proud of having generously contributed to the local Leh economy by the way of shopping and binging on the local food every single day, visiting the places of interest around the Leh City and making some of the most cherishable memories in that one week.

I don't think any one of us in my group slept the night of 08th Sep as the butterflies in the tummy won't let us (this, in fact, is true of every race irrespective of the place. It's the nervous energy before the big day). As I lay on my bed, wide awake, twiddling my thumbs in nervous anticipation and childlike excitement, I drifted back to all those years in my past which had somehow shaped me and brought me to this day...

Born to an Army officer father, I am the eldest of the three sisters my parents raised to be educated, self-confident, financially independent girls not scared to take challenges by the horns. Inspired by my father's magnetic persona, I knew I had to become an Army officer myself. With confidence and attitude in my kitty and no Plan B in life I appeared and passed the Services Selection Board (SSB) and found myself undergoing the toughest six months at the Officers Training Academy, Chennai.

I married an Army Officer and my home run in uniform lasted a few years till God decided to throw a bouncer when we were blessed with a baby girl born with genetic disorder coupled with, let's just say, some complications in her little heart that needed corrective surgery at the earliest. My little fighter survived that day to bring us immense happiness to this day. I left the Army soon after as there was another arduous journey I had to make but this time I had an excellent teacher with me – my daughter. Together we have grown to be wiser people with her giving me daily lessons on subjects that no university teaches – and these are the gems that I have collected over last 13 years and I don them with utmost pride.

In all these challenges what kept me going was my undying passion for running. I call it a passion and not a hobby as hobby is something you do when you are free or feel like it, while passion is something you are committed to, irrespective of the environment

around. Ever since I can remember, I have been running, initially by order, thanks to a discipline-obsessed father, till it became a way of life. Life took a hit with my daughter's diagnosis and what followed afterwards, but I did not stop running. Then arrived my son and I had two in my lap but I ran. My husband keeps getting posted to non-family stations but I continue to run. As if I didn't have enough on my plate already, I also picked up a job five years back but I have continued to run no matter what. I have been deeply influenced by an African proverb which goes like this *"Every morning in Africa, a gazelle wakes up, it knows it must outrun the fastest lion or it will be killed. Every morning in Africa, a lion wakes up. It knows it must run faster than the slowest gazelle or it will starve. It doesn't matter whether you are the lion or a gazelle, when the sun comes up, you'd better be running"*. So some days I am a lion all hungry and raring to go and most days I am a gazelle just trying to survive but I would be found running any given day.

I drifted off to sleep on that night with all those years behind me wafting gently in my mind, thinking of three people back home who make up my world and without whose unconditional support I would not have been there. And I think I dreamt of that blue banner reading "for the Resilient and the Brave" growing closer and bigger as I saw myself in that dream lumbering towards the finish line.

The next morning, like soldiers readying to go into battle, we were all geared up in our running rigs; hydration and energy bars in our pockets; timed bibs preciously pinned to our t-shirts; caps and shades to add to the glamour and we were ready to be flagged off at 0630 in the morning for the race of our lives. The weather was perfect with cotton soft clouds wafting in the blue sky and a gentle breeze on our faces, the mountains stood majestically smirking at our audacity of thinking we were there to tame them while the truth was that our lives were in their hands. The view in front of us was breathtaking and I, as I stood at the start line, was one of the only 2200 odd people participating in the race out of billions in our country; the thought itself was elevating but the 21.097 kms had yet to be tackled.

There we were, nearly 2200 people - red cheeked, climate hardened Ladakhi kids running in their rudimentary shoes and yet faster than us, young people from all over the country bustling with energy, middle aged but not quite ready to quit on their passions, veterans giving a serious complex to all the previous categories – all with our own demons and fears and a determination to conquer them all.

We were still wishing each other good luck and taking pre-run pictures when at precisely 0630 hours we were flagged off. The strategy of the run was to go full throttle downhill and level ground to make up for the time we would eventually lose during the uphill climbs. It had seemed so logical and sorted at the time till we actually started running and realised it wasn't a land of strategies but surrender. To go along with the rhythm of the route, keeping heart rate and hydration under check, and enjoying the run became the strategy. The winding roads, sun kissed mountain slopes, energy of the race, occasional views of monasteries perched on hill tops and the photographers stationed strategically through the route kept me blissfully unaware of what was happening to my breathing pattern.



Ladakh Marathon : Feels like running in the heavens

At 12 km mark I started to feel the heat when I realised I had stopped noticing the scenery around me and was looking down at the road labouring at each step and conscious of how heavily I

had started breathing. I had to do something to take my mind off it and so I started looking around for inspiration and I did get some as I saw few runners around me develop shallow breathing but like brave hearts carried on regardless with some puffing on the inhaler and on the other hand a few were running barefoot. Thankfully the Ladakh Marathon organisers had ample medical facilities and ambulance en route to cater for any emergency. That looked after my next five kilometres. At 17 km mark, with just 4 km remaining to the finish line, I thought it was now a cake walk; but destiny had different ideas. There in front of me, the very road I had become good friends with until now, betrayed me and had started to climb gradually till it attained a perfect 40 degree incline which it maintained for the next 3.5 km. What a dampener it was towards the end of the race. I tried, but it was impossible for me to keep running uphill on that incline. So I walked the whole uphill through. The only thing that prevented me from bashing myself up for walking was the fact that every other runner on that climb till my eyes could see, was walking it. Admittedly, secretly I quite enjoyed it as going against the elements then was unthinkable.

At the end of the dreaded climb, that had sapped me completely and added an extra 20-25 minutes to my usual time, the blessed sight of a large blue banner declaring "Finish Line" appeared out of nowhere less than a kilometre away sending all fellow runners into mad frenzy of nearly having done it. But rest assured it wasn't going to end so smoothly. Even though the last 600-700 metres were nearly flat ground, my legs simply refused to move. Never before have I had to literally instruct and reprimand my legs to move and transport me magically to the brighter side of the finish line. The more I ran towards the finish line, the farther it kept going. True to its essence, Leh made me struggle to account for the last of the milimetres and when it was finally over, there was no mad jumping or thumping of the chest, but moist eyes looking at the sky saying a silent little prayer of thanks. The cut off time was 3 hours 45 minutes and I finished the race in 2 hours 40 minutes stading at 690th position. All the members of my running group from Delhi did exceedingly well with Gayatri making it to the podium Gold with an unbelievable timing of 2 hours 06 minutes. I have already decided to go back again in 2019 and better my timings by training harder.

In hindsight though, even after this little mental victory under my belt, I would like to believe I am an average person with no great achievements to my credit. I had to give up a lot to accommodate various circumstances and challenges thrown at me but I believe everyone is fighting his/her own battle and most of us are doing a great job at winning them. In my opinion, every person has a passion, which is not just a hobby and to feed and nurture that passion is one's own moral responsibility. Aside from managing house and family, first and foremost, one is accountable to his/her own self. We owe it to ourselves to pursue our passions. How else would we motivate our children and people around us? What the flight crew say about wearing your own mask before you help others is very true. At the cost of sounding all preachy, I would say that life is so much more than just one long lazy plod from cradle to grave. My coach always says the day I feel I can't take anymore.....

“It hurts now but one day it will be your warm-up”



Ladakh Marathon Finisher Medal : Prized Possession

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Short Reviews of Recent Books

China's Faultlines: Implications and Lessons. By Sandeep Jain (Delhi: GB Books, 2018), pp..164, Price Rs. 995/-, ISBN 978-93-83930-75-3

China today has shaken off any pretence about modest growth and benevolent cooperation as it seeks to dominate Asia through economic expansion, military might and territorial claims. This book, in the first seven chapters, modestly attempts to unravel China's fault lines by examining the socio-economic and military aspects afflicting China and examining the traditional geopolitical tinderboxes across the Taiwan Strait, the vexing Indian subcontinent dispute and new zones of strategic competition. It also touches on the aspects of dissidence in an information age and how the new age military reform brought in by Xi Jinping has potential to rock People's Liberation Army (PLA) whose autonomy is being shackled. The suggestions offered at the end of the book are India specific where it seeks administrative and defence reforms, better technology management and necessity for a strong central authority. The author has been more critical about Indian fault lines and even tends to suggest "to draw certain lessons from China ... where they have been efficient and innovative". There have been numerous sunshine comments on the possibility of China overcoming these fault lines. According to the author "as long as leadership is in control, this will be like a storm in a teacup which China will endure".

The book makes a good read for those who are in the business of defence and diplomacy. China will remain a dominant player in world security dynamics and how China manages these fault lines will always be a source of concern for the world community. India will do good to take note of these and make considered policy decisions.

Brigadier Vivek Verma

The Tartan Turban: In Search of Alexander Gardner. By John Keay, (Kashi House, London, 2017), pp. XXIV + 324, ISBN 978-1-911271-11-6

In the 19th Century, North India attracted, for obvious reasons, a large number of 'adventurers' from the West. They were mostly gainfully employed at the courts of Indian rulers. Some of them, like George Thomas, carved out even their own principalities. Keay has successfully reconstructed the life and doings of one of these 'adventurers', Alexander Gardner, a controversial Scots-American.

This book is divided into 12 chapters: Chapter 1 deals with the Colonel's 32-year old daughter, Helena's visit to Kashmir in 1898 to trace her father's Estate there, but to no avail. The next Chapters, 2-4, there is a detailed description of the Colonel's 'aimless wanderings' in Central Asia and adjoining regions, 1819-32. Chapter 5 discusses his early years in America, 1785-1819, and Chapters, 6-8, relate to his exploits in the service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his successors, 1832-43. Chapter 9 deals with the events of the First Sikh War, the Colonel's somewhat controversial role therein, and finally his dismissal, mainly for mutilating one Jodha Misser. In Chapter 10, the Colonel 'reflects on his chequered past', and tries to expound his role in the Misser affair. The next Chapter, 11, deals with his last days in the service of the rulers of Kashmir, his retirement and death, 1860-77. The last Chapter, 12, opens with the author's lament that 'not all those who met the Colonel in Kashmir left any record of him, and not all who left records can be identified'; hence, the confusion and misrepresentation of facts about him. In the present work, Keay has rescued the Colonel from oblivion and infamy, and presented him in colours true to history.

In a scholarly work like this, however, even a small misrepresentation would be irksome. In Chapter 7, for instance, Keay has cast serious aspersions on the legitimacy of Prince Daleep Singh, the character of his mother, Maharani Jindan Kaur, and his father, Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Daleep Singh, he says, 'was son of a bhishti, a water-carrier'; Ranjit Singh was 'an old impotent rue' when he married his mother, Jindan Kaur, known for

her low character (p. 162). These are not historical facts, but falsehoods born of rumours spread by the vested interest and accepted by the scandal-mongers like GC Smyth, Keay's source of information here. Maharani Jindan's maid-servant Mangla's father was a bhishti, water-carrier, and not Daleep Singh's. As for Jindan's character, it is unthinkable that in a region like Punjab, people would accept a woman as 'the mother of the Khalsa' who had, as alleged, betrayed her husband, and led a loose life. The British saw in the Maharani their enemy number one, and spared no weapon in their armoury to destroy her. She told the truth in their face: 'You have not only destroyed my character, but have also imprisoned me, and separated me from my child...' (emphasis added). Whatever their relations, Sir Henry Lawrence's critique that Smyth's book, that Keay draws on here, is a 'hash'... 'concocted to suit the prurient appetite of a particular class of reader'; it is a work of 'the meanest understanding' (p. 212) is absolutely correct. Perhaps the author would like to give a re-look to this important issue.

The book, having 86 beautiful photographs and paintings, is, on the whole, a useful addition to the scanty literature on the subject.

Professor KC Yadav

Tryst with Perfidy—The Deep State of Pakistan. By Kamal Dawar, (Rupa Publications, New Delhi, India), pp-224, Price- Rs- 595/-, ISBN: 978-81-291-1

The author of the book was the first head of India's Defence Intelligence Agency and, therefore, eminently suited to write a book which researches the birth and subsequent entrenching of extra-constitutional interests in the Pakistan body politic, exemplified by the Army and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) dyad. He correctly defines 'Deep State', as "a state within a state", which determines the policies and operations of the government.

The book chronicles the evolution of the ISI as a power unto itself. The author traces the circumstances which led to the Pakistan Army to set up the ISI and its involvement in internal

politics. Having firmed in as a power centre the Deep State starts believing that they are best suited to take decisions in National interest. What is unsaid is that being the ruling elite confers great advantages to the Deep State which they are loath to relinquish. That Pakistan, over the years, has earned the dubious distinction of being the epicentre of global terror, is an outcome directly attributable to its Deep State and its support to fundamentalist proxies, first in Afghanistan, then in Kashmir and now in both places.

The language of the book is crisp and smooth-flowing and well researched with a decent bibliography. However, the author's statement that "Maharaja Hari Singh demobilised nearly 40,000 Muslims from his army, which caused resentment against them (p. 17)" is a factual error. The figure of 40,000 ex-servicemen is well documented to be demobilised ex-servicemen of the British Indian Army post World War II. The J&K Army at the end of WW II had a strength of approximately 10,000 of which the Muslim component was barely 20 per cent. The Poonch-Mirpur area of J&K and the adjoining Jhelum district of British India had a great tradition of soldiering in the British Indian Army. The ex-servicemen were easily afflicted by the communal inflammation from the adjoining area of Punjab.

While the book chronicles all events, an infirmity is lack of details of the Kargil War which was a classic Deep State misadventure. Another infirmity in an otherwise neatly printed book are a few editing errors, and in this edition, faulty binding of pages 49–65.

The book is of value to those who, in dealing with Pakistan will come up against the "Deep State". It will help them to understand the motivations and machinations of this Deep State and perhaps enable them to come up with appropriate counters to dangerous Pakistani stratagems which appear illogical and hard to fathom.

Lieutenant General GS Katoch, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd)

United Nations Peacekeeping and Conflict Resolution. By Sanjay Barshilia (New Delhi: KW Publishers Pvt Ltd, 2018), pp 162, Price Rs 680, ISBN 978-93-87324-42-8.

“If the United Nations did not exist, we would have to invent it. So why not to use our analytical tool kits to repair it?”

(Weiss, 2008: 16)

The United Nations peacekeeping has grown in complexity and dimensions, and conflicts which UN is expected to deal have increased in scope from ‘Interstate conflicts’ to include ‘Intrastate conflicts’ making the process of resolution extremely complicated, and well beyond the capacity of UN. While the global politics and changing nature of warfare has marginalised the role of UN, there is still no organisation which has as much acceptability in the globe as United Nations. The fact that no Third World War (of the type as First and Second World War) has taken place, some credit can justifiably be given to the United Nations, besides other factors like threat of nuclear holocaust or mutually assured destruction.

In context of the above the author has put in an exhaustive analysis of challenges of UN peacekeeping, conflict prevention, peace building, as well as conflict resolution by starting with separate examples like Syria having complication of intra-state conflict and terrorism, Yemen facing terrorism and foreign intervention without the Security Council’s approval, and Ukraine which had to handle annexation of Crimea, and tug of war between NATO and Russia, making diplomacy and conflict resolution difficult. There have been some successful missions, hence one or two examples of that would have made the analysis more balanced.

The author has exhaustively covered the evolution of peacekeeping in light of emerging global flashpoints and changing nature of conflicts. In this context he has given some analysis of the four panel reports for reformation of UN namely Brahimi Report, Capstone Doctrine, New Horizon Report, highlighting the

latest HIPPO Report. The role of regional organisations in brokering peace in many cases has been aptly highlighted along with advantages and disadvantages. It was interesting to read the problems related to protection of civilians, which the author has covered very well.

The helplessness of UN could have been deliberated a little more, although it has been mentioned throughout the analysis in patches. UN can only be as effective to the extent its members want it to be so. The 'Big Five' with exception of China (which recently started contributing troops for its own reason to give them some operational experience), do not contribute troops. The reformation and reconstitution/ reorganisation of Security Council has been covered, but issues like doing away with veto powers of the 'Big Five' because the national interests of all of them can never match at any point of time, hence veto power is more of an obstruction to any firm action by the Security Council. The individual national interests of countries are over-riding global interests; hence global impact of UN seems to be weakening. The author covered the problems of terrorism, which has emerged as the biggest challenge to mankind, but the proxy war and nuclear blackmailing by countries like North Korea and Pakistan need to be included in such challenges, being threats to global peace. There is a need to bring UN Resolutions on tactical nukes/dirty bombs which have the potential to be passed on to militants, as well as growing menace of cyber crimes and threats.

The author has also highlighted the role of India in UN, which will go well with Indian readers. Overall it is a comprehensive analysis of the issues which the author took up for analysis. It's an interesting reading, and the book deserves to be a part of all libraries and peacekeeping centres.

Major General SB Asthana, SM, VSM (Retd)

The Information Game in Democracy. Dipankar Sinha. (London: Routledge, 2018), 218 pp, Price Rs. 795.00, ISBN 9781138323407

Winston Churchill said very haughtily that, “democracy is the worst form of Government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.” Churchill should know as he lost elections when he was at the peak of his political career after the Second World War. Another famous statesman Abraham Lincoln said, democracy is a government “of the people, by the people, and for the people,” or institutionalising freedom and empowering the individual. In the Post Modern Information age democracy is expected to be strengthened due to proliferation of mass media with a better informed public which can make rational choices.

This may be too simplistic an assumption feels Dipankar Sinha, a professor of political science of University of Kolkata. Alternate facts, fake news and “as received,” forwards with intermediation of technology and politics has resulted what he deems to be, “mediatation”, or media dictating political agenda. The author then sets about exploration of the main theme of manipulation of information as a game in democracy.

Set in six chapters, Sinha first explains how information is a building block of democracy undermined today by prioritisation of fiction over fact. In the second chapter vital role of information in governance is underlined and how technology has an adverse impact creating a gap between the government and the people militating against physical contact. The next chapter distinguishes between information and informed society an oft debated issue.

Chapter Four outlines the dialectics of reality creation to an uninformed audience exploiting technological processes and corporatisation of information. Next the author exposes how networks create information monopolies thus being the antithesis of empowerment of the individual in democracies. In the final chapter the author argues the proliferation of spin and mediatation and what is unstated nexus between media, ideologies and politics. The author thus outlines how in democracies even though information is not controlled it is

channelized to achieve political objectives. It goes to the credit of the author that he does not dismiss mainstream media as the devil but the need to transverse ills through building an informed society from the grass roots.

All in all a work of heavy reading for the academic, political scientist, media and practitioners of politics.

Brigadier RK Bhonsle, SM (Retd)

Indian Recipients of the Military Cross Vol. I & II. By Sushil Talwar, (New Delhi : Knowledge World, 2017), 580 p & 581 p 1292, Price Rs. 7800.00, ISBN 9789386288707

This is the first book to focus on the Military Cross and that too specifically on recipients from the Indian Army from the date it was instituted after the outbreak of the First World War till the date of Indian Independence when Indians were no longer eligible for the award.

The recognition of courage in the face of the enemy and extreme adversity have been essential features of military activity worldwide, but it was left to Sushil Talwar to bring out a comprehensive reference work meticulously researched and illustrated with photographs that resurrect the faces of brave warriors of a different period of time and space.

The medal and its ribbon are beautifully designed and were instituted in December 1914 as recognition of gallantry in the field for junior officers and warrant officers of the colonial armies. The medal is in the shape of a Greek cross and the ribbon is white with a central purple stripe.

The two volumes of the book contain detailed record of all the Indian recipients of the Military Cross of World Wars I & II which contribute significantly towards filling the gap in the absence of a publication in this matter.

The book brings out the relative scarcity of the award to Indian officers in both the World Wars considering that the Indian Army was the largest volunteer army in the history of human

conflict. During World War I, Indians and Gurkhas were awarded just 145 MCs and 895 in World War II.

An interesting aspect brought out by the author is that nearly one third of all awards of the Military Cross have been awarded to members of the Indian Medical Corps which brings out not only that this is the only corps which had Indians serving as officers during World War I, but also that the Indian Medical Corps had many brave and gallant personnel.

This work encapsulates an extraordinary labour of love that extended into a period of research of over ten years. Its documentation does great credit to the author and these volumes should be part of the collection of every military historian and every institution dealing with military history.

Major General Ian Cardozo, AVSM, SM (Retd)

Karan Singh : Jammu & Kashmir (1949- 1967). By Harbans Singh, (New Delhi, Brahaspati Publications, 2018) 352 pp, Rs. 695.00, ISBN: 81-85382-14-X

This well researched volume is essentially about J&K after its accession to India by Maharaja Hari Singh and the important role played by Karan Singh (virtually a teenager) to save the State from the nefarious designs of Sheikh Abdulla. The study is well structured in twenty one chapters. Arranged sequentially, they merge seamlessly into one another. As the author brings out, the seeds for discord in the Valley were sown much earlier by resurgent Islam that included efforts of Iqbal in championing the cause of Muslims in Palestine, Xinjiang, India and Kashmir. The author shows the two main players responsible for bringing continued misery, strife and isolation to J&K – Nehru and Sheikh Abdulla. For greater mileage, in 1938 Abdulla adroitly changed the name of Muslim Conference to National Conference. It remains a moot point whether Nehru and Patel were wise in removing Hari Singh so unceremoniously after he had signed the Instrument of Accession. Abdulla gradually acquired an Orwellian image and was encouraged no end by the appeasement politics of Nehru. Nehru's vision was extremely myopic and he could never fathom

the sentiment of Praja Parishad and its demand for, ek nishan, ek pradhan' , 'ek vidhan. Equally, Sheikh Abdulla never understood the cause of Ladakh or the Dogras. Nehru displayed chicanery and timidity in ignoring Maulana Azad's sane advice to sack Abdulla as also BN Mullick's report that the great game of the British since 1930's was to encourage Abdulla to spearhead a liberal movement in the Valley! Spellbound by Mountbatten, Nehru took the issue to the UN; which further emboldened Abdulla and he continued his ranting at the UN about injustices being perpetrated on Muslims. A supine bureaucracy guided by a blinkered Nehru continued to kow-tow to Abdulla resulting in Article 370 et al. Karan Singh finally saw through the perfidy of Abdulla when he wanted to abolish jagirdari without payment that would have hurt the Hindus in the State. Karan Singh showed great strength of character in ordering Sheikh Abdulla's arrest that later led to substantial progress in J&K. Harbans Singh has done a yeoman's service by highlighting various important facts about J&K. The book is a valuable addition to the Kashmir imbroglio.

Major General Ashok Joshi, VSM (Retd)