

# U.S.I. JOURNAL

**INDIA'S OLDEST JOURNAL ON DEFENCE AFFAIRS**

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## **PRINCIPAL CONTENTS**

People's Liberation Army at Ninety-Five : - Major General (Dr) GG Dwivedi  
Transformation Imperatives (Retd)  
and Ramifications

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Learning from the Ukraine War and - Lieutenant General PS Rajeshwar  
Applying it in the India – China Context (Retd)

Chinese Role in the Sri Lankan Financial - Dr Madhukar Shyam and  
Crisis and India's Reaction Ms. Swayamsiddha Samal

**Vol CLII**

**JULY-SEPTEMBER 2022**

**No 629**

## USI LATEST PUBLICATION DURING 2022-2021

Pub Code	Title of Book & Name of Author	Price(Rs)	Year
Adm-SYB/22**	"Strategic Year Book 2022" Edited by Maj Gen BK Sharma, AVSM, SM & Bar (Retd), Lt Gen GS Katoch, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd) and Gp Capt Sharad Tewari, VM (Retd)	2250	2022
Adm-6 (UNPO)/ 2022**	"UN Peace Operations Part - VI : Challenges of Mission Leadership in UN Peace Operations in delivering the mandate" Edited by Maj Gen AK Bardalai and Maj Gen PK Goswami, VSM (Retd)	350	2022
OP-2/ 2022**	"India and Blue Economy : Challenges and Way Forward" by Dr Roshan Khanijo & Ms Samridhi Roy	325	2022
OP-3/ 2022**	"Military Manual on Laws of War" by Wg Cdr Umesh Chandra Jha (Retd)	250	2022
M-1/ 2022**	"Eastern Military Thought" by Colonel Harjeet Singh (Retd)	325	2022
Adm-5 (UNPO) /2022**	"UN Peace Operations Part - V : Women, Peace & Security" Edited by Maj Gen AK Bardalai and Maj Gen PK Goswami, VSM (Retd)	350	2022
CMHCS-5	"History of Indian Air Defence Artillery 1940-1945" By Col Mandeep Singh (Retd) M/s Manohar Publishers & Distributors	1495	2022
OP-1/ 2022**	"Military Legal System in China" By Wg Cdr Umesh Chandra Jha (Retd)	250	2022
CMHCS-4**	"BATTLE TALES" – Soldiers' Recollections of the 1971 War" Edited by Sqn Ldr RTS Chhina, MBE (Retd)	1350	2022
R-111**	"STRATEGIC YEAR BOOK 2021" Concept and Structure by Maj Gen BK Sharma, AVSM, SM & Bar (Retd), Edited by Lt Gen GS Katoch, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd), Gp Capt Sharad Tewari, VM (Retd) and Dr Roshan Khanijo	1850	2021
R-112	"Maritime Corridors in the Indo-Pacific : Geopolitical Implications for India" By Cdr Subhasish Sarangi M/s Pentagon Press	1295	2021
NSP-38**	"Role of Niche and Disruptive Technologies in India's Deterrence and War Fighting Capabilities" By Lt Gen PJS Pannu, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd)	295	2021
NSS-66**	"TRANSNATIONAL TERRORISM – Evolving Threats and Responses" Edited by Maj Gen RPS Bhadauria, VSM (Retd) and Dr Roshan Khanijo	850	2021
M-1/21**	"The Determinants of India's National Military Strategy" By Lt Gen (Dr) Rakesh Sharma, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd)	295	2021
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\*\* Available at M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd

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ISSN0041-770X

The  
**Journal**  
of the  
**United Service Institution**  
of  
**India**

Published by Authority of the Council



(Established : 1870)

**Postal Address :**

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e-mail: [director@usiofindia.org](mailto:director@usiofindia.org)

[dde@usiofindia.org](mailto:dde@usiofindia.org)

[cs3@usiofindia.org](mailto:cs3@usiofindia.org)

[ddadm@usiofindia.org](mailto:ddadm@usiofindia.org)

[ci@usiofindia.org](mailto:ci@usiofindia.org)

[cafhr@usiofindia.org](mailto:cafhr@usiofindia.org)

[library@usiofindia.org](mailto:library@usiofindia.org)

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**Vol CLII**

**July-September 2022**

**No 629**

USI Journal is a peer reviewed Journal, published quarterly in April, July, October and January. Subscription per annum w.e.f. 01 Jan 2016 : In India Rs. 1100.00. Postage extra (Rs 160 for four issues). Subscription should be sent through Bank Draft/Local/Multicity Cheque in favour of Director USI of India. Articles, correspondence and books for review should be sent to the Editor. Advertisement enquiries should be addressed to the Deputy Director (Adm).

Overseas annual subscription (By Air Mail) - £ 50 or US \$ 80

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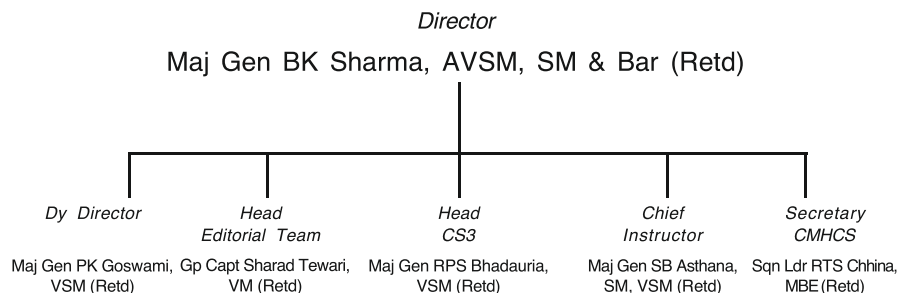
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**Editor**

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(b) DSSC (Navy)	1 <sup>st</sup> Week of Jan 2023	Jul 2023	–	Rs 3000/- for Paper-1
(c) Part B	2 <sup>nd</sup> Week of Dec 2022. Registration Open for 2022	Jun 2023 to Jul 2023	Rs 3000/-	Rs 1000/- each for Tac, CA & MH Rs 800/- each for Adm & ML
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1. USI welcomes original researched articles pertaining to national security, defence matters and military history for publication in the USI Journal. Articles should preferably not exceed 2,500 words. Along with the article, the author should forward abstract of the article not exceeding ten per cent of the total words. These should be forwarded as a word document on e mail to the Editor, United Service Institution of India, on [dde@usiofindia.org](mailto:dde@usiofindia.org). In the email the author should state that “ the article titled (Title of Article) has neither been previously published in print or online, nor has it been offered to any other agency for publication. The Editor reserves the right to make alterations.
2. It is mandatory that the author furnishes complete details of the book/journal referred to in the article as end notes. A guide to writing endnotes is given on the next page. Besides endnotes, if the author so desires, a bibliography may also be included, though it is not mandatory.
3. The article should be in Arial Font, size 12 and English (UK). Avoid use of symbols like %, & and so on unless unavoidable to explain a point. The date style should be 24 Jun 2020, except in the citations where it will be Jun 24, 2020. Abbreviations if any, should be used in their expanded form the first time and indicated in brackets.
4. The full name and address of the author along with a brief Curriculum Vitae should be given. Serving officers are advised to follow the prevailing Services instructions for publications of their articles.
5. The author will receive a copy of the issue of the Journal in which his/her article appears along with three offprints. A suitable honorarium will also be paid after the article is published.

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

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Some examples are given below:-

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

<sup>2</sup> Lina Bolzoni and Pietri Coral. *The Culture Memory*, (Bologna: Societa editrice Il Mulino, 1992), p 45.

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

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

<sup>4</sup> R Polrer, *Learning Physics*, (Academic, New York, 1993), p 4

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p.9.

<sup>6</sup> T Elliot, *Astrophysics*, (Springer, Berlin, 1989), p.141.

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

<sup>8</sup> Elliot, *op cit.*, p148.

<sup>9</sup> Elliot, *loc, cit.*

3. Where websites have been used to access information, the complete web address of the website should be cited, followed by the date the website was accessed by the author, e.g. Accessed Jun 24, 2020 from <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1947degana.html>.

## **Additions to the USI Library for the Quarter Ending Sep 2022**

During this period a total of 19 new books have been added. Details of the new books are available on USI Website.

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During the period Jul – Sep 2022, 12 registered as New Life Members; 04 Ordinary Member renewed membership and 171 registered as new Ordinary Members.

### **Course Members**

During Jul-Sep 2022, 73 Officers registered for Course Membership.



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The views expressed in the Journal are the opinions of the contributors and the Editor, and are not necessarily official views or those of the USI Council.

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## Editorial

Dear Readers,

The USI Journal for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter of the year 2022 is here. USI has been able to bring out its quarterly Journal for the last 151 years without a break. It has been able to make key contribution to the expanding horizon of the national security, defence studies, and strategic affairs. The Journal comes with a diversity of views from the strategic and national security studies community both from within and outside India. The issue contains 11 well researched articles, a book review and six short reviews of recent books.

The lead article, titled 'People's Liberation Army at Ninety-Five Transformation Imperatives and Ramifications' has been written by Major General (Dr) GG Dwivedi, SM, VSM & Bar (Retd). The author highlights that at Ninety-Five, PLA is on track to emerge as a modern military at par with the Western Armies by mid of the century. President Xi Jinping has initiated a path breaking defence reforms process to transform PLA in to modern military, in keeping with China's expanding global role. The author argues that holistic review of national security by our policy makers is no more an option but an urgent imperative.

In the complex power struggle dynamics for control of the newly constructed Indo-Pacific Region, South Korea and India have been playing a vital role to strategically avoid any hegemonic control of the region. With their national interest in minds, these two countries have been prioritising strategic autonomy, in turn, building foundation for a safer and hegemon free Asian Region. This has been well explained in the article titled 'South Korea as a Middle Power in the Emerging Dynamics of Indo-Pacific' by Professor Kunal Anand.

The next article is 'Learning from the Ukraine War and Applying it in the India – China Context' by Lieutenant General PS Rajeshwar, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd). The article explains how the Ukraine War, in progress since Feb 2022, has affected the globe in many ways. The article elucidates takeaways from the war and how their swift implementation will make our nation, and the armed forces, much more formidable.

Dr Madhukar Shyam and Ms Swayamsiddha Samal jointly write on 'Chinese Role in the Sri Lankan Financial Crisis and India's Reaction'. The authors look at the Sri Lankan financial crisis and how the country managed to land into such a situation. The article concludes by elucidating India's financial aid to Sri Lanka with an overall analysis. This is followed by an article titled 'Net Assessment: The Art of Long View' by Major General Sanjeev Chowdhry (Retd). The article describes Net Assessment (NA) as an instrument for military strategic analysis and its importance as an important strategic tool in national security management systems. The author covers the process of NA, tools and techniques used, and formulation of strategies under NA.

The article titled 'The Corps of Sikh Pioneers' by Colonel Harjeet Singh (Retd) brings out that although the Sikh Pioneers did not have the length of service of many other regiments in the Indian Army, they saw more fighting than has fallen to the lot of many older units. The article encapsulates the history of the Sikh Pioneers from 1857 till they were disbanded in 1932. This is followed by an article titled 'Killing in the Name: The Russia-Ukraine War, Illicit Arms Trafficking and National Security Implications for India' by Mr Archishman Ray Goswami. Here the author highlights how Russia-Ukraine War has significantly expanded the size of the international arms market and thus assesses the challenges that illicit arms trafficking poses specifically for India. The article concludes with a brief series of policy recommendations for the Indian Government to follow.

The article 'Pixels Speak - 'The Visible Intelligence' by Lieutenant Colonel Amandeep Singh highlights that imagery intelligence is the science of converting information, extracted from imagery, into intelligence with respect to areas of interest. The author argues that imagery intelligence will see a great transformation in the next decade as future success will be critically dependent upon the effective utilisation of imagery intelligence and its effective integration in creating a Common Operational Picture. The next article talks on how the covid pandemic, despite all its socio-economic disruption, opened new avenues for India to chart its way towards a self-reliant and sustainable country. India opted to turn adversity into opportunity, and is, hence, moving towards realisations of Atma Nirbhar Bharat says Dr Sanjay Kumar in his

article titled 'Concept of Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan and its Relevance'.

Mr Mohammed Zaid in his article, 'Perspective on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS): Employment and Legal Aspects' examines the military uses of LAWS as well as highlights arguments over the use of such systems, including ethical and legal implications. The last article, titled 'Civil Society: A New Theatre of Warfare in India's Internal Security Environment', by Mr Srijan Sharma highlights how Civil Society is being referred to as the new frontier of warfare wherein, the adversary tries to subvert the target population through psychological warfare to an extent that they revolt against their own country or start subversive activities.

In the Review Article, Lieutenant General Ghanshyam Singh Katoch, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd) writes about the book 'India's Pakistan Conundrum: Managing a Complex Relationship' by Sharat Sabharwal. The reviewer states that the book takes a very detailed look with a first-person insight, covering all aspects of very vexed and complicated relationship and an intractable dispute. The author's voice is one of reason and the politics of muscular nationalism often drowns such voices in both India and Pakistan.

This issue also carries short reviews of the following books:

- Military Musings: 150 Years of Indian Military Thought from the Journal of the United Service Institution of India.  
Edited by Sqn Ldr Rana T.S. Chhina, MBE  
Reviewed by Brig (Dr.) SP Sinha, VSM (Retd)
- House of Terror: An Insider's True Story.  
By Anwar (Ikhwan code name Umar);  
Reviewed by Ms Samriddhi Roy
- The Lurking Hydra: South Asia's Terror Travail.  
By Lt Gen Subroto Mitra  
Reviewed by Col Shanti Swaroop (Retd)
- Heroes of 1971: The Braveheart of the War That Gave Birth to Bangladesh.  
By Rajesh Ramachandran  
Reviewed by Maj Gen Jagatbir Singh, VSM (Retd)

- Valour & Wisdom: 100 Years of Unparalleled Leadership.  
Edited by Air Marshal PP Reddy and Mr Sidharth Mishra  
Reviewed by Gp Capt Sharad Tewari, VM (Retd)
- The United Service Institution of India Strategic Yearbook 2022.  
Edited by Maj Ge BK Sharma AVSM, SM\*\* (Retd),  
Lt Gen Ghanshyam Singh Katoch, PVSM, AVSM, VSM  
(Retd) & Gp Capt Sharad Tewari, VM (Retd)  
Reviewed by Mr Vinayak Sharma

As always, we look forward to your feedback and suggestions while we continue with our attempt to maintain our standards of research and writing, and pleasurable reading.

Happy Reading!

Gp Capt Sharad Tewari, VM (Retd)  
Head Editorial Team

# People's Liberation Army at Ninety-Five : Transformation Imperatives and Ramifications

Major General (Dr) GG Dwivedi (Retd)<sup>®</sup>

## Abstract

*At Ninety-Five, PLA is on track to emerge as a modern military at par with the Western Armies by mid of the Century. As the 'Army of the Party', PLA is well represented in the nation's governance structure. Communist leadership has accorded priority to the defence modernisation. However, after President Xi Jinping took over in 2012-13, he initiated path breaking defence reforms to transform PLA into a modern military, in keeping with China's expanding global role. White papers and vision documents redefine the role of PLA in sync with nation's strategic objectives. The doctrinal and structural changes aim to prepare the PLA to fight and win 'limited wars under the conditions of Informatisation and Intelligentisation'. Double digit increase in the budgetary allocations to defence provide requisite monetary support towards modernisation of PLA. Significant accretion in China's war waging potential has far reaching implications for the global polity, particularly for India given the disputed borders and divergent national interests. Hence, a holistic review of national security by our policy makers is no more an option but an urgent imperative.*

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<sup>®</sup>Major General (Dr.) GG Dwivedi, SM, VSM & Bar (Retd) is an Infantry officer with 38 years of distinguished service in the Army. A veteran of 1971 Bangladesh War, he has commanded a Battalion in the Siachen Glacier, Brigade in the Kashmir Valley, and Division in the North East. He served as Defence Attaché in China. An alumnus of National Defence College and Harvard Kennedy, he has a PhD from JNU, besides MBA and Interpreter ship in Chinese. He is presently a Professor Strategic-IR, Management Studies, and is an acclaimed writer and speaker.

*Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CLII, No. 629, July-September 2022.*

## Introduction

The two million strong 'People's Liberation Army' (PLA) — the world's largest standing armed force — marked its 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 01 August 2022, with show of its military prowess. The PLA traces its roots to 'Nanchang Uprising' of 01 August 1927; the day the Communist revolutionaries like Mao Zedong, Chen Yi, Lin Biao, and Zhou Enlai revolted against the Kuomintang (KMT) National Forces. Subsequently, the Communist Party of China (CPC) gained 'heavenly mandate' to rule through the 'barrel of the gun'. It was during the 'Ninth Meeting of Building the Party and Army' held at Gutian, Fujian Province, in December 1929, that Mao defined the role of PLA, "to chiefly serve the political ends".<sup>1</sup> Here on, absolute control of the Communist Party over the Red Army became entrenched, adhering to the dictum 'Party controls the Gun'. Mao and Deng Xiaoping — PLA stalwarts, as First and Second-Generation Leaders of the CPC respectively — steered the 'People's Republic of China' (PRC) since its establishment in 1949 for almost half a century.

CPC and PLA, the two key pillars of PRC's organisational structure, share a unique symbiotic relationship. PLA is well represented in the two apex governing bodies namely, Politburo (has 2 members out of 25) and Central Committee (accounts for around 20 percent of 205 permanent and 171 alternate members).<sup>2</sup> Incidentally, it is the Central Committee which elects the Politburo and 'Politburo Standing Committee' (PSC), the highest body which currently is composed of seven members. Until 1997, PLA had representation even in the PSC as well; General Liu Huaqing was the last one to hold the position. The PLA played a key role during the Communist Revolution and has frequently intervened in crucial domestic events like Cultural Revolution (1964-76) and Tiananmen protests (1989). It performed creditably during the Korean War (1950-53) against the US led UN Forces. In 1962, PLA inflicted a humiliating defeat on the Indian Army. However, it performed poorly against Vietnam in 1979, as a sequel to which commenced the process of its restructuring and modernisation.

The Communist Party has accorded high priority to defence modernisation as military is seen to be a vital component of state's 'Comprehensive National Power' (CNP). In 1993, the then President, Jiang Zemin, directed the PLA to prepare for 'local



wars under modern conditions', on observing US military power during the Gulf War. It entailed a major doctrinal shift from 'People's War'. In 2004, the then President, Hu Jintao, laid down the revised mandate for the PLA to 'win limited wars under informationised conditions'.<sup>3</sup> The PLA's transition from a guerrilla force to a modern army makes a unique case. Under the present dispensation, the scale and pace at which the transformation process is being driven has no precedence. This has serious ramifications, both, in the regional and global context.

### **PLA Transformation: Key Imperatives**

On assuming the mantle of 'Fifth Generation Leadership' in 2012-13, President Xi Jinping initiated the process of transforming the military with twin objectives; prepare the Armed Forces for China's expanding global role; and establish firm control of the Party over the PLA. Interestingly, on 30 October 2014, Xi visited Gutian and addressed the 'Military Political Work Conference' and reiterated the principle of 'Party leading Military'; reaffirming Mao's tenet eight and half decades on.<sup>4</sup> The process of revolutionary reforms entailed holistic review of the role, revision of war fighting doctrines, organisational restructuring including civil-military integration, command and control, especially higher direction of war, and jointness in operations.

For the strategic direction, 'White Paper on National Defence 2015' was issued with focus on 'active defence' and shift in the naval strategy from 'coastal defence' to 'off shore waters defence with open sea protection'.<sup>5</sup> In 2017, during the 19th CPC National Congress, timelines for PLA's reorganisation were formalised i.e., achieve mechanisation by 2020, basic modernisation by 2035 and transformation into the world class force by 2050.<sup>6</sup> According to 'White Paper on National Defence 2019', the thrust was on the 'defence in the new era'. The 14<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan and Vision 2035 envisaged; firstly, creation of high-level strategic deterrence, joint operations systems, and joint training support structures to achieve integrated employment of armed forces potential; secondly, cultivate 'three in one' new type of military talent; which entailed modernisation, intelligentisation of weapons and equipment alongside innovation in defence, Science & Technology (S&T) and cutting-edge technologies.<sup>7</sup>

China's strategic culture believes in exploiting 'strategic configuration of power' by gaining position of advantage to achieve the stated objectives. Its ways of war fighting have adopted comprehensive approach which entails balancing 'war preparation' and 'war prevention', responding to multi dimension threats by concentrating superior forces with ability to undertake 'trans-theatre' operations, and expand military cooperation to establish military security network.<sup>8</sup> The 'Grey Zone Warfare' has been conceptualised in the form 'Three Warfares' (Propaganda, Psychological, and Legal dimensions) to be concurrently waged along with the conventional operations.

As per 'China's Science of Military 2020', PLA perceives that 'competition continuum' (mixture of cooperation and competition below armed conflict) has widened and strategic thinking favours compellence vis-à-vis coercion. PLA strategy of 'active defence' entails seizing moral high ground and gaining politico-diplomatic advantage to justify 'use of force to stop war'. Keeping disputes 'hot and active' facilitates the Communist Regime to achieve multiple objectives; raising the nationalism pitch at home, constraining adversaries, and sensitising the international community about PRC concerns.

PLA has gone in a big way to harness disruptive technologies, especially Information Warfare (IW), integration of strategic space, cyber, electronic, and psychological warfare capabilities under the single umbrella — 'Strategic Support Force' (SSF). This now forms the foundation of its new war fighting doctrine based on 'Informatisation and Intelligentisation'. It reflects the centrality of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and robotic technologies.<sup>9</sup> Incidentally, China is amongst the top tier of nations to develop quantum, nano, hypersonic, and directed energy weapons technologies.

To implement the doctrines, Central Military Commission (CMC), the apex defence body, was streamlined; Xi Jinping, the Chairman, formally designating himself as 'Commander in Chief' to exercise direct control over the PLA. At the operational level, erstwhile 17 odd army, air force, and navy military regions were reorganised in to five Theatre Commands (TCs), with all the war fighting resources placed under a single commander 6 including logistics and training facilities, thus ensuring seamless synergy. In addition, 84 corps size formations were created which included 13

operational corps. These were further organised into combined arms brigades with agile and adaptable structures lending to rapid deployment. The 'Western Theatre Command' (WTC) responsible for complete border with India, most expansive of the five TCs, includes the sensitive regions of Tibet and Xinjiang in its geographic area.

The PLA Air Force (PLAAF) was assigned specific strategic roles and restructured. Its revised mission entailed shift from 'territorial air defence' to encompass both 'defence and offence', besides building 'air space defence force' and power projection capabilities to meet the requirements of 'Informatised Operations'.<sup>10</sup> It has been organised into corps (including airborne corps), divisions, regiments, and battalions, deployed in 150 airbases. The PLAAF is expected to have around 1300 fighters (4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Generation), including few squadrons of J 20 and F 31/J stealth fighter in its inventory, over next couple of years.

PRC has adopted 'Mahanian' approach to achieve global supremacy by mid of the century. PLA Navy (PLAN) is in quest to acquire outreach to 'far seas' in a bid to acquire maritime dominance in the Indo-Pacific. PLAN ships now regularly sail in the Mediterranean, the Baltic Sea and in the waters around Europe. It is also turning attention to the Arctic (Polar Silk Road), the next maritime frontier. Numerically, China already has the largest navy in the world with more than 350 ships including 3 aircraft carriers though it lags behind the US in terms of capability. By 2035, PLAN plans to have over 450 ships, a third being blue water capable.<sup>11</sup> The PLAN is ably complemented by the Chinese Coast Guard; the largest in the world with over 100 ocean going platforms.

China's 'Rocket Force' (RF), erstwhile 'Second Artillery', consisting of both conventional and nuclear assets, has been revamped to provide greater range, mobility, warhead capability, and precision. PRC's earlier nuclear weapon arsenal, estimated to be 250-300, is expected to reach a figure of around 700 by 2027.<sup>12</sup> China has nearly 100 'Inter Continental Ballistic Missiles' (ICBMs) including DF 41, capable of delivering up to 10 warheads with a range of over 12,000 km. The number of DF 21 and DF 26, medium range missiles, has increased from mere 16 to 200 launchers during last few years. China is also known to have developed 'Hypersonic Glide Vehicle' (HGV) / 'Hypersonic Cruise Missile' (HCM).

China's military budget has kept pace with its growing economic profile, defence spending rising almost ten times in last two decades, from \$ 22.93 billion in 2000 to \$ 230 billion in 2022.<sup>13</sup> Given that China has historically under reported its military expenditure, actual spending is estimated to be far higher.

### **Ramifications**

The magnitude of on-going defence reforms in PRC tantamounts to the biggest ever military shake up witnessed in generations. Two years back, on PLA's Ninety Third Anniversary, Xi Jinping, while presiding over the CPC Central Committee, had stated, "To develop socialism with Chinese characteristics and achieve national rejuvenation, efforts to make country prosperous and military strong go hand in hand". Xi also underscored the implementation of strategic guidelines in the 'New Era'; and stressed on drawing a road map and cultivating high calibre militant talent.<sup>14</sup>

On 28 July 2022, speaking at a 'Study Session', on the eve of PLA's 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Xi stated, "Chinese Military should be led by 'reliable people' loyal to the ruling Communist Party".<sup>15</sup> Reiterating that ultimate goal is to build Armed Forces that are able to 'fight and win', Xi called for efforts to enhance the supply of personnel with strong combat readiness.<sup>16</sup> Xi has instituted a number of measures to expand the role of the Chinese Armed Forces. The amended 'Chinese Defence Law' which came into force on 01 January 2021, empowers the state government to mobilise manpower and resources to counter any threat to national security and developmental interests. It lends to greater 'military-civil fusion', facilitating dual use of resources. Further, a new 'border law' applicable from 01 January 2022 seeks to erect boundary markers and legalise the transgressions and incursions.

As per the state media, Chairman Xi has signed off on 59 articles to issue guidelines on 'military operations other than war' which standardise and provide legal basis for troops to carryout missions like disaster relief, humanitarian aid, escort and peacekeeping.<sup>17</sup> This has raised eyebrows as this move comes just months after Putin's invasion of Ukraine, termed as 'special military operation'. Apparently, it will become part of PLA's 'Grey Zone' warfare strategy and could be used to justify future missions aimed at unification of Taiwan with the mainland. It may also be linked to the recent security pact which Beijing has signed with

the Solomon Islands. The ongoing PLA's overhaul is well aligned to Xi's grand ventures like the 'Belt and Road Initiative' (BRI), 'Maritime Silk Route', and 'Digitised Highway' project. With the accretion of its military potential, Beijing's growing aggressiveness, especially after Xi came to power, is evident from the activities in South China Sea, across the Taiwan Strait, and on the LAC against India. Cognisant of PLA's lack of operational experience, Communist leadership is using these forays to battle harden its military.

### **Conclusion**

Given the divergent geo political interests, disputed borders and on-going stand-off in Eastern Ladakh, coupled with China-Pak nexus, the security situation is extremely challenging for India. PLA has gone in for major infrastructure build-up in Eastern Ladakh and along the LAC opposite Arunachal Pradesh. Forward deployment of air and ground assets in Tibet and Xinjiang, provocative behaviour, incorporation of new defence and border laws amply manifest the Dragon's aggressive design. PLA's large-scale aggression in May 2020 was seemingly a replication of Mao's 1962 nudge, to send a strong message to the Indian leadership. Beijing apparently has no intention of resolving the boundary issue as obvious from the progress of politico-diplomatic and military level talks. PLA is likely to continue with its 'nibble and negotiate' policy in the realm of 'Grey Zone' warfare. It is time that our policy makers and defence planners comprehend the gravity of the situation and get the strategic direction right. It entails putting in place a national defence policy and joint war fighting doctrines, creating institutionalised higher defence organisational structures to prosecute limited operations in multi-domain setting; both in conventional cum 'non-contact' warfare scenarios. Ambiguities and anomalies with regards to the role of the CDS, architecture of 'Theatre Commands', complexities of border management, integrated development of military infrastructure and logistics besides 'procurement cum acquisition procedures' need to be ironed out on highest priority. All said, PLA at 'Ninety-Five' is in the wake of deep-rooted transformation which is doctrine cum technology driven, adequately supported by the budgetary allocations. It is fast closing up the capability gap vis-à-vis the US and Western Armies. In the coming decades, PLA will be able to take on extended global missions in keeping

with its enlarged role. This will dramatically change the balance of power matrix and world must be prepared to face an even more aggressive China in the coming times. For India, it has serious ramifications and merits a holistic review of national security and institution of suitable measures in both near and long term perspective.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> David Shambaugh (1996), "The Soldier and State in China" in Brain Hook "The Individual in China" Clarendon Press, Oxford, New York, p 108.

<sup>2</sup> Xinhua News Agency (25 October 2017), "List of Members 19th CPC Central Committee.

<sup>3</sup> James Mulvenon (9 January 2009), "Chairman Hu and PLA-New Historic Mission", China Leadership Monitor No 27, Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

<sup>4</sup> China Military Online (3 November 2014), Party Controls the Gun.

<sup>5</sup> "White Paper on China's Military Strategy" (May 2015), The State Council Information Office, People's Republic of China, Beijing.

<sup>6</sup> Note 2, op cit.

<sup>7</sup> 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) for National Economic and Social Development and Vision 2035 of People's Republic of China. Accessed Aug 25, 2022 from <https://perma.cc/73AK-BUW2>

<sup>8</sup> Note 5, op cit.

<sup>9</sup> Yatasuzuka Masaaki (January 2022), "PLA's Intelligentized Warfare: The Politics of China's Military Strategy", Security and Strategy Vol 2, National Institute of Defence Studies, Tokyo.

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<sup>11</sup> Fanell James E, (13 June, 2020) "China's Global Navy Eyeing Sea Control by 2030, Superiority by 2049", Sunday Guardian. <https://www.sundayguardianlive.com/news/chinas-global-navy-eyeing-sea-control-2030-superiority-2049>.

<sup>12</sup> Written testimony of Fuell Lee, Hearing on "China's Military Modernization and Implications for the United States" in 'U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission; Second Session' of One Hundred Thirteenth Congress. January 30, 2014.

<sup>13</sup> China Military Spending/Defense Budget 1989-2022". Macrotrends <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/CHN/china/military-spending-defense-budget>

<sup>14</sup> <http://eng.chinamail.com.cn> (22 July2020). (Accessed 26 August 2022)

<sup>15</sup> PTI, "Chinese military should be headed by 'reliable people' loyal to Communist Party: Xi Jinping", *The Hindu*, Jul 30, 2022, Accessed 28 August 2022, Chinese military should be headed by 'reliable people' loyal to Communist Party: Xi Jinping - The Hindu

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Xinhua, "Xi signs order to promulgate outlines on military operations other than war", *Global Times* 13 June 2022, Beijing. Xi signs order to promulgate outlines on military operations other than war-Xinhua (news.cn)



# South Korea as a Middle Power in the Emerging Dynamics of Indo-Pacific

Professor Kunal Anand®

## Abstract

*As many of the world leaders sat pondering over the politics of the Indo-Pacific and how to neutralise the exponentially increasing power struggle of China and the USA, North Korea, in frenzy, conducted six rounds of short-range missile testing since the beginning of the year 2022. In this complex power struggle dynamics for control of the newly constructed Indo-Pacific Region, South Korea and India have been playing a vital role to strategically avoid any hegemonic control of the region. With their national interest in their minds, these two countries have been prioritising strategic autonomy, in turn building foundation for a safer and hegemon free Asian Region. With a mix of diplomacy, trade relations, and soft power, they have been challenging the world view of hard power being the only answer to traditional security issues. With more than one aligning factors, these two countries can work together to neutralise the power struggle and bring peace to the region while keeping their national interest at the focal point.*

## Introduction

For a decade now, South Korea has been pushed to take a stance vis-à-vis traditional security issues arising in the Asian maritime region. The pressure started since the disputes of the South China Sea and now gradually moved on to the Indo-Pacific. South Korea, however, has tried to maintain a neutral stance and has so far chosen to not be on any 'side'. With the growing great power rivalry in the Indo-Pacific, every middle and small powers have been adjusting their stance to conjoin their national interest

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®Professor Kunal Anand is an Assistant Professor and Coordinator (Korean Language, Literature and Culture Studies and Korean Studies) at Amity School of Languages, Amity University, Haryana.

*Journal of the United Service Institution of India*, Vol. CLII, No. 629, July-September 2022.



to the politics of the maritime domain. Seoul needs to extrapolate its strategy as an important middle power in the region. Although a late joiner, its role as a middle power has considerably grown post 'Indo-Pacific era'. Oscillating between Quad, Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) strategy, AUKUS and various other organisations which have the capacity to escalate tension at any given point of time in the strategically contested theatre of Indo-Pacific Region, Seoul has, so far, tried to keep its balancing act intact.

Indo-Pacific is a geo-strategic supra region which encompasses the confluence of the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, and has become a hub of trade within the last decade. With no defined border, this region is accountable for almost two-third of the world trade. The gradual eastward shift of the 'economic centre of gravity' will lead to the Indo-Pacific amounting to almost 56% of the total world growth.<sup>1</sup> The current state and the projections have unfailingly made the world economies, and the major players in this region, accept the newly developed construct while fighting to secure their seat. However, the biggest drama is unfolded by the power tussle that has been ensuing due to the clash of the US and the Chinese interests in the region. In this conundrum, the regional players have been trying to recalibrate their position so that they are not caught in the crossfire between the heavyweights.

The tension ensues from the economic rise of the 'revisionist state', the structural difference between the political system of the US and China, and from the basic understanding of co-operation. Any attempt to resolve the issue gets stuck between 'trust before co-operation' and 'confidence building measures as an end to trust building'.<sup>2</sup> From the South China Sea issue to the freedom to collect military intelligence within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), the differences see no end. The denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula is another issue that has loomed for far too long. While the US expects Complete, Verifiable and Irreversible Dismantlement (CVID) of Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK, also known as North Korea) nuclear program, Pyongyang has forever maintained the stance of phased denuclearisation. Pyongyang maintains that denuclearisation of Korean peninsula means the removal of American nuclear umbrella from in and around the Korean peninsula lest it creates an imbalance of power structure.<sup>3</sup> DPRK feels that suspension of

nuclear program will leave it vulnerable like Israel or Libya.<sup>4</sup> For Kim Jong-un it becomes a question of economic hardships versus threat to life. In such a hostile situation, Seoul's involvement in any traditional security initiative that threatens Beijing's position can be considered provocative.

The Indo-Pacific strategy on part of any country cannot emphasise confrontation but co-operation. Any conflict with China, which is a leading military power and trading partner of majority of the countries of the world, will lead to an economic devastation which no nation might be prepared for. Moreover, the Covid-era has specifically reiterated that the world cannot function while exerting alienation, dissociation, non-cooperation, all or any of the mentioned, with an economic, military, and sizeable giant like China. It is the need of the hour to induce China into the world order to tackle various global issues like climate change, health issues, piracy et al.

Despite being a part of the Indo-Pacific, Seoul has so far trodden very cautiously on the FOIP strategy of Washington, although assuring collaboration between important aspects of FOIP and New Southern Policy (NSP) in 2019. Middle powers like South Korea know that any rhetoric or action on their part may initiate retaliation from China, an arms race or even a direct war. The middle powers want strategic autonomy and being able to not choose sides. Moon Hee-sang, the speaker of the National Assembly of Republic of Korea (ROK) said that choosing between the US and China is like choosing between economy and security.<sup>5</sup>

China considers the Indo-Pacific as a construct created by the US to counter the influence of China in the Asian Region. The translation of Abe's FOIP idea into a strategy by the US has made China sceptical about the US's intentions of increasing its presence in the Indo-Pacific. The bellicose approach of FOIP of 2017 has gradually transformed into the change of the undertone in 2019 by including phrases like 'promotion of networked region', 'peaceful resolution of disputes'.<sup>6</sup>

ROK is in a perpetual state of quandary when it comes to taking a hard stance against China. There are multiple factors that influences Seoul's stance on traditional security. South Korea's policies are framed keeping in mind the issue of North Korea at the focal point. DPRK is not just a security threat; its compliance

to the world order is a key to Korean reunification. China's cooperation is of utmost importance in keeping DPRK under check as well as facilitates the unification process. After Kim Jong-un's advent to power, the lip to teeth relationship has not been as smooth, but not enough to break the tide either. Seoul cannot irk Beijing lest it dampens any hope of reunification. Security threats from such a Brobdingnagian power, and economic arms twisting incidences of China like the 'garlic standoff' of 2000<sup>7</sup> and the 'THAAD retaliation' of 2017<sup>8</sup> has also made South Korea wary of disturbing the turbid waters. South Korea is so far trying to not lose its strategic agency as it did during the division of the Korean peninsula. There is a Korean saying-“*고래 싸움에 새우등 터진다*” (*gole ssaume saeudeung teojinda*) which translates to 'When there is a clash of two whales, the back of a shrimp is broken'. Like every middle and small power, ROK too feels that it is caught in the clash between the 'wolf-warrior diplomacy' and the 'jackal diplomacy'. Therefore, Seoul either opts for the balancing role or tries to not make it a zero-sum game.<sup>9</sup> Not making the two alliances mutually exclusive provides ROK a lot of manoeuvring space.

The Asian Region has already been in conflict since Asia-Pacific Region gained traction. However, with the shift of attention to the newer Indo-Pacific construct, the centre of the region also somewhat changed from China to India. While the power tussle in the region ensued, India was no less in dilemma than South Korea. India, in fact, remains at par in vulnerability to South Korea if not more. It shares a disputed land border with China. China has been a close strategic ally of Pakistan providing it with economic, military and technical assistance. Pakistan in turn has been a security nightmare for India. So, any traditional security measures taken by India which even remotely irks China, expectedly results in a matter of national security crisis. In a situation where all the major players of the region like the US, Australia, Japan, the UK and the ASEAN nations expect India to play a more proactive role in the Indo-Pacific, India needs to evaluate its move so as not to raise a war like situation. With the Neo-Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) policies of alignment which suits its national interest to the best, India has been trying to use the mix of hard power and soft power or as it has been termed as smart power.

### **The Limitations in Conducting Soft Power Diplomacy**

The soft power diplomacy of South Korea has been questioned and various limitations have been defined to conclude that it will fail in the long run. Soft power cannot be a replacement for hard power, is an undeniable fact. South Korea is not a naïve state to have missed the point. However, the soft power diplomacy has provided Seoul to develop deeper ties with its neighbours as well as Western nations. Moreover, a demand to “take a stand” seems more like a lecture when it is not followed by a solution to the brunt that South Korea will evidently face in case of a Chinese retaliation. The logical corollary between rhetoric and reaction is often conveniently overlooked. The demand for a firm stance also carries a façade of ‘the right to choose’ while the ambiguity carries the undertone of ‘stance against China’.

Of course, the soft power diplomacy comes with its own limitations. However, all the problems with the current diplomatic stance of Seoul flourish on the question of ‘what ifs’. It needs to be acknowledged that diplomacy can take various forms, can have various levels of impact, and can work in various time frames. Underplaying South Korean soft power diplomacy is being unaccepting to any other form of diplomacy the US does not subscribe to. Moreover, the soft power diplomacy is helping Seoul inch closer to build strategic security ties with various states. The ‘balancing act’ diplomacy of ROK, is seen in the light of only the restricting factors that binds Seoul’s hand. A deeper analysis is required to explore the deliberate engagement and hedging policy of ROK.

Historical linkages of South Korea to China and North Korea are also overlooked denying the role of any perceptual factors in framing of the nation’s policies. While North Korea remains a disgruntled brother than an enemy state, the Declaration of Independence of Korea exemplifies their historical view of China as the protector of the East.<sup>10</sup>

The Korean peninsula was divided along the 38th parallel by the US and the USSR on ideological lines, without the participation of any Korean representatives. Although these two Koreas have ideological differences now, but they are more like disgruntled brothers than enemies. ROK’s foreign policy has always been designed with DPRK and the issue of unification of the Korean

peninsula at its epicentre. ROK detests from taking any step that would jeopardise its year's long effort of unification.

On the other hand, historically Korean peninsula was a vassal state of China for a long time. So, whatever the state of diplomacy or the public opinion right now, it needs to be agreed upon that ROK is less likely to see China in the same light, as the rest of the world does, despite its belligerence. The Declaration of Independence of Korea exemplifies their historical view of China as the protector of the East.<sup>11</sup> In the above context, it is, therefore, important that we understand the role of ROK on contested issues with China and DPRK on the parameters of the perceptual linkages as well.

The critics of South Korean diplomatic stance emphasise that the nation has been too preoccupied with its internal matters. However, the merit of the New Southern Policy (NSP) has been overlooked which focuses on diversifying trade by developing relations with the ASEAN, India, and other nations. The Moon administration launched its NSP in 2017 making peace, prosperity, and peoples its three main pillars. In 2020, the policy was restructured into NSP Plus. Furthermore, South Korea is relocating the manufacturing segment out of China due to the arms twisting it has endured in the past. In such a scenario, India poses as a viable option, apart from Vietnam, due to its low labour cost. The trade and investment with India have maintained a somewhat flat graph in last few years, providing a tremendous scope for growth. The 64 per cent growth in trade with ASEAN nations, apart from Vietnam, between 2020-21 is also addressing the concern of disproportionate mechanism of distribution towards Vietnam.<sup>12</sup>

The critique that South Korea should focus on developing security alliances have overlooked the fact that Seoul has been involved in minilateral, bilateral and multilateral security architecture with Indo-Pacific states for more than two decades.<sup>13</sup> South Korea's Official Development Assistance has also shown maximum growth amongst the entire Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) members. It plans to double its Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) for the ASEAN nations till 2023.

South Korea can find a common ground to work on connectivity and infrastructure development through Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) in which India has been an active

participant. South Korea is also making efforts to work with India on forums like East Asia Summit (EAS) and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).<sup>14</sup> India has been engaging with East Asian nations and beyond on multiple levels in an effort to bolster relations. The 'Act East Policy' of the Modi government has been a big step to promote economic, cultural, and strategic ties with Asia-Pacific nations. Multilateral, bilateral, and regional ties to enhance continuous engagement have been the primary motive of the policy. Under the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue too India has been engaged in various important initiatives.

India has actively engaged in Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with countries like South Korea, Japan, Singapore and very recently with UAE to promote bilateral trade between two countries. India has also been participating in joint defence exercises on bilateral and multilateral levels. Australia's Pitch Black, SITMEX with Thailand and Singapore, Passex 2020 with Russia, the US, Australia and Vietnam on multilateral level and VINBAX with Vietnam, Dustlik with Uzbekistan, Za'ir Al Bahar with Qatar, Imbex with Myanmar, Harimau Shakti with Malaysia, et al on bilateral levels are some of the recent collaborative defence exercises that are helping India strengthen its ties with big as well as small players in the region. India is also going to host the foreign ministers of 10 ASEAN nations from 16 June 2022, primarily with the motive to discuss the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF).<sup>15</sup> Although underused, India has been trying to build people to people connect and faith through the use of the non-coercive and intangible methods of soft power. India has been trying to promote its composite heritage, art and culture, yoga et al across the world so as to create goodwill and trust.

### **Conclusion**

Till about a decade ago, South Korea's role as a middle power in the Indo-Pacific Region has been either undermined or miscalculated. However, in the new geo-strategic power play, Seoul prefers more strategic autonomy. Despite its close ties to Washington, Seoul realises that any wrong moves on its part will disturb the peace in the region. Its policy in the region, therefore, seems to be very calculated and though unpopular with many states, Seoul is showing the world a different strategic approach in dealing with traditional security issues.



However, the usage of soft power by India remains highly underutilised. Despite its considerably smaller size the number of Korean Cultural Centre stands at 42<sup>16</sup> while there are only 38 Indian Cultural Centres across the world<sup>17</sup>. South Korea has been planning to support its cultural promotion with a staggering sum of 5.5 billion USD for the year 2022. While India has allocated just 0.34 billion for the year 2022. On the Global Soft Power Index, India stands at 29<sup>th</sup> position.<sup>18</sup> Although they have climbed up from the 36<sup>th</sup> position they held last year, they still have a long way to go. The dismal rank of India on the Human Freedom Index<sup>19</sup> and depleting people to people trust amongst foreigners in regard to India makes it much more important for India to accelerate soft power diplomacy so as to give a boost to its global image. India needs to strategically increase the budget to promote culture if it plans on increasing its soft power influence. Bollywood can also be used to spread the Indian culture as many actors and actresses from the industry have tremendous fan following in foreign lands.

India and South Korea align not just on their threats but also their policies towards the containment of the Indo-Pacific from any hegemonic overtake, their approach towards North Korea and, peace and unification on the Korean Peninsula. Their alignment of NSP and Act East Policy (AEP) is first amongst many steps to power tussle in the Indo-Pacific in general and Asia in particular. With a mythological connect and historical goodwill, these two countries can play a pivotal role in balance of power and be the keepers of peace in the Indo-Pacific Region.

### Endnotes

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# Learning from the Ukraine War and Applying it in the India – China Context

Lieutenant General PS Rajeshwar (Retd)<sup>®</sup>

*From the very beginning of the Ukrainian crisis, we called for an immediate cease-fire, insisting that dialogue is the only way to resolve the dispute. We believe that there will be no winning party in this war, everyone will suffer. [...] India is deeply concerned by the humanitarian impact of this conflict.”*

Prime Minister Narendra Modi  
May 2022, Berlin<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

*The Ukraine War has been in progress since Feb 2022 and its repercussions are being felt around the globe. Salient strategic and military lessons are there to be learned from this modern war. India too has been facing the threat of a conflict with China since mid-2020. China's belligerent behaviour and contentious build up towards our northern borders forebode a conflict. Strengthening our deterrence with speed is essential to prevent any conflict. The takeaways from the Ukraine War and their swift implementation will make our nation and the armed forces much more formidable.*

## Introduction

The Ukraine War has been in progress since Feb 2022 and has affected the globe in many ways. While Russia chose to carry out a 'special military operation' in Ukraine, the genesis of the war can be traced back almost three decades ago. The seeds of the conflict had been sowed by the West in the aftermath of the Cold War with the retention of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), though the erstwhile Soviet Union stood dismantled in

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<sup>®</sup>Lieutenant General PS Rajeshwar, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd) served in the Artillery. He commanded the Andaman & Nicobar Command as CINCAN and HQ IDS as CISC. His other command assignments included the Desert Corps, a Rashtriya Rifles Force and an infantry brigade on the Line of Control.

1991. As the NATO membership expanded, its military alliance has almost doubled, making Russia increasingly insecure, finally resulting in this conflict. The impact is ubiquitous with shortages created in energy, food and fertilisers, disruption of global trade and security links, apart from dire economic and political consequences for nations severely hit by the pandemic.

India too has been facing the threat of a conflict with China since mid-2020, when the PLA, in a sudden operation in Eastern Ladakh, violated laid down agreements and existing protocols that had maintained peace on our northern borders. As is the Chinese wont, they put the onus of their aggressive actions on India's building of roads and bridges close to the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Some analysts also attributed it to India changing *suo motu* the status quo in Ladakh to a Union Territory. As a result, India has had to deploy substantial forces there to rebuild deterrence, which had diminished. The Ukraine War is being closely studied by India, China, and a number of other nations to derive contemporary lessons which are applicable in various conflict scenarios.

### **The Ukraine War**

In mid-2014, Russia annexed the predominantly Russian speaking Crimea from Ukraine, securing vital access to the strategically important Black Sea Region. Ukraine and the West protested vehemently but settled for condemnation instead of conflict. Negotiations led to the Minsk II Agreement in Feb 2015. However, relations kept worsening and led to further insecurity in the Russian leadership. "Since the beginning of 2021, a certain number of signals have been very negatively interpreted by Moscow, which saw confirmation that Washington was actively preparing a general show of force against Russia".<sup>2</sup> These were reinforced by the signing on 11 March 2021 by Volodymyr Zelensky of a decree stipulating that Kiev "reserves the right to make use of all means necessary to protect [...] its sovereignty and its territorial integrity"<sup>3</sup> and in early April, "a change of policy by President Zelensky, who made joining NATO and the EU a priority".<sup>4</sup>

The amassing of Russian forces in the vicinity of Ukrainian borders for a series of exercises at the end of 2021 was seen as part of a continued hybrid war, which turned into conventional war as Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 Feb 2022. President Putin

indicated the purpose of his actions “We will seek to demilitarise and denazify Ukraine, as well as bring to trial those who perpetrated numerous bloody crimes against civilians, including against citizens of the Russian Federation”.<sup>5</sup>

The Russian Armed Forces initially attempted a bold operation to seize Kiev, which failed miserably. Other offensives were planned to target Kharkiv, Luhansk, and Donetsk oblasts linking up all the way to Kherson in the South. Their political aim appeared to be regime change, but the military operation suffered from inadequate intelligence of Ukrainian preparedness as the Russian Military overreached itself. Poor planning, training and dissipation of war effort forced the Russians to review their initial goals and consolidate forces towards the Donbas Region. They have now succeeded in Luhansk oblast while efforts are ongoing in Donetsk oblast.

### **The Strategic Lessons**

There are a number of takeaways at the strategic level as under:

- First, nations irrespective of their power can develop a deep sense of insecurity, which might become acute if lack of strategic communication or misperceptions about an adversary’s intentions gain ground.
- Second, a series of military coercion manoeuvres spread over a long time connotes Hybrid War but a belligerent could use them as a prelude to initiate a conflict or a full-scale war as is taking place now. More importantly, conventional wars between nations can happen despite their deep economic links. Adverse financial and economic consequences are then inevitable.
- Third, political aims in a war have to be based on own military capabilities vis-à-vis the adversary’s (including those of its allies). Inaccurate assessments could lead to huge setbacks, forcing a hard reset of politico-military goals. “Wars are initiated based on a political aim, but the unpredictability of conflict often leads to the purpose not being immediately or wholly achieved. In these circumstances, what constitutes success for both sides can determine the future course of a war”.<sup>6</sup>

- Fourth, Russia has been greatly hampered by technological sanctions. “The United States has led our allies in banning the export of semiconductors to Russia. Since Moscow lacks its own advanced chip manufacturing capacity, without imports the Russian military cannot replenish its precision-guided munitions”.<sup>7</sup>
- India’s imports from Russia could now get delayed. Further, the Indian ‘defence industrial complex’ too will need to secure their hi-tech material supplies, having been tasked with domestic orders and desired defence exports.

Finally, while nations may plan for short and swift wars, once a war begins, its duration cannot be predicted. More so, when both sides here have hardened their stance, desire complete victory and are not prepared to negotiate. “Gen Mark Milley told Congress on Tuesday that he believed the Russia-Ukraine war would be a “very protracted” conflict”.<sup>8</sup> Hence it will be necessary for any nation with threatened borders to build national resilience in peace which lasts through the conflict. This demands a ‘Whole of Nation’ approach where risks are identified, strategies made and necessary capabilities developed.

### **The Military Lessons**

Drones have played a huge role in the Ukraine War gathering data for assisting operational level assessments to execute tactical kinetic engagements. “Ukraine has made extensive use of drones, from the Turkish-made Bayraktar TB-2 to hobbyist drones supporting civil resistance. [...] Russia appears to have stepped up its efforts, employing systems like the Orlan-10 and the KUB-BLA loitering munition. Drones have been used in a wide variety of roles from carrying out strikes to guiding artillery and recording video that feeds directly into information operations”.<sup>9</sup> India has aptly developed a vibrant policy to encourage the nascent drone industry. The Armed Forces will need to be innovative in the use of drones, train properly and adapt their application to combat situations. With the proliferation of drones there is a need to take a *de novo* look at the concepts of air superiority and air space management.

The reliance of Russians on artillery is well documented. Once the operations were focussed on Donbas Region, they resorted to attritional warfare in which guns, missiles, and rockets took centre

stage. "Artillery is one of the most important components of Russian operations, and in terms of lethal capabilities it has become Russia's mission-critical force multiplier[...] Russian artillery is generally able to bring accurate artillery fire down on targets 3 to 5 minutes after UAV reconnaissance has identified them, but if a target is identified with EW direction finding, acoustic reconnaissance or counterbattery artillery radar, it will take Russian artillery approximately half an hour to bring inaccurate artillery fire to bear".<sup>10</sup> We may have to reiterate the effective employment and synergy of firepower in our land doctrine.

The Russian cyber operations have often targeted Ukraine's critical infrastructure, independent of their kinetic attacks, but seem to have been blunted due to continuous hardening of cyber defence by US tech companies and military cyber warriors. "Once conflict begins, cyber becomes much less useful. Physical attacks are more disruptive than cyber-attacks".<sup>11</sup> Our armed forces, therefore, must secure the portion of cyberspace that they operate in during peace and war.

Information operations have become a key part of war outcomes. "Videos from the battlefield, leaked drone surveillance, and other forms of digital communications have made Russia's invasion of Ukraine the most internet-accessible war in history, turning Twitter, TikTok, and other internet platforms into primary sources of news on the war".<sup>12</sup> The use of internet by Ukraine, enabled in good measure by Space X Star Link terminals, by military and civilians alike has become a huge force-multiplier.

We seem to have reached an inflection point in the traditional domains of warfare wherein each country has to seriously reassess the type of weapon platforms that they need to develop henceforth. "At a conceptual level, the promise of the small-versus-the big, of the modern battlefield, has to be explored by India's military planners. The shifting character of war favouring small platforms over big ones can work in India's favour if we can first decide at the Joint Services doctrinal level, the theory of application of the concept for India's future battlefields".<sup>13</sup> This aspect demands urgent examination by each of our three Services.

The man behind the machine continues to be the biggest factor in combat. "Another issue which has contributed to Russia's military woes is the low quality of its conscript force. Indeed, Ukraine

has even turned images of Russian POW conscripts being allowed to call their mothers into a weapon in its information warfare”.<sup>14</sup> In our case, it is imperative that new recruits (*Agniveers*) are well and fully trained to ensure success in battle.

### **The India – China Context**

While the Ukraine war has brought war to Europe again, the challenges faced in South Asia, particularly by India, have been frequent and much greater. Dr S Jaishankar, our External Affairs Minister, put it this way, “Ukraine is not a precedent for China; such events have been underway in Asia for the past decade. So, this is a wake-up call for Europe to start looking at Asia. This is a part of the world with unsettled boundaries, terrorism, and continuous challenges to the rules-based order. The rest of the world has to recognise that problems are not going to happen, but that they are happening”.<sup>15</sup>

Following the 2020 Eastern Ladakh incident, India and China have maintained considerable armed forces opposite each other, and the situation is volatile and prone to escalation. “India and China failed to make any breakthrough in resolving outstanding issues on the remaining friction points in eastern Ladakh at the 16th round of military talks but agreed to maintain dialogue to arrive at a mutually acceptable resolution at the earliest”.<sup>16</sup> Disengagement has been achieved at Pangong Tso, Galwan and now PP 15, but it seems to be a long journey ahead for any resolution at Depsang and Demchok.

The imbroglio is summed up by Shri Shivshankar Menon, our former National Security Advisor. “Unlike past confrontations and face-offs, the framing of the (India – China 2020 border) crisis by China as a sovereignty dispute — rather than as a border dispute which would be solved by give and take — makes it harder to settle”.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the issue becomes acute considering that CPEC traverses close to the LAC.

China has a penchant for building a narrative about its belligerent behaviour. This is evident from Gen Wei Fenghe’s statement at the Shangri La Dialogue. “China adopts a military strategy of active defence. China’s military strategy adheres to the principles of defence, self-defence and post-strike response. It stresses that we will not attack unless attacked, but we will surely counterattack if attacked”.<sup>18</sup> China is likely to keep the LAC



simmering for a long time, not only locking India's military power on its northern borders but also constraining development of maritime capabilities to counter an expanding PLA Navy presence in the IOR. We need to protect our territorial integrity and sovereignty by building a credible deterrence and steadily developing our military capabilities.

In the last decade, China has been testing the waters from time to time. Its recent air violations and provocations for over a month in Eastern Ladakh and movement of research and survey vessel Yuan Wang 5 to Hambantota, have affected Indian security interests adversely. Any increase in such acrimonious behaviour could ensue in the future and will have to be countered firmly.

Chinese scholars mostly view the Ukraine War in the context of the US as an adversary. "The Russia-Ukraine military conflict is another watershed event in the three decades since the end of the Cold War, in terms of the international security order, the major power dynamics and world economic development".<sup>19</sup> The Chinese have surely drawn important lessons from the war. Their recent belligerence against Taiwan is part of hybrid warfare arising out of concerns about their 'One China' policy, perhaps encouraged by US ambiguity to get involved at this stage.

Doklam and Galwan incidents appear to have galvanised the Chinese to rapidly build up their military infrastructure on our northern borders. "Within its western regions of Tibet and Xinjiang, China is constructing and upgrading dozens of airports and heliports — a large majority of which are military or dual-use facilities. Additionally, China is supplementing its airpower expansion with new roads, rail, and other infrastructure that are upgrading the PLA's logistics capabilities and enabling more rapid movement of troops, weaponry, and equipment".<sup>20</sup> Further, a number of training exercises and live fire drills are happening to upgrade PLA combat skills opposite us. This portends military coercion in the future which could escalate into a full-fledged conflict.

All the while, it would be prudent to remain abreast of threats emerging out of Sino-Pak collusion, as envisaged by Sardar Patel over seven decades ago. "While our western and non-western threat to security is still as prominent as before, a new threat has developed from the north and north-east. Thus, for the first time,



after centuries, India's defence has to concentrate itself on two fronts simultaneously".<sup>21</sup> This implies the need to use leverage with our strategic partners and ensure that Pakistan does not open another front in the event where China forces us into a conflict.

### **A Comprehensive View**

The context in which the Ukraine War is being fought happens to be quite different from the situation obtaining in case of the India-China context. Yet, there is much to learn from this modern war to strengthen our deterrence and prevent any conflict on the northern borders. Some of the lessons learned, enumerated earlier, have already begun to be absorbed by the armed forces. In addition, certain other measures will help to build national security comprehensively.

The articulation of a National Security Strategy by a confident nation deserves the utmost attention, wherein a 'Whole of Nation' approach will end in success. It should address threats that include low intensity conflict, hybrid war and conventional war under a nuclear backdrop. Escalation dynamics will have to be thought through. This will galvanise all stakeholders, i.e., government and private sectors apart from civil society in contributing positively towards national security.

The country's resilience needs to be geared up meaningfully for the challenges ahead well in time. Peace-time efforts in strengthening our food, energy, material and technological stocks, and their supply chains then becomes crucial. It will greatly help the nation to absorb, adapt and respond to risks and setbacks that they would deal with in any conflict.

The armed forces are the primary instrument available to be employed in any war. Therefore, their combat edge has to be kept sharp. In our case, no stone should be left unturned in equipping and arming them within the timeframes that we envisage a conflict to take place. This also means enhancing defence budgets to look after our continental and maritime ambitions. *Atmanirbhar Bharat* is a good step in building defence self-reliance which can be sufficiently augmented if we technologically collaborate with friendly countries.

For the armed forces, jointmanship and integration is a sine qua non for victory in a conflict. The urgent appointment of the CDS, therefore, becomes vital. A joint doctrine, integrated capability development and an overarching tri-services training philosophy will then need serious deliberation. The new domains of cyber, space and electromagnetic spectrum need to be given greater impetus if we are to fight successfully in a multi-domain environment.

### Conclusion

The Ukraine War has created an inflection point in global geopolitics. Most nations have to pick sides. India has clearly articulated its stance on the war which appears to be resonating well with most nations. A number of lessons are being learned at various levels of conflict and combat management. This conventional war was neither anticipated nor does it appear near any resolution soon. National security strategies of many nations are consequently being revised. China has been posing a grave threat to India over the last two years. Its belligerent behaviour and contentious build up towards our northern borders forebode a conflict. Building a credible deterrence against her is imperative. It thus becomes essential to invest in developing visible capabilities now rather than face an adverse situation arising due to their dearth. The takeaways from the Ukraine war and their swift implementation will go a long way in strengthening our nation and the armed forces, should we be pushed into any conflict.

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# Chinese Role in the Sri Lankan Financial Crisis and India's Reaction

Dr Madhukar Shyam<sup>@</sup> and Ms. Swayamsiddha Samal<sup>#</sup>

## Abstract

*In the post-Covid-19 scenario, the economies of many countries suffered. Some managed to recover their economy; for example, the Indian economy recovered in a K-shaped phase. However, it was difficult for Sri Lanka to manage its foreign exchange reserves. Its financial condition became so poor that it led to a catastrophe in its political arena. The following article is to demystify Sri Lanka's financial crisis. In order to do so, some questions have been analysed; a) How did Sri Lanka end up in a financial crisis and what is China's role in it? b) What is Chinese reaction to the crisis? and c) Being an immediate neighbor, how has India behaved in regard to the crisis? The article concludes by elucidating India's financial aid to Sri Lanka with an overall analysis and conclusion.*

## Introduction

Sri Lanka became independent in 1948. It procured its first loans from multilateral financial institutions in the mid-1960s. After that period, its external debt problem only grew. There were many mega projects such as the Mahaweli Development program to increase arable land and others, financed through loans from bilateral partners and multilateral institutions like the World Bank.

In 1977, Sri Lanka abruptly changed its economic ideology and policy, embracing an 'open economy'. A 'big bang' liberalisation

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<sup>@</sup>**Dr Madhukar Shyam** is a Research Assistant at Centre for Strategic Studies and Simulation (CS3) at the United Service Institution of India, New Delhi. He finished his M.Phil. and PhD from Centre for East Asian Studies at School of International Studies, from Jawaharlal Nehru University.

<sup>#</sup>**Ms Swayamsiddha Samal** is a Research Assistant at the Centre for Strategic Studies and Simulation (CS3) at the United Service Institution of India. (USI). She holds a Bachelor of Arts from Jawaharlal Nehru University in Mandarin language and a Master of Arts from Pondicherry University in Politics and International Relations.

of price controls, exchange controls, and subsidies led to a period of high inflation and the manufacturing sector's decline. By the early 1980s, the contribution of manufacturing to GDP declined and plateaued. The country adopted an International Monetary Fund (IMF)-recommended program of privatisation in the late 1980s.

In the absence of a national development banking system, a depreciating currency, and an ongoing Civil War brought financial crisis in the island. Sri Lanka was keen to join the path of development. It sought help from the IMF. As per IMF policy, Structural Adjustment Programme or SAP countries could not continue with the welfare programme for a very long period if they followed the neo-liberal economic policy. The putting off IMF's welfare programme forced the country to depend more on concessional bilateral and multilateral lenders. This process essentially paved the way for an external 'debt trap'.<sup>1</sup> However, Sri Lanka resorted to funding its widening trade deficit from the IMF.

According to the Ministry of Finance and Planning of Sri Lanka, in 2005, 50 per cent of Sri Lanka's total external debt was owed to the World Bank and Asian Development Bank alone, while another 29 per cent was owed to Japan, the leading bilateral lender at the time.<sup>2</sup>

In 2009, in the aftermath of the civil war, the government began tapping into China's rapidly increasing development finance. Between 2009 and 2018, Sri Lanka borrowed around USD 7.8 billion to develop transport and energy infrastructure - about 9.3 per cent of its 2019 GDP.<sup>3</sup> As per the Central Bank of Sri Lanka<sup>4</sup>, repeated attempts at IMF reforms have failed to solve the underlying problems in Sri Lanka's economy. In 2018 alone, the country spent USD 1.8 billion on currency interventions defending the rupee due to excessive imports.

### **Chinese Involvement**

It was a Canadian-based firm that studied about the relevance of Hambantota Port.<sup>5</sup> Its study highlighted that the Colombo Port was in the middle of the town, while Hambantota had a hinterland, meaning it offered tremendous potential for expansion and development.<sup>6</sup> However, the Canadian firm could not get the project due to the changes in Sri Lankan domestic politics.<sup>7</sup> The project was offered to the U.S., but it denied the project. It was also

offered to India, but India also refused because it lacked funding for big and ambitious projects. China saw the relevance of this port, and its construction firm, the China Harbor Group, lobbied hard for the project. China Exim bank agreed to fund it, and the China Harbor won the contract.<sup>8</sup>

In 2007, when Sri Lanka was in the mid of civil war, China Exim-bank offered USD 307 million, a 15-year commercial loan with a four-year grace period, offering Sri Lanka a choice between a 6.3 per cent fixed interest rate or one that would rise or fall depending on LIBOR<sup>9</sup>, a floating rate. Colombo chose the former, conscious that global interest rates were trending higher during the negotiations. Phase I of the port project was completed on schedule within three years.

For a conflict-torn country struggling to generate tax revenue, the loan terms seemed reasonable. That same year, Sri Lanka also issued its first international bond with an interest rate of 8.25 per cent.<sup>10</sup> Both decisions would come back to haunt Sri Lanka. After the civil war, the government embarked on a debt-financed push to build and improve the country's infrastructure. Annual economic growth rates climbed to 6 per cent, but Sri Lanka's debt burden also soared.

In Hambantota, instead of waiting for Phase I of the port to generate revenue as the Ramboll team had recommended, the Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa pushed ahead with Phase II, transforming Hambantota into a container port. In 2012, Sri Lanka borrowed another USD 757 million from China Exim bank, at a reduced, post-financial-crisis interest rate of 2 per cent. Rajapaksa took the liberty of naming the port after himself. By 2014, Hambantota was losing money. Realising that they needed more experienced operators, the Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA) signed an agreement with China Harbor and China Merchants Group to have them jointly develop and operate the new port for 35 years. China Merchants was already using a new terminal in the harbour in Colombo, and China Harbor invested USD 1.4 billion in Colombo Port City, a lucrative real-estate project involving land reclamation. But while the lawyers drew up the contracts, political upheaval was taking shape.

Mahinda Rajapaksa called a surprise election in January 2015, in which former Health Minister Maithripala Sirisena contested and



won the election. However, the economic challenges of the Rajapaksa government were piled up via international sovereign bonds, which comprised 40 per cent of the country's external debt. When Sirisena took office, Sri Lanka owed more than Japan<sup>11</sup>, World Bank, Asian Development bank than to China. Of the 5.4 billion USD in debt service, Sri Lanka only paid 5 per cent because of Hambantota.<sup>12</sup> Colombo arranged a bailout<sup>13</sup> from the IMF and decided to raise the much-needed dollars by leasing out the underperforming Hambantota Port to an experienced company. There was not an open tender, and the only two bids came from China Merchants and China Harbor; Sri Lanka chose China Merchants, making it the majority shareholder with a 99-year lease, and used the USD 1.12 billion cash infusion to bolster its foreign reserves, not to pay off China's Exim bank.<sup>14</sup>

### **Sri Lankan Perspective towards China**

Sri Lankan perspective towards China was positive because of the following reasons:

- According to the Ministry of Finance and Planning (2013), Sri Lankan policymakers viewed Chinese contractors favourably due to their excellent balance of speed, efficiency, and product quality.
- Additionally, they finished projects ahead of time while engaging in extensive CSR activities benefiting local constituents.
- For Sri Lanka, China was the only available lending source for long-term project financing and equity investments, especially at the height of the 2008 global financial crisis.<sup>15</sup>

China contributed to infrastructure development in Sri Lanka through direct investment and official loans.<sup>16</sup> Infrastructure-related FDI from China averaged about USD 200 million annually over 2013–17 (¼ per cent of GDP), while outstanding bilateral loans from China to Sri Lanka's public sector, including SOEs, were estimated at USD 4.6 billion end-2016 (5.8 per cent of GDP).<sup>17</sup>

After analysing the Sri Lankan perspective towards China, it is imperative to underline the Chinese perspective towards the debt crisis in Sri Lanka.



### **China's reaction towards Sri Lanka**

In China, the reaction has been mainly that of anger and resentment.

- There has been large-scale condemnation on the Chinese internet of what is being called Sri Lanka's victim card.<sup>18</sup> There are accusations that the island nation 'took advantage' of China, and used it as an ATM,<sup>19</sup> and is now 'publicly embarrassing China'. The words used for Sri Lanka and its political class are far from flattering, including 'white-eyed wolf' behaviour<sup>20</sup> of Sri Lanka.
- China got further disappointed as Sri Lanka decided to suspend foreign debt payments in April, defaulted on its debts in May, declared bankruptcy in July, and went to the IMF for assistance.
- China says Sri Lanka's decisions are detrimental to Chinese interests as they will cause severe economic losses to China. China had wanted Sri Lanka to keep repaying its debts. At the same time, China helped it to secure better deals at the international financial institutions, which in a way, would have also ensured that the money continued to make its way back into the Chinese coffers.
- The Chinese side has positioned Sri Lanka as an 'economy enemy' of China,<sup>21</sup> forcing it (China) to offer debt relief to Sri Lanka, under unfavourable IMF conditionality.
- China has been opposing the IMF's condition of debt haircut (which requires all the creditors to forgive an equal amount of debt voluntarily) because it will be a more significant loss for a creditor of new debts like China. In contrast, most of Sri Lanka's existing debt is 'old debt'. China, therefore, must not allow itself to be a scapegoat but instead make active efforts to scuttle Sri Lanka's bid to obtain IMF assistance.<sup>22</sup>
- What further irked the Chinese side was that Sri Lankan leaders, including ex-President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, Sri Lankan ambassador to China, Palitha Kohona, among others, publicly raised concern over the lack of China's interest in helping Sri Lanka. They argued that this has further strengthened the Western/Indian discourse of Chinese

culpability in Sri Lanka's debt crisis, and the economic crisis faced by several other developing countries, and built-up of international pressure on China to align its stance with the Paris Club and re-consider its position on the 'Common Framework for Debt Treatment'.<sup>23</sup>

### **Sri Lanka's Importance to India**

India places a lot of significance on Sri Lanka as an island nation, strategically placed in the Indian Ocean. About 70 percent of the oil consumed in India is imported through the ports of the Indian Ocean. Due to China's influence, India has stepped up its efforts in Sri Lanka and the IOR region. India is participating in forums like the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) and the Indian Ocean Naval symposium. India has also been increasing its presence by becoming a significant foreign investor in local infrastructure development and mining projects, particularly around the coast of the Indian Ocean.<sup>24</sup>

India was Sri Lanka's second-largest trading partner in 2020 as trade accounted for nearly USD 3.6 billion in bilateral product trade. The Bank of India estimated that from 2005 to 2019, FDI from India totalled roughly USD 1.7 billion.<sup>25</sup> Sri Lankan businesses are also expanding in India. Bilateral Free Trade Agreements, Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements, and Investment Protection and Promotion Agreements are just a few of the bilateral agreements that offer a solid legal basis for growing economic ties. Additionally, there are bilateral MoUs and deals on air services, agriculture, small development projects, and financial project cooperation.

### **Indian Aid to Sri Lanka**

After the financial crisis began, India's economic engagement has provided bilateral assistance to Sri Lanka that can be broadly categorised into two groups: one is assistance to meet immediate needs, and the second is aid to resurrect the sectors that were negatively impacted by the pandemic and the forex reserves downturn.<sup>26</sup>

The Government of India has provided a package of food, health, and energy security, as well as foreign reserves, support totalling more than USD 3.5 billion to meet the immediate needs. This package also included a USD 1 billion concessional loan to

the Government of Sri Lanka, in the background of Sri Lanka's financial crisis of 2022.<sup>27</sup> A Line of Credit (LOC) of USD 500 million was used to finance the purchase of petroleum products such as aviation fuel, diesel, and gasoline in February 2022. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in March 2022 to establish the Trincomalee Power Company in eastern Sri Lanka. The USD 500 million renewable energy project in Sri Lanka's north was awarded to Indian energy and port billionaire Gautam Adani. Adani had already won the USD 700 million contract to construct the West Container Terminal in the Colombo port.<sup>28</sup>

Indian Oil Corporation supplied a consignment of 40,000 MT of fuel outside the LOC facility. Sri Lanka requested an additional USD 500 LOC from India to purchase electricity. India extended a currency swap facility of USD 400 million under the South Asia Association of Regional Centre (SAARC). Currency Swap Framework 2019-22 and a deferral of dues of approximately USD 1 billion until March 2022, to be paid by the CBSL to the Reserve Bank of India under the Asian Clearing Union, to support the declining foreign reserves.<sup>29</sup>

Additionally, in response to the urgent need for medications, India donated a shipment of pharmaceuticals and medical supplies to many hospitals in Sri Lanka. Further, kerosene has been provided for Sri Lankan fishermen use. The Tamil Nadu government has also promised to provide USD 16 million in humanitarian aid, including 40,000 MT of rice, 500 MT of milk powder, and medications for Sri Lanka. The Government of India also agreed to provide a USD 55 million credit line at the request of the Government of Sri Lanka for the purchase of 65000 MT of urea fertiliser for the Yala season's planting.<sup>30</sup>

### **How have Indian Bureaucrats and Academicians reacted to the Crisis?**

Former High Commissioner to Sri Lanka and former Ambassador to China Ashok K. Kantha stated that India had long-standing concerns about Chinese projects and was sceptical of Indian enterprises participating in such projects. According to him, the new Colombo City project is a part of a broader pattern of Chinese intrusions into a range of island nations. In addition, the Hambantota project had previously incurred losses of USD 300 million by the

end of 2016. The government was forced to approve a contract turning the port to China in July 2017.

- Ambassador Kantha said, like the Hambantota port, the Colombo City port project was also being funded by the China Harbour Engineering Company (CHEC). He emphasised that CHEC was a division of China Communications Construction Company, a Chinese government-run infrastructure company in charge of President Xi's Belt and Road Initiative. Previous projects were accused of breaking environmental laws. He did not see how the Colombo City project would economically benefit Sri Lanka.<sup>31</sup>
- Professor P. Sahadevan said that the Hambantota and Colombo City project (CCP) differed. The Hambantota project was to bring in revenues through the docking of ships, but it did not make money, and hence the project did not work out. He added that the CCP was, however, a commercial venture. This meant that the project's multi-functional design was done solely to generate revenue from its residential, commercial, and other assets. He said that the project enamoured Sri Lankans and thought they could make the money they had lost in earlier projects.<sup>32</sup>

### **Analysis**

The Chinese role in Sri Lanka's financial crisis could be understood through the port project of Hambantota. However, some analysts believe that China is not responsible as it offered a choice to Sri Lanka to restructure the loan. However, the situation in Sri Lanka was so pathetic that it could not go back to restructuring loans because of the Covid-19 crisis.

There are two aspects which points out that China is responsible for Sri Lankan crisis. Firstly, Sri Lanka had the Hambantota port in 2017. There was no Covid-19 crisis at the time, and Sri Lanka loan was supposed to restructure the loan. Secondly, if the loan interest rates are compared to the Japanese interest rate, it is lower than the Chinese interest rate. This aspect reflects that China was aware of the economic history of Sri Lanka, and it still offered loans at the market floating rate and 6.3 per cent fixed interest rate. The US had declined the project because of Sri Lanka's financial situation.

## Conclusion

After Sri Lanka became independent, it chose the path of rapid development. It knocked on the door of the IMF, World Bank other financial institutions. However, the long-stretched civil war, change in central authority and its policies also impacted the economic decisions of Sri Lanka. The country then depended on China for financial assistance and development projects, and we saw the hasty decisions Sri Lanka took adversely affected its economy.

In China, the dominant perspective about investing in Sri Lanka was based on cooperation and a win-win situation for both countries. However, there was a change in the status, and things did not go as expected. China's onerous terms and feeble revenues have pushed Sri Lanka to debt, and now the Hambantota port remains under lease to a Chinese firm.

Therefore, Sri Lanka should look more in the direction of India. Sri Lanka and India have had mostly peaceful political and economic relations except for contentious issues like the Tamil conflict, the fishermen issue and maritime boundary disputes. As far as the crisis is concerned, India might not have huge funds for building infrastructure in Sri Lanka, but India has not denied aid to the country. Current Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe recently called India a 'breath of life' in hard times, even calling India its closest neighbour.<sup>33</sup> Sri Lanka has faced immense backlash. However, the government's present decisions would decide the country's future, but Sri Lanka would have to be extremely careful in its decision-making in order to overcome the trap of debt diplomacy.

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# Net Assessment: The Art of Long View<sup>1</sup>

Major General Sanjeev Chowdhry (Retd)<sup>@</sup>

## Abstract

*Net Assessment (NA) provides decision makers with a deep insight into national security management and is a tool for relative analysis of military balances between competing nations or even potential competitors.<sup>2</sup> These assessments range from weapon comparisons to those at the regional or world level. The end state of any net assessment is to evolve long-term military strategic efforts to achieve the desired military edge. The key aspect of the procedure is the environmental scan which is carried out by a range of tools and techniques. Scenario building is an essential ingredient of any net assessment which is a methodology to test the current strategy and check if it would work in the diverse types of futures expected to arise. The benefits of net assessment are invaluable, and India needs to take it up for future strategic initiatives.*

## Introduction

Post-World War II, a significant weakness in strategic planning was acknowledged, and it emerged that adequate attention was not being given to long-term evaluation of the emerging competitions. The entire strategic picture was never put together and, hence, the need was for real diagnosis and not just threat assessments to justify military strategies.

Net Assessment (NA), as an instrument for military strategic analysis, has now become an important strategic tool in national security management systems and is being undertaken in a number of countries. In the USA, the Net Assessment group as part of the

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<sup>@</sup>Major General Sanjeev Chowdhry (Retd) is a graduate of the DSSC Wellington, and College of Defence Management. He commanded a new raising Composite Artillery Brigade and a Subarea. He served as DDG (Artillery) looking after modernisation and as Director (Net Assessment). His instructional tenures include one at Special Frontier Force Academy and at Defence Services Staff College.

National Security Council was formed in 1972 under a Presidential Decree. It was converted to the Office of Net Assessment (ONA) and transferred to the DoD in 1973. The director ONA is responsible for providing the Secretary of Defence, and other senior leaders, with independent comparative assessments of the prospects of the military capabilities of the United States relative to other actors, as well as the political, economic and regional implications of those assessments.<sup>3</sup> The US Congress made NA of military competition a required function under the law when it directed the Joint Chiefs of Staff with responsibility for conducting such assessments.

The term 'Net Assessment' is a combination of two distinct words *Net* and *Assessment*, where *Net* implies the consideration of all aspects and perspectives significant to the problem at hand and *Assessment* means the systematic process of analysis, appraisal, and review to determine the salient information to develop knowledge. As per Paul Bracken, a professor of political science and business at Yale University, the best way to define NA is to understand *that it is a practice and not an art (like military judgment), or a science (like chemistry)*. A properly conducted NA will provide the policymaker with adequate information to allow the building of successful objectives, goals, and strategies for a nation. But unfortunately, it remains something of a mystery to many.<sup>4</sup>

In India, the Directorate of Net Assessment (DNA) was created as part of HQ Integrated Defence Staff in 2002, based on the recommendations of the Group of Ministers. It was envisaged that the creation of DNA will facilitate undertaking long and as well as medium terms assessments, outside the perspective planning directorates of the Service Headquarters, comprising the totality of national capabilities (*political, military, and economic*). However, in comparison with the American ONA, the directorate was not adequately staffed, and neither did it have the requisite mix of civilians and combatants. No permanency was accorded to the organisation, and neither was the intelligence setup integrated. Keeping in view the geo-strategic template of India, the need to have such an organisation is obvious and we need to further empower the organisation.

NA differs from threat assessment. Threat analysis focuses on the strength and weaknesses of the adversary based on a

broad judgment of combat capabilities. NA, on the other hand, centres on a greater analysis of strengths and weaknesses by considering factors like state of the economy and its impact on defence spending, national technical base, state of militarily critical technologies, the character of national leadership, national myths, and their impact on decision making, etc. The process deals with issues well beyond current military capabilities.<sup>5</sup> NA can be of various types as under:

- Overall Security Environment in the form of global, regional, or national NA.
- Military balances as strategic & operational NA.
- Weapons and force composition as an operational NA.
- Lessons learned and historical evaluation.
- Special assessments on a case-to-case basis.

### **Process of NA**

The broad methodology commences with identification and articulation of the national vision, followed by identification and articulation of the desired region of nation's security influence and formulation and implementation of strategies to achieve aspirations and defeat competition.

### **Steps of Net Assessment**

The five steps of the process are explained below:

- **Step-1.** This involves generation of the need as felt by the decision maker and is the commencement of the Net Assessment Project. The issue that is worrying the decision maker often becomes the subject matter of analysis. An example could be - *To evaluate the war-waging potential of Pakistan in the next 15 to 20 years.*
- **Step-2.** This involves theme mapping and is a detailed investigation of the subject. This allows a range of factors to be arranged in a logical sequence and the establishment of interdependency and causal relationships among them. It enables spelling out the contours of a research project and provides a framework for the study. To this end, conduct of seminars/

workshops/panel discussions and interaction with experts is necessary. The essential steps of theme mapping are to establish 'Conceptual Necessity' and frame the 'Research Design' comprising identification of the type of assessment and competing players, the hypothesis, research questions that need to be answered, and the research methodology.

- **Step-3.** It involves a diagnostic style of comparative analysis using various tools and techniques to scan the environment. The basic steps involved are to work out the present balance analysis, extrapolate the trend analysis, define the key drivers of change, carry out a competitive analysis by comparing concepts and strategies and, finally, identify asymmetries and competitive edges.
- **Step-4.** Scenarios, which are visualisation of future/alternate futures, are then formulated based on iterative analysis of scenario defining drivers of change.
- **Step-5.** Because of the net assessment exercise and through simulation and gaming, strategic asymmetries are diagnosed between competitors to identify environmental opportunities to support senior policymakers in the formulation of effective strategies.

### Tools and Techniques

*Steps 1 and 2* are theoretic and need no elaboration. The most crucial step is *Step 3* and there are various tools and techniques available to carry out an environmental scan. Some relevant tools / techniques used in the Net Assessment process are discussed in the succeeding paragraphs.

**BMC Analysis.** The main drivers of a nation state's security can be grouped under *Base*-what is accorded to it by nature, and which may, if at all change very slowly and imperceptibly, e.g., geospatial base, geo-material base, geo-demographic base. Next is *Means*- man-made competencies which can be utilized to pursue national objectives and aspirations viz military, economic, and political; and finally, the *Capacity* for collective action which could be politico-social and psychological.

**SWOT Analysis.** This enables the researcher to identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of competitors. The steps for carrying out such an analysis are:

- Opportunities and Threats, which are always external, are brainstormed and then prioritised by giving out a probability of occurrence/success rating. Those with a high probability of occurrence and high attractiveness are the major opportunities and should be the focus of formulation of strategy while those having a low probability of occurrence and high attractiveness/seriousness should be monitored for change. On the other hand, all those with a high probability of occurrence and high seriousness emerge as major threats. Subsequently, the Strengths and Weaknesses, which are always internal, are evaluated and prioritised. A summary of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and threats is finally rank ordered.
- Once the SWOT review is complete, the future strategy may be readily apparent, or a series of strategy options or combinations will suggest themselves. The SWOT analysis identifies possible strategies, which emerge as *S-O*, *S-T*, *W-O*, and *W-T* combinations, with the aim being to build on strengths, resolve weaknesses, exploit opportunities, and avoid threats. One *S-O* strategy could be *S1-O1* articulated as, '*Utilise Strength 1 to Exploit Opportunity 1*' and so on.
- All plausible *S-O*, *S-T*, *W-O*, and *W-T* options thus developed must be tested for their *Environment-Value-Resources* congruence. Those found to be congruent may only be considered for final articulation and the making of strategy choices. It must be kept in mind that *Environment* imposes constraints on the implementation of strategy, *Values* may not allow a particular strategy option, and *Resources* required to implement the strategy option may not be available.

**Trend Exploitation.** This tool uses historical data to gain insight into future developments, i.e., extrapolate to infer the future from the past. Net Assessment looks at long-term trends and ascertains asymmetries and competitive edges between nations, intending to

provide decision-makers a sense of future direction in terms of capability development and contours of future competition.

**Delphi Technique.** Based on the belief that group judgments are more valid than individual judgments, this is a process to survey and collect the opinions of experts on a particular subject. The technique takes place by the controlled elicitation of group opinion by iterative use of questionnaires with selective feedback of earlier responses as an informational input for later reference by group members. It involves a researcher pooling expert opinion about factual questions, particularly in the context of forecasting the future, and is a highly effective tool for decision making.<sup>6</sup>

**De Bono's Six Hats.** The Six Thinking Hats approach was created by Edward de Bono, a Maltese physician, psychologist, and philosopher. The Six Thinking Hats technique gets one to look at a problem in six separate ways. These six perspectives are<sup>7,8</sup>

- **Blue Hat: 'The Conductor's Hat'.** When you or your team are in blue hat mode, you focus on controlling your thinking and managing the decision-making process. There is an agenda, summaries, and conclusions are reached.
- **Green Hat: 'The Creative Hat'.** The green hat represents creative thinking. While donning this hat, one explores a range of ideas and possible ways forward.
- **Red Hat: 'The Hat for the Heart'.** This hat represents feelings and instincts. With this hat, one can express feelings without having to justify them logically. It looks at problems using gut intuition, reaction, and emotion.
- **Yellow Hat: 'The Optimist's Hat'.** With yellow hat thinking, you look at issues in the most optimistic light possible. You accentuate the benefits and the added value that could come from your ideas.
- **Black Hat: 'The Judge's Hat'.** This hat plays the Devil's Advocate and is about being cautious and assessing risks. One employs critical judgment and brings exactly the reasons for the concerns.
- **White Hat: 'The Factual Hat'.** The white hat represents data & information gathering and an analytical view. It

reflects being neutral and objective and is concerned with data and taking an analytical view. The aim is to look at data and extrapolate a past trend from historical data.

**Cross-Impact Analysis.** Cross-impact analysis is widely employed to inform management and policy decisions based on the formulation of scenarios, defined as combinations of outcomes of relevant uncertainty factors.<sup>9</sup> It is the general name given to a family of techniques designed to evaluate changes in the probability of the occurrence of a given set of events consequent on the actual occurrence of one of them.<sup>10</sup> It can help the analyst and forecaster explore how certain factors are likely to interact with each other.<sup>11</sup>

All the techniques discussed above need not be utilised together. Some or a combination could be attempted depending on the nature of problem at hand.

### Scenario Building

Moving to *Step 5*, a scenario is defined as a context-dependent description of a probable future (fictitious) situation extrapolated from the present (start state), a hypothetical chain of events (the scenario dynamics) leading to a final situation (end state). A scenario must be plausible, internally consistent, based on rigorous analysis engaging, and compelling. *Scenarios are stories (or narratives) set in the future, which describe how the world might look in, say, 2025 or 2050.* They explore how the world would change if certain trends were to strengthen or diminish, or if various events were to occur. Normally a set of scenarios are developed (between two and five) representing different possible futures, associated with different trends and events. These scenarios are then used to review or test a range of plans and policy options or be used to stimulate the development of new policies, or as the basis for a strategic vision. They are also a useful means of identifying 'early warning' indicators that signal a shift towards a certain kind of future.<sup>12,13,14,15</sup>

**Stages.** The eight stages to developing scenarios are:

- **Stage 1-Initiating a Scenario.** This is the first initiating step that defines the *purpose of the scenario-building exercise* or the focal question. This could be a result of



brainstorming. It also lays down the time dimension for the exercise including a period for the development of scenarios and time steps for the development of scenario dynamics (viz, annual time steps, five-yearly time steps, etc). Certain purposes could be<sup>16</sup>:

- o *What will the future of Country X / Region Y look like in 10 years? (country / region analysis focus).*
- o *What risks do we face in Country Y over the next 5 years? What contingency plans should we put in place? (Risk management focus).*

- **Stage 2-Identification of Key Decision Factors.** In the next stage, the *key decision factors (KDFs)* are identified which are critical to the decision. This could also be a result of brainstorming and will help the team to focus on what is important for planning. If Stage 1 has identified Management of National Security up to the year 2030, as the purpose, the KDFs could then be seeking military competitive advantage, economic security and status, self-sufficiency in energy and adequacy of mineral and raw materials for growth, internal socio-economic stability, technology edge to drive key national endeavours, etc.
- **Stage 3-Driving Forces.** Once the key factors have been listed, the third step involves *listing driving forces* in the macro-environment that will shape the future of these factors. They could be social, technological, economic, environmental, and political.
- **Stage 4-Rank Ordering.** Next comes the *ranking of key factors and driving forces based on two criteria*: first, *the degree of importance* for the success of the focal issue or decision identified in Stage 1, and second, the *degree of uncertainty* surrounding those factors and trends. The point is to identify the two or three factors or trends that are most important and most uncertain.
- **Stage 5-Scenario Logic.** The *logic or structure of a given scenario* will be characterised by its location in the matrix of forces or drivers and involves defining the following:

- o **Scenario ‘Parameters or Constants’.** These are ‘High Impact-Low Uncertainty’ factors identified earlier.
- o **Scenario ‘Variables or Drivers’.** The task team focuses on grouping the ‘High Impact-High uncertainty’ factors – identified as drivers, which revolve around two or more critical axes of uncertainty. Each of these axes presents mutually exclusive different trends referred to as scenario logics. Based on each different logic, separate scenarios need to be developed leading to separate future end states.
- o **‘How Many Scenario Logics?’.** Each Scenario Logic will dictate as many *plausible scenarios* as possible. The effort should be to identify those combinations of the behaviour of the drivers which are logical and plausible.
- **Stage 6-Scenario Writing.** Having decided on the number of scenarios to be written, a team of experts is constituted *to write each scenario*. Before commencing on writing the scenario, each team must describe the time dimension (period & time steps), the scenario logic, and the target end state.
- **Stage 7-Scenario Analysis.** This is where the scenario-building team *interprets the scenarios* linking them back to the strategic decision(s) identified in Stage 1. Each scenario team must present respective scenarios to the nominated teams and in presence of other teams. A detailed critique must be held, and the presenting team should be able to convince ‘plausibility’ of each development which is part of its ‘scenario dynamics.’ If needed, the scenario team is allowed to go back, rework scenario dynamics, and refine and present the same again.
- **Stage 8-Selection of Leading Indicators and Signposts.** It is important to know as soon as possible which of several scenarios is closest to the course of history as it unfolds. Once the different scenarios have been fleshed out and their implications for the focal issue determined, then it is worth spending time and

imagination on *identifying a few indicators to monitor in an ongoing way*. Each scenario will be analysed for its impact on the organisation and derive '*Decision Needs*' to exploit opportunities and avert threats.

### **Formulation of Strategy**

The decisive step in the process of Net Assessment is to formulate effective strategies to face the probable future and not get surprised by it. It also entails taking mid-course strategy corrections as projected scenarios pan out on the time horizon.

### **Conclusion**

Depth and width of inquiry and analysis is the basic requirement of the Net Assessment process. The concept of jointness is thus epitomised by this process and a Net Assessment practitioner is by necessity a practitioner of jointness as well. It is impossible to carry out a worthwhile Net Assessment by confining the inquiry and analysis to just one or a few aspects. Even if the Net Assessment project is confined to a specific functional aspect like a maritime balance between two competitors it will still require examination of many other factors that will impact the specific balance.

Net Assessment is like the stock market. Everyone on Dalal Street has the same information available to them about stock prices and company performance. Balance sheets and operating statements of companies are public information and are readily obtainable. But some players do better than others. Having data is important. But it is not enough. Time after time some players use information that is available to all to make a lot more money than other players. The Net Assessment uses data that is widely available and creates Strategic Insights that lead to Decisive Advantage.

As per Peter Schwarz, using Scenarios is like rehearsing the future.<sup>17</sup> You run through the simulated events as if you were already living them. You train yourself to recognise which drama is unfolding. It helps you avoid unpleasant surprises and know how to act in your interest.

## Endnotes

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# The Corps of Sikh Pioneers

Colonel Harjeet Singh (Retd)<sup>@</sup>

## Abstract

*From early days the necessity of having efficient Pioneer units in the British Indian Army was considered essential, and as time went on more and more Pioneer regiments were raised or existing Indian infantry regiments made into Pioneers, until the army in India had twelve Pioneer battalions. The British Army, strange to say, possessed no Pioneers beyond the few men in each battalion who were called Pioneers. Although the Sikh Pioneers did not have the length of service of many other regiments in the Indian Army, they saw more fighting than has fallen to the lot of many older units. Nearly every campaign fought by the Indian Army from 1857 till the Third Afghan War in 1919 has seen one or more of these three gallant regiments (23<sup>rd</sup>, 32<sup>nd</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> Sikh Pioneers) taking part in it. This article encapsulates the history of the Sikh Pioneers from 1857 till they were disbanded in 1932.*

## Introduction

To place in proper perspective the history of a class of men, who from an insignificant socio-cultural background rose in martial spirit and proved their value, it is necessary to go back in time. Though soldiering is a way of life for the people of Punjab, the profession of arms was earlier open only to those from the warrior caste. The rise of Sikhism gave an opportunity for the development of a caste-less society and for everyone to have the right to bear arms.

In June 1857, with the general uprising in India against the East India Company, the British were hard pressed to find troops to fight under their colours. In this time of strife, Punjab had not been affected by the rising tide against foreign rule. To meet the

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<sup>@</sup>Colonel Harjeet Singh (Retd) holds an MSc and MPhil in Defence and Strategic Studies from the University of Madras. He is from the Sikh Light Infantry which carries on the legacy of the Pioneers. He is a prolific writer who has authored a number of books on military history and military affairs.

urgent need for troops, an irregular force was formed out of the Mazhbi Sikhs working on the Bari Doab Canal at Madhopur and they had their baptism under fire at the siege of Delhi. In March 1858, this force was designated as the 24<sup>th</sup> Regiment (Pioneer) of Punjab Infantry, later re-designated as the 32<sup>nd</sup> Sikh Pioneers. Meanwhile, there was a demand for raising a regular regiment of Mazhbi Sikhs who had displayed great staunchness under fire. The 15<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the Punjab Infantry, later re-designated as the 23<sup>rd</sup> Sikh Pioneers, was raised at Lahore, on 20 October 1857.

Both the regiments gave such an excellent account of themselves, establishing such outstanding standards, that another regiment, the 34<sup>th</sup> Sikh Pioneers, was raised on 28 March 1887. This trio of Sikh Pioneers won undying name and fame through their deeds of glory amply proving that accidents of birth have no importance in the military tradition, where actions of merit and courage are recognised and justly rewarded. Their epic history, for a period of 75 years, is a story for the ages. Their motto was – *Aut Viam Inveniam Aut Faciam* – a Latin phrase translated as ‘Either find a way or make one’. To the old soldiers, the unofficial motto was ‘What Mazhbi, Mazhbi’ or ‘*Jo hoega, so hoega*’.

The Sikh Pioneers belied the idea that the Indian Army was raised, trained and equipped for service in India alone, or upon its frontiers. It earned great credit and glory in diverse theatres of combat. It was a force always ready, of admirable efficiency, and assured valour. The conditions under which they bore arms and fought in countries where the climate, language, people, and customs were entirely different; yet their cheerfulness, dedication, discipline and intrepidity ensured solid and striking display of soldiering. They were expected to act as infantry on special and critical occasions, and they always responded with conspicuous success. Unswerving and unstinting in their loyalty, it is a spirit that evokes admiration and is worthy of esteem.

### **China 1860**

In 1860, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Sikh Pioneers (then 15<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Punjab Native Infantry) embarked for China. The Second Opium War had just begun. Reaching in end-July, they took part in action at the Taku Forts (in Northeast China) and in the capture of Peking. There were four forts, two on each bank of the Peiho River (now

called Hai), which were low-profiled and flat-topped. The plan to capture the forts involved moving up the estuary and landing from ship eight miles away. Fire support was provided by the ship's guns. The smaller northern fort was captured on 22 August 1860 after constructing a road for two miles through the marshes and the breaching of the fort by artillery fire. After crossing the mud ditches, hand to hand fighting ensued before enemy resistance was overcome. As the assault on the southern fort was underway, its garrison surrendered. A month later, the Regiment marched to Peking which was occupied on 06 October 1860.

### **Abyssinia 1868**

Lieutenant General Sir Robert Napier commanded the expeditionary force to Abyssinia in 1867-68 for the release of the British envoy, and 60 other hostages, held at Magdala Fort on the orders of Emperor Tewodros II. The 23<sup>rd</sup> Sikh Pioneers, as part of this force, moved from Peshawar to Calcutta, from where they embarked to land at Zula near Djibouti in January 1867. They were initially ordered to dig wells, erect telegraph lines and construct a railway line. They were then part of the leading column for the advance to Magdala, over 400 miles from the Red Sea. The long and arduous journey took over two months with each soldier carrying upwards of 55 pounds of equipment. They had to march across plains, scrubland and farmlands before reaching the hills and mountain plains to get to the fortress of Magdala. On 24 March, the force entered Dildi but the mountainous ridges meant a tortuous circumventing route of some 60 miles over most inhospitable terrain. The track passed over a height of 12,000 feet with temperatures touching 100 degrees by day and 10 degrees Fahrenheit (frost) by night. On 09 April 1868, a large body of Abyssinians attacked the advance guard at a ravine near Arogi. The Regiment met the attack in a most spirited manner and, after charging with the bayonet, drove the enemy into the surrounding ravines. The occupation of Magdala then became a mere formality.

### **Peiwar Kotal 1878**

Pioneers were integral to any force that operated in the Northwest Frontier. In 1878, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Sikh Pioneers participated in the Second Afghan War. They marched from Thal to Kurram and then on to the Afghan position at Peiwar Kotal, a very dominating feature. The Afghans were dug in and had artillery support. Any direct attack up the track to the *kotal* (pass) was exposed to flanking fire



from Afghan positions on the spurs to the north and south, as well as frontal fire from positions along the main ridge. The *kotal* itself was dominated by defences which were some 500 feet above the pass. In effect, a frontal attack implied pushing into a cul-de-sac dominated on all three sides. The Afghans had repulsed an earlier assault. The 23<sup>rd</sup> Sikh Pioneers participated in the successful attack, on 02 December 1878, fighting under the personal command of General Sir Frederick Roberts, who led the turning movement.

### **Charasia 1879**

In 1879, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Sikh Pioneers were again ordered to Kabul, following the killing of the British Resident along with his escort. The force advanced through the Shutargardan Pass and reached Charasia, the last major geographical obstacle before Kabul, on 05 October. At this point, no armed resistance was expected. General Roberts decided to camp on the flat ground around the village of Charasia with a view to seizing the eastern pass early the next morning.

At dawn on 06 October 1879, cavalry patrols were sent out along with a party of 23<sup>rd</sup> Sikh Pioneers and 92<sup>nd</sup> Highlanders to prepare the valley road for use by the carts, wagons and guns. They reported observing Afghans along the ridges of the hilltops with some artillery pieces. It suggested that a determined force was going to prevent the British column from reaching Kabul. The Afghan strength was difficult to establish, but was assessed as probably 13 regular regiments of infantry, 20 field guns and several thousands of tribesmen in excellent defensive positions. The advancing force was on the flat ground beneath the imposing hills and the situation did not look good.

Roberts decided to split his forces and attack the Afghans on the west of the range and roll them up along the hilltop ridges. Meanwhile, a smaller force would be sent to hold the Afghans at the east of the range and prevent them from sweeping down from the hills in a rush to aid their forces in the west. The 23<sup>rd</sup> Sikh Pioneers were part of the main force and were attacking an enemy that greatly outnumbered them. The fighting was intense and hung in the balance until a company of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Sikh Pioneers arrived on the flank of the Afghans, which completely unnerved them and they retreated northwards, with the Pioneers hot in pursuit. Apart from capturing six guns, the force had taken possession of the entire position.

**Kabul to Kandahar 1880**

In July 1880, a British column was destroyed at the hands of Ayub Khan, a son of the late Amir Sher Ali, who then laid siege to Kandahar. The 23<sup>rd</sup> Sikh Pioneers received orders to be part of the column to march to Kandahar under General Sir Frederick Roberts. The march of 310 miles in three weeks, in hostile territory, was an epic achievement. As speed was of the essence, the troops had to march light. No wheeled transport or heavy guns were in the column and they were out of communication for most of the time, with no base of operations behind it and with an uncertain strength of enemy in front.

During the whole of this forced march, through mountainous terrain, the Regiment formed part of the advance guard. Conditions were hard. Most of the force was woken up at 1 or 2 in the morning to start off by 4. The freezing cold and darkness made it difficult to load up the pack animals. By the time they stopped at 1 or 2 in the afternoon (though the rear guard did not get in till 5 or 6 hours later), the heat was intense, with no shade and scarcity of water. Meanwhile, the 32<sup>nd</sup> Sikh Pioneers were part of another force reaching Kandahar from Quetta. On 01 September 1880, the day after its arrival at Kandahar, they took part in the battle to lift the siege of the town. Besides the battle honours, all troops who had marched from Kabul to Kandahar were awarded a special bronze star.

**Chitral 1895**

In 1894, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Sikh Pioneers moved to Gilgit to build roads, lay telegraph lines and construct a fort at Chilas. The 32<sup>nd</sup> Sikh Pioneers relieved them. The problem with the ruler of Chitral started soon thereafter when, the Mehtar, Nizam-ul-Mulk, was murdered by his brother in January 1895 and the throne was contested. The British agent, along with the garrison at the Chitral Fort, was besieged and a relief column had to be quickly organised. The task fell to the 32<sup>nd</sup> Sikh Pioneers.

The small column of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Sikh Pioneers that marched from Gilgit to Chitral, achieved great renown for its endurance and courage. The route was a difficult one, through deep snows, passing over the 12,400 feet high Shandur Pass. They started on 22 March 1895 in heavy rain, in two detachments, with a mountain battery accompanying. After a week of marching, they reached the snow line which made movement tougher. The coolies with

the column, who were carrying the food supplies on ponies, decided to vanish. While climbing up to the Shandur Pass, it began to snow. At some stages, the men were in chest-deep snow and could only flounder up the slopes. Carrying the guns up was an arduous task as the troops suffered from thirst, snow blindness, frostbite, lack of supplies and the sheer physical exhaustion of moving in the deep snows at the heights without adequate shelter, but they persevered.

The epic crossing of the Shandur Pass on 04-05 April brought them into Chitrali Territory. After a bold action at Chokalwat, the column reached Mastuj, the most important fort between Gilgit and Chitral. Fighting their way through, they were the first troops to reach Chitral and relieve the besieged garrison. The final physically unnerving task was the fording of the Chitral River, which had breast high water and a swift current.

#### **Tibet 1903-04**

The 23<sup>rd</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> Sikh Pioneers participated in the Younghusband Mission to Tibet in 1903-04, (the designation of the Regiment had, by then, been changed to Sikh Pioneers). The mission set off on 19 July 1903 from Darjeeling. The 23<sup>rd</sup> Sikh Pioneers moved via Kalimpong, over Jelep La, as part of the escort to the mission. The move over the passes till Chumbi was uneventful, save for difficult pioneering work in improving the tracks and hard marching. On reaching Khamba Jong, just inside Tibet, they settled down to await the Tibetan and Chinese delegates. As no official came for talks, the march was sanctioned to Gyantse, with the capital Lhasa, 100 miles farther on through the mountains.

The mission was then expanded into a full-scale military expedition with about 1,200 British and Indian soldiers, four artillery pieces, two Maxim guns, 16,000 pack animals and 10,000 coolies. The force left Siliguri on 20 November 1903. The 32<sup>nd</sup> Sikh Pioneers joined the force, part of which was formed into mounted infantry to keep the advance at a good speed. The force reached Tuna, at 15,000 feet, where they stayed for the winter, enduring terrible hardships. On occasions, minus 25 degrees was registered (the thermometer could register no lower!). Conditions were frightful. Rifle-bolts froze into the breeches, and the soldiers kept them warm in their own beds. The troops' clothing offered no real protection and was too bulky to allow free movement for firing.

It was not until they reached the tiny village of Guru on 31 March 1904, that they came into direct conflict at the Tibetan fortifications. Two thousand Tibetan troops were waiting there, blocking the caravan trail which the British had to follow if they were to get to Gyantse. Younghusband ordered the Sikh Pioneers to disarm the Tibetans. As the two forces wrestled with each other, the situation began to turn ugly. Then the Tibetan General fired a shot as a Sikh soldier was trying to take away the rifle of his orderly. Fighting broke out instantly and nearly 900 Tibetans lay dead and wounded on the field. The mission then continued to Gyantse after seeing action at Hot Springs and Karo La.

The action of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Sikh Pioneers at Karo La, on 06 May 1904, was at heights in excess of 18,500 feet, establishing a record for high-altitude warfare that stood for 80 years till it was broken in the Siachen Glacier. The expedition then marched on towards Lhasa. Here Younghusband learned that the Dalai Lama had fled to Outer Mongolia. After crossing the Tsangpo River, the mission entered Lhasa on 02 August. An agreement was signed on 07 September and the mission was ordered back to India.

### **Egypt and Palestine 1914-18**

At the beginning of the First World War, the three regiments of the Sikh Pioneers were at their cantonments of Lahore, Sialkot and Ambala respectively. During the war, the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 32<sup>nd</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> Sikh Pioneers, originally one battalion regiments, expanded to three battalions each. Soon they were tramping over the battlefields of Egypt, Europe, Palestine and Mesopotamia, leaving indelible imprints wherever they went. Numerous battle honours emblazoned their glorious record. The Corps of Sikh Pioneers had nine battalions, plus a training battalion, when the armistice was declared on 11 November 1918.

The 23<sup>rd</sup> Sikh Pioneers were tasked to defend the line of sea communication through the Suez Canal and the Red Sea. They sailed from Karachi in November 1914, landing at Fort Turba, north of Aden, in the face of enemy opposition, and destroyed the fort and its armament. They were then employed in Somaliland, before moving to Egypt, in March 1915, to be divisional troops as part of 10 Indian Division at Suez. They were tasked to defend the railway line on the east bank of the Suez Canal before they moved to Gaza on the Sinai Peninsula.

The 1/23<sup>rd</sup> saw action in the first battle of Gaza against the Turks in March 1917 and the 2/23<sup>rd</sup> was the first unit to enter Palestine. Three weeks later was the second battle of Gaza. Both battalions worked on the narrow-gauge railway line to Jerusalem in preparation of the offensive. The advance to Beersheba commenced on 01 November 1917. The 2/32<sup>nd</sup> came to Palestine in February 1918 and was also employed on constructing a standard railway line and repair of the existing metre-gauge railway line. Their efforts, under frequent air attacks and ground raids, made it possible for the Allied offensive to be carried forward. They saw action in the offensive towards Jerusalem, under General Allenby, and were then deployed at Haifa. To them goes the credit of constructing the railway line from Gaza to Jerusalem, through Sharon, Megiddo and Nablus.

After the war, the 1/23<sup>rd</sup> were to return to India, while the 2/32<sup>nd</sup> and 3/32<sup>nd</sup> were employed for the construction of the Damascus-Beirut railway line and the coastal road in Palestine. The 1/23<sup>rd</sup>, while at Suez, were diverted to Constantinople. After a short stay, they were sent through the Black Sea to Tiflis, in Georgia, and then returned to Turkey to take charge of refugees from Russia. (It was later learnt that the orders, at Alexandria, were for a 23<sup>rd</sup> battalion of a British regiment). The 1/23<sup>rd</sup> returned to Ambala in August 1920.

### **France 1914-1915**

The 1/34<sup>th</sup> Sikh Pioneers earned the coveted title of "Royal" during the war. They were the only pioneer unit in the army to receive this honour. Moving from Ambala, as part of divisional troops of the 3<sup>rd</sup> (Lahore) Division, they landed at Marseilles, in France, on 26 September 1914. Much was expected of them and they responded in full measure. There were problems, not only related to the cold, clammy climate. The rifles were obsolete and new rifles and ammunition was issued at Marseilles but there was no opportunity for training. The clothing was suited to Indian conditions and warm clothing was only issued by mid-winter. There was no mechanical transport, artillery or signal equipment with the Indian Corps. Above all, was the problem of language, especially when most Hindustani-speaking British officers were killed or wounded and their replacements were not familiar with Indian culture. Yet, the Sikh Pioneers lived up to their warrior reputation.

They were sent straight to the trenches for holding defences from seven miles north of Neuve Chapelle to Givenchy. They relieved the French cavalry at night, in unknown territory, cut up by wire entanglements and deep ditches full of water and mud, facing the German onslaught at Givenchy, in December 1914, suffering a large number of casualties. They fought on wet and cold nights with insufficient food, and little or no sleep. Rations could only be collected from a central point 400 yards behind the line, at night, when there was a lull in the intense shelling and sniping. No lull meant no rations.

In the 14 months they spent in France, they saw action at the First Battle of Ypres on 23 October, at Neuve Chapelle on 27-28 October and in Festubert on 23-24 November. They played a glorious part in the deadly battle to capture Neuve Chapelle from 10-12 March 1915, where victory was achieved at a great cost in lives. Then followed the Second Battle of Ypres on 22 April, where they were subjected to mustard gas attacks. Then came the Second Battle of Festubert from 15-25 May. Finally, they saw action at the Battle of Loos in September.

Influenza and trench fever added to the casualties of war. They experienced heavy shellfire, air and gas attacks, and trench fighting against an enemy who had mortars, rifle grenades, searchlights and other advanced weaponry, while they had to locally manufacture explosives with empty jam tins. Weary, depleted and battle-scarred, they were finally relieved in November. They left France in December 1915, after leaving their mark on the battlefields of Europe at a time when British and French troops were not available to fight.

### **Mesopotamia 1916**

The 34<sup>th</sup> Sikh Pioneers did not return to India from France but were sent to Mesopotamia. They disembarked at Basra on 14 January 1916. The 6 Indian Division under General Townshend was besieged at Kut-ul-Amara and troops were sorely needed to relieve the garrison. The Regiment marched along the Tigris River to join the relief force at Ali Gharbi. The British offensive had floundered strategically and tactically. The surrender of General Townshend with his garrison on 27 April necessitated further fighting against the Turks. They saw action as part of the force that advanced on to Baghdad in January 1917, and participated



in the fighting for the capture of the city. At Sherquat, as part of 17 Indian Division, towards the end of October 1917, they participated in the action that led to the final defeat of the Turkish forces in the theatre.

### **Black Picquet 1919**

Immediately after the Third Afghan War, Wazir and Mahsud tribes launched attacks on British convoys and posts, angered by false rumours that Waziristan was to be handed over to Afghanistan in post-war talks. On 18 December 1919, the leading brigade of the Derajat column, under General Andrew Skeen, pitched camp at the Palsonia plain in Waziristan. After two days of demoralising reverses during attempts to establish picquets on the far side of the Takki Zam River, it was decided to build a *sangar* on 'Black Hill', about a mile northeast of the camp, on the near side of the river. Two companies of the 3/34<sup>th</sup> Sikh Pioneers, under four officers, were given the task.

The Mahsuds planned to attack the camp with about 10,000 tribesmen. By mid-day on 21 December 1919, the encirclement of the camp was complete. The two battalions tasked to provide fire support to the construction on Black Hill retreated as the first wave of attacking Mahsuds appeared, leaving the two companies of the 3/34<sup>th</sup> Sikh Pioneers alone, completely uncovered and exposed, on the hill-top with no more than a knee-high wall and a few strands of barbed wire in front. Casting aside their tools, the Sikhs took up rifles to defend their post. They gallantly faced and repelled waves of attacks, which were so fierce that on three occasions there was grim hand-to-hand fighting in the picquet itself, but each time the Mahsuds were driven back.

The battalion suffered 186 men killed and wounded in this action where individual acts of gallantry were many. It was the final stamp of Sikh Pioneer actions on the Northwest Frontier. In honour of the gallant action of the 3/34<sup>th</sup> Sikh Pioneers, the 'Black Hill' picquet was named as 'Pioneer Picquet'.

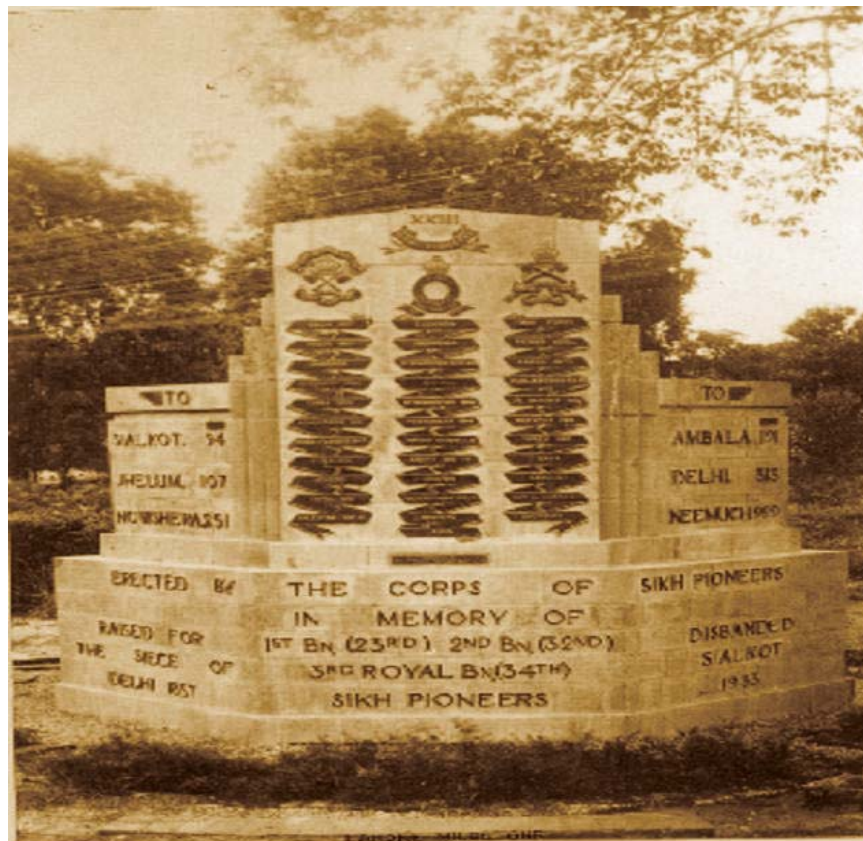
### **Disbandment**

In 1929, the Sikh Pioneers were reduced to a Corps HQ with one battalion each as it was felt that, under modern conditions, they could not be both fully-trained infantry and engineers. They were useful for roadmaking in expeditions on the Northwest Frontier;



but such ventures became infrequent and the regular garrisons had permanent roads built by civil contract. It was also felt that the engineer troops of any division should be homogeneous. This, coupled with serious financial stringency, caused the Government of India to decide in 1932 that the Pioneers should be abolished from the Indian Army and that a part of the financial saving so effected should be applied towards an increase in the strength of the three Corps of Sappers and Miners.

10 February 1933 was a sad day for the Regiment as the Sikh Pioneers were disbanded after 75 years of glorious service. It was a traumatic experience for a community that had soldiered so sedulously. A farewell parade was held at Sialkot on 08 December 1932 to bring the curtain down on a fine fighting force. Yet, its heritage was destined to continue.



*Commemorative Milestone constructed by the Sikh Pioneers in Lahore Cantonment.*

**Raising of the Sikh Light Infantry**

Within eight years of disbandment, the Sikh Pioneers were re-raised, like the phoenix rising from the ashes, as the Sikh Light Infantry, to meet the urgent and mounting demands of World War II. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was raised at Jullundur on 01 October 1941, the 2<sup>nd</sup> at Peshawar on 01 July 1942 and the 3<sup>rd</sup> at Sialkot on 15 August 1942, by converting the 13 Pioneer Battalion.

**Reference**

1. Lt Gen Sir George MacMunn, *The History of the Sikh Pioneers* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, 1936)

# Killing in the Name: The Russia-Ukraine War, Illicit Arms Trafficking and National Security Implications for India

Mr Archishman Ray Goswami®

## Abstract

*The Russia-Ukraine War has significantly expanded the size of the international arms market as Moscow ramps up domestic military production and Western countries supply Ukraine with vast amount of military aid. Yet, as historical precedent indicates, when large number of weapons are supplied to any side in a war, there remains the tangible risk of several of those arms being trafficked and reaching the possession of transnational violent non-state actors, including terrorist organisations and organised crime syndicates. With the war in Ukraine being no exception, this article assesses the challenges this illicit arms trafficking poses specifically for India. It does so by first evaluating the security threat posed by ISIS' exploitation of the war in Ukraine to acquire these trafficked arms in order to use it for terror attacks worldwide and, especially, in India. The article then looks at the similar danger posed to internal security and policing by smuggling and the use of these arms by domestic organised crime syndicates in India and concludes with a brief series of policy recommendations for the Indian Government to follow.*

## Introduction

“The arms industry has verve and a drive which makes its own logic beyond any arguments about strategy and diplomacy”, noted a British journalist in the 1970s in his seminal work on the global arms trade, *The Arms Bazaar*.<sup>1</sup> “It refuses to accept that it is different in kind from other industries”, he continued— instead,

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®Mr Archishman Ray Goswami is an incoming postgraduate student of National Security Studies MA programme at the Department of War Studies, King's College, London.

“it is only more adventurous and inventive”.<sup>2</sup> His words continue to resonate with respect to the state of the modern global arms trade over four decades on. Indeed, the Russo-Ukrainian War, in its seventh month of continuation at the time of writing, has borne witness to a significant influx of weapons within global arms markets, as Western governments have stepped up their arms exports to Kiev in its efforts to push back against Russian military advances. Yet, when it comes to the global arms trade, it remains a fact — demonstrated by historical precedent — that the merchandise in question often fails to reach its intended customers, often falling into the hands of other state and non-state actors with an interest in using the weapons in question for private strategic interests.

As total supply on global arms markets has grown amid the war due to large Western weapons arms supplies to Ukraine, so has their access to violent non-state actors worldwide. Jurgen Stock, Secretary-General of Interpol, voiced these concerns in June 2022, predicting, “An influx of weapons in Europe and beyond” as “criminal groups try to exploit the situation and the availability of weapons, even those used by the military and including heavy weapons”.<sup>3</sup> Heeding his warning, governments worldwide, including those in the West, have started taking steps to counter the rise in illicit arms trafficking during and following the predicted end of the Russo-Ukrainian War. In July 2022, the European Union (EU) announced the establishment of a 27 member hub in Moldova specifically aimed at countering the illicit trafficking of arms supplied to and from Ukraine.<sup>4</sup>

While Ukraine has long been a flashpoint of the global illicit arms trade, the ongoing war has only exacerbated existing threats emanating from the country. The fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s culminated in a flood of Soviet weaponry being trafficked by ‘conflict entrepreneurs’, such as Leonid Minin (a Ukrainian citizen himself) and Viktor Bout, to war-zones around the world such as the civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia during the latter part of the decade — documented in Douglas Farah’s and Stephen Braun’s 2007 book *Merchant of Death*.

At a time when India faces a variety of security threats from internal and external armed conflicts — from the threat of a resurgent Taliban in Afghanistan already armed with US military kit to the increased access to military-grade weaponry among

domestic organised criminal networks linked to hostile foreign intelligence services, and to the continuing jihadist violence in Kashmir — the potential threat of illicit arms trafficking from and via Ukraine is something which policymakers in South Block should consider seriously.

Building upon ISIS spokesperson Abu Omar al-Muhajir's April 2022 remarks exhorting its members and sympathisers to "take advantage" of the ongoing war in Ukraine to declare a "global offensive" against its enemies<sup>5</sup>, this section points towards the increased threat posed by ISIS amid the Ukraine War, specifically via the immediate threat of its acquisition of illicit weaponry smuggled from the Ukrainian conflict.

### **Threat 1: ISIS and Transnational Jihadism**

It may be argued that the greatest beneficiary of the Russo-Ukrainian War as a direct consequence of the trafficking of weapons will be ISIS and similar transnational jihadist organisations, who will seek to acquire Western small arms and military-grade weaponry smuggled worldwide from the battlefields of Ukraine. The challenge this poses to Indian national security gains greater salience given the outfit's stated desire to grow its influence amid the war and following the success of the US special operation in February 2022 to kill Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi, the self-styled caliph of the Islamic State. This view is supported in particular by the group's characterisation as a hybrid criminal-terrorist organisation within certain academic schools of thought.

ISIS and the conflict in Ukraine share a long and chequered history, dating back to at least 2014, following Russia's annexation of Crimea and the ensuing frozen conflict in the Donbass between Ukrainian forces and pro-Russia separatists. Since 2014, the instability in Eastern Ukraine has provided ISIS fighters with opportunities to smuggle unregistered weapons and foreign fighters to war-zones in Iraq and Syria, collect identity documents, revenue (often in conjunction with local organised crime networks) and even acquire military training as part of volunteer battalions on either side.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, the endemic corruption in the country, coupled with easy access to small arms, has facilitated post-2014 Ukraine's devolution into what Marcin Mamon refers to in his report for *The Intercept* as "an important stop-off point for the 'brothers of the Islamic State'".<sup>7</sup> The arrest of Abu Omar al-Shishani, ISIS' so-called 'minister of war' and a close aide of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi,

near his home in the Kiev region in late 2019 by the Ukrainian intelligence services once again shone a light upon ISIS' illicit activities in the country following the start of the war in the Donbass in 2014.<sup>8</sup> In such circumstances, it may be argued that the current state of war between Russia and Ukraine provides new opportunities for ISIS to consolidate its presence in Ukraine in pursuit of its global objectives, including in India — especially via arms smuggling to conduct large-scale terror attacks.

ISIS' statements following the February 2022 US military operation which saw the death of al-Qurashi point towards the group's collective desire to exploit the Russo-Ukrainian War to expand its global influence. Just a few days after the operation, the group's spokesman, Abu Omar al-Muhajir, called upon ISIS sympathisers to take advantage of "the crusaders fighting each other" in Ukraine to re-commence large-scale terror attacks in Europe and across the world — implying the outfit's desire to enrich itself from the conflict and its presence in the country to achieve its transnational objectives.<sup>9</sup> In these conditions, the potential challenge posed by ISIS' global smuggling of weapons from Ukraine for their use in terrorist attacks worldwide gains greater challenge. This, when combined with ISIS propaganda's renewed focus on India as a theatre of operations evidenced by its exploitation of the hijab controversy in March<sup>10</sup> and its calls for the assassination of PM Modi and terrorist attacks in India<sup>11</sup> underscores the implications of developments in Ukraine for India's national security with regard to the threats posed by ISIS.

The national security challenge posed to India by ISIS's facilitated access to weapons available on illicit markets in Ukraine is exacerbated by the organisation's longstanding emphasis on criminal activity as an aspect of its wider operations. Indeed, ISIS' historic focus on acquiring revenue and weapons through criminal and semi-criminal activities such as arms trafficking and drug smuggling has led to its categorisation as a hybrid criminal-terrorist outfit. Pointing towards the group's close ties with "different organised crime groups in the Balkans, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East Region" aside from its dependence on "illegal oil trading, human and human organs trafficking and arms trading", Iranian academic Mahdokht Zakeri argues that today, "ISIS is no longer solely an ideological-terrorist group", but "also a de-territorialised, international non-state actor which acts as an hybrid criminal terrorist organisation".<sup>12</sup>



Viewed through this prism as a transnational criminal-terrorist entity, ISIS can be projected to use its global footprint to exploit instability in one country to carry out attacks elsewhere, such as in India — a possible destination for these trafficked weapons. Colin P Clarke, a Senior Fellow at the Soufan Centre, concurs, underlining that “terrorist groups will engage in nearly any activity that generates a profit and have demonstrated an ability to adapt to losses in one area by aggressively expanding into new markets”, thus demonstrating “the blurred lines between criminality and terrorism”.<sup>13</sup> Both sets of arguments demonstrate that not only does ISIS’ potential trafficking of illicit arms from Ukraine to India pose a tangible threat to India’s internal security, but also point towards the novel global security challenges posed by ISIS’ actions as a criminal-terrorist entity.

### **Threat 2: Domestic Organised Crime Networks**

In a similar vein, the Russia-Ukraine War and the ensuing influx of weapons into global arms markets provides organised crime networks, including those in India, with facilitated access to foreign weaponry. The rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) attack on the Punjab Police Intelligence Headquarters by local organised criminal outfits in May 2022 not only points towards the increased access to military-grade weaponry by such groups in India, but in a global arms market, increasingly saturated by smuggled weapons from Ukraine, signals a worsening of the current situation in coming years.

Concerns surrounding such forms of arms trafficking link back to Interpol Secretary-General Jurgen Stock’s aforementioned remarks surrounding criminal exploitation of the black/grey weapons markets in wartime Ukraine. As the war drags on, these apprehensions have been echoed more vocally among Western states and government bodies, with the British delegation to the OSCE arguing in July 2022 that “as Russia’s invasion of Ukraine continues, global drivers of serious organised crime strengthen”.<sup>14</sup> In a similar vein, a Europol statement the same month warned that “the proliferation of firearms and explosives in Ukraine could lead to an increase in firearms and munitions trafficked into the EU via established smuggling routes or online platforms”.<sup>15</sup>

Both statements and, particularly, the views expressed by Europol, underscore significant, similar security challenges for India. With weapons smuggling channels to domestic criminal networks



in India remaining a pertinent policing challenge and growing reports of illicit dark web-enabled weapons sales across the country, the challenge that Europol predicts as a consequence of the influx of weapons onto Ukraine is likely to affect India as well.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, the rise in the use of foreign-imported guns by members of organised criminal networks in Indian cities in recent years point towards well-established smuggling channels enabling the supply of such weapons to these groups from overseas – especially those from Pakistan facilitating weapons trafficking from Western markets.<sup>17</sup> In such circumstances, the expansion of global black/grey arms markets amid the war in Ukraine may be projected to create new opportunities for domestic organised crime networks in India.

The presence of various channels of arms smuggling into India makes her problem all the more pressing. India has long contended with the security challenges posed by the crime-terror nexus along its porous borders with Pakistan in the northwest, Nepal in the north and with Myanmar in the northeast. As the global illicit arms market becomes increasingly inundated with weapons being smuggled in from Ukraine, these existing smuggling routes will serve to become increasingly critical for domestic organised criminal networks seeking to acquire these new small arms. This view is supported by Mohammed Siyech, who argues that “the supply-demand equation in the criminal-terrorist ecology does not take place in a vacuum but rather co-exists in tandem with other non-state actors”.<sup>18</sup> Siyech’s remarks reiterate the danger posed to India’s national security as a result of arms smuggling from Ukraine, especially when viewed through the prism of organised criminal security threats, which will remain incentivised to benefit from the supply of smuggled weapons into India.

### **Policy Recommendations**

Having established the two primary challenges, posed by illicit arms trafficking from Ukraine, for India’s national security — those posed by transnational jihadist outfits (specifically ISIS) and domestic organised criminal organisations in India, the three broad policy recommendations for the Indian government to pursue are:

- **The Establishment of a Specialised Unit/Task Force and a Liaison Centre.** Special Task Forces (STFs) should be established within both the IB and the NIA, with each task

force analysing the challenges posed by the receipt and use of trafficked weapons by organised crime and terrorist organisations respectively, as per agency mandates. The establishment of a liaison centre between both agencies, responding directly to the NSA's office would also be recommended in order to ensure effective intelligence sharing, prevent potential turf wars, provide oversight and better explore the crime-terror nexus' engagement in arms trafficking into India from Ukraine.

- **An Increased Ground HUMINT Presence in Ukraine.** With the Indian embassy in Kiev having been re-opened with immediate effect from 17 May 2022, it is recommended that diplomatic and embedded intelligence personnel in the country increasingly focus their attention towards the trafficking of weapons from Ukraine to India. This will require greater focus on the activities of local criminal organisations in the region with incentives in trafficking weapons, and their relations (direct or otherwise) with violent non-state actors in India. Establishing a ground intelligence presence via the re-opened embassy would allow Indian authorities to keep a check on the supply of these illicit arms at their source.
- **Tighter Surveillance of Borders and Sea-Ports.** Given that most supply chains for arms trafficking into India are controlled by actors in neighbouring countries (namely Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Nepal), it is key that surveillance be increased in border areas and around sea-ports as these are the points of entry for the illicit weapons in question. This can be conducted using human surveillance/tighter physical control of entry points as well as by the increasingly focussed collection of IMINT along land borders by satellites.

## Endnotes

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Kim Willsher, "Arms sent to Ukraine will end up in criminal hands, says Interpol chief", *The Guardian*, 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2022 (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/02/ukraine-weapons-end-up-criminal-hands-says-interpol-chief-jurgen-stock>)

<sup>4</sup> Apoorva Kaul, "European Union Announces Hub in Moldova To Tackle Possible Arms Smuggling From Ukraine", Republic world, 11<sup>th</sup> July 2022 (<https://www.republicworld.com/world-news/russia-ukraine-crisis/european-union-announces-hub-in-moldova-to-tackle-possible-arms-smuggling-from-ukraine-articleshow.html>)

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid

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<sup>11</sup> PM Modi on ISIS-Khorasan magazine cover; Terror group calls for attacks in India, The Hindustan Times, 20<sup>th</sup> July 2022 (<https://www.hindustantimes.com/videos/news/pm-modi-on-isis-khorasan-magazine-cover-terror-group-calls-for-attacks-in-india-101658331776368.html>)

<sup>12</sup> Mahdokht Zakeri, "De-territorialised Phenomenon: ISIS As a Hybrid Criminal Terrorist Organisation", *Hemispheres*, Vol 31 No 1 (2016), pp 42

<sup>13</sup> Colin P. Clarke, "Drugs & Thugs: Funding Terrorism through Narcotics Trafficking", *Journal of Strategic Security*, Vol 9 No 3 (2016), pp 1

<sup>14</sup> Addison, Justin. "Russia's illegal war against Ukraine increases risk of trafficking: UK delegation to the OSCE", gov.uk, (<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/russias-illegal-war-against-ukraine-increases-risk-of-trafficking-uk-statement-to-the-osce>)

<sup>15</sup> Europol statement on the cooperation with Ukraine, Europol, 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2022 (<https://www.europol.europa.eu/media-press/newsroom/news/europol-statement-cooperation-ukraine>)

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# Pixels Speak - 'The Visible Intelligence'

Lieutenant Colonel Amandeep Singh®

## Abstract

*Imagery intelligence is one of the advanced and progressing forms of intelligence gathering. It is the science of converting information, extracted from imagery, into intelligence with respect to areas of interest. Imagery intelligence acts as a strategic important resource that encompasses more than systems, technology and processes. The discipline is comprised of highly skilled and domain specialisation. Role of imagery intelligence in national defence and security is decisive, making it critically essential and a crucial component of successful military operations. The uses of imagery intelligence continue to progress extensively with the arrival of newer technologies, like Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning and Big Data Analytics, which afford greater scope for exploitation. Imagery intelligence will see a great transformation in the next decade as future success will be critically dependent upon the effective utilisation of imagery intelligence and its effective integration in creating a Common Operational Picture. The ability to utilise multiple forms of intelligence and channelise it to an automated common point of reference with minimum human interference will be critical for dominance resulting in victory on the future battlefield.*

## Introduction

From balloons to light aircraft, reconnaissance had major strategic implications for a commander's ability to visualise the battlefield and direct his forces which often contributed in a

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®Lieutenant Colonel Amandeep Singh holds a bachelor's degree in Law (LLB) and MBA Finance. He carries 11 years plus experience as Image Analyst with domain and vertical specialisation in outer space assets.

major way towards victory. Imagery intelligence is a significant source to obtain information about the adversary from a remote platform. Today, with sub-metric resolution, any military feature or otherwise can be easily detected.

All conventional military missions are progressively migrating to outer space on a much faster pace and, thereby, strengthening the theory that space systems affect every degree of military operations to include effective integration of the battlefield. By allowing everyone to comprehend requisite details about the enemy and terrain in the required time and space, the commander's visualisation of the battlefield is enhanced.<sup>1</sup>

Imagery intelligence is one of the advanced and progressing forms of intelligence gathering, the aspects of which are significant and considerable including being able to function at a distance, detached from physical boundaries, and proficient in providing daily revisits on any point on Earth. An image from a space platform could provide much more information of earth's surfaces on a large scale and in a relatively short time. Imagery intelligence derived out of satellite images has been widely used for resource management, planning, monitoring, predicting, and operational, and research purpose in various fields.<sup>2</sup>

### **Historical Perspective**

The use of imagery for intelligence applications has a long and rich history. Before the invention of photography, scouts would deliver tales of their observations to military commanders. They would perhaps draw pictures and maps in the dirt to illustrate what they had observed. They would use word pictures to convey information but the military commander had to always create a mental picture of the scout's descriptions. With the invention of photography in 1830s, this procedure started to migrate towards pictorial depiction.

Manned balloons were used during the Civil War to observe enemy positions, activities, and photographs obtained from a balloon vantage point were used to support military operations. The need for relatively long exposure time to take 1860s vintage photographs caused blurring because of balloon motion and limited the utility of these early intelligence products. The primary use of aerial photography in World War I was to support front-line tactical

operations. As the sophistication of both aircraft and photography increased, it became possible to expand the utility of aerial photography. Longer array aircraft, aircraft for photographic tasks, high resolutions cameras and proficient photo interpreters collectively augmented the scope of aerial photography in its application. Thus, it became possible to accumulate evidences that assisted in detailed analysis of the adversary's future plan.

During World Wars, it was factually proven that nothing in the intelligence arsenal was as effective as a photo reconnaissance mission for determining enemy force deployment, target locations, bombing mission effectiveness and essential map making. Photo reconnaissance missions were flown for area coverage, point targets, enemy movements and to carry damage assessment, interpretation of these was an art that necessitated finesse in assessing photographs and infer facts from images.<sup>3</sup>

### **Evolution of Imagery Intelligence**

Imagery intelligence is an intelligence-gathering discipline wherein imagery is analysed through various components to identify information of intelligence value. It also encompasses technical and geographic information derived through the interpretation or analysis of imagery and collating the same with existing knowledge. It is the science of converting information, extracted from imagery, into intelligence with respect to areas of interest.<sup>4</sup>

Outer space has emerged as a new medium and has highlighted the urgent need to augment awareness regarding specific space issues. Military applications of space and technological advances with increasing integration of outer space capabilities in war fighting doctrines have changed the nature of warfare. Imagery intelligence is among the most important technological achievements of the intelligence community maintaining the capability to support military operations in avoiding collateral damages. Intelligence derived from imagery has become an essential element of military operations and has matured as an increasingly powerful tool for mapping and visualising the world.<sup>5</sup>

For military perspectives, analysis and derivation of imagery intelligence is produced by conversion of raw information into intelligence and includes the integration, evaluation and analysis of all available data which draws separate pieces of information



together to identify patterns and draw conclusions/assessments. Progressive technology now affords the competence to use geospatial data in different ways to generate interactive and customised visual products. It allows the analyst to make more complex connections quickly between different types of data and information than otherwise possible.

### **Geospatial Intelligence (GEOINT)**

GEOINT is a specialised field of practice within the broader profession of intelligence that encompasses all activities involved in planning, collection, processing, analysis, exploitation and dissemination of spatial information to gain intelligence about the operational environment, visually depict the inputs and fuse the acquired inputs with other information through analysis and visualisation processes for better assimilation, thus, aiding in faster decision-making process.

Imagery intelligence is a highly progressive discipline of intelligence, which goes beyond stating as to what is happening, where is it happening and when is it happening, it also reveals how is it happening, why is it relevant and facilitates in carrying out predictive analysis. As an intelligence gathering discipline, the production of imagery intelligence depends heavily upon a robust imagery collection mechanism, which includes satellites and other on ground apparatus, and professional image analysts. The exploitation and analysis of imagery and geospatial information to describe assess and visually depict physical features and geographically referenced activities on the Earth act as the fulcrum for varied military operations. GEOINT consists of geospatial information and imagery intelligence that collectively provide innovative, versatile solutions fulfilling intelligence requirements and predicting tomorrow's threat environment.<sup>6</sup>

### **Imagery Analysis**

Imagery analysis is the process by which meaningful intelligence is derived from pixels or a collection of pixels. The data recorded in the pixel will dictate the quality of the image and its capability for being analysed further for deriving intelligence from it. The body of pixels is holistically interpreted and creatively combined in light of other collateral open-source information to synergistically derive new value-added information from the annotated imagery.

Imagery analysis is a process that begins with an initial examination of an image and its constituent features. Various constituent features of an image that will aid in interpretation are size, shape, shadows, shade, surroundings, signatures, texture, time and perspective. Imagery intelligence has proven to be an effective tool for many military applications.

Varied categories of spatial data which provide intense support to military operations are panchromatic imagery, infrared imagery, multispectral imagery, hyperspectral imagery, ultra-spectral imagery, motion imagery sensors like and Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) and Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR).

### **Role of an Image Analyst**

The skills and experience of an image analyst are critical to any pertinent verification of information extracted from all sources of imagery. Imagery analysis is the cornerstone upon which entire technology to collect imagery data collection, technologies and capabilities to process are built upon.

The discipline of imagery intelligence encompasses more than systems, technology and processes. The discipline comprises of highly skilled and experienced professionals with a wide range of expertise and domain specialisation to include payload planning, imaging architecture, imagery acquisition and analysis, corroboration with available inputs, and creating an Imagery Intelligence Report and data base management for archival imagery. An experienced image analyst possesses a database of knowledge and operating principles developed over many years of experience.<sup>7</sup>

Spatial data is required to be competently interpreted by well trained and experienced imagery analysts, fully cognizant of terrain, its seasonal dynamics, enemy strategies, equipment and operations. For tactical and strategic verifications, spatial data is corroborated with collateral information from other sources and open source information and draw correctly under geospatial intelligence tradecraft.

In future, imagery analysts will face more challenging tasks as they are required to look at and evaluate diverse types of imagery and use more sophisticated tools which are under continuous upgradation due to fast changing technologies and

technological evolution. The demanding timelines required to be met by producing thoroughly analysed and contextually based products. Strategic superiority will be enjoyed by the entity with shortest timelines for collection, exploitation and dissemination.<sup>8</sup>

### **Imperatives of Imagery Intelligence**

Role of imagery intelligence in national defence and security is decisive, making it critically essential and a crucial component of successful military operations. All conventional military missions for land, sea and air are migrating to spatial data, for effective integration of space systems for military operational needs. The uses of imagery intelligence continue to progress extensively with the onset of newer technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning and Big Data Analytics affording greater scope for exploitation.<sup>9</sup>

Imagery intelligence provides the ability to integrate precise location and terrain data to create a foundation of information about a specific area. This information is then turned into a picture of area that diverse users and organisations can access simultaneously ensuring they are working with identical data and are referencing the same information. This Common Operational Picture (COP) provides users the ability to quickly orient and visualise their mission space which displays the required information supporting situational awareness and rapid decision making.

Spatial products range from standard geospatial data, satellite imagery, digital raster and vector information, reports, GIS maps, terrain maps and 3D fly-through models that incorporate multiple types of advanced sensors. These products may be used alone or with many layers of additional data such as geographic data and intelligence information. Same can be accessed using hard copies i.e., annotated prints or soft copies i.e., graphics and overlays displayed for displaying a holistic operational picture. The varied products examine the imagery to detect, recognise, identify and locate objects and activities. The products may be developed using sophisticated technology to integrate multiple types of geospatial data as well as data from other intelligence sources.

### **Integration with Imagery Intelligence**

Imagery intelligence has already been proven to be a timely, accurate data source to support and supplement monitoring. The

world has witnessed an era of new capabilities in earth observation that include large constellations of more agile and capable satellites having improved spatial, spectral and temporal resolutions that even include high-definition video.<sup>10</sup>

Spatial source of imagery have global coverage and reach which is now freely available via digital virtual globes. Moreover, imagery can be readily supplemented by multiple platforms, sensors, companies and nations. Despite the initial uncertainty regarding quality, timeliness of acquisition and processing and final delivery, spatial imagery has more than established in its value as a monitoring and intelligence tool. The technology has progressed over a period of time and brought ease of access to sub metric resolution for spatial products. However, the challenges of real time dissemination, correlation, corroboration, rate of data acquisition, increase in signal bandwidth, no loss data transmission and time sensitivity in generating final actionable intelligence requires more advancement and expertise. The emergent need of the present time is to integrate varied sources of intelligence under one nodal appointment for depiction, correlation and corroboration.<sup>11</sup>

### **Technology-Tactical Fusion**

Technology has revolutionised how intelligence is gathered and analysed. Advanced technology facilitates the capability to use and combine geospatial data in different ways to create interactive, dynamic, customised visual products. It facilitates an image analyst to make more complex connections between different types of data and information, than otherwise previously possible, to present predicted analysis.

Rapid response is becoming increasingly important in military operations with targeting, surveillance, command and control activities that need to make sense out of a large amount of disparate and possibly unreliable information. Subsequent control of acquisition, collation, corroboration and dissemination is passed to an autonomous system that will attempt to select an appropriate target from captured image data set and initiate an appropriate response.<sup>12</sup>

In recent times, Russia-Ukraine conflict has demonstrated that technologies that can perforate cloud cover and work at night are coming to fore as emerging professionals and experienced

spatial intelligence analysts offer near real time assessments of battle ground developments.

The imagery intelligence discipline encompasses all activities involved in the planning, collection, processing, analysis, exploitation and dissemination of spatial information to gain intelligence about the operational environment. Imagery intelligence is combined with a wider variety of data, such as signal intelligence, human intelligence, technical intelligence and open source intelligence through collaborative processes, to provide more accurate, comprehensive and relevant products.<sup>13</sup>

### **Growth of Imagery Intelligence – The Future**

The collection of intelligence was earlier considered about primarily in human terms with covert actions and espionage missions by agents. Reconnaissance satellites have contested counter to this statement and has ultimately undermined the opinion to exclusively obtaining intelligence picture with human intelligence. In the course of active operations, imagery intelligence would provide an atmosphere of legitimacy over espionage that had never existed.<sup>14</sup>

COP of a specific area is established effectively using multiple and advanced sensors, multiple types of data and information including operations, planning and logistics as well as multiple intelligence disciplines to present a comprehensive visual depiction. This capability provides many advantages for the military leaders by precisely locating activities and objects, assessing and discerning the meaning of events and providing context for decision makers.<sup>15</sup>

The intelligent system envisaged will be an automated configuration for dynamic and comprehensive integration of sensors, intelligence inputs, reports, data processors and communication systems. It will enable simultaneous, global measurement and timely analysis of the operational environment in real-time. The varied fields for futuristic progression in the imagery intelligence domain necessitate development and growth in the following arena:

- Nano Satellites.
- Resolution and accuracy.
- Sensor technology.

- Automated extraction and information collation.
- Change detection.
- All weather capabilities.
- Thematic analysis.
- Launch on demand facilities.
- Hybrid constellation.
- Onboard processing.
- Higher bandwidth.
- Artificial Intelligence analysis.
- Automated target recognition system.

GEOINT platform must provide target and situational development information; determine effects on operations, threat assessment, enemy weaknesses and potential high value targets. The systems must be reliable and have self-contained communications to support joint and coalition operations with standard product transmission formats with dissemination down to battalion level.<sup>16</sup>

Detection and identification of target holding military value, from imagery intelligence, is the last stage of expert application, however, the entire scheme of affairs functions at much higher levels. It encompasses training and learning concerning diverse aspects of imagery intelligence comprising payload operations, orbital calendar matrix, operational and imaging capabilities, scene coverage, target acquisition and real time transmission procedures which collectively positions as essential elements for image analysis without which satellite imagery can be difficult to interpret.<sup>17</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The present and future of space based intelligence has added a fourth dimension to modern day warfare to achieve desired operational capabilities by empowering commanders to take decisions in a compressed period. Increased and faster access to high-resolution spatial data will shift power from the former holders of secrets to the newly informed end user.

Imagery intelligence will see a greater transformation in the coming decade as future success will be critically dependent upon the effective utilisation of imagery intelligence and its effective integration in creating a COP. The ability to utilise multiple forms of intelligence and channelise it to an automated common point of reference with minimum human interference will be critical for dominance resulting in victory on the future battlefield and enabling decision makers to arrive at the most viable course of action.<sup>18</sup>

### Endnotes

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# Concept of Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan and its Relevance

Dr Sanjay Kumar<sup>@</sup>

*When India speaks of becoming self-reliant, it doesn't advocate a self-centred system. In India's self-reliance; there is a concern for the whole world's happiness, cooperation and peace.*

Hon'ble PM Shri Narendra Modi

## Abstract

*The covid pandemic, despite all its socio-economic disruption, has opened new avenues for India to chart its way towards a self-reliant and sustainable country. India has opted to turn adversity into opportunity, and is, hence, moving towards realisations of Atma Nirbhar Bharat. It has clearly spelt out that Atma Nirbhar Bharat will not be a policy of protectionism and isolationism, but a policy of India working with the world to produce for the world. PM Modi in his clarion call had clearly marked the five pillars on which the policy will stand and India has since then taken many strides towards realisation of the goal.*

## Introduction

**A**tma Nirbhar Bharat or self-reliant India is one of the most ambitious visions of the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. In principle, the vision is about understanding India's present, and based on learnings from the past, to create a new tomorrow — a new India. In this context, the article, both descriptive and analytical in nature, aims to understand the concept, campaign, the thrust areas and relevance of it in the overall development of India as a self-reliant and self-sustainable country.

In his address to the nation on 12 May 2020, Indian PM Narendra Modi said that an unprecedented crisis has emerged

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<sup>@</sup>**Dr Sanjay Kumar** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Defence Studies, Meerut College, Meerut and a Visiting Professor, United Service Institution of India, New Delhi. He has authored and edited fifty-one research and text books and has published 200 research papers in various reputed journals.

due to COVID-19, and in this battle, India not only needs to protect itself but also has to keep moving forward.<sup>1</sup> What he referred to is that India has to protect its interests and its citizens and sustain it largely by itself, which in other term means an India which is self-dependent. He further said that a self-reliant India will stand on five pillars viz. Economy, which brings in quantum jump and not incremental change; Infrastructure, which should become the identity of India; System, based on 21st century technology driven arrangements; Vibrant Demography, which is our source of energy for a self-reliant India; and Demand, whereby the strength of our demand and supply chain should be utilised to full capacity.<sup>2</sup>

In short, the call was for a near revamp of the overall Indian economy, infrastructure, capitalisation on technology, and utilisation of a vibrant demography through bold reforms to enhance Indian capacity and capabilities. The address was aimed to chart a new way forward in a moment of grave national and international crisis. In his address, the PM also announced a special economic package which, taken together with earlier announcements during Covid crisis and decisions taken by RBI, was to the tune of Rs 20 lakh crore; equivalent to almost 10 per cent of India's GDP.<sup>3</sup> Following this announcement, the Finance Minister, Ms Nirmala Sitharaman, through five press conferences, announced the detailed measures under the economic package. It was intended to give a formidable shape to the vision with concrete initiatives towards achieving 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat'.

Some of the reforms announced by the finance minister were directly linked to the economic developments and reviving economy, which in turn is expected to boost the income of the masses. It included increase in borrowing limits, Privatisation of Public Sector Enterprise (PSEs), collateral free loans for businesses, corpus for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), Schemes for Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs), ease of doing business for corporates, amendments to Companies Act, 2013, concessional credit boost to farmers and agri-infrastructure fund, one nation on card, free food grain supply to migrants, Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHC) for migrant workers / urban poor.<sup>4</sup> Later in November, the Union Cabinet gave approval to introduce the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme in 10 key sectors for enhancing India's manufacturing capabilities and enhancing exports – Atma Nirbhar Bharat.<sup>5</sup>

### **Conceptual Understanding of the Atma Nirbharta**

At the very conceptual level, it has often been interpreted as an isolationist policy, where India seeks to shield itself from the external shocks. A kind of protectionist policy followed by India during the pre-liberalisation era that had led to the economic crisis of 1991. However, the Prime Minister and the Indian Foreign Minister as also Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant have repeatedly suggested that the policy is of self-sustainability and sharing Indian products with the world. Amitabh Kant said, “Atmanirbhar Bharat mission is [...] not about protectionism. It’s about abilities of Indian companies to create world-class products, capture the Indian market and then use the strength of the domestic market to penetrate the global market”.<sup>6</sup>

The External Affairs Minister (EAM) had taken a step forward in defining Atmanirbharta when he said, “The objective of Atmanirbhar Bharat is to build greater national capacities so that we can make a stronger contribution globally. What, according to the EAM, appears to be a national initiative is basically an endeavour that has the global partnership at the centre of it, which in turn will contribute to the larger global rebalancing.”<sup>7</sup> Indian EAM clearly understands that Indian economy is intertwined with the global economy, and any shock on the global economy is going to impact India and its public. The strategic significance of India’s economy to the world needs to be exploited and it can be done only through making India self-reliant and self-dependent.

At the institutional and administrative level, the aim is to bring changes to various institutions and administration that could spur the momentum of change envisioned by the government. It visions reform at the social, bureaucratic, and political level. The essence is to reform for better quality of governance and policies across the public and private domain. Society or demography is looked upon as both the engine or agency for the change and the recipient of these changes. At the centre of any governance is the society and the people. The policies and the early announcement clearly put people as the beneficiary.

### **Five Pillars of Atma Nirbhar Bharat**

The five pillars of Atma Nirbhar Bharat, as stated by the Indian PM, are crucial because these are the specific areas that faced

the maximum disruption due to covid-19 pandemic and are equally the most crucial clogs of the wheel for the development.

**Economy.** The outbreak of covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent global crisis clearly demonstrated that the world, including India, was not fully prepared to handle the crisis without external help. The lack of proper medical infrastructure to scale of the crisis, the existing gaps in supply and demand of medical equipment and medicine, and the spiral impact of the lockdowns clearly took toll on the lives of ordinary citizens and had an impact on the Indian economy. Indian economy was hit hard by the covid-19 as the informal sector had to bear the brunt of the lockdown because of various reasons, including migration. One of the consequences of lockdown measures in the country has led to an unprecedented migration of workers and families from large urban centres to rural India. For decades, millions of workers have migrated from their rural homes and villages to urban cities, looking for opportunities and livelihoods.<sup>8</sup>

The covid-19 has hit the world economic order and institutions as well. The existing world order has been challenged severely as experts are of the view that the neoliberal economic globalisation will take a major beating in the wake of the pandemic. Economists are warning of a global recession<sup>9</sup>, and the impact of the pandemic on global economy is clearly visible; however, India has been able to recover much better than many of its counterparts.

**Technology.** Technology and its related services played crucial role during the lockdowns. Lockdown placed technology squarely at the forefront, driving activities digitally and virtually. It was being used widely to tackle the pandemic. Digitalisation of services — from telehealth to online education to cashless transfers and emergency assistance has been at the centre of country's responses.<sup>10</sup> In India, the digital payment, virtual meetings and seminars, virtual medical consultation became norm and has continued even after the lockdowns have been lifted, and when the country is fast moving towards normalcy. Technological support, despite shortcomings, was instrumental in sustaining the day to day activities as well as the economy.

Technological dependence on the West has been a persistent problem in the past. However, this is one of the sectors where India has achieved monumental success in the last 2 decades,

and that is reflected on her performance in other related sectors, including the service sector. However, despite these successes, India still needs to go a long way in the new fields of technology, particularly Artificial Intelligence and Quantum computing and Machine Learning. It is expected that with the PM's vision for Atma Nirbhar Bharat, India is going to make quantum jump in the field of technology. Reliance Jio's announcement of leading India's march into the 5G era with the development of a complete 5G solution is a step towards the direction. Similarly, Indian technological institutions and education hubs need to develop technologies made in India and take it further to industry for production.

**Infrastructure.** Absence of robust health and related service infrastructure further compounded India's problem. The existing medical infrastructure which caters to 1.37 billion people was left wanting for enhanced modernisation. The paucity of capabilities to absorb the scale of hospitalisation and medication attention, almost faced by every other country including the developed ones, was a factor that forced the Indian government to look at the infrastructure issue in a renewed manner. It wasn't the health and hospitality sector alone that faced the brunt of the pandemic but also the digital infrastructure, logistics, telecommunication, agriculture and industry infrastructure and power sector that faced the brunt. Prime Minister in his speech of 12 May 2020 emphasised on the role of infrastructure, and why infrastructure should become the identity of India.

**Demography.** India's growing population has two very crucial dimensions to it: first, the larger section of the society is youth, and is also urban based. According to one of the UN reports, India's urban population is estimated to stand at 675 million in 2035, the second highest behind China's one billion. The report further says, despite greater incidence of the virus in urban areas and the economic difficulties created by the pandemic, cities are once again serving as beacons of opportunity to people in search of employment, education and training or taking refuge from conflict.<sup>11</sup> The urban centres are also centres for opportunities for a large number of Indians who migrate from rural areas in search of better prospects and are largely youths.

According to a Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)'s report titled 'Youth in India 2022', by

the year 2036, those above the age of 30 will form the majority of the country's population. 'Youth', in the report, refers to people in the 15 to 29 age group, as defined in the Centre's National Youth Policy, 2014.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, India in the coming decades will be fast losing its current advantage of demographic dividend. It may turn out to be a liability if more jobs, and employment opportunities, are not provided to the youth. Government understands the urgency to utilise these youth in a productive manner; and there could not be any other way than to facilitate their contribution to the growth of the nation. "If India does not create enough jobs and its workers are not adequately prepared for those jobs, its demographic dividend may turn into a liability. And education and skill development will be the biggest enablers for reaping this dividend", says another report by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) released on India's Demographic Dividend.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, understanding the urgency, government has given special attention to the youth while talking about Atmanirbharta.

**Supply and Demand.** In his clarion call for Atmanirbhar Bharat, the PM clearly emphasised the need to strengthen India's demand and supply chain, and its utilisation to full capacity. He underlined the importance of strengthening all stakeholders in the supply chain to increase, as well as fulfil, the demand.<sup>14</sup> The supply chain reforms included for agriculture, a rational tax system, simple and clear laws, capable human resource and a strong financial system to promote business, attract investment, and further strengthen Make in India.<sup>15</sup> It was well evident that the lockdown had brought severe disruptions to the supply chain which further led to supply side and demand side shrinking by 22.9 per cent and 23.9 per cent respectively in Q1, 2020-21.<sup>16</sup> The disruption on the supply and demand chain had impacted the overall consumption and savings of the masses. It had also impacted production and export of the goods.

The clarion call by the Prime Minister towards Atmanirbhar Bharat has been implemented by all the sectors, including private sectors, working in various industries as well as by all the ministries of the government. The government also identified 12 key sectors where it was looking to promote quality production not just to make India a self-reliant but also a global exporter. These 12 sectors are food processing; organic farming; iron; aluminium and copper; agro-chemicals; electronics; industrial machinery; furniture;



leather and shoes; auto parts; textiles; and coveralls, masks, sanitisers and ventilators.

To understand the relevance of the Atmanirbharta during and beyond the pandemic years, it is imperative to look at one industry that urgently needed indigenous solution to India's import dependence — Defence Industry. The overseas dependence has clearly threatened and undermined India's defence preparedness and indigenisation.

### **Defence Sector Initiatives**

Defence sector is one of the key sectors where India has, for long, been importing its arms and ammunition. The policy announcement was a big step towards self-reliance in defence sector. It also offers a great opportunity to the Indian defence industry to rise to the occasion to manufacture the items in the negative list by using their own design and development capabilities or adopting the technologies designed and developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) to meet the requirements of the armed forces in the coming years. The government has taken several policy initiatives in the past few years under 'Make in India' program and brought in reforms to encourage indigenous design, development, and manufacture of defence equipment in the country, including design and development of the projects like Kamov 31.

It is according priority to procurement of capital items from domestic sources under Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP)-2020. Some other initiatives are: announcement of 18 major defence platforms for industry led design & development; notification of two 'Positive Indigenisation Lists' of total 209 items of Services and one 'Positive Indigenisation List' of total 2851 items of Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs); simplification of industrial licensing process with longer validity period; liberalisation of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) policy allowing 74% FDI under automatic route; simplification of Make Procedure; launch of innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) scheme involving start-ups & MSMEs; implementation of Public Procurement (preference to Make in India) Order 2017; reforms in offset policy with thrust on attracting investment and Transfer of Technology for defence manufacturing by assigning higher

multipliers; and establishment of two Defence Industrial Corridors, one each in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.<sup>17</sup>

MoD has also launched a 'SRIJAN' portal to promote indigenisation by the industry. 19509 defence items, which were earlier imported, have been uploaded on the portal for indigenisation. Out of them, the Indian industry has shown interest for indigenisation of 4006 defence items so far.<sup>18</sup> With focus of government on indigenisation and procurement of defence products from the domestic resources, the expenditure on defence procurement from foreign sources has reduced from 46 per cent to 36 per cent in the last four years, i.e., from 2018-19 to 2021-22. Moreover, the government, in the last four years, i.e. from 2018-19 to 2021-22, has accorded Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) to 162 proposals, worth Rs 2,51,130 crore approximately, under various categories of capital procurement from domestic sources.<sup>19</sup> This clearly suggests that a lot has been happening under the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative and the government has been able to gain some benefit as far as the indigenisation of defence production is concerned, reflecting in the reduction of the expenditure from foreign sources.

### **Conclusion**

Indian PM's call for Atma Nirbharta, amidst a global crisis of unprecedented scale and nature, has been one of the most astute and bold decision of the government, with its own share of pitfalls. The demand for making India not just a large-scale market for the world but also a country that produces for the global market has been under debate for the last many decades. The clarion call has the potential to turn the debate into a reality. The government has shown commitment both in terms of investment, and policy prescription to undertake what it needs to make India an Atma Nirbhar Bharat; the journey, however, is going to be long and arduous.

### **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> PIB, PM gives a clarion call for Atmanirbhar Bharat PM announces special economic package; comprehensive package of Rs 20 lakh crore Total package equivalent to 10% of India's GDP PM gives a call for self-reliant India; lays down five pillars of Atmanirbhar Bharat Bold reforms across sectors will drive the country's push towards self-reliance: PM It is time to become vocal for our local products and make them global:

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## Perspective on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS): Employment and Legal Aspects

Mr Mohammed Zaid®

*Robot hordes that can murder people are no longer just the product of science fiction. There are now Lethal Automated Weapons Systems (LAWS) to inflict casualties on opponents during conflicts. Autonomous systems will use machine and deep learning to work 'at the speed of light' in situations such as cyberattacks, hypersonic missiles attacks, electronic warfare etc. Currently, the volume of data being produced by surveillance drones and terrorist organisations, monitoring social media posts, is overwhelming military experts. Mr. Work established an algorithmic warfare team to explore how AI may aid in the pursuit of Islamic State fighters in Syria and mobile missile launchers in North Korea, before he left the Pentagon.<sup>1</sup> At the moment, drone technologies are altering the character of the battlefield and allowing the military to partially control warfare from a distance with standoff precision kinetic weapon platforms. LAWS, which are gradually entering combat, serve as an illustration. As this technology develops further, it may eventually influence how future battlefields will look. It can be stated that the development of robots was driven by the idea that soldiers' lives shouldn't be in danger unnecessarily. But one cannot take a simplistic view of R&D and deployment of LAWS since there are ethical and legal issues involved that merit a concurrent reflection and debate. The article examines the military uses of LAWS as well as arguments over the use of such systems, including ethical and legal implications.*

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®Mr Mohammed Zaid is a Research Intern at the USI. His area of interest is niche technology, with special focus on AI and its application.

### **Understanding LAWS**

**A**n autonomous military system, known as LAWS, may independently seek for and engage targets on land, in air and at sea, based on predetermined limitations and descriptions. With a variety of sensor suites and pre-programmed computer algorithms, LAWS are extremely advanced autonomous military weapon systems that can autonomously find, identify, track, engage, and kill enemy targets. Once activated, these weapon systems may eliminate targets without additional assistance from anyone. Therefore, by integrating AI into systems that manage weaponry, where humans would not be involved, LAWS on a large scale can change the way that war is fought.<sup>2</sup> The world's top military establishments are experiencing the AI-triggered Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA). Many developed nations have already deployed fully autonomous defence systems to thwart air assault. The Missile Defence Systems (MDS) are the most prevalent type of autonomous defence armament. MDS has been successfully deployed and tested in both the US and Israel. Israel and the UK have both used fire-and-forget systems. Even South Korea employs the SGR-A1, an autonomous mode sentry robot, in the demilitarised zone along the North Korean border. Under the NATO Joint Strike Missile program, Norway has an offensive autonomous system that will be used. A target ship or land-intervention can be hunted, recognised, and detected by this system. Similar systems are being developed more quickly in both China and Russia. But there seems to be considerable disagreement about what constitutes significant human control.

### **Employment Philosophy**

Autonomous systems provide several benefits to military. They have the potential to be 'faster, better, and less expensive' systems. The quantity and quality of AI used in such systems would determine their success. As per some experts, such technologies might cost one-third the price of manned platforms and two-thirds the price to run. More significantly, the introduction of life support systems would not restrict the system architecture. Typically, all of this frees up essential space and weight, allowing for the creation of smaller and stealthier devices. Furthermore, this provides for increased range, durability, and persistence, as well as a reduction in logistical footprint.<sup>3</sup> The method of initiating an attack with weapon



systems is completely professional. Machines can make split-second judgements based on intelligence inputs and other relevant data. Another significant benefit is that there is no human presence surrounding the weapon system. In the absence of people, the system is able to launch an assault in any high-threat circumstance or in nuclear, chemical, or biologically polluted situations, thus, obviating investments in the NBC suits and assorted nuclear hardened wherewithal.

In regard to quantum of autonomy, there is a school of thought that there is no such thing as absolute autonomy in the context of current technological advancement. Science fiction scenarios such as runaway robots have yet to become a reality. Robots today do not have the ability to sense or smell, and they cannot plan on their own in reaction to the current 'environment'. In general, there are no robotic agencies that will decide on their own to begin work and deploy AWS, which will again decide independently on the kind, type, target, and location of the assault. In that regard, today's weapon systems in service, or under manufacturing, might be regarded to have limited autonomy. After launch, modern systems are self-sufficient. They are pre-programmed to do a certain activity. There is no turning back once the system is activated and decides to fire based on the knowledge gained by the system. Because the machine lacks situational awareness in terms of deciding whether or not to kill, there is very little opportunity for the system to modify the target/s or decide against shooting. Understanding the nature of offence-defence of such systems is also required for delving into the legality of the disputes around LAWS. Nonetheless, these LAWS scenarios imply that some type of human interaction will always exist, even if at a remote level.

### **Legal and Ethical Aspects**

When it comes to the governance of these technologies, many researchers think that regulations will have to arise alongside technology because 'morality will coevolve with technical growth'. The rapid advancement in AWS presents certain challenges to the basic tenets of the laws of war or international humanitarian law (IHL). Though there are international agreements to specifically ban or regulate a number of inherently problematic weapons, such as expanding bullets, poisonous gases, antipersonnel landmines, biological and chemical weapons, blinding lasers, incendiaries,



and cluster munitions, there is no regime for LAWS.<sup>4</sup> IHL provides that in the conduct of military operations, whether on land, at sea or in the air, the parties to a conflict must take all reasonable precautions to avoid loss of civilian lives and damage to civilian objects. The parties to a conflict are under an obligation to spare the civilian population and civilian objects from the effects of armed conflict. This obligation covers actions in both offence and defence and applies to all personnel; even an act of a single soldier in attack could be covered. For instance, a pilot who is on a bombing mission is required to meet this obligation. Likewise, those who plan or decide upon an attack must do everything feasible to verify that the objectives to be attacked are military objectives and are not under any form of protection.<sup>5</sup> What is 'feasible' would depend upon the resources and technology available with a commander who is planning an attack.<sup>6</sup> This customary obligation of taking 'feasible precautions' can be justly expected from a military commander in conventional warfare. However, in an armed conflict in which LAWS are deployed, it would be nearly impossible for such systems to take all 'feasible precautions'.<sup>7</sup>

A machine cannot be programmed with every futuristic scenario of an armed conflict. While a military commander may cancel or suspend an attack, such possibility may be ruled out with the deployment of LAWS. The lack of multiple intelligence sources could also inhibit the ability of LAWS to identify targets accurately. Developing LAWS with an 'intelligent system' that is similar to or better than 'human' is perhaps not feasible in the near future.<sup>8</sup> Giving machines the power to release violent force without meaningful human control would cross a fundamental moral line and may lead to serious violations of IHL and human rights law. According to Liu (2012), IHL in its current manifestation is insufficient to regulate the growing use of LAWS. He attributes two reasons for this; first, the permissive nature of IHL based on military necessity; and second, the structural inability of IHL to cope with the challenges raised by this novel means and method of armed conflict.<sup>9</sup> According to Heyns (2013), if the nature of a weapon renders responsibility for its consequences impossible, its use should be considered unethical and unlawful.<sup>10</sup> Recognising the urgent need to engage state players in this issue and to explore potential preventative measures, the United Nations formed a Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on LAWS in 2017.

The outsourcing of decision-making to computers, particularly choices concerning a person's life or death, is a frequent concern of many who oppose AWS. Widely respected scholars and researchers have called for a ban on 'lethal autonomous targeting' because it violates the 'Principle of Distinction' under IHL; that is, AWS will have a difficult time determining who is a civilian and who is a belligerent in periods of conflict, which is challenging for humans in many cases. Individuals have a recurring anxiety that trusting AI to make judgments regarding target engagement may result in intolerable collateral harm. As a result, another key worry, 'accountability' would arise. This problem emerges when robots make their own judgments, making it difficult to discern whether an incorrect conclusion is the result of defects in the software or the autonomous reasoning of this automation. The essence of this issue was revealed when an autonomous automobile went faster than the authorised speed limit on a highway, while it was uncertain to whom the penalty should be given. When a human being makes a judgement on a target, there is a clear line of accountability that extends from the person who 'pulled the trigger' to the 'commander' who gave the command. When compared to the identical situation on AWS, however, no such certainty exists. In the event of an incident, it is uncertain who or what will be accused or held accountable. These arguments prove that it is past time for nations to concentrate on defining norms and principles to guide and restrict research and development of LAWS, as well as their ultimate implementation. These standards might aid in the establishment of legally or ethically acceptable behaviour. This even argues for just an international agreement or multilateral framework to control or even outlaw them, if necessary, considering the accelerated advances the governments are making in fusing LAWS with state-of-the-art armed systems.

### **India's Position**

Lieutenant General RS Panwar, a noted expert on the subject, brings out that India's approach at international fora has been to prepare for the future and work to preserve the balance of conventional strength it presently has in the subcontinent until such weapons are produced. India reaffirmed its approach during the Informal Conference of Experts on LAWS that took place in Geneva in April 2016. The United Nations Convention on Conventional Weapons (UN CCW) on LAWS "should be enhanced

in a manner that does not exacerbate the technical gap among nations”, according to our permanent representative at the UN, Ambassador DB Venkatesh Varma who also endorsed the necessity to follow IHL while creating and deploying LAWS. It is doubtful that international discussions about the moral and legal implications of LAWS would limit the rate at which different nations create and implement them. Pakistan is anticipated to use its strategic partnership with China to leverage China’s progress toward becoming a leader in this sector of technology. India must, thus, act quickly to guarantee that it maintains a significant lead in this race. By utilising the advantages of participants in the private and public sectors, it may achieve this. Setting up a collaborative environment so that organisations such as the Defence Research and Development Organisation may engage with civilian academia and business is a problem for the political leadership in India.<sup>11</sup>

### **Conclusion**

A more automated battlefield littered with LAWS is likely to bring new dimensions to fighting. At the moment, much of the discussion about autonomous weapons is centred on legal and ethical concerns. However, militaries are viewing these armaments on two separate levels: as useful and deployable weapons in battle, and as a tool for ensuring strategic stability. Some see LAWS as destabilising weapons, which might lead to an arms race in the future. The genuine deterrent potential of these weapons is yet to be explained and sold appropriately. Once LAWS are completely created and effectively proven as weapons, they do have potential to destabilise certain present weapon systems as well as the prevailing character of war. As military’s technical progress accelerates, the international community must recognise the possible uses and hazards of LAWS and guarantee that adequate rules and legal frameworks are in place. India is beset with disruptive technology centric collusive hybrid threat. Laced with LAWS, our adversaries are capable of altering the military balance in their favour. It is, therefore, a strategic imperative for Indian thinkers and policy-makers to invest in the niche and disruptive technology based systems and develop a holistic understanding of ethical and legal aspects associated with the R&D and deployment of these platforms. Such knowledge will help India in presenting its case better at the armament / disarmament talks.

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# Civil Society: A New Theatre of Warfare in India's Internal Security Environment

Mr Srijan Sharma<sup>®</sup>

*"Those who can make you think the way that's in their interest  
enjoy the real power"*

Ajit Doval

## Abstract

*Civil Society is being referred to as the new frontier of warfare wherein, the adversary tries to subvert the target population through psychological warfare to an extent that they revolt against their own country or start subversive activities. Although psychological warfare existed since ages in security and strategic paradigm, its snowballing with the modern digital technology and proactive participation of civil society is making it more lethal and worrisome. India has been targeted by our enemies in this manner with success and, sometimes, without success. Where such enemy actions have aided insurrections, the result has been very harmful. It is important for India, and indeed all countries, to know how this process is started and given impetus by the intelligence agencies of the enemy state. Only such realisation can enable this insidious danger to be combated which, if neglected, can hollow out the country from within, leading to its downfall or defeat.*

## Introduction

During the passing out parade of IPS probationers at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy (SVPNPA) last year, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval had referred civil society as a new frontier of warfare<sup>1</sup> and this statement triggered a spark in the minds of many intellectuals. Some are taking it differently

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<sup>®</sup>Mr Srijan Sharma is a Research Intern at the USI of India .He has extensively written on Security and Strategic Affairs in Journals and Newspapers. He served as Defence editor for a Journal. He has also been a guest contributor to JNU school of International Studies.



and some are still decoding the real meaning. However, if we pay attention to the terms used and apply some strategic intellect then Doval's statement perfectly aligns with the concept of psychological warfare (PSYWAR) and is quite relevant to India's current internal strategic environment.

### **Civil Society and Psychological Warfare**

Referring civil society as a new frontier of warfare is true because with upcoming generations of warfare and given the changing dynamics of India's internal strategic environment, the civil society will become a significant component of India's internal security architecture. Now a brief explanation on how the civil society becomes a new frontier of warfare and how civilians (civil society) knowingly or unknowingly become a participant of this warfare? Civil society is general population of the state and for any state to face instability, the population is the first and soft target, thereafter population led instability affects the political atmosphere of the state which further leads to political instability and this is what the enemy state wants. To put it simply — what your enemy state can't do from the outside it is doing it from inside that means the intensity of harm which may have resulted from an actual war is far more deadly and effective when deployed from indirect means i.e., using your people and society and turning them against you and your government. Now an obvious question arises that how does a society or population of a state get to be turned hostile towards its own state machinery? For this, we need to delve deeper and understand the concept of psychological war.

### **Sharing Equations with Psychological Warfare**

Civil Society acts as a base of psychological warfare and without instigating/ provoking and creating a mob mentality one cannot trigger internal war or rift within a state and hence the participation of civil society becomes an important and necessary ingredient of psychological warfare. Civil Society participates as a form of weapon with an aim to cause political violence, topple down the ruling government or generate hatred against it. How does that happen and how are different actors involved in constructing this deadly form of warfare?

### **Understanding the Construct of Psychological Warfare**

In psychological warfare, the enemy state often manipulates the

thinking of civil society and tries to mould it in its interest in such a way that it helps the other country to achieve their objectives like destabilising the socio-political environment. Here, manipulation can be defined as tactical usage of propaganda or psychologically colouring the general population with a false narrative eventually leading to an aggressive mob mentality which becomes hostile to the state machinery. When the enemy state succeeds in creating a hostile mob mentality then it only requires a spark which can trigger unrest, riots and violence in the targeted state. Till now we were dealing with a basic understanding of the framework of psychological war. Now it becomes imperative to understand the technicalities of how psychological operations are conducted and how the general population, masked with false narratives, targets the country.

At the first level, the enemy state's intelligence agency assesses the social environment and political processes etc. of the targeted country and infiltrate their operatives inside the targeted country. These operatives identify sensitive issues of the civil society of that country and accordingly create grey zones from which they can mobilise people who may be anti-government or not satisfied with the functioning of the government. The mobilisation process includes the infiltration of foreign operatives or foreign backed terror operatives into different spaces of civil society which later constitutes a mobilised mass. These include NGOs, unions, political or non-political groups, activists etc. Once the mobilisation process gets completed these operatives/subverted actors will negatively colour their psychological belief and behaviour and turn them hostile against the government and society leading to polarisation of the environment, riots, unrest and continue to provoke sensitive subjects of the country through mobilised masses until and unless desirous results are achieved. In some cases, subverted operatives attempt to establish new organisations or unions from the help of the mobilised masses.<sup>2</sup>

An obvious question that arises here is that means the normal public voicing of grievances against a government becomes a threat? No that is not so. To distinguish a fake from real, we need to see and identify what is a genuine agitation and what is a manufactured agitation which is unnecessarily forced upon to touch the sensitivities of the society. Once these subverted actors succeed in destabilisation, the government of the day or the political

actors will be in the spotlight and blamed for unrest/riots or disturbance which will eventually create an atmosphere of animosity in the society and the government and, as a result, instability prevails not only at the different levels of society but also at different levels in the government. This situation becomes worse when opposition parties in the state capitalise on these kinds of situations to grab political brownie points and to pressurise the ruling government. In short, someone else is held responsible for actions that are in reality executed by someone else. The whole setup of psychological war has one more driving force apart from the civil society that sets the bridge between civil society and propaganda/false narratives. This is Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT).

### **Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT)**

OSINT means intelligence gathered through open-source information such as newspapers, digital space<sup>3</sup>, WhatsApp, emails, Facebook, Twitter, etc. One provocative or sensitive message or any type of open-source information that has the potential to disturb the peace in the society can destabilise the socio-political environment of the country. This usually takes place whenever and wherever there is polarisation in the society or a situation has been created to deliberately mislead the civil society. These subverted actors of the enemy state use OSINT to circulate fake and provocative messages via their handlers where they are planning to carry out destabilisation.<sup>4</sup> To have a broader understanding of propaganda there is a clear division in the concept of propaganda which distinguishes different types of propaganda as described by Lerner Daniel, an American scholar:<sup>5</sup>

- **White Propaganda:** Where the news is true and of whistle-blower nature which embarrasses the enemy.
- **Grey Propaganda:** Where the information or news is true but the source is not known
- **Black Propaganda:** Where Information/news is fake and misleading to push the population into the false narrative and colour their psychological beliefs and behaviour against the government; and usually people even don't know that they have been misled. Here the source of information is not known or sometimes kept deceptive or is attributed to a fake source.

### **Reasons for Waging Psychological Warfare**

There are primarily three reasons for waging psychological operations — first, it is intended to bring a regime change/installing favourable government; second, to maximise influence in the region for geopolitical gains; and third, when conditions are not favourable for war. A brief explanation through an example is discussed below:

If state A(targeted state) is not functioning as per the state B (perpetrator), or if the government B feels that the state A might become a subject of potential threat to their country in future and regime change is one effective solution, or state B thinks that influencing or turning the masses of state A towards a certain direction can favour or benefit state B (maximising sphere of influence)<sup>6</sup>, then state B decides to either change the regime by destabilising state A or instilling elements which are pro state B to maximise its sphere of influence. Thus, it achieves its aim not through war or armed conflicts but by psychological operations (PSYOPs). War is not an all-time favourable option and conducting PSYOPs against that country remains an effective option through various means — creating grey zones, carrying out false flag operations through political and non-political subversion, using intelligence agencies from where they can mobilise and provoke sensitive subjects of the country (process explained above). This will automatically build pressure on the government and demoralise the leadership of state A and, in some cases, government (if weak) gets toppled due to enormous pressure of failure in handling riots and political unrest.

### **Psychological Warfare with Battlefield Perspective**

The crux point is that psychological warfare is a war which is fought by invisible soldiers of a state against a targeted state, and weapon involved is the population of the targeted state, and casualty of war involves the government and civil society of the targeted state. In short, without firing a single bullet, our enemy can give inflict wounds which are hard to heal and bring instability to the state apparatus. Subversion of previously aggrieved actors in the civil society is one of the major planks of psychological warfare. They, thereafter, are responsible for spreading poison in society which leads to the state's civil society becoming hostile against its own state. This leads to political and social

destabilisation. When we say subverted actors, it means hostile actors such as enemy's intelligence operatives and sometimes violent state-sponsored actors (terror groups) — who act as sleeper cells — to destabilise the targeted state when the opportunity presents itself. Therefore, after understanding the psychological warfare concept, one cannot deny that civil societies participate in this war, knowingly or unknowingly, and become a participant/actor in the war. Hence, civil society becomes a new domain of warfare. In a battlefield perspective, it is a situation where two states engage in indirect warfare using civil society as a weapon. Once war begins, the enemy state does its best efforts to destabilise the targeted state socially and politically and the targeted state does its best efforts in controlling and demolishing propaganda to extinguish the fire in the civil society and in identifying the subverted actors in the civil societies.

### **Psychological Warfare in Indian Perspective**

For decades, the Indian security establishments, while computing the threats in India's internal security environment, have perhaps not paid much heed to this emerging threat or have never expected psychological warfare taking this much space in the India's internal security environment. Now with realisation of this emerging threat, India is getting cautioned. One can say that maybe the consciousness regarding psychological warfare was much higher in India's external security environment as compared to India's internal environment. India's external Intelligence agency (R&AW) has hands on experience in waging psychological warfare by organising public protests and trading loyalties of people in their inner circles respectively.<sup>7</sup> However, one cannot shut one's eyes from the fact that India's internal environment has time and again suffered from the Pakistan's ISI backed PFI's hand in Delhi riots.<sup>8</sup> There are many incidents which are likely to occur if not identified and government or security agencies do not make some hard calls to negate subverted actors or hostile elements in the civil society on time.

### **Various Theatres of Psychological Warfare**

Since the Cold War, psychological warfare was witnessed in various geographies of the world. Two of these are discussed below:

**US in Iran: A Classic example of Blame Game.**

In April 1953, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was given with a task (operation/project named Ajax) to destabilise the political structure and ruling party in Iran, in other words, to launch a coup against the Iranian Government and establish a puppet government by causing factions in the party or by destabilising and by making opposition party stronger and mobilising people who had non-satisfactory views on the government. This operation was planned to overthrow the democratically elected Prime Minister of Iran Mohammad Mosaddegh.<sup>9</sup> The plan of action of the operation involved CIA agents conducting attacks on mosques and key public figures by posing as members of the communist party. As a result, the Iran Government and party were blamed for the attack, and this led in overthrowing of the democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh in favour of strengthening the monarchical rule of the Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.

**China**

China is famous for waging psychological and propaganda warfare. Post stepping back from Galwan Valley, the Chinese media started to play victim card and broadcast that India was responsible behind all the tensions and mobilisation at the border. China is playing propaganda tactics to hide its mistakes and to avoid any unrest against the Chinese Government by its people.<sup>10</sup>

**Conclusion**

Psychological warfare in India's security calculus can be said to be an emerging threat which can become lethal to India's internal security structure. Although psychological warfare existed since ages in security and strategic paradigm, its snowballing with the modern digital technology and proactive participation of civil society is making it more lethal and worrisome. A country like India is more vulnerable to exposure to such threats because our society is diverse and has a pluralistic character which makes it more sensitive. A cluster of communal issues emerge on day-to-day basis which can become a hot issue in the blink of an eye or can be escalated by interested parties with the snap of a finger. The same goes for our political environment. India's political environment is also sensitive as it is governed by various domains of the political process (caste, class, etc), and if any speech,



political message, and government-led initiatives touch the wrong nerve or line or get unnecessarily politicised then it can create disturbance in the society and this opportunity can be capitalised upon by some hostile subverted actors to further worsen the situation and destabilising the environment. Hence, there is no denying the fact that the political and societal environment of our country is sensitive and diverse and both sensitivity and diversity make India's civil society vulnerable to psychological warfare making it a possible theatre of new warfare.

### Endnotes

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## **Review Article**



## India's Pakistan Conundrum: Managing a Complex Relationship\*

Sharat Sabharwal

### Introduction

Conundrum meaning “a confusing and difficult problem or question” is used often and with good reason — in respect of India and Pakistan. While Stephen Cohen’s “Shooting for A Century: The India-Pakistan Conundrum” published in 2013 analyses the conundrum with a global perspective hyphenating India and Pakistan, this book analyses the issue from the perspective of Pakistan being India’s conundrum. Born out of the Partition in 1947, from its inception Pakistan turned into an authoritarian state at heart as its founding father MA Jinnah concentrated power in himself by becoming the Governor General, a position held in Independent India by Lord Mountbatten. The governor-general had the power to choose and appoint the Council of Ministers and could dismiss them under his discretion. Mountbatten was Governor General for 10 months and in this time let Indian democracy take root. Jinnah was Governor General for just over a year till his demise and left an authoritarian legacy which has persisted in Pakistan. Concentration of power in the hands of the establishment has remained the norm. Authoritarianism peaked under military rule, but the spells of democracy failed to usher in reform. While Jinnah and Ayub Khan regarded religion as a cultural marker and Zia solidified it — since their time the Islamists have gradually prevailed. As the title of the book says, it would be of help to those wanting to learn about the intractable conflict in the India-Pakistan relationship, for managing it or even understanding it in the context of general knowledge. It’s a Gordian Knot which even Alexander would have been vexed to open.

### The Author

Mr Sharat Sabharwal the author of this book was a career diplomat of the 1975 batch of the Indian Foreign Service. As a civil servant

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*\*India's Pakistan Conundrum: Managing a Complex Relationship. By Sharat Sabharwal; Publisher: Routledge, London & New York (February 2022); Pages 228; Price Rs 995/-; ISBN: 978-1-032-37431-4 (Hardcover).*

*Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CLII, No. 629, July-September 2022.*

and career diplomat, he held several positions of responsibility, including being the Deputy Permanent Representative of India to the UN in Geneva (1999-2002), Ambassador to Uzbekistan (2002-2005), High Commissioner to Pakistan (2009-2013) and the Central Information Commissioner (2013-2017). Mr. Sabharwal has been an author at the Indian Express, The Hindu, India Today, The Tribune and The Wire. This is his first book.

### **The Book**

The book is divided into two parts with six and twelve chapters respectively. Part I is 'The Pakistan State' and it provides a background covering the nature of the Pakistani state, its internal dynamics and how all this impacts India. This enables the reader to better comprehend Part II which is 'India-Pakistan relations and India's policy options'. This part covers the key issues of the bilateral relationship, appraises a range of policy options and offers a way forward.

### **Part I**

Sharat Sabharwal provides a brief and easy to assimilate account of the relationship between India and Pakistan, tracing the religious extremism and Muslim divide within Pakistan — sometimes with political or military patronage. This has given disproportionate influence to religious groups. This influence has however, till now, not reflected in a clear victory to extremist political parties because the agenda for the voter when it finally comes down to it, is to yearn for economic prosperity. Over a period of time it has become evident that such prosperity if sought by being a rentier state will make only a very small proportion of the elite richer without benefitting the general populace.

Though the author does not state, this but in the perception of the reviewer — gleaned from what the author writes in Part I about education as a purveyor of anti-Indianism — both India and Pakistan suffer from "illusory truth effect," a glitch in the human psyche that equates repetition with truth. As the author states Pakistanis right from their primary education are taught that India and Hindus are evil and tend to believe it, in the same manner Indians after reading and hearing repeated references to Pakistan being a debtor failed state believe that this is actually

so. However, as the chapters of Part II bring out, Pakistan is nowhere near that though these frailties do make it vulnerable to fissiparous pressures.

In Chapter three of Part I, the author covers the civil-military imbalance in a succinct brief which makes the subject very clear to even a lay reader. A reader who wants to read in greater detail is advised to read a number of books dedicated to this imbalance such as Christophe Jaffrelot's "The Pakistan Paradox Instability and Resilience" from the perspective of a Western author, Ayesha Siddiq's "Military Inc. Inside Pakistan's Military Economy", from the perspective of a Pakistani-American historian. Obviously, writing on the subject while being based in Pakistan is something inadvisable. The author states that though Pakistan is a dysfunctional state because of its civil-military imbalance yet it is nowhere close to a being a 'failed state'.

The author brings out that Pakistan faces existential challenges ranging from ethnic strife to Islamism, two sources of instability which hark back to elite domination. A major and powerful part of the elite is the army which sees little sense in normalising relations with India. Based upon his ground knowledge the author is sanguine that the resilience of the country and its people, the resolve of the judiciary and hints of reform in the army may open a new and more stable chapter in its history.

## **Part II**

Part II forms more than 60 per cent of the book and this is rightly so because the aim of the author in analysing this conundrum is to try to recommend a way out of the maze. Doing this in respect of India's Pakistan conundrum is no easy task since a number of factors make this intractable.

The author's firm conviction which comes through his writing a number of times in the book is that Pakistan is here to stay, and any strategy based upon its breaking up is bound to go wrong. The author states that all-out war is not a good idea. India's tactical military options to deter Pakistan from its terrorist strategy may carry only temporary impact because heightening tensions to whip up nationalism to garner votes or internal support is a time-tested strategy. Though there are strident cries for abrogating the Indus Water Treaty whenever Pakistan indulges in

an outrageous act of terrorism, the author explains why coercion through water or trade does not work — the act may lead to the same being justified to be used against India, by China, where India is the lower riparian. With the very close China-Pakistan relationship which leads to a collusive threat, Pakistan is now part of India's China problem. In the case of trade, it may not work since the volumes are too small. We have seen in the case of trade sanctions against Iran or in the aftermath of the war in Ukraine against Russia, that trade sanctions may engender some hardship for the people of a country, but never reach a stage of coercion where they capitulate.

Sharat Sabharwal favours a pragmatic approach that stresses the region's co-prosperity, in which Pakistan will realise it has more to gain by bettering itself economically than pulling India down. The author acknowledges that this realisation may take time to dawn on Pakistan, but he states that surely and steadily this is happening. However, with every one step forward chance or engineered incidents lead to a step back — as Pakistan's identity crisis comes in the way of rational decision-making and better sense. Closer to the end of the book in his recommendations Sabharwal has a word of advice for India too. He states that if India wants to change Pakistan's behaviour, there is work to be done at home too. He says that this is not just about military strength and counter-terror capabilities. It is about denying Pakistan opportunities to fish in troubled waters. This can be done by putting India's own house in order, including in Jammu & Kashmir, rebuilding what used to be the broad national consensus on foreign policy that no longer exists, and avoiding a tit for tat show of nastiness towards the neighbour. A smaller neighbour will always feel threatened by the bigger entity next to it as happens in the case of India and China. However, with China, a system has been worked out that regardless of the tensions and intractability of the border issue, in matters of trade there continues to be forward moment. In time it may be the intermeshing of economies which provides greater incentive to find a solution to a conflict.

Sabharwal narrates past diplomatic and political initiatives to find a solution to this conundrum. He narrates how in the not-too-distant past, the two sides were prepared to put aside differences and make rational choices. This was in the trade negotiations between 2011 and 2012. Later also after Nawaz Sharif was elected



in 2013 his government decided to take up the final trade agreement with India once again. This is especially interesting after the Imran Khan government in 2021 did a U-turn on the decision to reopen the Wagah border for limited trade in sugar and cotton making a precondition for its resumption contingent on India's August 2019 decisions on Kashmir. The author writes that soon after his retirement, he came to know from his contacts in official circles which were still existing till then, that if necessary, the UPA government was prepared in 2013 to attempt to complete the trade normalisation process. But the momentum slowed. A retired Pakistani official told Sabharwal that their side through backchannels had been advised that that Nawaz Sharif should wait and sign the trade deal with the incoming BJP government as a BJP victory in the 2014 elections was a clear possibility. But this remained a missed opportunity.

The other chapters in Part II which make very good and educative reading are concerning the backchannel process and the omnipresent nuclear dimension. The final three chapters convey that there can still be a way to resolve the conundrum. The author brings out the silver linings in the shape of firstly, an increasingly vocal constituency in Pakistan which realises the benefits of a rapprochement; secondly, the information revolution globally which has made it difficult for the security establishment to control the narrative, and thirdly, after the end of the Musharraf regime the image of the army has reduced and it gets questioned in varied ways by various constituencies on its self-propped claim of being the final arbiter of Pakistan's destiny.

### **Conclusion**

Sharat Sabharwal's book takes a very detailed look with a first-person insight, covering all aspects of very vexed and complicated relationship and an intractable dispute. It gives out an historical context, the contours and evolution of the issues confronting both countries and also gives a glimpse of the challenges faced by those responsible for maintaining the security and integrity of the borders which are perceived differently by both countries. The book covers the nature of this relationship. The book is highly recommended for those who wish to understand the military, political and social dimensions of India-Pakistan relations. Unfortunately, the peace that should be there in the interest of both countries and especially Pakistan is wanting. It is an imperative

for both the prosperity and the development which has eluded us as mistrust still dominates the narrative between the two countries. The LoC cannot be resolved without keeping the talks channel open and as the author states, realising that “India has to deal with Pakistan as it is and not as India wants it to be”. He is an exponent of the view that talking does not imply a concession and “need not result in a concession unless India decides to make one”. The author’s voice is one of reason, the politics of muscular nationalism often drowns such voices in both India and Pakistan. In Pakistan this suits not only domestic politics but also the army’s agenda.

*Lt Gen Ghanshyam Singh Katoch, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd)*

## **Book Reviews**



**Military Musings: 150 Years of Indian Military Thought from the Journal of the United Service Institution of India.** *Edited by Sqn Ldr Rana T.S. Chhina, MBE; (Speaking Tiger Books, New Delhi, February 2021); Pages: 456; Price: Rs 899/-; ISBN 978-93-90477-38-8.*

This is a remarkable anthology of articles published over 150 years, culled from the pages of Journal of the United Service Institution of India (USI). It is remarkable in the sense that articles cover a wide range of subjects from thoughts on strategy for national defence, changing nature of warfare, scientific and technological advancements, military campaigns, regimental histories, training and man management, customs, traditions and military ethics, personal reminiscences and even on ghosts in military stations.

There are a total of 50 articles; 25 were written by British officers before Independence, the balance was by Indians after India's Independence. While there is confluence of thought between British and Indian writers on many issues, for example, that India's defence was not confined to national borders but its strategic frontiers extended beyond to sea and buffer states. Reading through the articles it becomes evident that the British nurtured the Indian Army to serve imperial interests. The introduction of martial races theory was divisive; it kept other than those designated martial from enrolling in the army (Lt Col G Hunter Thompson 1871) but it served British interests. For better or for worse, groups once designated as 'martial races' still tend to carry that badge with pride. However, there are many articles by British Service officers and officials that point to their pragmatism and foresight in administration and study of racial and geographical characteristics of peoples - a few sample observations - 'they (Chinese) are stately and deliberate and will not be hurried' (Lt Young Husband 1889): 'as soldiers they (Dogras) are not remarkable for daring or impetuous bravery but they are valuable for quiet unflinching courage, patient endurance of fatigue' (Lt Col JJH Gordon 1874).

The regimental history is a unique record of the service and achievements of a regiment. The anthology includes an article titled 'Indian Regimental Histories' (Hyderabad 1929). The author went through the full collection of histories of Indian regiments; his

observation that despite a few exceptions most regimental histories were scanty and of little historical value is valid even today. Research before writing was lackadaisical then and is no better today but the main problem lay in 'astonishing unevenness' of digest of services; most were so sketchy as to be of any value as primary source for compiling regimental histories. The author lists the following essentials to be regarded as 'standard': good printing, adequate binding, bibliography, index, illustrations, maps and appendices. In the present context, authors of regimental histories are not free to include actual maps of unit /formation's operations because these have yet to be declassified by the Ministry, although more than 30 years may have elapsed since.

There is an interesting article (Maj Gen D Hunt 1967) in response to correspondence on 'Tradition' published in USI Journal. There were two opposing views: There were those who regard much of army's tradition as legacy of the British and as such alien, and ripe to be discarded, while there were others who argue that army's traditions are not made solely by officers but is built up over the years, revered by all ranks and for this reason it will be disaster to abandon them. The author goes on to argue that much of the conflicting views arise because the difference between customs and traditions is not understood. Tradition is handed down from ancestors to posterity while custom is usual practice of doing things. For example, customs followed in Officers' messes, such as, passing the port, not mentioning ladies' name in the mess, and so in and so forth, are hardly traditions. They are customs, which were created in the British image and therefore are discarded. Regimental tradition is quite different. The conduct of 36th Sikhs at Saragarhi or 13 Kumaon at Rezengla (1962) or 3 Jat in the Battle of Dograi (1965) has become cherished tradition of the Indian Army.

In recent years the celebration of anything associated with our colonial past or foreign rule or foreign origin is considered slavish. For example, Beating retreat ceremony, which marks the end of Republic day celebrations, concluded with the soulful rendition of Mahatma Gandhi's favorite Christian hymn 'Abide with Me'. There are many who attend the ceremony repeatedly for the joy of listening to its moving rendition. The hymn has now been replaced by a very popular emotional song by the legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar but hardly appropriate for the occasion.

Surprisingly, articles written by Indian military officers and others after independence are quite perceptive. 'Peace Making and War Making in the Twentieth Century' (KM Panikkar 1956) provides an insight into the transformation of war into 'total war' as opposed to wars in the previous century, which was essentially limited war. Despite strategic analysts like Panikkar and other service officers having analyzed the nature of future wars and transformation of interstate relations realistically, yet, the Indian State failed to foresee the consequences of China's occupation of Tibet and had to face an ignominious defeat in NEFA in 1962.

There are many articles of contemporary relevance; 'Religious Instruction in the Army' (1960), 'The Girls they left Behind' (1944), 'Tips from the Subedar Major' (1965): the Indian soldier has always been seeker of divine; for him religion is as important as physical and professional education. Guided by the past experience, religious instruction in the Indian Armed Forces is devoid of communalism and sectarianism. The thought that 'India's superb fighting men will be marching home again to the girls they left behind' is revealing. Separated families are no longer in 'pardah'; Family welfare Centre's of units have enlarged the scope of welfare; soldiers' wives have learnt that they are 'home makers' and have a great share in making a happy family and keeping their husbands on righteous path. 'Tips from a Subedar Major' (1965) — 'Roko Toko' —, is simple down to earth but is full of gravitas. The Subedar Major's prescription to his commanding officer to improve discipline is 'roko toko', implying that a leader has to be upright all the time to have the moral authority to tick off those who cut corners, disobey orders and treat unit's valued customs casually.

There are two articles on declining military ethics; An Officer and a Gentleman (Brig NB Grant 1978) and 'Passing It On' (Brig SC Sardeshpande 1982). Brig Grant laments that an officer still remains an officer but his image as a Gentleman is vastly eroded; he no longer placed on the same pedestal of trust that he once was. Of all the reasons, the most responsible for this is tolerance of lack of integrity, which is fast reaching epidemic proportion. Sardeshpande's article is personalised but is an honest appraisal of good and successful officer. He makes a very subtle difference between the two: 'The good officer contributes, but pays a price. The successful officer extracts and manipulates the price. The former is closer to the professional ethic and finds joy in doing his



bit irrespective of upset or success. The latter derives joy mainly in success, but incidentally adds to professional competence of the army as a whole.' Point to ponder.

One of the last articles is on 'Naxalite Problem' (Lt Gen KM Seth 2005). Left Wing Extremism poses a serious threat to the stability of Indian society. Lt Gen Seth examines the internal security challenges from varying perspectives and recommends the road ahead for policy makers. The last article is 'Anniversary of the Battle of Kohima' (Maj Gen Pk Goswami 2019). The remembrance of the battle is relevant. The thought of sworn enemies of the Second World War - Japan and the British forces (mostly Indians) coming together at Kohima for the 75th Anniversary of the epic battle is reminder of the changing fortunes of time. In this chaotic world, there are no permanent enemies.

'Military Musings; 150 years of Indian Military Thought' deserves a place in all public libraries. This excellent anthology must be read by the younger generation of officers for 'A nation that forgets its past has no future.'

*Brig (Dr) SP Sinha, VSM (Retd)*

**House of Terror: An Insider's True Story.** By Anwar (Ikhwan code name Umar); (New Delhi: Kautilya Books, April 2022); Pages: 183; Price: Rs 399/-; ISBN: 978-93-90885-72-5 (Paperback).

Anwar (Ikhwan code Umar) invites readers into the house of terrors with a disquiet yet benign assurance of a peaceful Kashmir. Although, in today's popular narrative, Kashmir is a place where militants rule the roost, unfortunately, it is identified as just that. This book is a collection of disappeared thoughts and notes written across a sea of experiences and reflections by an ex-Ikhwan member- Anwar. The writer leads off with a brief exegesis of Pakistan's involvement in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (POK) and its subsequent reverberations as Kashmiri youth join militant organisations and encourage white-collar terror groups, all under the garb of religion. The pro-Indian government militia, Ikhwan-ul-Muslimeen- which functioned against Pakistan-backed militants in Kashmir- was born in 1993 by Kuka Parray, a well-known local folk singer. Ikhwan-ul-Muslimeen was later rechristened as JK Ikhwan (friends of Jammu Kashmir); the group primarily assisted the government in ensuring security and logistics and served as polling staff for untroubled and active assembly elections.

After spending three years in POK, Pakistan and Afghanistan for training, Anwar headed to Kashmir in 1992 and joined the Ikhwan in 1994. What instantly pulls the reader in is the substructure titles and chapterisation adopted by the author over the course of his narration. He chronicles assuming a new identity, Khalid (meaning eternal), as he left for Pakistan. Nevertheless, we find one whole chapter of Anwar explaining his former identity as a son, brother, diligent student and above all, a Kashmiri who aspires to undergo rehabilitation and witness constructive peace in the Paradise of Earth. The author's journey from Anwar to Khalid to Umar recalibrates the power of core identity, longing for effectual peace and security that never entirely withdrew from his selfhood despite his engagement with militants.

Among the plethora of issues gripping Kashmir, the book indulges in important developments in the valley, such as the business of smuggling young Kashmiris to POK, traces of heavy financing by the ex-army Pakistani chiefs on Jihadi training, manipulated crime reporting sponsored by Pakistani intelligence, Operation Balakot, ISI plans to target Chinara Crops office, K2 movements and much more. The heavy socio-political events are at the helm of the narration as they deeply affected Anwar's evolution. For a reader sitting miles away, this account serves as a peak into the fervour of Kashmiris that remain majorly unknowable through doctored media, or in most cases, with no coverage at all. Anwar's plight of growing up in a trauma-stricken land is intensively unpacked; what is especially chilling is his decision to pick up an AK-47, and training in POK was initially piloted by protecting his father from the terrorists. The protagonist's transformation into a member of the counter-terrorism group came with its own set of challenges as he incurred financial crunches, a threat to life, lack of disbandment benefits or rehabilitation schemes from the Army and the Indian government. The final chapter- "Untouchables Again", truthfully examines the trials Anwar faced, both psychological and social, after joining the JK-Ikhwan. Rung at the bottom of economic gains, there came a time when Anwar struggled to find solace in his decision to help the Indian Army.

Moreover, the Ikhwani and their families were reupdated from religious gatherings and social events and termed 'traitors' of Kashmir. Anwar recalls how at the behest of the Kashmiri elites, which he believed were influenced by Pakistan, locals openly rallied

against Ikhwan as social pariahs. The author frustratingly unveils the fallacies in policy by the Indian Government and Army mirrored in the lack of safeguarding schemes offered by them. Due to frequent postings, weak institutional mechanisms, and a lack of sentimental understanding towards the Ikhwanis, there brewed a feeling of neglect and loneliness in their quest for ideological redirection.

Every terror organisation is spearheaded by the question, why? Why is it essential for them to go on? What is the motive behind unwarranted massacre and ferocity? Once their members lose confidence over the answer to why the group struggles to thrive on impressionable minds. There is a quote in the chapter "Umar's Soul searching while in Ikhwan-ul-Muslimeen", which says, "...with Jihad nowhere in sight, the sentiment for it began gradually losing its hold on him". House of terrors, as the name suggests touches raw nerves teeming with horrors of facts and fiction overshadowing Kashmir. Anwar's story serves as a severe interjection in fractionating the role of the state, Army and other security bodies in Kashmir's conflict reconstruction post abrogation of article 370. It is only by asking questions like how serious, or rather tight, the state policies, particularly the ones in Srinagar and Delhi, in defusing insurgency and safeguarding ex-militants who chose to fight for Kashmir, can we begin to fructify Ikhwani's sincere contributions. In the foreword Lt Gen AK Bhatt, who got acquainted with Anwar during his posting as a Corps Commander of XV Corps in Srinagar, hopes for him to republish his story under his original name and reclaim the identity which once got crushed under the weight of trepidation and terror.

*Ms Samriddhi Roy*

**The Lurking Hydra: South Asia's Terror Travail.** By Lt Gen Subroto Mitra; (Pentagon Press LLP, New Delhi, April 2022); Pages: 216; Price: Rs.462/-; ISBN: 9789390095551.

A superfluity of reasons and circumstances in South Asia has given rise to an 'insecurity community' which has played into the hands of local and international terrorists, thus becoming a broad incubator of terrorism and posing additional challenges of violence, terrorism, and instability across the entire Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

A highly decorated soldier for operations where he had played a sterling role makes General Subroto Mitra just the right person to assess the terror travails of South Asia. His excellent command over the English language, military acumen, and eye for detail, his astute observation and understanding of the unfolding geopolitical drama combined with the panoply of experiences in counter insurgency operations played their role in shaping the articulate author in him.

I have read and re read the book all in order to savour the profound professional philosophy and thought of Gen Subroto Mitra. The book in its finished form bespeaks the intellectual reach of his knowledge and military acumen, and reflects the strength of his persona in professional field and elsewhere. Frankly, the lucidity of the book is such, that on turn of each page I feel myself looking at Gen Mitra and tending to find myself in dialogue with him.

The General presents a meticulous as well as itemised account of the dawning of terrorism in the South Asia combined with the travails of the nations in the region. The author's purpose in writing the book is to lay bare before the reader, the origins of an insidious process that ultimately metastasized into a sprawling beast, threatening our very existence. Noteworthy is the penetrating reason and rationale with which he examines current developments that are having an unnerving effect to further enervate the dangerously careening peace and conflict balance in the region.

Reader will be stunned to learn the true extent of the planned disorder behind the scenes and to find how well the arguments in book mesh with the facts of our live experiences. He explains how a 'Mumbai type carnage could trigger retaliatory air strikes on Pakistani economic and nuclear assets followed by an expanded canvass of war drawing in the USA, Russia and Israel to the conflict triggered by Pakistani sponsored global terror groups'. He observes the shortcomings, both major and minor, of the concerned nations in addressing the menace in its initial stages with insightful reflections. The book offers a compelling, and at times chilling, expose on how this multi headed organism, with its far-reaching tentacles, arrived where it is today. But while the causes leading to the rise of terror are blasted, that is only one facet of the book.

It is with logical eloquence that he presents his views regarding solutions to counter the medusa head; by strengthening the regional

cooperative mechanism and forging new avenues for joint action. He offers area wise recommendations to counter terrorism in a comprehensive, integrated manner.

Gen Mitra's conviction of power of volition in countering the surge is an inspiring aspect of the book. Certain Reforms in SAARC Development Bank, Societal and Media Responsibilities, Corporate initiatives are some of the tools that he suggests. 'Capacity building in youth', 'nimbleness of thought and action by the governments' as being the precise requirement in dealing with the emergent situations speak volumes about his in depth understanding of generators of terror and his penchant for their systematic erasure. Dr Jamadagni, HOD, Defence and Strategic Studies, University of Madras have aptly stated, 'Though the book talks extensively on the South Asian Region, it offers immense scope for interpretation for other terror affected areas of the world'.

The best feature of the book is its writing style. Far from being a dry military work, the narrative is totally engrossing and absolutely enlightening. A must read not only for military personnel but anyone interested in understanding the reasons for the rise of terror, especially in South Asia. It is worth delving into this deeply analytical and very well worded work to capture the thrust of his thinking - which is to seek solutions. Indeed, a well-constructed, well written, book worthy of your time and attention.

*Col Shanti Swaroop (Retd)*

**Heroes of 1971: The Braveheart of the War That Gave Birth to Bangladesh.** Edited by *Rajesh Ramachandran*; (*Harper Collins India, 16 January 2022*); Pages: 272; Price: 399/-; ISBN: 978-93-54893216.

The Tribune Group has published stories relating to the 1971 conflict to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of what is easily considered as India's finest hour. The stories particularly relate to the heroic deeds of our soldiers, many of whom did not return home but their sacrifices enabled the country to win the war. In the march to free Dacca, Lieutenant General SS Mehta, then a Squadron Commander, talks about the battle of Akhura and the way General Sagat Singh seized a fleeting opportunity by crossing the Meghna River and headed for Dacca the strategic centre of gravity even though it was 'beyond his brief'. Admiral Arun Prakash writes

about how the Indian Navy employed 'the full gamut of their maritime capabilities' unfortunately their successes did not stamp the vital role of this Service in the minds of the decision makers.

Rajesh Ramachandran while analysing the role of a leader in the conflict and of strong institutions wonders whether today's leaders 'can repeat Indira's feat while presiding over people anxious about discord and dissension within the nation'.

Air Vice Marshal Arjun Subramaniam talks about the air operations and how the IAF showcased its prowess in the strategic, operational and tactical domains while orchestrating air operations that were meticulously planned and 'delivered disproportionate results in the battle for Bangladesh'.

Lieutenant General Sujana writes about the 'born to battle' officers, those commissioned just before the war, many of whom would not return. He writes of the exploits of Second Lieutenant Ashok Taskar of 9 PARA (SF) at Poonch against an enemy infiltrating column, the exemplary courage of Second Lieutenant Arun Kheterpal of Poona Horse at Basantar where a Pakistan Brigadier has stated; he stood like an unsurmountable rock between victory and defeat of the counter attack by Pakistan's 13 LANCERS. Major General Randhir Singh who served as the ADC to General Sagat Singh has written a wonderful tribute to him, highlighting both his professional competence and personal qualities. There is no doubt that 'he was ruthless in pursuit of his vision but ensured that his troops and commanders were imbibed with enthusiasm for it'.

The book is full of wonderful pieces such as Ajay Banerjee's telling us how General Jacob gave General Niazi 'thirty minutes to reconsider the decision not to surrender'; a simple but stern message that forced General Niazi to surrender the same evening. Wing Commander Bhalla's account about two officers who had been in the same training institute now faced each other one of whom was now a prisoner of war but in true soldierly tradition the Indian Colonel still addressed the captured Pakistani Commodore as Sir. The stories include those of Veer Naris and are a part of 'the tapestry that is the Indian Army'.

The second part of the book covers individual stories of the gallantry award winners those who have won the Param Vir Chakra and Maha Vir Chakra. Ordinary men who have performed



extraordinary feats and who willingly put the honour of the country above all. These are the deeds that continue to inspire the next generations and represent the finest spirit of our Armed Forces. The names and valliant deeds of Major Hoshiar Singh of 3 GRENADIERS during the battle of Jarpal, Second Lieutenant Arun Kheterpal of Poona Horse during the battle of Basantar, Lance Naik Albert Ekka of 14 GUARDS at GangaSagar and Flying Officer Nirmal Jit Singh Sekhon, the first Air Force PVC awardee at Srinagar will always continue to inspire future generations. Three of the four laid down their lives unmindful of their personal safety putting the honour of the country and the units above all.

The book has also documented all the seventy-six Maha Vir Chakra winners of the 1971 war. Of these fifty-seven are from the Army which include two Brigadier Sant Singh and Brigadier (later General) Arun Vaidya who got a Bar to the Maha Vir Chakra. Eleven are from the Air Force many of whom went on to become Air Marshal including Air Chief Marshal SK Kaul and eight are from the Navy which include Captain Mahendra Nath Mulla who in the highest traditions of the Navy chose to go down with INS Khukri on 04 December 1971.

Heroes of 1971 tells the stories of fearless warriors and brave hearts who fought these battles to give India what is considered its most conclusive victory as also created Bangladesh. It is written by several eminent people who were either part of the conflict or have carried out extensive research on the war. These are stories of remarkable gallantry, determination against all odds, upholding honour and valour in the finest traditions and self-sacrifice needs to be passed on to future generations. The book edited by Rajesh Ramachandran is a fitting tribute to the fearless courage and commitment of our soldiers and is an inspiration for the readers.

*Maj Gen Jagatbir Singh, VSM (Retd)*

**Valour & Wisdom: 100 Years of Unparalleled Leadership.**  
*Edited by Air Marshal PP Reddy and Mr Sidharth Mishra;*  
*(Published by Rimcollian Old Boys Association (ROB), January 2022); Pages: 495; Price: Rs 2095/-; ISBN: 978-93-5607-596-2 (Hardcover).*

The story of RIMC is the story of Indianisation of the officer cadre of the British Indian Army. Due to persistent demands from the



national leadership, particularly after the World War I where more than 70,000 Indian sacrificed their lives in support of the Allied forces, the British relented and set up the Prince of Wales Royal Indian Military College (PWRIMC) at the Dehradun in March 1922. The college came up on the campus of the erstwhile Imperial Cadet College, popularly known as the Rajwada Camp, as the Indian royalty was trained there. The PWRIMC was inaugurated on 13 March 1922 by the Prince of Wales, Prince Edward VIII, and set up on the pattern of British public schools to groom the selected Indian boys for entry into the Royal Military College at Sandhurst, UK, before awarding them Royal commission.

In March 2022, the college, renamed as Rashtriya Indian Military College (RIMC) post-Independence, completed 100 years and celebrated its Centenary. This book is the story of 100 years of RIMC – not of a century of existence in brick and mortar, but of the leadership its alumni have provided at various stages of evolution of our nation. The book is not a glossy coffee table book, nor a compilation of various achievements of its Old Boys, known as the Rimcollians. It is a story of leadership – mainly in military – but also in diverse fields such as administration, governance, and corporate sector, of its Old Boys who went on to occupy critical positions, rose to become military chiefs in various countries, influenced policy, and contributed significantly to the growth of strategic culture in India.

The Rimcollian Old Boys Association (ROBA) was formed in August 1949. The ROBA office bearers have several defining moments in the history of its existence. It has been an architect of progress and ably supported the college to maintain highest standards. Most of all, the ROBA has contributed to retaining the exclusive status of the RIMC. The pre-partition Old Boys made efforts at national level, in Track 2 diplomacy to facilitate people to people relations with Pakistan. during the 1990s. As a repository of values and its deep commitment in nation building, the Association and the Alma Mater are committed to take the RIMC to grander levels. The RIMC and the ROBA are the umbilical cord of impregnable bonds between the cadets called 'RIMCOS' and the RIMCOLLIANS.

The Old Boys of RIMC were everywhere. As the title goes, the 'valour' first –Second Lieutenant Premindra Singh Bhagat won

a Victoria Cross at the young age of 22 years in the World War II and was the highest decorated officer in the Indian Army at Indian independence. Post-independence, the first recipient of Param Vir Chakra, was another alumnus of RIMC – Major Somnath Sharma for his actions on 03 November 1947 in defending the Srinagar airport. He died in the Battle of Badgam, but prevented the tribal invaders from advancing towards Srinagar. His younger brother, who followed him in RIMC, went on to become Chief of Army Staff in 1988 - General Vishwa Nath Sharma.

There were other Chiefs from this beautiful 140-acres campus. RIMC produced five Army Chiefs, four of the Indian Army - General KS Thimayya, General Sundararajan Padmanabhan, General GG Bewoor, General VN Sharma, and one of the Pakistan Army - General Gul Hassan Khan. It has also produced four Air Chiefs, two of the Indian Air Force - Air Chief Marshal NC Suri, Air Chief Marshal BS Dhanoa, and two of the Pakistan Air Force - Air Marshal Asghar Khan and Air Marshal Nur Khan. Their stories, lives, and military leadership, particularly those in India, form an important part of the book.

The initial part covers the Indianisation of Officer Corps and the Great War, the Commandants and Principals, and the Guru-Chela traditions of RIMC. Later, there are debuts of young military leaders from RIMC in World War II, the key role played by Rimcollians in integrating Kashmir with India, and the military leadership provided by Rimcollians in all other wars, conflicts, and operations of post-independence. During the 1971 War with Pakistan, three of the four Army Commanders were Rimcollians – Lt Gen CP Candeth, Lt Gen PS Bhagat and Lt Gen GG Bewoor. The trend has continued. In 1998, Group Capt AG Bewoor, a Rimcollian, flew the first IL-76 aircraft to Male in Operation Cactus; and in the 2019 Balakot air strikes by India, the Air Chief and the AOC-in-C Western Air Command – Air Chief Marshal BS Dhanoa and Air Marshal C Hari Kumar respectively – were Rimcollians.

An interesting chapter is the role of Rimcollians in shaping the strategic culture of India. They write, they strategise, and they have quietly worked behind the scenes. Jaideep Saikia and Air Vice Marshal Arjun Subramaniam have been leading writers on North East and on India's wars respectively. Other names which ring a bell are Maj Gen Ashok Mehta, Sidharth Mishra and Ali

Ahmed, who are well known writers. The first Chairman of NTRO was a Rimcollian, Major RS Bedi, a brilliant officer. Rimcollians have excelled in diverse fields – they have been diplomats, governors, IAS and IPS officers, and have occupied senior positions in the corporate sector. The book has a separate chapter titled Corporate Centurions, and another for public service. There are adventure narratives – climbing Everest to sailing around the world.

The book is well-researched; there are end-notes and few precious photographs. Reading the book may provide an insight on what makes the RIMC tick – a small bunch of alumni (only less than 50 pass out in a year) punching much above their weight in a diverse and competitive country like India. But then diversity, inclusiveness, and meritocracy is what makes RIMC a successful experiment which smoothly transited from a British-era school to a cradle for excellence in post-independence years. The boys do not come from privileged backgrounds. They are selected on basis of a competitive examination without reservations, a Naga boy meets his classmate from Kerala for the first time, the Masters (teachers in RIMC) are UPSC-recruited, and an Old Boy is the Commandant. The place is egalitarian. The stories are genuine, not everyone is brilliant – some excel in squash (Ritwik Bhattacharya was first Indian to break into top 50 of the PSA World Rankings) more than mathematics. Not everyone is in military. There are Rimcollian Start-ups in California. There are advertising gurus like Suraja Kishore, and actors – such as Sidharth Jyoti in Don (2006) and Rudrashish Mazumdar in Chhichhorey (2019).

The book is readable – any ‘in-my-times’ nostalgia has been weeded by stern editors. There is no glorification or oversimplification. It does not read like a list but like a story, spanning 100 years, commencing in Dehradun, and then meandering all over the Indian sub-continent and the world. In sync with a young, dreamy and growing-up India. It should be read by military readers, history buffs, younger generation – and anyone else who does not yet believe in the India story. The book may convince them.

*Col Shailender Arya (Retd)*

**United Service Institution of India Strategic Year Book 2022.**  
*Edited by Maj Gen BK Sharma (Retd), Lt Gen GS Katoch (Retd) & Gp Capt Sharad Tewari (Retd); (Vij Books India Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, 2022); Pages: 265; Price: 2250/-; ISBN: 978-93-93499-95-0 (Hardback).*

The USI of India Strategic Year Book 2022, which was released on 20 July 2022, continues the writing excellence the publication has established since its first issue in 2016. The book is presented in a 11-inch by 9-inch trim size which is a good size for a reference book of this genre. This makes it equally suitable to be kept on a book shelf or a table. The USI Year Book has gained respected reputation as a compendium of professionally researched and presented strategic issues of relevance to India, of both the current time and previous year. The 2022 issue has 31 comprehensively researched articles on contemporary security studies by knowledgeable Indian strategic thinkers and scholars, both from the military and civil field.

The articles deal with security issues covering international and domestic affairs presented in six thematic sections titled 'India's National Security Overview', 'Internal Security Issues', 'Pakistan-China', 'India's Strategic Neighbourhood', 'Global Issues' and 'National Security Capacity Building'. The lead article by Major General BK Sharma, AVSM, SM & Bar carries out 360-degree geopolitical scan and sets the stage for the articles that follow making them easily comprehensible even by the lay reader. In this issue the first article in section six i.e., National Security Capacity Building is about the 'Transformation of the Indian Military'. This has been compiled by the editorial team from the gist of talks by the three Service Chiefs in August 2021 at the USI. It is particularly valuable to gauge the transformation philosophy of the Services of the Indian military.

Other articles deal with the existing paradigm of India's national security, in particular, with reference to the past 12 months. The articles deal with Kashmir and the North East insurgency challenges, terror finance, Pakistani and Chinese challenges, the Ukraine war, the new cold war and where and how should India align its national interests with respect to that. While it may be out of place in this review to list each and every subject covered or name each and every one of the subject authority authors, it

would suffice to state that the articles contribute to security studies in fields of international relations, geopolitics, changes in the character of war, technology, transformation, organisational changes, space, economic issues connected with defence and internal security threats and responses.

A yearbook by definition presents events of the past year. When it is the yearbook of an organisation or educational institute this is simple. The events covered are from January to December, regardless of when the yearbook gets published. However, a strategic yearbook of the genre of the USI Strategic Yearbook faces a dilemma. In the fluid dynamics of strategic affairs, an article even a month old may appear dated. The authors and editors of the USI Year Book have achieved a balance between recording past events and analysing future impact on global, regional and country specific affairs in its 250 pages and this is what makes the book valuable, as the articles empower the reader to carry out further research on strategic subjects of their interest. In this manner, the Year Book provides an increased 'upstream' focus on defence and security policy practice for all military or civilian practitioners in the field and those researching strategic and security issues.

The Year Book is available in both Hardback paperback and Kindle formats and is a useful addition to private collections, as well as educational and institutional libraries.

*Mr Vinayak Sharma*

### **ONLINE CPSC: DSSC/DSTSC-2023**

1. Online CPSC will be conducted for Current Affairs (CA), Science & Mil Tech (SMT) and Mil History (MH). Duration will be 14 days. Tentative schedule and fees for subscription are as under:-

Course	Nature of Course	Duration of Course	Fees
DSSC/ DSTSC (Army)	CPSC 2023	20 Feb - 04 Mar 06 Mar - 18 Mar 20 Mar - 01 Apr 03 Apr - 15 Apr 01 May - 13 May 15 May - 27 May	(a) All Three Subjects - Rs 15000/- (13500/- CPSC+1500/- USI membership fees).  (b) Two Subjects - Rs 13000/- (11500/- CPSC+1500/- USI membership fees).  (c) One Subject - Rs 7500/- (6000/- CPSC+1500/- USI membership fees).  (d) Existing members will deposit only subscription fees.

2. Registration will open from 01 Oct 2022 onwards.

## USI LATEST PUBLICATION DURING 2021-2019

Pub Code	Title of Book & Name of Author	Price(Rs)	Year
Adm-4 (UNPO)/ 2021)**	"UN Peace Operations Part - IV : Protection of Civilians" Edited by Maj Gen AK Bardalai and Maj Gen PK Goswami, VSM (Retd)	295	2021
CMHCS-3	"WITH HONOR AND GLORY - Five Great Artillery Battles" By Maj Gen AJS Sandhu, VSM (Retd) Published by USI (CMHCS)	–	2020
R-105**	"Tao of Soldiering the Chinese Paradigm – The Shift in Human Resources Development in PLA and Lessons for India" By Col Nihar Kuanr	1995	2020
OP-1/2020**	"The Dynamics of the India – Nepal Relationship" By Lt Gen Shokin Chauhan, PVSM, AVSM, YSM, SM & VSM (Retd)	295	2020
OP-2/2020**	"Chinese Intransigence in Ladakh : An Overview" By Maj Gen PK Mallick, VSM (Retd)	295	2020
OP-2/2019**	"Unpacking SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region)" By Cdr Subhasish Sarangi	150	2020
CMHCS-1	"Traditions and Customs of the Indian Armed Forces" By Brig SP Sinha, VSM (Retd) M/s Manohar Publication, New Delhi	4500	2020
CMHCS-2**	"Laddie Goes to War – Indian Pilots in WWI" By Mr Somnath Sapru	1250	2020
R-106**	"India and China Building Strategic Trust" By Maj Gen Rajiv Narayanan, AVSM, VSM (Retd) & Professor Qiu Yonghui	1950	2020
R-107**	"Strategic Year Book 2020" Edited by Maj Gen BK Sharma, AVSM, SM & Bar (Retd) Lt Gen GS Katoch, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd) and Dr Roshan Khanijo	1850	2020
R-108**	"The End of an Era India Exits Tibet - India Tibet Relations 1947-1962, Part-4" By Claude Arpi	1950	2020
R-109	"China, The Rising Aerospace Power-Implications for India" By Air Marshal Anil Chopra, PVSM, AVSM, VM, VSM (Retd) M/s Pentagon Press	995	2020
R-110	"Non-Contact Warfare : An Appraisal of China's Military Capabilities" By Brig Vivek Verma M/s Pentagon press	1295	2020
Brief History 1870-2020**	"A Brief History of the United Service Institution of India (USI)" By Col VK Singh, VSM (Retd)	750	2020
Adm-1/ 2020	"When Sparrows Flew Like Eagles – 1971 Indo-Pak War of Liberation of Bangladesh" (Memories of a Signal Officer) By Brig M.R. Narayanan, VSM (Retd) (M/s Pentagon Press)		
JC/2020	"Military Musings 150 Years of Indian Military Thought" from the Journal of the United Service Institution of India Edited By Sqn Ldr Rana TS Chhina, MBE M/s Speaking Tiger	1899	2020
GPMST-7/ 2020	"Bajirao I – An Outstanding Cavalry General" By Col RD Palsokar, MC M/s Mervin Technologies, Manoj R, Kelkar, Indranagari, Dahanukar Colony, Kothrud, Pune-411038	525	2020
M/1/2020**	"CDS and Other Reforms – A Midway Milestone" Edited by Col (Dr) Rajneesh Singh	295	2020
M-1/2019**	"An Appraisal of The PLA's Training for Integrated Joint Operations – India's Actions, Response and Counter-Strategy" By Col Nihar Kuanr	295	2019
Op-1/2019**	"Kashmir Valley Politics : Alignments and Re-alignments" By Prof Kashi Nath Pandita	150	2019
R-101	"CHINA-PAKISTAN MILITARY NEXUS : Implications for India" By Lt Gen PC Katoch, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SC(Retd) & Gp Capt Sharad Tewari, VM (Retd) (M/s Pentagon Press)	1295	2019
R-102**	"Pakistan's Internal Security Challenges and the Army's Ability to Overcome Them" By Brig Shaman Chodha	995	2019
R-103	"China's Strategic Behaviour" By Brig Sanjeev Chauhan (M/s Pentagon Press)	995	2019
CAFHR-40**	"RIDING THE WIND – THE STORY OF ONE OF INDIA'S GREATEST TEST PILOTS" By Wg Cdr P Ashoka (Retd)	850	2019
CAFHR-41**	"Distant Battlefields – The Indian Army in the Second World War" By Harry Fecitt MBE TD	2495	2019
CAFHR-42	"THE KARGIL VICTORY BATTLES FROM PEAK TO PEAK" By Col SC Tyagi (Retd) M/s Speaking Tiger Publishing Pvt Ltd	299	2019
NSS-65**	"Evolving Geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific Region- Challenges and Prospects" Edited by Cdr Subhasish Sarangi	850	2019

\* Available at USI of India    \*\* Available at M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd



# USI

(Estd. 1870)

## OUR ACTIVITIES

### Library and Reading Room

The library holds over 68,000 books, and journals, including some books of 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, on an astonishing variety of subjects. While the principal emphasis is on strategy and defence, there are a large number of works on different vistas of Indian life. There are memoirs, biographies, recollections, diaries, journals, manuscripts for scholars and researchers. The reading room is air-conditioned, spacious and well stocked in terms of current reading material. Library was automated in 2002.

### Correspondence Courses

The Institution runs regular correspondence courses for officers of the Armed Forces to assist them in preparing for promotion examinations, and for the entrance examinations to the Defence Services Staff College and Technical Staff College. Over the years, this has been a significant and well-received activity.

### USI Journal

The USI Journal is the oldest surviving defence journal in the country and in Asia, having first appeared in 1871. In an era when there is a feeling that free expression of views by Defence personnel is not looked upon kindly by the establishment, the Journal in fact provides just such a forum, without regard to seniority and length of service in the Armed Forces, subject of course, to propriety and quality of the written work.

### Centre for Strategic Studies and Simulation

The Erstwhile Centre for Research and its resources have been merged into the new Centre named as USI Centre for Strategic Studies and Simulation (USI-CS3) wef 01 January 2005. The Centre aims at conducting detailed and comprehensive enquiry, research and analyses of national and international security related issues, and gaming and simulation of strategic scenarios, to evolve options for wider discussion and consideration.

### USI Centre for UN Peacekeeping (CUNPK)

The Centre was established in 2000 and functioned with USI till Aug 2014, when it moved out of USI premises and was delinked from USI. Its aims were organising workshops, seminars and training capsules for peacekeepers, observers and staff officers – both Indian and foreign. It also oversaw the practical training of Indian contingents. It functioned under a Board of Management headed by the Vice Chief of the Army Staff and worked in close coordination with the Service Headquarters and the Ministries of External Affairs and Defence. In August 2014, CUNPK moved out to the accommodation allotted by the Army HQ.

### Centre for Military History and Conflict Studies (CMHCS)

The Centre was established on 01 Dec 2000 and encourages study and research into the history of the Indian Armed Forces with objectivity, covering different facets such as strategy, tactics, logistics, organisation and socio-economic aspects and their implementation.

### Gold Medal Essay Competition

Every year the Institution organises a gold medal essay competition open to all officers. These essays, the first one of which was introduced in 1871, constitute a barometer of opinion on matters that affect national security in general and the defence forces in particular.

### Lt Gen SL Menezes Memorial Essay Competition

This has been instituted from 2015 on a subject related to Armed Forces Historical Research. The Essay Competition is open to all across the globe.

### Lectures, Discussions and Seminars

A series of lectures, discussions and seminars on service matters, international affairs, and topics of general interest to the Services, are organised for the benefit of local members in Delhi.

### MacGregor Medal

This medal is awarded to Armed Forces personnel for valuable reconnaissance and adventure activity they may have undertaken.

## MEMBERSHIP

The following are eligible to become members of the Institution :

- Officers of the Armed Forces
- Class I Gazetted Officers of Group 'A' Central Services.
- Any category mentioned above will be eligible even though retired or released from the Service.
- Cadets from the NDA and Cadets from the Service Academies and Midshipmen.

For further particulars, please write to Director, USI of India, Rao Tula Ram Marg, (Opposite Signals Enclave) Post Bag No. 8, Vasant Vihar PO, New Delhi – 110 057

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Printed by Manish Comprint, New Delhi - 110 015 Phone : 011-41037172