

India and the Great War Centenary Commemoration Project - An Update

Shri Adil Chhina@

During the period under review (Oct-Dec 2015) the first ever conference on India's role in the First World War was held at an Indian University and the first ever USI event was held in the UK.

Having gained adequate momentum, the India and the Great War Centenary Commemoration Project is now being extended into community outreach and education modules. As a part of this endeavour Mr Dominiek Dendooven of the In Flanders Fields Museum in Ypres, Belgium and Squadron Leader Rana Chhina (Retd), Secretary USI-CAFHR spoke at Amity Global School, Noida on 5th November, 2015 on India in World War I. This was followed by a joint USI-Shiv Nadar University (SNU) international conference titled India and World War I: Across Generations. This was held on 6-7th November and included a wide variety of speakers who examined 'art, literature and the history of the conflict' from an Indian perspective. The Belgian ambassador His Excellency Mr Jan Luykx presided over a session. A session on 'sepoys and labour' featured talks by Dr Kaushik Roy, Dr Radhika Singha and Dr KC Yadav. This was followed by a session on representations of the war in art and literature where papers were presented by Dr Vikram Kapur and Dr Narendra Yadav. As Dr Rimli Bhattacharya was unable to attend, her paper was read out by Squadron Leader Rana Chhina.

Day Two of the conference was held at the Shiv Nadar University's campus in Gautam Budh Nagar, UP. The day began with the opening of an exhibition of charcoal drawings by Professor Sumantra Sengupta. The exhibition was inaugurated by Prof SN Balakrishnan, Chancellor of SNU. Professor Sengupta used a few period photographs and muslin gauze to create artistic interpretations of the experiences of Indian soldiers from the Great War. A poem based on letters written by Indian soldiers was recited by Dr Akhil Katyal. A session on commemorations was conducted in the morning where Mr Dominiek Dendooven presented a paper on the Indian involvement in Belgium and Squadron Leader Rana Chhina spoke on the Indian contribution and the commemoration activities undertaken so far.

The commemoration project hopes to engage with more schools and universities in the coming years as part of the project so that India's contribution in the war is passed down through the generations.

The USI-CAFHR has also signed a MoU with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to honour and commemorate the sacrifice of Indian servicemen who fell in various battlefields around the world in the First and Second World Wars.

Another conference titled Voices of India: The First World War was organised by the Royal Pavilion Museums, Brighton and Hove, along with the USI and the UK Punjab Heritage Association on 21 Nov 2015. Papers were presented by scholars from Germany, India, Canada and the UK attempting to recover the Indian voice that has long since been forgotten. The conference could not have been held at a more appropriate location; namely Brighton, where Indian soldiers wounded on the Western Front in WW I were brought to convalesce.

Dr Prabhjot Parmar from the University of Fraser Valley in Canada examined censored letters of Indian soldiers held at the British Library in London. Mr Kevin Bacon from the Royal Pavilion focussed on how these soldiers were portrayed in the media at the time. Dr Heike Liebau from Germany explored the Indian voice through the German Prisoner of War recordings. She played a recording of a Gurkha sepoy who died in captivity which was very moving. Adil Chhina brought to light many of the diaries and memoirs of Indian soldiers recovered as a result of the project along with photographs and recordings of Indians veterans of the war.

Mr Tom Donovan discussed the landscape of Belgium where the 129th Baluchis had fought during the First Battle of Ypres and compared present day photographs to what it looked like in 1914. Davinder Dhillon of the Chattri Memorial Group was in conversation with Squadron Leader Chhina on the Chattri Memorial where Indian soldiers (Hindus and Sikhs) who died in hospitals in Brighton were cremated. Dr Glyn Prysor of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission spoke about Indian memorials from the War around the world. Amandeep Madra of the UK Punjab Heritage Association discussed how their organisation has engaged the Sikh community in the UK to commemorate the Sikh soldiers from the War.

BBC radio presenter Anita Anand spoke about her book on Sophia Duleep Singh, granddaughter of Maharaja Ranjeet Singh and specifically about the fact that she had volunteered to become a nurse when she heard Indian wounded from the Western Front were being sent to the UK to convalesce in WW I. Kamila Shamsie discussed her book A God in Every Stone with Dr Santanu Das and the relationship between history and fiction. The conference ended with a haunting Punjabi folk song presentation by Jasdeep Singh, Amanroop Kaur and Harleen titled Take the Bachelors to War: Songs of Separation which moved many in the audience to tears.




On 08 Dec 2015, the first in our series of WW I theatre histories specific to the Indian Army was launched by Lieutenant General PK Singh, PVSM, AVSM (Retd), Director USI, at the Australian High Commission. The book titled Die in Battle, Do not Despair: The Indians on Gallipoli, 1915 has been written by Professor Peter Stanley of the University of New South Wales, Canberra. The launch included an illustrated talk by Professor Stanley and an 'in conversation' session with Squadron Leader Rana Chhina (Retd).

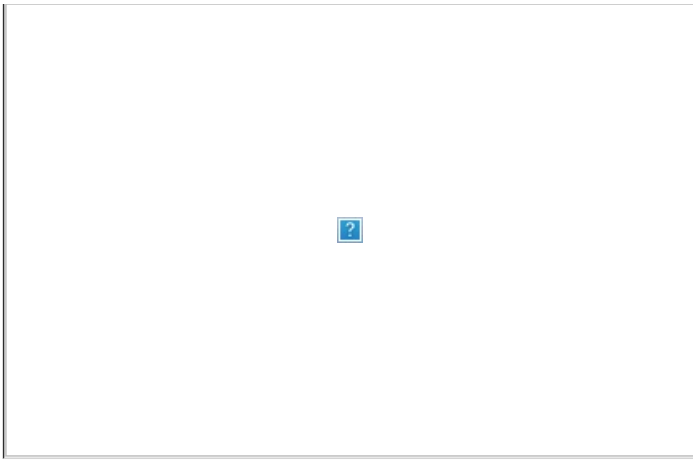
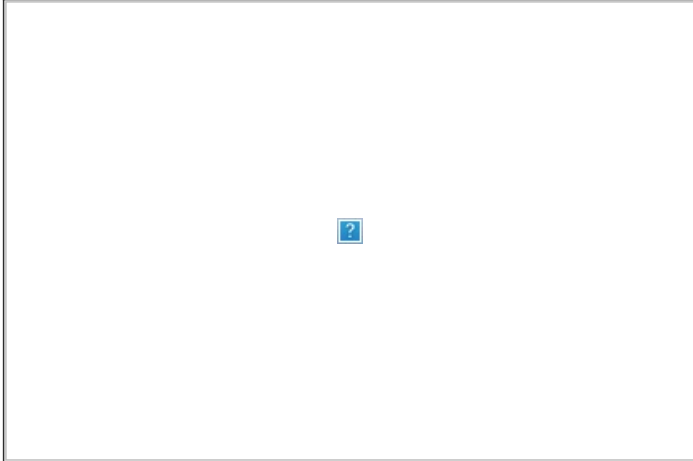
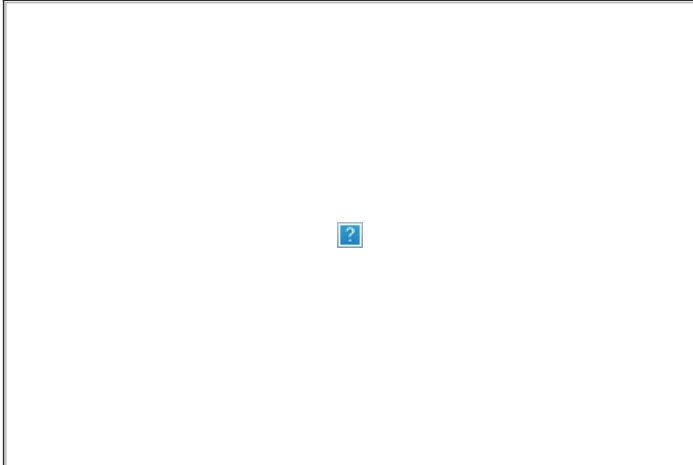
Our forthcoming events include the release of the book - Les Hindous: The Indian Army on the Western Front by Squadron Leader Rana Chhina (Retd). The foreword for the book has been written by the Hon'ble President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee. The CAFHR will also work with the CWGC to build the CWGC/USI community engagement resource pack for disseminating knowledge about the role and sacrifice of Indian soldiers in the two world wars as well as the CWGC role in honouring their memory. A joint unveiling of the CWGC/USI project by the Director USI and Commission's Director-General will be organised at the USI once the project deliverables are in hand.

Endnotes

1 Anita Anand, Sophia: Princess, Suffragette, Revolutionary, (Bloomsbury, 2015)

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Sqn Ldr Rana Chhina responds to a query about the commemoration activities that have been undertaken in India at the Voices of India Conference held at Brighton. Image credits - Mr Taranjeet Singh Padam	
	
Ms Anita Anand talking about Sophia Duleep Singh as a nurse during WWI (Voices of India Conference, Brighton). Image credits - Mr Taranjeet Singh Padam	
	
Mr Dominiek Dendooven, Sqn Ldr Rana Chhina (Retd) and Mr Subhashis Gangopadhyay during a panel discussion at the SNU-USI Conference	

	
Opening of exhibition by Prof SN Balakrishnan, Chancellor of SNU of the charcoal paintings by Prof Sumantra Dasgupta	
	
Sqn Ldr Rana Chhina, Prof Peter Stanley and Lt Gen PK Singh at the book launch of 'Die in Battle, Do not Despair; The Indians at Gallipoli, 1915' at the Australian High Commission	
	
A selection of the audience at the book launch	

China's Growing Influence in India's Neighbourhood and Implications for India*
Shri Kanwal Sibal, IFS (Retd)@

We should view China's growing influence in our neighbourhood in a larger perspective. It is part of China's expanding influence worldwide. It is the world's second largest economy and the world's largest exporter of goods. It is the biggest trade partner of several of the world's largest economies such as the US, Japan, South Korea, besides a number of ASEAN countries. It has accumulated vast foreign exchange reserves, amounting to about US \$ 3.7 trillion. It has set up financial institutions like the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to compete with existing institutions such as the Asian Development Bank. It has built huge over-capacities in sectors like steel, cement, power, highway and dam construction, that is, infrastructure in general. It is looking at all possible external markets for utilising this excess capacity. It is exploiting the economic crisis in the EU and the collapse of the economies like that of Greece to penetrate the EU. Germany has become a major economic partner of China. The manner in which the UK is courting China, its decision to break ranks with the US and join the AIIB, the kind of reception accorded to President Xi when he visited the UK recently, the approval of Chinese participation in the massive new nuclear plant the UK plans, is all indicative of China's rising global influence. One should add to this China's mounting presence in Africa, the Gulf countries and Latin America. It is, therefore, not surprising that China's influence is also growing in our neighbourhood.

We must admit that some of our neighbours are China's neighbours too. Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar have contiguity with China. Bangladesh too is geographically close. China could therefore legitimately claim that its growing relationship with our common neighbours is normal and that they have equal right to develop mutually beneficial ties with them.

If our own relations with China were normal and friendly, its growing presence in our neighbourhood would cause less concern. In some ways China's investments in the region, specially in infrastructure, could then be seen as serving a general interest. India and China have, however, serious issues of discord between them. The relationship has many adversarial elements. China poses a strategic threat to India in many respects. This, therefore, makes its enhanced presence in our neighbourhood a serious challenge.

India and China have an over 4000 kilometres long unsettled border. China occupies Indian territory and lays claims to more of it. The India-China situation is possibly the only one in the world today involving major powers. China does not seem to be interested in settling the border. If it were, it would cease making untenable claims on Indian territory. Maintaining these claims aggressively is a way to prevent a resolution. Very little progress has been made through the Special Representatives (SR) mechanism set up specifically at the highest political level to find a solution. Other than agreeing on guiding principles and parameters for resolving differences, which too in key respects are being re-interpreted by China, no real progress has been registered. Those who say that the work of SRs has been completed and now it is for the two sides to take a political decision are confounding the reality, as differences have not been materially narrowed.

India is the only power in Asia that can compete with China and stand up to it in the long run. Japan is strong economically and technologically, but it is too small and dependent on the US for its protection to be a real counterweight to China. South Korea or Southeast Asian countries are also too small to play a countering role on their own. China will have to eventually share the leadership of Asia with India. China's India problem will become more difficult for it to handle on unequal terms if the US, Japan, Australia join India as a group of democratic countries to counter China's growing power. India can pose a stronger challenge to China's assertion of its great power status in unilateral ways.

The direction of India's Act East policy would be to carve out an Indian sphere of influence in Southeast and East Asia, not in the classic sense of dominating the area and seeking to exclude others but a more cooperative approach based on win-win engagements. Japan and ASEAN countries welcome a larger Indian role so as to balance the enormous weight of China. The ASEAN would also want to create conditions in which the group can benefit from the growth of both China and India.

For all these reasons, China would have interest in limiting the expansion of Indian influence eastwards to the extent it can by using our neighbours to tie us down in the subcontinent. Our neighbours too (barring Bhutan) want to balance India's preponderant weight in the subcontinent by bringing in external powers into the region. They have exploited India-China differences to checkmate India. Our neighbours are part of the same political, security, economic, cultural, linguistic, ethnic and civilisational space as us. Their challenge is how to differentiate themselves from us, develop their own identities and sense of nationhood, avoid being overwhelmed by India and lose their independence and sovereignty de facto. Those in power in some of these countries could see India as a potential threat to their group interests and privileges if they are not compliant enough because of India's perceived capacity to intervene in their internal affairs. Although India does not promote democracy or human rights as a matter of policy, and does not support the concept of responsibility to protect, our neighbours still feel threatened. They are more comfortable with an authoritarian regime like that of China that is willing to work with any kind of government and ignores issues of democracy or human rights, the very ones that the West uses against it.

By using the China card our neighbours believe that they can extract more from India by way of economic assistance, as well as deter India from interference out of concern that this might push them to draw even closer to China as a consequence. Independent of concerns about India's size and strength, our neighbours would also like to benefit from China's economic rise and obtain Chinese economic assistance for their development projects, which

would be quite normal.

Our neighbours have also tested over time that our tolerance levels for their disregard for our sensitivities and security interests are quite high, and that we hesitate to make them pay a price for their misconduct. This encourages some of them to challenge India's legitimate interests with a sense of immunity. The support our neighbours give to China's entry into SAARC, knowing India's position and sensitivities is a case in point. This blatant attempt to give China equal status with India in the subcontinent, allow it to shape the grouping's agenda of cooperation, give it the power to prevent reaching any consensus that it does not like, enable it to use its economic weight to reduce India's influence, and give it leverage to counter us in our own region, amounts to a provocation. Our neighbours also use internal lobbies in India to ward off a strong Indian reaction to their provocations. We have now a China lobby, both ideological and economic, that acts as a pressure point on the government to play down the Chinese threat to India and its interests.

Pakistan has been China's partner of choice to contain India. The premise would be that the more India is kept busy in managing its neighbourhood, its ability to expand its influence outside the region will become that much more difficult to accomplish. China has made full use of Pakistan's endemic hostility towards India to curtail the latter's regional and extra-regional role. By transferring nuclear and missile technologies to Pakistan, India has been strategically neutralised. The "strategic stability" that the US seeks between India and Pakistan has lost its relevance as China has established it already in the subcontinent. China is today Pakistan's biggest defence partner. It panders to Pakistan's obsession with parity with India to the extent possible, at the core of which lies the transfer of nuclear and missile technologies to Pakistan. As a reaction to the India-US nuclear deal, China has extended nuclear cooperation to Pakistan in violation of its own Nuclear Suppliers Groups (NSG) commitments. It has assisted in the construction of the plutonium producing Khushab reactor and a Plutonium reprocessing facility. It is building nuclear reactors in Pakistan without the latter being required to accept constraints on its overall nuclear programme as India has had to accept under the India-US deal. Now, China is linking Pakistan's membership of NSG to that of India, as it did in the case of India's SCO membership. In April 2015, China has concluded the sale of eight conventional submarines worth US \$ 5 billion to Pakistan.

On the economic side, the relationship so far has not been too big. The current trade between the two countries amounts to US \$ 9 billion, making China Pakistan's second largest trade partner. As part of China's strategy to capture the telecom sector in the subcontinent, China Mobile announced US \$ 1 billion investment in Pakistan in the telecom infrastructure in April 2015. Its subsidiary emerged as the highest bidder in the 3 G auction and has qualified for the 4 G license. During his April 2015 visit, President Xi divulged plans to hugely expand the economic relationship with Pakistan, giving it an unprecedented strategic dimension. He signed agreements worth US \$ 28 billion in hydro, wind and solar energy projects.

On terrorism, the core issue between India and Pakistan, China shields Pakistan. It has never condemned the Mumbai terror attack and more recently opposed a UN Security Council probe into the source of the financing of Ziaur Rehman Lakhvi's bail bond, in violation of a relevant UNSC resolution. With the announcement of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), China has deepened its strategic commitment to Pakistan. By this step, China is also taking a position in Pakistan's favour on the legal status of Kashmir. Its position is inconsistent with the one it took in the 1963 Border Agreement with Pakistan, which does not recognise POK as Pakistani territory and mentions that the agreement in question relates to "the boundary between China's Sinkiang and the contiguous areas the defence of which is under the actual control of Pakistan". China's step also amounts to a violation of UN Security Council resolutions, as China is effectively integrating POK with its own territory in a longer term strategic perspective. China has become a third party to the India-Pakistan differences over J&K, beyond its own bilateral differences with us over Aksai Chin. The India-China dispute is now being extended from Aksai Chin to POK. The CPEC is a strategic project and not a commercial one as the Chinese claim. China's position on the CPEC is also inconsistent with its own position on Arunachal Pradesh where it objects to any involvement of international financial institutions, and indeed the Indian government, in development projects there.

China has steadily expanded its influence in Nepal. Earlier the Palace played the Chinese card against India and local democratic forces represented by the Nepali Congress. The Maoists have acted as China's proxies in Nepal for long. After they came to power in 2008 after the fall of the monarchy, the first visit by Prime Minister Prachanda was to China. In 2007, China announced US \$1.3 million of military aid to Nepal, which was increased to US \$ 2.6 million after the Maoists came to power. These are small amounts no doubt but the issue is sensitive in the context of the India-Nepal treaty. The new Nepali Prime Minister Mr KP Sharma Oli has been openly speaking of reaching out to China to balance India in response to Madhesi protests against the new Nepali Constitution which have resulted in the disruption of oil supplies from India. China has for many years established itself south of the Himalayas, with Nepal, with its open border with India, now a buffer. Even if China does not too openly encourage Nepal to take positions against India, it does enough to keep Nepal into its political fold and provide it some options against Indian pressure. It uses the anti-Indian lobbies in Nepal to dilute a dominant Indian role there. It seeks a degree of parity with India in treaty relations with Nepal. The extension of the Qinghai Tibet railway line to the Nepal border would make little economic sense but would serve a strategic purpose. China is actively pursuing hydro-projects in Nepal. It has established its presence in the Terai where it has reportedly opened 35 China Study Centres. Its aborted Lumbini project, intended to give China a Buddhist friendly face, would have served to erode the civilisational/cultural base of India-Nepal relations, with a potential fall-out effect on Ladakh, Sikkim etc. China has entered the telecom sector in Nepal as it has done in other countries in the subcontinent, including India. It has given Nepal the Zhangmu-Kathmandu optical fibre cable. In 2001, China was the fifth largest investor in Nepal. Within 10 years it has become the third largest, after India and the US. Trade with Nepal amounts to US \$1.2 billion, with Nepal's exports to China a paltry US \$ 14 million.

China is strongly entrenched in Bangladesh. Since 2002 it is involved in building Bangladesh's military capabilities, with focus on naval defence. The Bangladesh army is equipped with Chinese tanks, frigates, missile boats, anti-ship missiles and air force jets. It is offering two Ming class submarines to Bangladesh. Almost 70 per cent of

Bangladesh's defence inventory is supplied by China. This military connection gives China the political influence it needs in Bangladesh. China is helping to develop the Chittagong port close to Kyaukpyu in Myanmar from where the oil pipeline to Kunming has been built. Bangladesh has a comprehensive economic partnership with China, with a two way trade of US \$ 10.3 billion in 2014, which is heavily tilted in China's favour. Bangladesh exports less than US \$ 460 million to China.

Sri Lanka has enjoyed close relations with China traditionally. China views Sri Lanka as a major partner for its Maritime Silk Route with Hambantota playing a key role in it. The Hambantota Development Zone to be completed in 10 years will include an International Container Port, a bunkering system, an oil refinery and an international airport. In August 2013, China opened the Colombo Container Terminal, which is a US \$ 500 million project owned 80 per cent by a Chinese company. Another Chinese company - blacklisted by the world bank till 2017 - is constructing the Colombo City Port Project on reclaimed land. The Sirisena government is reviewing some of these projects, as they are being seen as unproductive investments and bad loans. It remains to be seen how much can be reversed by the present government as the Chinese government will not easily accept a major setback to its maritime strategy in the Indian Ocean in which Sri Lanka is a critical element. Chinese companies are participating in developing Sri Lanka's expressways. It is providing military equipment to Sri Lanka and trains its military personnel. It has invested US \$ 5 billion in Sri Lanka so far.

Maldives is strengthening its relationship with China, with growing Chinese investments in housing, roads and airports. This has increased after Abdulla Yameen came to power in November 2013. Tourism has become a major area of Chinese presence in Maldives, with 330,000 tourists visiting the country in 2013. Maldives is an important player in China's Indian Ocean strategy. China's investments could give it an opportunity to increase its military presence in the country at a future date. Maldives has passed legislation allowing transfer of land on long term lease to foreign investors. Although Maldivian emissaries reassure us that the intention is not to allow any military activity in leased land, we have to be alert to future developments

China had made deep inroads into Myanmar during the period when the country was in the grip of the military and sanctioned by the West. Since the 1980s China has been the major source of military equipment and export market for Myanmar's natural resources. Chinese investments in Myanmar increased to US \$ 13 billion between 2008 to 2011, but dropped to US \$ 1 billion in 2012. Tensions have emerged in China-Myanmar relations after the opening up of the country and the cancellation of the Myitsone dam project and public resentment about the destructive environmental practices of Chinese companies and poor observance of social standards. The oil and gas pipeline to Yunnan is, however, operational since 2013. This project helps China in part to deal with its Malacca dilemma by shipping oil and gas directly from the Bay of Bengal to China. In that sense Myanmar is strategically important for China. It has now reached out to the democratic leadership of Myanmar. Whatever the differences that have emerged, Myanmar would see it in its interest to have stable relations with China.

China is now seeking to extend its influence in Afghanistan by promoting the reconciliation process between the Afghan government and the Taliban, for which it has the US support. This Chinese move outflanks us politically in Afghanistan. Given the extremely close ties between China and Pakistan, China will work collaboratively with it in Afghanistan, at the cost of our interests. Although India and China are having a dialogue on Afghanistan at the Foreign Office level, China will give far more weight to Pakistan's interests in its policy towards Afghanistan than be responsive to India's concerns. The Afghanistan government too is looking to China for investments and for leveraging its influence with Pakistan to positively influence the latter's conduct towards Afghanistan.

We obtained an insight into China's goals in the subcontinent in President Xi's speech at the Indian Council of World Affairs in September 2014. China views its engagement with India as part of China's larger South Asian goals. Xi pledged that China will work with South Asian countries to increase bilateral trade to US \$ 150 billion, raise its investment in South Asia to US \$ 30 billion, and provide US \$ 20 billion in concessional loans to the region in the next five years. Besides that, China, he said, plans to offer 10,000 scholarships, training opportunities for 5,000 youths and, exchange and training programmes for 5,000 youths, and train 5,000 Chinese language teachers for South Asia in the next five years. He noted that China was the biggest neighbour of South Asia and India was the largest country there. Xi said, "Beijing is ready to work together with New Delhi and make even greater contribution to the development of the region, so that the three billion people living on both sides of the Himalayas will enjoy peace, friendship, stability and prosperity."

China is already a dominant player in Central Asia. It has entrenched itself in Iran, taking advantage of the West's policy of sanctioning that country. It has all-weather ties with Pakistan and is making deeper inroads into Afghanistan. This makes it a dominant player in the region to our West. Because the US is withdrawing from the region, our strategic challenge from Chinese power is becoming more problematic. Even if the US maintains about 10,000 troops in Afghanistan, it will not be able to provide a counter to increasing Chinese influence in this entire region. China's enhanced role will only serve to boost Pakistan's ambitions to its West and efforts to keep India out of that region as much as possible. Pakistan will have even less incentive to facilitate links between India and Afghanistan, and beyond that to Central Asia.

It is in this larger context that India should view China's Belt and Road initiative. This project is a vehicle for the expansion of China's power through economic linkages financed by China's financial resources. All the land linkages envisaged in this project are either East-West ones through Eurasia or Russia, or North-South ones intended expressly to give China access to the Indian Ocean from Yunnan and Sinkiang. The North-South corridor through Iran to Central Asia and southern Russia is excluded, and so is the East-West corridor from India through Pakistan to Afghanistan, the two linkages of interest to us. China did not consult us before launching its initiative. It is keen that India join it as this will give the project greater acceptance. It will be then seen as a truly cooperative venture and not a cover for China's political and economic ambitions.

The Maritime Road or Silk Route is a re-conceptualisation of what has been referred to as China's "string of

pearls” strategy, which had begun to be seen to represent China’s geopolitical ambitions in the Indian Ocean rather than any cooperative commercial grand design to enhance trade throughout the area and beyond. By calling it the Maritime Silk Route the political aspects of the strategy are being redefined as commercial ones.

China seems determined to extend its naval reach. The 2015 Chinese Defence White Paper on Maritime Strategy says that “The traditional mentality that land outweighs sea must be abandoned, and great importance has to be attached to managing the seas and oceans and protecting maritime rights and interests.” As a result, the PLA Navy “will gradually shift its focus from ‘offshore waters defence’ to the combination of ‘offshore waters defence’ with ‘open seas protection.’” The paper says that the “Navy aims at gradual extension of the strategic depth for offshore defensive operations.”

China’s presence in the Indian Ocean will therefore grow with time. It may be manageable for some years, but the appearance of Chinese submarines in these waters and the real prospect of Gwadar becoming a naval base in the future will add to our strategic challenge. Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives have supported the project, which includes Chittagong, Colombo and Hambantota ports, as well as a potential foothold in Maldives.

China has been pushing for the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) corridor as part of its grand design to link Yunnan to adjoining regions and provide it access to the sea. We are participating in the working group set up to study the project. Our northeast is not sufficiently integrated with the rest of the country. By agreeing to a link between China and our northeast we run the risk of allowing this region to move into China’s economic orbit, with all its political implications. We may then find it more difficult to politically manage this region, besides weakening our hand in dealing with China’s thrust into it, including its territorial claims on us. We have been concerned about the China promoted North-South corridors in our region. China’s penetration of Myanmar and gaining access to the Bay of Bengal has been a source of concern. In this light, to support BCIM, a North-South corridor linking to Bangladesh and giving China access to the sea makes little strategic sense until such time as our territorial issues with China are not settled. The argument that this corridor will help in the development of our northeast is self-defeating at the political level. We should instead accelerate the building of the West-East corridor linking our northeast to Myanmar and on to Thailand and beyond. In all this, we have also to factor in Bhutan’s sensitivities, if we open up our northeast to China.

Our own approach to China encourages our neighbours to establish closer ties with that country and being responsive to its overtures. China has become one of our biggest trade partners; regular high level visits are being exchanged; we are seeking Chinese investments; China is already strongly present in our telecom and power sectors. We have declared a Strategic and Cooperative partnership with China; we have institutionalised a Strategic Economic Dialogue with it. We have, rather oddly, agreed in joint statements to support each other in enhancing friendly relations with our common neighbours (meaning Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar) for mutual benefit and win-win results. We have agreed to enhance bilateral cooperation on maritime security, which serves to legitimise China’s penetration into the Indian Ocean. We are endorsing civil nuclear cooperation with China, which actually undermines our objections to the China-Pakistan nuclear axis.

Theoretically, improved India-China relations should leave less scope for our neighbours to use the China card against us. Up to a point this may be true. In reality, under cover of enhanced engagement with India, China is strengthening ties with our neighbours, sometimes in provocative ways, such as the announcement of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), developments of ports in Sri Lanka and appearance of submarines there, as well as efforts to secure a foothold in Maldives.

What should India do to deal with China’s growing presence in our neighbourhood? India has limited options. China and our neighbours have the right to establish bilateral ties at levels they feel are to mutual advantage. India cannot object, except where our security interests are seriously affected. India is facing a rather complex situation. The gap between us and China has widened greatly. China has ambitions and resources to back them. It has begun to challenge the US and its allies in the western Pacific. Any incremental success it achieves there erodes the US hegemony and increases China’s regional and global stature. If China can challenge the US power, it can be confident of dealing with India’s rise. China has begun to expand westwards where the US power is withdrawing. This brings the weight of Chinese power to bear on us even more.

We need to engage more with Maldives at the political level. Nepal is a very complex case. The need to call Nepal’s bluff on China has to be weighed against being tolerant of a smaller neighbour’s provocations. It is possible that a tougher stance with Nepal may pay dividends in the longer run, but it will cause a setback in the immediate in terms of public sentiment. Pakistan is endemically hostile to India. The China-Pakistan nexus will remain strong. We should consider putting roadblocks in whatever possible way in the development of the CPEC. We should accelerate the development of West-East connectivity through Myanmar. Improved relations with Bangladesh should be consolidated as transit rights and connectivity through its territory can help develop and integrate our northeast, besides boosting our Act East policy. We have yielded too much ground in our joint statements with China on our neighbourhood and this should not be repeated in the future. We have to expand and strengthen our Navy. More importantly, we have to strengthen our economy. China has become a power to reckon with because of its economic transformation. At the end of the day, however, we have to accept China’s growing presence in our neighbourhood as a fact of life. Our aim should be to prevent the India-China balance turning more to our disadvantage. An equilibrium has to be established that we can live with.

* This is a full text of the 31st USI National Security Lecture delivered by Shri Kanwal Sibal, IFS (Retd) at USI on 09 December 2015 with General JJ Singh, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd), former COAS and Governor of Arunachal Pradesh in the Chair.

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The Succession of Dalai Lama

Colonel Shailender Arya@

Introduction

Athrone awaits the return of the 14th Dalai Lama at his summer residence at Nechung, Tibet. Whether the Dalai Lama will return to reclaim Lhasa or not is a difficult question to answer as today even his images are banned in Tibet. But as Tenzin Gyatso, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama turned eighty in 2015, questions about his succession stare at Tibetans and the international community. The Dalai Lama is the most important figure in Tibetan Buddhism as he combines the undisputed spiritual and the temporal authority, a unique system not present anywhere else with the exception of the tiny Vatican City. The Oxford Dictionary defines him as ‘The spiritual head of Tibetan Buddhism and, until the establishment of Chinese communist rule, the spiritual and temporal ruler of Tibet. Each Dalai Lama is believed to be the reincarnation of the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, reappearing in a child when the incumbent Dalai Lama dies’. The question of his succession is equally significant to the Chinese as it may decide the future of Tibetan independence movement and its direction. To India; the birthplace of Buddhism, the current residence of the Dalai Lama and the refuge of 1.2 lakh Tibetan community including the Tibetan government-in-exile; the importance of this question cannot be overstated.

Importance of Dalai Lama

The Dalai Lama is considered as a ‘living god’ by six million Tibetan people. The Tibetan Buddhists believe that each Dalai Lama is the reincarnation of his predecessors who, in turn, are the manifestations of Avalokiteshvara, the patron saint of Tibet and Bodhisattva of Compassion. Bodhisattvas are enlightened beings who consciously choose to be reborn in order to help others achieve enlightenment. The current Dalai Lama is the 14th in history with the first Dalai Lama being born in 1391. Perhaps none has held the position with as much popularity and esteem as the current Dalai Lama and therefore despite having fled over the Himalayas to exile in India in 1959, he remains highly popular in his homeland. Post 2008 Beijing Olympics, as the restrictions on Tibetan faith and culture have intensified, more than 130 Tibetans have immolated themselves to protest Chinese rule over the high plateau. In many cases, they have used their final words to express devotion to the Dalai Lama.¹

Apart from his position as the Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama plays a major role as the political voice of the Tibetan people, who have suffered decades of conflict with the Chinese government.² In fact, in spite of his non-violent stance, he retains his status as the focal point of Free Tibet movement. He has single-handedly transformed a broken movement-in-exile in 1959 to one recognised by the world as having legitimate aspirations.³ Therefore, there are increased calls and pleas for the Dalai Lama to reincarnate for the sake of Tibet’s future. In addition, there are now 400 million Chinese Buddhists including in inner military circles that may one day tilt the balance in his favour. Incidentally, the mother of President Xi Jinping is also a devout Buddhist. Beijing is now seeking to control Tibet by getting involved in the reincarnation selection process, making the next succession of Dalai Lama a highly political issue.

High Reincarnations in Tibet

Traditionally, it has been the responsibility of the High Lamas of the Gelugpa tradition (Yellow Hat Sect) and the Tibetan government to find reincarnation. Upon the death of the Dalai Lama and consultation with the Nechung Oracle, a search for the Lama’s yangsi, or reincarnation, is conducted. High Lamas often visit Lhamo La-tso, a lake in central Tibet, and watch for a sign from the lake itself. This may be either a vision or some indication of the direction in which to search, and this was how the present Dalai Lama was found. High Lamas may also have a vision by a dream or if the Dalai Lama was cremated, they will often monitor the direction of the smoke as an indication of the direction of the rebirth. Once the High Lamas have found the home and the boy they believe to be the reincarnation, the boy undergoes a battery of tests to affirm the rebirth.⁴ The process can take around two or three years. The tradition also stipulates that when the Dalai Lama dies, the duty falls on the Panchen Lama to find his new reincarnation, and in turn a new Panchen Lama has to be recognised by the Dalai Lama.

The Chinese Stand

While the Dalai Lama turned a venerable eighty in 2015, the year also marked the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Tibet Autonomous Region by the Chinese communist regime. The region is still a major flash point and resistance simmers under the surface even as high speed trains criss-cross the roof of the world. Therefore, the Nobel peace prize laureate Dalai Lama is seen as a potent threat by the Chinese government. Unsurprisingly, he has been described by Chinese Government officials as a “wolf in monk’s robes,” and a “dangerous splittist” intent on cleaving the Chinese nation. Beijing often orchestrates protests against the Dalai Lama during his travels abroad by Shugden worshippers and groups of ‘nationalist’ Chinese students. Beijing is also steadily increasing diplomatic and economic pressure on foreign governments to refrain from meeting the Dalai Lama.

China has now claimed the power to approve the naming of ‘high’ reincarnations in Tibet, based on a precedent set by the Qianlong Emperor of the Qing Dynasty. These ‘high’ reincarnations are mainly the Dalai and the Panchen Lama. The issue of reincarnation of Tibetan lamas became politicised when in 2007 China’s State of Religious Affairs Bureau issued its Decree No.5, ruling that reincarnations of all tulkus or living Buddhas, were only valid once approved by the state. Perhaps Chinese bureaucrats believed the decree would ensure that something like the controversial succession of the Panchen Lama in 1989 could not reoccur.⁵

To be fair to the Chinese, the religious affairs have always had state patronage in China. During the imperial

period, all Taoist deities had to be officially recognised by the emperor. For example, an imperial decree of the Song Dynasty in 1281 conferred upon the sea goddess Mazu, popular within the Chinese Diaspora, the official title of Tianfei (Heavenly Princess). Under the Qing Dynasty, four centuries later, Emperor Qianlong elevated the goddess to the rank of Tianhou (Empress of Heaven).⁶ However, to extend the strictly Chinese precedence to remote Tibet is devoid of any logic and hints at potential manipulations. Meanwhile, Chinese president Xi Jinping has asked officials to alter school curriculum of Tibetan children in order to incorporate ‘core socialist values’. This is part of China’s preparations to bring about major changes in the thinking of the next generation of Tibetans. The Communist Party sees the Dalai Lama as a major obstacle in enforcing its idea of a socialist society among Tibetans.⁷

The Chinese have been repeating their newly-discovered stance. In March 2015, on the sidelines of China’s annual parliamentary session, Zhu Weiqun, head of an influential ethnic-and-religious-affairs committee, insisted that it was the Chinese government’s responsibility to designate the Dalai Lama’s successor. Again in July 2015, China claimed that it has a vital role in the succession as it had officially conferred the title of 5th Dalai Lama in 1653. However, there have been dissenting voices within China. Professor Jin Wei, Deputy Director of Minority Issues in the Central Party School in Beijing, in an interview published on 6 June 2013, by the Hong Kong-based Chinese language magazine ‘Yazhou Zhoukan’ (Asia Weekly), asserted that China must ensure that the Dalai Lama’s reincarnation is found “inside China” and China must “make every possible effort to avoid the embarrassment of the ‘twin Panchen Lama’ event”.

The thirteenth White Paper on Tibet was issued on 14 April 2015 by China’s State Council Information Office. It emphasises that “Tibet has been an integral part of China since ancient times, and has never been an independent nation”, it insists: “Only when he (Dalai Lama) makes a public statement acknowledging that Tibet has been an integral part of China since antiquity, and abandons his stance on independence and his attempts to divide China, can he improve his relationship with the central government in any real sense.” In response to China’s White Paper on Tibet, the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) at Dharamshala prepared a 31-page report which claimed that China wants to grab Tibet’s institution of the Dalai Lama due to its past geopolitical importance in the volatile politics of China, Mongolia and Tibet. According to CTA, China’s internal assessment that it cannot rule Tibet forever without the legitimising influence of Dalai Lama over the Tibetan people is also behind the move.⁸

A Missing Lama

Panchen Lama is the second highest figure in Tibetan Buddhism. He heads the powerful Tashilhunpo Monastery and his name ‘Panchen’ means the ‘Great Scholar’, a title given by the 5th Dalai Lama. 2015 marked the 20th anniversary of the disappearance of the real Panchen Lama, Gendun Choekyi Nyima, whose fate remains of deep concern to many Tibetans. In 1989, the 10th Panchen Lama died suddenly in Shigatse, at the age of 51, shortly after giving a speech critical of the Chinese occupation. In 1995, the Dalai Lama named a boy in Tibet, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, as the reincarnation of the previous Panchen Lama. But the Chinese placed that boy under house arrest and installed another, Gyancain Norbu, in his place. Amnesty International declared him to be the world’s youngest political prisoner. Today, while China insists that Gyancain Norbu is the legitimate Panchen Lama, the Tibetan Buddhists do not recognise him and in fact spurn the Chinese-appointed Panchen Lama, referring him as the ‘Panchen Zuma’ meaning ‘fake Panchen Lama’.

Views of Dalai Lama

The Dalai Lama has put forward frank views on his succession. Perhaps he will choose his successor during his lifetime, contrary to the usual tradition of identifying the new Dalai Lama only after the death of the old one. Maybe his soul will transfer to a person outside of Tibet. Or perhaps, he has said most recently, the line of Dalai Lamas will end with him, if that is the wish of the Tibetan people.⁹ In the mid-1970s; the Dalai Lama first told a Polish newspaper that he thought he would be the last Dalai Lama. These statements caused a furore amongst Tibetans in India. Many could not believe that such an option could even be considered. It was further felt that it was not the Dalai Lama’s decision to reincarnate.¹⁰

Following the Chinese decree, the Dalai Lama in 2007 publicly suggested that he might not want to reincarnate. Later on, he told author Matteo Pistono that he would “be reborn outside of China’s control”. In 2011, after giving up his formal political role within the Tibetan exile Government, he opined that the succession should not be used for political ends. “Bear in mind that, apart from the reincarnation recognised through such legitimate methods, no recognition or acceptance should be given to a candidate chosen for political ends by anyone, including those in the People’s Republic of China,” he said.¹¹ In 2013, the Dalai Lama said that he would not be opposed to a woman successor - and even thought it could be the better option for Tibet. “I think it would be good,” the Dalai Lama told an interviewer with the UK’s Channel 4 News. “Now we are in the 21st century... Females have more potential regarding the promotion of human compassion.”

Again in an interview with a German newspaper in 2014, Welt am Sonntag, the Dalai Lama underscored his belief that the tradition of the post he holds could end with him. He said Tibetan Buddhism was not dependent on a single person and is characterised by a substantial network of lamas and monks who nurture spiritual education in the community. “Tibetan Buddhism is not dependent on one individual. We have a very good organisational structure with highly trained monks and scholars.”¹² This was contested by China. A spokesman for China’s Foreign Ministry, Hua Chunying told reporters that China had a “set religious procedure and historic custom” when it came to the reincarnation of living Buddhist lamas, including the position of Dalai Lama. “The title of Dalai Lama is conferred by the central government, which has hundreds of years of history.”

Fresh speculation was again sparked by the Dalai Lama’s interview on BBC’s Newsnight programme on 17 Dec 2014, where he commented that he may not have a successor. BBC quoted “The Dalai Lama institution will cease one day. These man-made institutions will cease. So, much better that a centuries-old tradition should cease at the time of a quite popular Dalai Lama.” Ganden Thurman, Executive Director of Tibet House US, has analysed that by denying

the need for a successor, the Dalai Lama may also be charting a course for a more democratic Tibet moving forward. The Tibetan government had, in the past, looked to the Dalai Lama to make most political decisions. But if Tibet is to flourish beyond the life of its prominent leader, a more democratic system may be needed.¹³

The New York Times reported that the Dalai Lama again said in 2015 that China did not have the right to choose his successor - contrary to government claims - and that in fact he might not be reborn at all. This statement led Padma Choling, the autonomous region's Chinese-appointed governor, accusing the Dalai Lama of blasphemy for suggesting as much and reiterated that Beijing has the right to choose. However, the most likely possibility is that a successor may be chosen from Tibetan diaspora outside Tibet, as profoundly foretold by the Dalai Lama; If I die in the near future, and the Tibetan people want another reincarnation, a fifteenth Dalai Lama, while we are still outside Tibet, my reincarnation will definitely appear outside Tibet. Because the very purpose of the incarnation is to fulfill the work that has been started by the previous life.¹⁴ According to Robert D Kaplan, this could mean that "the next Dalai Lama might come from the Tibetan cultural belt that stretches across northern India, Nepal, and Bhutan, presumably making him even more pro-Indian and anti-Chinese".¹⁵

From a purely religious perspective, the lamas are able to determine firstly whether they are reborn, and if they are going to be reborn, where they will be reborn. Therefore, Chonpel Tsering, Dalai Lama's representative in northern Europe, stated "The present carnation, the present Dalai Lama, can decide. The rebirth is his choice." It is most likely that the Dalai Lama shall consult the Tibetan people and others that follow Tibetan Buddhism to find out whether they think that there should be a 15th Dalai Lama. Thereafter, if the decision is, 'Yes', then he will set out clear instructions about the process, so that there is no ambiguity, so that the reincarnation process is not manipulated or misused by anybody for their own personal or political interests.¹⁶

Tibetan and Indian Views

Members of the Tibetan exile community have also disparaged the ruling Communist Party's insistence on dictating the Dalai Lama's afterlife. "It's like Fidel Castro saying, 'I will select the next Pope and all the Catholics should follow,'" Lobsang Sangay, the Tibetan Prime Minister in exile, told Reuters in March 2015. Tibetans fear that the Chinese government will use the issue of the Dalai Lama's succession to split Tibetan Buddhism, with one new Dalai Lama named by exiles and another one by the Chinese after his death. India is meanwhile giving increasing importance to the Dalai Lama. In July 2015, two central government ministers for the first time attended the function in Dharamsala in their official capacity. In Delhi, three former foreign secretaries spoke at a well-attended symposium on July 4, while the reception on July 6 evening was also attended by two central ministers.

While it is certain that the Chinese will put up their own candidate as their next successor, it is likely that the demands from the Tibetan community including the widespread diaspora shall lead to Tibetans nominating their reincarnation. In that case, according to Tibetan writer and activist Jamyang Norbu, the ideal place for the next Dalai Lama to be born is in the Himalayas on the Indian side of the border, where the people are ethnically Tibetan, where there are Tibetan Buddhists, and they are very loyal to the Dalai Lama, to the Tibetan spiritual world. Norbu further states that "So if he's born there, it would drag in the government of India. They would be obliged to protect him."¹⁷ This will be an uncanny repeat of 1959 for India when the current Dalai Lama fled to India and Pandit Nehru granted him asylum. The Sino-India war soon followed in 1962.

Succession Dynamics

The communist invasion of Tibet had the unintended side-effect of uniting all Tibetan lineages under the Dalai Lama. The various sects, lineages and diaspora groups are today more united than ever in the Tibetan history. In fact, many regard the personable young 17th Karmapa Lama, head of Buddhism's Karma Kagyu sect (the Black Hat sect with global headquarters at Rumtek, Sikkim) and representative of the world's oldest unbroken line of succession through reincarnation, as the Dalai Lama's natural heir.¹⁸ He is 29 years old, an avid environmentalist and at 14 years had fled Tibet for India. The next Dalai Lama will also have a pivotal role to play in the selection of next Panchen Lama. The Dalai Lama's approval of any settlement between CTA and China dealing with the future of Tibet is vital to make the deal legitimate and acceptable.

Independent analysts like Robert Barnett, director of the Modern Tibet Studies Programme at Columbia University in New York, believe that China wants a 'tame' lama and has invested huge resources into trying to find a tame lama. China is intent on avoiding a situation where there are rival, contending Dalai Lamas. On the other hand, the peace-loving Dalai Lama is reluctant for his succession as he is afraid that the succession issue and the holy institution itself may be politically oriented which is not what Buddhism is all about. His concern is also to ensure that China should be prevented from exerting more control over Tibetan Buddhism, which is possible if China is able to manipulate the succession results. In fact, it is a strange situation. The centuries old Tibetan Buddhism is open to drop this sacred religious institution if it is not possible to keep it away from Chinese manipulations. On the other hand, a communist China, with its 'religion is poison' atheist position and no belief in reincarnation is keen to keep the same - evidently for manipulation and strengthening their control over Tibet.

Conclusion

The current Dalai Lama is a world-renowned figure of compassion, wisdom and patience. He is also an international celebrity - admired by influential people like Barack Obama, Richard Gere and Desmond Tutu. It is indeed strange that his reincarnation which is an esoteric concept that cannot be proved scientifically has become a key political issue in the Chinese-Tibetan context. The Dalai Lama was born in 1935 and has said that he hopes to live to be 113 years old. Let us hope that it is true, and by then the Tibetans may gain significant autonomy or political freedom from China so that they may welcome him back to his magnificent Potala palace at Lhasa. If not, we may remember that the 6th Dalai Lama, Tsangyang Gyatso, was born in Tawang, 13th Dalai Lama Thupten Gyatso had exiled to Sikkim in India from 1910 to 1912 to escape a Chinese invasion and the 14th Dalai Lama had exiled to India in 1959 after an abortive

uprising against Chinese rule. India may as well be hosting the 15th Dalai Lama and their unique heritage for years.

Endnotes

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@Colonel Shailender Arya was commissioned into the Regiment of Artillery in Dec 1998. He was the winner of USI Gold Medal Essay Competition 2006 (Group B), runner up in 2007 Competition (Group B), winner in 2008 Competition (Group B) and runner up in 2011 Competition (Group A). Presently, he is commanding an artillery unit. Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CXLV, No. 602, October-December 2015.

Introduction

Field Marshal Manekshaw led the Indian Army to a great victory in the 1971 War. It was also, one might say, the last decisive campaign. Decisive wars are rare in history if one judges them by the peace which they brought. If we go by the Clausewitzian dictum that the object of war is not victory but peace, most wars have fallen short of the standards. The operative phrase in this is of decisive outcome. Decisive wars attain the strategic objectives, bring lasting peace and resolve contested political issues.

Changing Character of War

An alternate historical view interprets the 1914-2014 hundred years as a Long War which included the First and Second World wars, the Cold War, Post-Cold War and other wars till date, as a continuum of military campaigns for ascendancy amongst ideologies of capitalism, communism, socialism and of religious identity.

There have been many military campaigns in the last forty years. These have been led by developed nations with the most modern technology and kinetic power. Such operations have led to regime change and scattering of the adversary's military. These operations were followed by long occupation in which the populace remained sullen at best and hostile at worst. The occupation resulted in the rise of armed groups and militias with local and foreign support making the occupation increasingly costly in human terms leading to loss of support of the home population in countries which waged these campaigns. The political cost of foreign interventions has become untenable in all countries, notwithstanding the successes of their militaries. The haunting images of people risking all in migrating over the seas in rubber boats and braving barbed wire barricades, are evidence of the failure of the purpose for which such wars were waged. In other words no decisive outcomes were obtained by the wars of shock and awe.

Old and New Wars

The last few years have seen the emergence of a discourse on New Wars as opposed to the conventional Old Wars. The premise of the new war discourse is that such wars need a different strategic approach and a new set of policy parameters. New wars are not new, in the sense that such conflicts were present in the past. However, the scope and capacity of such new wars is now substantial. New wars have been termed as wars of the era of globalisation. The differences between old and new wars are in the varied actors, indeterminate goals, methods and the economic basis of such wars. New wars are fought by different combinations of states and non state actors. These include regular armed forces, militias, mercenaries, private security contractors, jihadists, paramilitaries and warlords. While old wars were conducted for ideological or geo-political goals, new wars are fought for ethnic, religious or tribal identities. The goal more often than not is to gain the power of the state rather than to implement particular policies. The decisive battle which defined old wars is replaced by control of territory through political means and by population displacement. As for finance, new wars are backed through diaspora support, smuggling of raw materials like oil, precious stones and through clandestine state based support through money and weapons transfers etc. While old wars were centralising and autarchic, new wars are an open globalised and decentralised phenomenon. These differences change the character of war in that while conventional war led to all out efforts to win and end the war, new wars extend in territory and duration, and tend to persist and recur as either side or sides gain in political and economic terms.

New Wars have thus become instruments of politics instead of policy. Since political interests of the warring groups become salient, they deliberately violate the rules and norms of war. The inner tendency of such wars has been termed as not war without limits but war without end. Therefore, such wars have a self-perpetuating interest, in which enemies become useful towards sustaining the conflict. Useful Enemies is now part of the lexicon of New Wars. Major Powers and their allies have found a rapid erosion of public support for extended campaigns on foreign soil. The economics of sustaining military expeditions in an era of diminishing defence budgets further aggravated the diminishing return from such ventures. The response to New Wars from the developed world, whose militaries fought but gained no traction from it, went through many phases. These were of intense public scrutiny and debate, in which legislators and senior military leaders often disagreed with policies. There was wide spread media critique which in some cases led to cover ups and disinformation which eroded the credibility of governments. Later there were surges in military numbers and also changes in military commanders, to hasten the end of conflict. Finally, it led to a military pull back resulting in leaving the countries, regions and populations at the mercy of the new actors of new wars. It is no surprise that Britain's Chief of Defence Staff observed last month, "We are experiencing ever greater constraints on our freedom to use force..... The constraints on use of force lay in areas of societal support, parliamentary consent, and ever greater legal challenge." He went on to add that the, "the UK is in a state of permanent engagement in which all instruments of national power need constantly to be in play". India has faced this situation for long.

We can be certain that future wars will not be limited to conventional operations. There will be a simultaneous unfolding of overt and covert armed action, cyber-attacks on non-military targets which will affect the national response, international financial and economic pressures by a combination of countries and attacks by a number of unidentified armed groups. The phrase Hybrid War captures this landscape vividly. An example of this is the Israeli experience in Gaza and Lebanon. In that campaign conventional and irregular fighting with sophisticated weapons blurred the difference between front lines and rear areas. This made every place, whether in towns and villages, or in open spaces a combat zone. Israeli Forces incurred more casualties than anticipated, and units and subunits were continually surprised and attacked. The conclusions drawn from it were that combined arms fire power and manoeuvre with responsive air, artillery and UAV systems were critical for success, in addition to heavy forces with tanks and Infantry Fighting Vehicles. Ukraine has also been subjected to this hybrid form of warfare. Russian military units

without insignias allegedly operated as guerrilla forces inside Ukraine, and were able to take over good amount of territory. The tide could only be turned when regular conventional forces of the kind just listed were employed. New Wars add complexity to the conventional war environment, they do not however obviate the need for a full scale conventional or Old War response.

Impact on India

India is most unlikely to get itself involved in expeditionary military campaigns, unlike other major military powers have in the past. The war imperative for India will either emerge from necessity, in response to military action by another country; or, as a choice in response to uncontrolled terrorist or new war initiatives launched against it. Its need to fight a war will be limited in geographic and territorial size. Indian military actions will face a violent and wide range of responses marked by the power of latest military technology. The response will also be quick and aim to impose a heavy cost in material and human terms. The response will also include terrorist activity of a virulent nature in the Indian hinterland. India will need to prepare for a spectrum of war ranging from the conventional with a nuclear overhang to counter insurgencies and terrorism, with the hybrid mix in between. There should be no doubt that while the hybrid content of new war affects the character of war, full scale conventional or Old War capability will be ever more required for success. It is fashionable for Think Tanks, particularly in western capitals, to build scenarios of an Indian military thrust inviting a nuclear response, and then examine plans to work on international mediatory initiatives to disengage the two sides. This ignores the reality of new and hybrid wars which will be ongoing and the impossibility of restoring order in such circumstances. Indian Armed Forces are also heavily dependent on armament import. The indigenous armament industry is unlikely to be in a position to replace the extensive import dependencies. This would mean that for the short notice war requirement, the state of readiness for war will have to be much higher than anything experienced in previous conflicts.

A war by or with India will draw an immediate and coordinated international response in the diplomatic, economic and political arena. The stake holders in such a war, both in its continuance and its quick termination will be varied. The pressures to call a ceasefire, to end the conflict on unacceptable terms and the threat and application of sanctions will be intense and mount by the week. Managing the international environment as the war unfolds will be as much a challenge as the need to rapidly achieve the military aims set for the war. National and international media will report the war and interpret its developments in unexpected and unfavourable terms. This will be compounded by social media which is a major public perceptions builder to which governments often respond in panic. Retaining public support for the operations and its costs will be a major political responsibility. These parameters will demand a coordinated response from all organs of the Government.

Structural Challenges

India's military (Army, Navy and Air Force) systems are resilient enough to cope with the challenges and character of a future war. Previous wars and crises have demonstrated that the military system can rise to the occasion. War, however, is a national endeavour, in which the political, economic, intelligence and diplomatic structures have to operate in a combined and seamlessly integrated effort. As Expert Committees and a number of other analysts in India and abroad indicated, there has been a legacy of these structures, efficient as they are individually, functioning in their own silos. The need for a 'government as a whole' instead of efficient 'systems on their own' has been amply highlighted. The debate on the need for systemic integration, rapid and reasoned decision making processes, and overall synergy in the tense and exacting process of war has gone on for long.

Indians who held high positions during periods of conflict have written books based on personal experience of decision making and crisis management processes. A few examples will suffice to confirm the need for structural reforms and change. The story of months long trial and error journey towards the war of 1962 is well known. The problem then lay in the absence of synergy between the political, diplomatic and military wings in New Delhi. India consequently did not fight a war but blundered into it. In 1965, even after the Rann of Kutch episode, Indian intelligence and the military were surprised in J&K. Recovering from the surprise, the political leadership gave enough operational autonomy to the military which could not be optimised into an effective joint Army-Air Force campaign. In 1971, according to Field Marshal Manekshaw, the then Prime Minister held a meeting with him and the Defence and Foreign Ministers. The task given was for the Army to 'go into East Bengal'. None of his questions on the purpose of doing so were answered or an indication given on the time and scale of the operations. General Manekshaw, as he then was, had to separately meet the Prime Minister to inform her of the consequences of such a war and to extract from her a time period in which to prepare for the war. In the Kargil operations of 1999, a series of Cabinet meetings were needed to ascertain the situation on ground to arrive at an outline idea of the military response which could be mounted. The policy on using the Air Force had to be negotiated between the Chiefs of Army and Air Force. After the 2001 attack on the Parliament, the Prime Minister had to seek the Service Chiefs' views on what could possibly be done militarily. Once the Armed Forces were deployed for a possible war and remained so deployed for months, a decision on whether to pull back or continue with it had to be sought from the National Security Advisory Board.

The seam which runs through forty years of war experience is of fault lines in national security management. The shortcomings have been in lack of structural and institutional mechanisms to anticipate and prepare for national crisis and to evolve a coordinated response after the crisis comes to head. A better way to put it would be to term them as absence of systemic integration, of inter-ministerial coordination, and of political guidance. One can be sure that future scenarios will prevail with higher intensity and urgency which will require that systems and structures are put in place to effectively anticipate and prepare for them. Future wars and armed conflicts will emerge rapidly which can only be dealt with if there are contingency plans drawn up in peace time, through such structures and mechanisms capable of coordinated action. A future war will be a multi-agency, multi-ministry and multi departmental effort. The existing method of crisis group meetings, or committees headed by senior Secretaries, and other ad hoc groups meeting on the directions of a minister or even the PMO, have in the past fallen short of expectations. In a future war these will fail to even give a lead, leave aside produce an integrated response.

The primary need in a future war will be for a decisive outcome to be obtained in a short time, without running into the risk of an extended military campaign. India's Chief of Army Staff has recently used the apt phrase of a 'Swift War' to describe such a campaign. However, swift and fast moving campaigns require long peacetime planning, training, force deployment and equally important armament acquisitions. Strategic thinking and work on operational planning needs to start well before the clash of arms. Wars are won before the first shots are fired, by the assets for war being made ready in peace. This requirement, before and during the war demands that an integrated politico-military structure is in place in peace and war. The shape and the functional cohesion of such structures depend on the culture of governance and the confidence levels between the political executive and the defence services.

Conclusion

Successive governments in the last decade and a half have made serious attempts to examine the shortcomings of the existing national security structures and processes. They established Expert Committees for the purpose. Recommendations on significant changes and reforms of such structures and processes have been made in the Expert Committee reports, which are with the Government since long. Reforms, which is another term for change, is never a popular policy choice. Global experience in this has been one of resistance, of procrastination and of obfuscation. In every field, of economy, climate change, labour laws, or WTO reforms evoke negative responses. Defence and national security reforms trigger even stronger resistance. In a democratic system, change needs to be politically acceptable. It is apparent that making reforms independent of the political system is an unviable option. India is, therefore, no exception in being resistant to change and modernisation of existing structures. However, India is also unique, in its political leadership having committed itself to structural and process reforms. The potential of India's growth to being a leading player and its structural vulnerabilities in the event of war makes urgent implementation of such reforms a policy priority. The risks are known, as is the way forward. In a democracy, the power to change rests with the political leadership. It is time to exercise the power to change.

*Adapted from the Field Marshal Manekshaw Memorial Lecture 2015, delivered by Lieutenant General VR Raghavan, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM (Retd) on Infantry Day, 27 Oct 2015 in New Delhi.

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Introduction

The Internet of Things (IoT) is all about intelligent machines connecting to people or to each other. Such connected machines can be remotely controlled or they can collect and communicate valuable data. The word IoT was coined by British entrepreneur Kevin Ashton in 1999.¹ But the concept was discussed as early as 1982 when a coke machine at Carnegie Mellon University became the first internet connected appliance. IoT implies convergence of people, processes, data and things which is bringing about unprecedented disruption.² The common elements that hold it together are connectivity, sensors and processing.

Definition

The IoT can be defined as a, “network of unique physical things that contain embedded technology to communicate, sense, analyse and/or interact with their internal or external environment”.

So what are these “things” or “machines”?³ The answer is just about anything. They could be household appliances, irrigation sensors in a rice field, a cutting machine on a factory floor or an aircraft engine. Right now, companies are in the process of giving machines the intelligence and connectivity they need to participate in this connected world. An industry that has previously been known as the “Embedded Industry” is now referred to as the “Internet of Things Industry” and it is growing at a phenomenal pace. After surpassing the human population in 2011, internet connected devices are expected to number between 26 billion and 50 billion globally by 2020, that is 4 to 8 connected things for each person in the world. These devices, which in the past, could only be thought to be mobile phones, laptop and desktop computers now include almost anything like ATM machines, gas pipelines, street lights, factory automation, mining, energy, transportation vehicles, health monitoring devices and even the soil used for agriculture.

IoT in Defence Industry

In the defence industry, the concept of the IoT has been around for some time. The planes, vehicles, ships and weapons systems found in the connected battlefield were networked and sharing tactical data among themselves well before the IoT gained momentum in commercial markets. With the growth of autonomous vehicles, this connected battlefield is ever-expanding and reaching into more applications and machines. Embedded rugged computers are providing intelligence for military machines large and small. Sensor processors are helping to gather and process large amounts of data such as high definition video. Network solutions — rugged routers and switches provide the connectivity infrastructure and high-performance embedded computers process the big data generated by the connected battlefield.

Now that the defence forces have experienced the benefit of the connected battlefield and beyond, they are aiming to connect even more machines. The concept of connecting every battlefield asset, whether large or small, human or machine has taken hold.⁵ This has impacted the civil industry which is now giving increased emphasis on Size, Weight and Power (SWaP) and miniaturising for the Commercial Off The Shelf (COTS) products for the military. It has also led to an increased emphasis on security — segregating classified and unclassified data, anti-tamper and information assurance.

Software development for speedy information processing and security are critical areas. There is a wide scope of employing the software developed for industrial internet to be used for defence applications with little modification. For instance, software that is used to analyse and optimise the operation of diesel engines in large mining vehicles could be applied to armoured military vehicles. Or the tools and software that collect data from sensors installed in an aircraft engine and can notify maintenance crews in real time are directly applicable to military aircraft. Even the software that rail transport companies use to optimise the operation of locomotives — saving them millions of dollars in energy costs — could be applied to the operation of unmanned submarines, allowing them to execute longer missions further and further from port.

It is important to note that IoT will work in conjunction with other technologies like analytics, data protection, cyber security and data governance.⁶ However, IoT should not be viewed only as a technology initiative. It is a tool for increasing efficiency, reducing cost, optimising resource utilisation and increasing customer satisfaction. It helps in establishing real time co-relation of events.

Opportunities and Challenges

IoT presents both a large opportunity and many challenges as we try to integrate it into overall industrial and military capabilities and as it matures and our connected world grows. Some of the challenges are :-⁷

- (a) **Myriad of Technologies, Networks and Protocols.** Starting with sensor equipped things themselves, there are a wide variety of situation specific technologies, networks, protocols and data formats that must be chosen, managed and integrated.
- (b) **Distributed Business Data, Analytics and Logic.** Sensors, devices and gateways are often capable of local data filtering and analysis. They can also store business logic to enable quick response to various situations, such as a safety issue. The IoT software platforms would have to manage things and gateways,

analyse and manage sensor data and integrate with enterprise systems. The challenge is that business data, analytics and logic are resident outside of the core enterprise applications and processes.

(c) **New Security Risks.** IoT brings with it new security challenges that span customer premises, the internet and the enterprise. It is critical to ensure that the connected devices and the data they collect are tamper-resistant and tamper-evident. One has to select which identity, authentication and encryption technologies will work for sensors and gateways. It is absolutely imperative that the chain of custody remains secure all the way through cloud services and back to the enterprise applications.

(d) **New Network Demands.** The network administrators and managers have to cater for a surge and variety of devices that would connect to the network nodes. Some devices may stream data continuously, while the others need low latency and high quality of service for quick responses to critical events.

(e) **Vast Quantities of Time-series Data.** Analysis of huge quantity of time-series data would require new generation of analytics technology to decide how best to transmit, capture, store and retrieve data.

While the efficiencies and insights gained through the deployment of this massive interconnected system will bring new benefits, it could also bring new risks. Experience shows us that when everything is connected, everything is vulnerable. As cyber threats become more sophisticated and aggressive in this expanding IoT environment, four areas of concern will rise in importance.⁸ All organisations should, therefore :-

(a) **Make sure information is reliable and systems are resilient.** With the large amount of data generated by the IoT, a key question will be: "How do I know the data generated by this system is reliable?" Chief information security officers (CISOs) will have to find answers within their information assurance strategies.

(b) **Keep pace with technology.** With each new device that enters the IoT domain, new vulnerabilities and threats are introduced. A cyber adversary will not only have this new target with its vulnerabilities to exploit, but he will also have a new path from which to attack the other entities on your network. Security organisations must have a lab and do their research on new devices to understand, not just how to use a device, but also what is embedded in the device; what data is generated and transmitted; where does the device transmit its data; and what connections will it accept from other devices in an environment, among a host of other concerns.

(c) **Focus on the insider threat.** The IoT is about connections among devices, the masses of data generated by sensors, cloud processing and storage, and automated actuators. Threats to this environment may be slowed by perimeter defences, but the most dangerous threat is the one inside – where the most serious damage can be done. The Target Corporation, WikiLeaks, and Snowden breaches are evidence of this damage. The Target Corporation is a typical example of insider threat in the IoT environment, whereby adversaries were able to penetrate the point-of-sale (POS) devices by first entering through a heating, ventilation, and air conditioning controller! As a result, banks and credit unions lost more than US \$200 million, according to the Consumer Bankers Association. In this new environment, it's critical for agencies to have insider-focused security and continuous monitoring solutions that can detect anomalies, unauthorised privileged user activity, and determine when information has been accessed inappropriately. These must be behavioural analytics, not just simple rules and policies.

(d) **Embrace (big and community) data analytics to minimise cyber threats.** The IoT will generate more data as new devices and systems are added to the ecosystem. Innovations in analytics will drive more than efficient processes but also new ways to detect threats. For example, successful data analytics programmes apply algorithms that automatically identify areas of cyber security interest in large volumes of data. In this new ecosystem, analytics will hold the key to predicting threats before they happen.

The IoT has moved from the military to everyday life, allowing us to create and process more data than ever before on everything from the products we buy, to critical power and water, to how we drive on the highway. Making sure this system of systems is secure will help us ensure the IoT delivers its promise of convenience and efficiency.

Network and Security Architecture

Connectivity is at the heart of IoT capability. It serves dual purpose. First, it allows information to be exchanged between the product and its operating environment, its maker its user and other products and systems. Second, connectivity enables some functions of the product to exist outside the physical device. The opportunity with IoT comes from its ability to link components via an intelligent, secure and programmable network in which physical objects like vehicles, weapons and unmanned vehicles are connected to secure networks to create information dominance.

Connectivity is also the most significant vulnerability both in civil and military applications of IoT. Many nations have developed their warfare doctrines and capabilities to attack and degrade this connectivity provided by networks. Consequently, the architecture of IoT must ensure complete security of networks and the systems connected to them as an integral part of design and implementation. This presents a very serious and a major challenge.

An integrated and secure architecture for IoT creates interconnected physical and virtual environments that combine IoT devices with secure virtualisation, mobility, unified communications and other advanced technologies. Networks and system integration must cater for unification of computing, storage and networks with sensors, devices

and collaborative applications

The proliferation of unstructured imagery and video data from a variety of sensors is creating new capture, storage, computing and exploitation opportunities. To accommodate an influx of new devices without sacrificing security, they must be managed as part of an integrated architecture for IoT. The framework should preferably leverage commercial products which are not only less expensive and technologically current but are easier to field, manage and support.

Security concerns surrounding IoT will be particularly important for military operators connecting to classified networks. Hence, network-aware intelligence and end-to-end physical security for video and all networked sensors must be at the heart of any military IoT solution.

Architecture suited to support IoT will include compute, storage and virtualisation assets in the data centre. It will also include secure network fabric for connectivity, voice and video-enabled secure mobile infrastructure and battlefield sensors. Virtualisation combined with advanced security from the network to application levels are essential to allowing highly secure access to sensitive and classified information on multiple networks while lowering the risk of vulnerabilities. When properly designed and deployed, IoT will help to realise the vision of net-centric warfare while providing technology advantage to our connected soldiers and systems.

IoT in the Indian Context

At the national level, we have been using IoT for some time in manufacturing, health care and in some cases for monitoring and maintenance of power supply and so on. Most of these are connected to private networks and hence can be managed comparatively easily. Digital India and Smart City projects would see large scale deployment of IoT and connectivity with public networks. This presents an unprecedented challenge with regard to technology, products, skills, cyber security and privacy of citizens. IoT adds another dimension to cyber security and demands enhanced capabilities in encryption, software development, networks, and system integration and so on.

The Government of India has released a draft IoT Policy in April 2015.⁹ The key stakeholders in the IoT initiatives would be the citizens, the government, academia and the industry. Participation and collaboration of each of the stakeholder at an appropriate stage is essential. At this juncture, we require policies for promotion of IoT, selection of the essential domains and emphasis on building answers for 'What Data will Service the Citizens'. IoT products and solutions should clearly strategise with a simple goal of 'Value Up' and 'Cost Down'.

The Policy framework of the IoT Policy has been proposed to be implemented via a multi-pillar approach. The approach comprises of five vertical pillars (Demonstration Centres, Capacity Building & Incubation, R&D and Innovation, Incentives and Engagements, Human Resource Development) and two horizontal supports (Standards & Governance structure).

The Governance structure would consist of :-¹⁰

- (a) **A legal framework.** IoT will lead to new systems/products/services where machine will take decisions based on certain available data. Legal frameworks will be created for issues that might arise due to IoT related product/systems/services.
- (b) **Advisory Committee.** To set up a High Level Advisory Committee including representatives from the Government, industry and academia for providing ongoing guidance in the emerging area of IoT.
- (c) **Governance Committee.** To set up a High Powered Governance Committee for different application domains to be chaired by Secretary of respective Ministry/Department including representatives from Government, industry and academia governing all IoT initiatives, projects and their progress against planned timelines.
- (d) **Programme Management Unit.** Provide ongoing support in identification, implementation, monitoring of IoT initiatives and conduct of periodic review of policies.

Based on the above strategies and structure, India will have to invest in capability and capacity building to include technologies for setting up smart cities, Human Resource Development with necessary skills, R&D, innovation and formulation of standards. To ensure security of our assets, these technologies will have to be developed indigenously. Sensors, gateways, analytics, data centres, encryption, networks and connectivity will have to be fully secure with trusted software, products, chips and components.

IoT and the Indian Armed Forces

Employment of IoT in the Indian Armed Forces is very limited at present. With the doctrine stipulating capability build up for Network Centric Warfare, planned large scale induction of unmanned and autonomous platforms, missiles, robotics, smart health and smart logistics, a lot needs to be done for capacity building in IoT. Besides what has been mentioned above, the emphasis would have to be on secure and agile networks supported by highly qualified human resource in big data and analytics. While technology standards for these networks have yet to evolve fully, some experts feel that adoption of Internet Protocols (IP) with its latest version of IPv6 would be a recipe for disaster from security and vulnerabilities points of view.¹¹ We will have to have our own standards and protocols and resist the technology push by the developed nations.

Armed Forces must work closely with the civil industry, R&D establishments and academia and exploit COTS products/technology. “Make in India” drive must concentrate on joint R&D, development of secure software and manufacture of secure products based on trusted chips produced in India. Concurrently, the Armed Forces must examine employment of IoT as part of its doctrine for a digital battlefield and concentrate on establishing necessary infrastructure, organisation, skilled manpower and training. The time is running out and we need to act now.

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Background

Fragile structure of West Asia stands deeply impacted by the geostrategic shift, as a sequel to the emerging 'new world order'. Radical changes have taken place in the diverse political systems adopted by the nations in the region. External interventions have further contributed to the rapid destabilisation of situation. As a result, Middle East continues to remain in a state of flux for the last few decades.

West Asia has a complex history due to numerous factors : Arab-Islamic heritage, ethno-religious heterogeneity, Arab-Persian rivalry and sectarianism. Colonialism, imperialism and Zionism played critical role in shaping the region's geopolitical architecture. Uneven distribution of resources has been a major reason for conflict in the region.¹ The root cause, however, was the creation of the State of Israel.² During the last century, initially the UK and later the US attempted to impose their security framework on the region. Break-up of the Soviet Union resulted in significant changes in the West Asian landscape. The 9/11 episode marked a major turning point redefining the security dynamics of the region. 'Global War on Terrorism' initiated by the US led to the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan with catastrophic outcomes.

Rising aspirations of the common people gave rise to mass protests in the recent past. A local incident in Tunisia in 2010 sparked off demonstrations which spread like wildfire, engulfing the entire Middle East. Consequently, many longstanding authoritarian regimes were eased out.³ Although the monarchies in the Gulf survived, its security architecture was affected. Due to the interplay of multiple forces, security scenario in the region has turned out to be extremely volatile. Syria is amidst serious turmoil. The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has emerged as a new menace. Russian intervention has further compounded the strategic calculus. Situation in Yemen remains turbulent. It is no longer the case of Arabs versus Israel or Iran versus Saudi Arabia. Arab world today is a divided house, which precludes collective approach to address security issues in the region. The US strategy of rebalancing Asia-Pacific implies progressive shift from the region, thereby limiting its role as a long time security guarantor.

India has vital political, economic and security stakes in the stability of West Asia. The yearly trade is around US \$ 200 billion.⁴ Serious challenge facing India currently is how to balance its national interest with the regional and external players. This paper attempts to provide an overview on the geostrategic shift and emerging security dynamics in West Asia, while briefly highlighting the implications for India.

Geostrategic Shift - An Overview

As a strategic subsystem, West Asia lies on the confluence of three continents and has close linkages with North Africa. It dominates the sea lanes of communications and is home to huge hydro carbon reserves.⁵ British having replaced the Ottoman Empire dominated the region till WW II; in the process broke the monolithic structures into number of monarchical states. Thereafter, the US took control of the region. Its dominance was contested by the Soviet Union which led to the emergence of military governments with social overtones in countries like Egypt, Syria and Iraq.

In 1969, the US initiated Nixon Doctrine which envisaged Allies contributing to their own security with American assistance.⁶ Saudi Arabia and Iran were incorporated to ensure the security of the Gulf region. This arrangement fell apart with the Iranian revolution in 1979. To balance Iran, America turned to Iraq. Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was formed in 1981 to counter the Iranian threat. Even this strategy failed when Iraq attacked Kuwait in August 1990. Here on, the US resorted to forward presence in the region. Russia by now was out of the scene.

Post 1991 Iraq War, the US initiated Madrid Peace Process by creating multi-lateral security framework. ⁷ In the Gulf, America sought to contain both Iran and Iraq. The reliance was more on the military power and not so much on the political framework. Washington launched Cooperative Defence Initiative (CDI) for integrating the defence organs of the GCC, Egypt and Jordan.⁸ GCC members even signed a defence pact in December 2000.

The geostrategic profile of West Asia transformed dramatically as a sequel to 9/11, with the US unleashing of 'Global War on Terror' in Iraq and Afghanistan. Discovery of Iran's covert nuclear programme further complicated the environment. While in Iraq, war ended by 2005, fighting in Afghanistan dragged on, compelling the US to review its engagement strategy. In May 2006, the US initiated 'Gulf Security Dialogue' to serve as security coordination mechanism with the GCC.

By the end of the first decade of 21st Century, the US was deeply engaged in West Asia. The GCC were wholly dependent on America for their security. Iran stood totally isolated. The Non State Actors emerged as a new phenomenon. Currently, geostrategic landscape in West Asia is undergoing metamorphosis. Key factors which are driving this phenomenon are summarised in the succeeding paras.

Ensuing Conflicts. The region is ridden by a number of conflicts, which are primarily due to long term structural disorder. Important factors are as under :-

- (a) In 2011, the Americans pulled out of Iraq leaving the nation to its fate. With Shia regime in Iraq going overboard, the Sunni Baathists who were in disarray since 2003, managed to regroup. These reorganised elements were instrumental in the creating the ISIS. Iran played a predominant role in ethnic strife by unequivocally supporting the Iraqi Government. Today, Iraq faces the dangerous prospects of disintegration,

given the forays made by the ISIS. Both America and Iran are actively competing in Iraq in their fight against ISIS. Recent Russian move to establish military intelligence 'coordination cell' with Iran and Syria in Baghdad could raise the stakes for others.⁹

(b) Assad's brutal crushing of the peaceful demonstrations in 2011, snowballed into a grave crisis. His minority Alawite regime although considerably weakened, managed to hang on with support from Tehran and Moscow. Due to lack of unity amongst the opposition forces, conflict in Syria has dragged on. For Iran, maintaining influence in Syria is a strategic imperative. Beyond Assad, Moscow's prime interests in Syria are : ensure credibility as a dependable ally, defeat ISIS, maintain military presence in the region and preserve market access for Russian companies including arms industry. Even the US is planning to induct Special Forces to fight ISIS in Syria.

(c) The root cause of prolonged Palestinian-Israeli conflict is sharing of land. The changing internal political dynamics in Israel and Palestine have made it impossible for the two to resolve the lingering conflict on their own. It is increasingly clear that only international intervention could provide viable platform for a fruitful outcome.

(d) In Afghanistan, after the pull out of the US and allied troops in 2014, Kabul is confronted with a serious situation to hold out against Pakistan backed Taliban and their affiliates. The new Government is faced with enormous challenges to steer the Nation from the prevailing quagmire. Keeping in view the latest developments, there is serious rethinking on the part of Obama Administration regarding its military presence in Afghanistan.

Arab Uprising – Political Islam. Since the beginning of 2011, the regional dynamics of West Asia have been drastically altered due to the Arab Spring movement. Toppling of Ben Ali in Tunisia and Hosni Mubarak in Egypt set a precedence for political activism in the Arab World. It further followed violent overthrow of Qaddafi in Libya, with cascading effect on Bahrain and Syria. The pressure was felt even in Algeria, Morocco, Jordan and most of the oil rich Arab states. This forced the authoritarian regimes to even undertake limited political reforms. Arab Uprisings have provided stimulus to political Islamists in the Sunni dominated Arab countries.

Sectarian Fault Lines. With the weakening of Egypt, Saudi Arabia became more assertive as a regional player. Riyadh perceives Tehran as the main regional protagonist and is concerned about latter's expanding influence in the region. Some of the issues which trouble Saudi leadership are : Iran's strategic partnership with Syria, organic links with Hezbollah in Lebanon and relationship with Iraqi Government, as also with some Shia groups in Afghanistan. Hence, Saudi Arabia deployed forces in Bahrain, lent strong support for the Saad Hariri led opposition in Lebanon besides, certain Sunni groups in Iraq and Sunni opponents of Assad regime. Its consistent efforts are to have a favourable regime in Yemen. Tehran's design to counter it has opened another battleground, where Iran backed Houthis are slugging it out with Saudi backed Government Forces.

The geopolitical architecture in West Asia has transformed rapidly, leading to a tectonic strategic shift. The US 'strategy of rebalancing' implies its waning stakes in West Asia. The intensity and extent of impact of the ongoing churning is difficult to be gauged at this stage. Suffice to state, West Asia continues to be on roller coaster mode.

Emerging Security Dynamics

From the above, it is evident that Middle East has remained extremely volatile due to differing perspectives about the security threats. In the absence of one single overwhelming power, the local players have vied for leadership role, adding to the security complexities. Current security challenges of the region can be broadly classified into three categories : conventional, emanating from balance of power dynamics; ones arising out of globalisation; and the third, tied to domestic or regional politico-economic issues.

Since past several decades, West Asia has been witness to multiple interlocking conventional conflicts. The local interstate rivalries coupled with the US policies, particularly military alignments have contributed to the instability of the region. Due to certain significant developments in the region; namely, emergence of Turkey as a major player, marginalisation of Palestine issue in the Arab world and Baghdad-Tehran rapprochement post US withdrawal from Iraq resulted in tangible shift in the balance of power matrix.¹⁰

Second sets of security concerns in the region are closely connected with the global economy. These are food and cyber security, migrant workers and increasing expat population. Although such concerns are domestic in nature, yet have regional ramifications. Energy security is a paramount concern, both by way of flow of oil and routes of transportation.¹¹ Iran's influence over the Strait of Hormuz remains a potential for conflict; despite reduced US commercial interests with Shale gas revolution at home.

The third is the emergence of Non State Actors, especially Jihadist groups in the weak states, posing the most serious challenge. Al Qaida's sway in collapsing states like Iraq, Yemen and Afghanistan and lately ISIS allegedly supported by Saudi led countries marks a dangerous development. A concerted effort to build consensus among both the regional and external powers to defeat the ISIS in Syria is the need of the hour. It requires the US to negotiate with Russia, Iran and Saudi Arabia to develop a comprehensive strategy; ironically the culprits behind the crisis. States which seek security through 'rentier bargains' with other powers and rely on buying off population is yet another issue of concern.

Existing GCC security framework was based on countering Iran, with reliance on the US military presence in the region, complemented by Europe. However, long term security arrangements in the Gulf are unsustainable, without the cooperative involvement of littoral states; Iran and Iraq. New security framework for the Gulf ought to factor asymmetric threats, sectarian issues, radical Islam, piracy and Palestinian-Israeli conflict; as also role of external

powers including India.¹² The future stance of the US would be one of the critical components in the envisioned security architecture. The Gulf region needs to adopt a 'common security framework' based on 'cooperative security model'.

Implications for India

As extended neighbourhood, the developments in West Asia have a direct bearing on India's strategic interests. Ironically, the region has not been given the attention it deserves by Indian policy makers. Salient facets which merit consideration are enumerated below:-

- (a) Due to large energy imports, West Asia remains India's key trading partner, accounting for almost 20 per cent of its total trade. Given India's rapidly growing appetite for energy and domestic production being stagnant, the import dependency is going to increase further.¹³
- (b) India is looking for investments in infrastructure and development projects from West Asia. Reciprocally, it can offer expertise in developing 'knowledge centric economies' based on IT, space and lead technologies. In addition, sectors like health, pharmaceuticals, tele medicine and cost effective R&D offer significant scope.
- (c) The Indian expat community, numbering nearly seven million is making huge contribution in development of the region. Their annual remittances to the home country are around US \$36 billion. Image of India, as only an unskilled workforce provider is also fast changing. The security of expat community stands out as a paramount concern.
- (d) Peaceful, secure and stable West Asia serves India's multiple interests. There is vast scope of cooperation in the field of defence and security. But for the boots on the ground, in the areas of training, intelligence sharing, homeland security, anti piracy operations and sale of armament are some of the areas where fresh avenues can be explored.

India needs to carry out a holistic review of its West Asia strategy, in the long term perspective. Delhi must leverage the goodwill it enjoys in the region by playing more proactive politico-diplomatic role in supporting fresh multi lateral initiatives.

Conclusion

Political developments in the wake of rapidly changing global landscape have resulted in paradigm geostrategic shift in West Asia, intensely impacting security environment in the region. The phenomenon has been driven both by internal and external factors. Current security situation in the region is extremely volatile and highly complex, with numerous imponderables; characterised by conflicting interests, alignments and alliances. Military approach to tackle the problems of the region has not yielded results. There is need for the major players to cut across the party lines and explore viable politico-diplomatic options.

Specific to the Gulf, prevailing security architecture needs urgent restructuring, if the region is to come out of the prevailing chaos and instability. The new security framework has to be inclusive, multilateral and right sized. In view of the deep rooted mistrust, ideological conflict, regional rivalries and divergent interests, it appears a herculean task. The current state of impasse in West Asia can be tackled only through fresh thinking by optimising the existing institutional mechanisms. The belligerents have to be brought on the negotiation table, by creating conducive environment, through persuasion. Defeating ISIS and terrorism provides a common platform for the key players. Given the current imbroglio, any significant improvement of situation in the region is unlikely in the near future.

India has high stakes in West Asia and its interests are best served if the region is politically stable and economically prosperous. Delhi's traditional policy has been to maintain friendly relations with the regional players and pursue a policy of minimalist response. India has the opportunity to play a more meaningful role in the region. For this, it has to redefine the strategy and adopt decisive approach in building consensus to support fresh multilateral initiatives.

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Introduction

The irony of Afghanistan is reflected in the young lad with good command of English manning the 12 hour night shift at the reception desk of Tejarat International Hotel in Herat. He attends BA classes by day, sleeps in the afternoon, aims to further attain MA degree but says there are no jobs other than in the army where he has already served three years and a second tenure means more chance of getting killed. The state in rural areas can be gauged by the fact that there is 35 per cent unemployment and narcotics contribute to 50 per cent of agricultural produce. The paradox of this condition is that the country has untapped mineral reserves to the tune of US \$ 3 trillion as per Afghan sources, 3.8 billion barrels of oil between Balkh and Jarwan in the North, estimated mean volume of undiscovered petroleum of 1,596 million barrels of crude oil, 444 billion cubic metres of natural gas, and 562 million barrels of natural gas liquids.

History of Violence

Afghanistan has had a history of violence for past several decades. In more recent times, the Soviet occupation widened the divide between the Pashtuns and non-Pashtuns. It also led to the rise of the Mujahedeen in Pakistan with the US and Chinese support, and within Afghanistan rise of the Afghan Taliban and Al Qaeda with US support to oust the Soviets, major fear being Soviets would advance South and lodge in proximity of the Persian Gulf, so critical to American interests. Then came a decade of Taliban rule with full Pakistani support. This was followed by the US invasion of October 2001. Pakistan became the frontline ally of the US in global war on terrorism (GWOT) but only after the US permitted a Division worth of Pakistanis (26,000 plus) including 9000 Pakistan Taliban (3,000 Pashtuns and 6,000 Punjabis) evacuated out of Kunduz and Khost, many were airlifted. The US was also aware that Pakistan had airlifted hundreds of Afghan Taliban out of these locations as investment for future proxy war. The stay of the US-NATO since 2001 did little to bring up the economy of impoverished Afghanistan still dependent on 97 per cent foreign aid.

Ground Situation

Afghanistan's strategic location has become a disadvantage with the Country caught amidst the Great Game; geopolitical power play between the US, China and Russia, with Pakistan walking the tight rope appeasing the former two. About 60 per cent of Afghanistan has gone under Taliban control. The lightning capture of large parts of Kunduz on 28 Sep by Taliban surprised the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), while attention was focused on the southern and eastern strongholds of Taliban.¹ But both the Afghan and Pakistan Taliban had been moving purposefully to northern Afghanistan, latter pushed into Afghanistan by Pakistani military offensive Operation 'Zarb-e-Azb'.² Both the Taliban had always been linked. This bond was sealed further by Pakistan establishing Mullah Akhtar Mansoor as the head of Afghan Taliban.³ Mullah Mansoor is the religious leader of Haqqanis based in Pakistan for the last 30 years. So now Pakistan has both the Taliban and Haqqanis to wage her proxy war in Afghanistan.⁴ Pakistan's Operation 'Zarb-e-Azb' has also pushed lakhs of refugees into Afghanistan, facilitating infiltrating terrorists as part of the 20 Mujahid battalions that Pakistan had trained to operate as Taliban during 2012-2013.⁵ Pakistani regulars have been involved in terrorist attacks even in Kabul.⁶ What led to the bombing of the 'Doctors Without Borders' hospital in Kunduz by US forces on 03 Oct was USSF intelligence that the facility was a Taliban command and control centre, a Pakistani ISI operative present was coordinating operations and possibly a store house of heavy weapons.

The Taliban have invested Kunduz, captured Warduj district east of Kunduz, and Ghormach district of Faryab province having consolidated in Badakhshan region of northern Afghanistan, far beyond their usual southern strongholds, fully backed by Pakistan. This has led to Russia increasing her troop strength in Tajikistan under a security agreement between both countries. Violence pan Afghanistan has increased and Taliban influence is likely to increase.⁷ The ISIS has consolidated in seven districts of Nangarhar province and is already attacking the ANSF. Their sanctuaries in Pakistan obviously also getting cadres from Uighurs of China, East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) and possibly even from Maldives, India and Bangladesh. The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan has already declared they are "part" of ISIS and hundreds of youth from Central Asia are joining ISIS. Al Qaeda has declared full support to Afghan Taliban while most Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) have declared allegiance to the ISIS.⁸ Overall, the situation is grim and because of lack of governance views are being expressed that the Afghan Government would find it difficult to survive even in the mid-term.

Security Cover

There are currently 9,800 US troops in Afghanistan, most of which were due to leave by the end of 2016, save for an embassy security force in Kabul. But post the Taliban success in Kunduz, that number will now remain constant before falling to about 5,500 troops in early 2017. The forces who remain will continue training and advising Afghan troops, while a special operations contingent will focus on counterterrorism. A small number of US bases are likely to continue, including at Bagram, Jalalabad in the East, and Kandahar in the South. However, this does not mean much because the transition of security duties from the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to the ANSF in 2014 was premature and without Afghanistan even achieving adequate political stability; with a Pentagon report highlighting in 2014 itself that the Afghan National Army (ANA) was short of air, artillery, logistics support and even transport. This explains how the Taliban could easily capture major part of Kunduz. ANA is fighting with what it has; but, with voids even in transport, it has problems in providing logistics support to troops deployed in far flung areas. The contractual period of an ANA soldier is only three years; and plans to extend it to 10 years cannot be implemented because finances to maintain the force are promised only up to 2017. Despite 35 per cent unemployment, there are large scale desertions.⁹ In 2014, 203,888 small arms could not be accounted for - possibly sold off.¹⁰ By February 2015, ANA had declined to an overall strength of 1,69,203 personnel (lowest ever since 2011) and attrition continues to be a problem.

ANA's manpower strength has reportedly further declined to around 1,40,000. This strength is grossly inadequate to fight some 25,000 Taliban and large cities can easily be infiltrated despite ANA presence; Kunduz had 7000 ANA troops when Taliban captured large parts of it. It could be recaptured only after a week of fighting with coalition support. Eventual pullout of US-NATO troops and closure of Operation 'Resolute Support' will create further massive voids.

Security versus Economy

The Centre for Strategic and International Studies, the US had reported in 2012 that if all figures from financial year (FY) 2001-2013 are totalled for the direct spending on the US war in Afghanistan, they reach US \$641.7 billion, of which US \$198.2 billion (30 per cent) was to be spent in FY 2012 and FY 2013.¹¹ More importantly, the vast majority of aid went to the ANSF, not development. The report also stated that this data was only about the amount of money made available on category basis and did not indicate how much money actually reached Afghanistan. The point to note is that nothing was done to improve the economy. The fundamental problem remains that the US continues to rush ANSF to accept responsibility for the security based on Obama's timetable rather than conditions on the ground. Announcement of extended stay of US troops in Afghanistan may give political mileage to Obama, but means little considering the deteriorating situation. General John Campbell has stated that the President's decision (extended stay of US troops) "serves notice to our common enemies It is time for them to lay down their arms and enter the political process." But given the Taliban gains, it will make no difference, Mullah Akhtar Mansoor having already stated he is not interested in any talks.

Some queries have been raised about how roughly 25,000 Taliban fighters are giving so much trouble to 352,000 ANSF and nearly 17,000 coalition forces, little realising ANA is down to around 1,40,000 and coalition forces are not all tasked for combat support. The Afghan War is being termed as America's longest war but nothing was done to uplift Afghan economy. In sharp contrast, America's 60-year troop presence that contributed to South Korea's transition from a country devastated by war to one of Asia's most affluent economies is a case in point. Point to note, this success was made possible in part by a long term military commitment that was not constrained by the lifespan of a single presidential administration of the US. Even today, some 28,500 American soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines are stationed in South Korea, of course as forward presence as part of US rebalancing toward Asia-Pacific.

If the last six years have proved anything, it is that the Taliban are more resilient than analysts give them credit for. Even a veneer analysis of the circumstances suggests that American troops need not be in the lead, but they must remain in Afghanistan for the foreseeable future unless the aim is to plunge the region into chaos to stymie Russian and Chinese influence. Simultaneously, the ANSF needs to be realistically boosted not numerically alone but by providing the required wherewithal to eventually take on the security of Afghanistan without external support in the long-term. In the absence of such a plan, Afghanistan is headed for greater instability, with Central Asia equally threatened and Russia may need to support the Afghan Government in critical situations, as it is doing in Syria.

Rebuilding Afghanistan

As would be clear from the aforesaid, security is a must for the economy to come up. Much of Afghanistan's security issues can be addressed if economic sanctions are placed on Pakistan, till it stops her proxy war and support to Taliban. The US needs to seriously revisit her Pakistan policy, including targeting the terrorist sanctuaries inside Pakistan akin to Russia tackling the ISIS in Syria. Pressure also needs to be put on Pakistan by global forums including the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and Collective Security Treaty Organisation; latter, because of the threat to Central Asia. Also a coherent economic and industrial policy is needed where suggestions and guidance to the Unity Government should actually be welcomed by the latter. The Taliban would certainly not lay down arms; but, enlargement of their recruitment base to include non-Pashtuns should make them conducive to permit activities that uplift Afghanistan's economy.

Looking at the mineral wealth of Afghanistan, areas in the North, East and South under Taliban control have large reserves, whose tapping should not be attempted crudely. The worst example is that of copper mines where unscrupulous exploitation and lack of oversight can become a source of environmental disaster of catastrophic proportions. The High Peace Council which also has Taliban representation could contribute to such an economically progressive plan, even as the Taliban do not believe in democracy and don't respect the Afghan Constitution. Extraction of minerals will also need transportation, railways etc and industrialisation, all leading to much needed jobs.

The 2009 US announcement of pull-out resulted in investors and NGOs abandoning Afghanistan. The international community made little progress on the seven Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) (Counter Terrorism, Counter Narcotics, Disaster Management, Chambers of Commerce, Commercial Opportunities, Regional Infrastructure and Education) agreed upon in the June 2012 Kabul Ministerial Meeting held at Kabul, attended by 20 countries in addition to the EU and the UAE. Even then all countries represented had not committed to support all the CBMs; China committing to only three. Any project that contributes to upgrading the economy automatically contributes to peace building. The Indian-built Salma Dam was recently renamed India-Afghanistan Friendship Dam. Many other projects are being undertaken by India, as also other countries. China is in the process of extracting minerals and has been drilling commercial oil since 2012; is doing electricity generation for mining and has undertaken railroad projects that provide jobs for Afghan population.

But these are individual countries, not as per an overall development plan. A major scope exists in the agricultural sector including shift from narcotics cultivation to cash crops. Significantly, Mullah Omar had declared poppy cultivation un-Islamic in year 2000 and did not permit narcotics cultivation, so it is not that Afghanistan cannot survive without poppy. With all the advances, perhaps even a strain of locust could be introduced that wipes out poppy cultivation. A focused approach to energise the agricultural sector should be undertaken supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), where even joint projects could be taken on by India and China.

As per the ADB, economic activity remained slow in the first half of 2015 in Afghanistan.¹² Investor and consumer confidence was low as the political and security situation worsened and the National Unity Government struggled to deliver on anticipated reforms. Agricultural production in 2015 is projected to be slightly higher than in 2014, based on initial estimates, with good harvests of wheat, fruits and vegetables. Construction, trade and services remained depressed. Foreign direct investment declined by 30 per cent in the first half of the year. Business conditions deteriorated substantially from January to June 2015. The Afghan Afghani (AFN) currency depreciated by 5.7 per cent against the dollar from January to June 2015, continuing a declining trend since 2011. Declining capital inflow, rising capital outflow, and flagging demand for AFN during the period amounted to downward pressure on the currency from weakening political and security situations.¹³ The World Bank forecasts an unfavourable medium-term outlook: growth, projected at 1.9 per cent, would likely remain sluggish in light of further deterioration in security; mild recovery is expected for 2016; real GDP growth is projected to increase to 3.1 and 3.9 per cent in 2016 and 2017 respectively, and; improvements in the security environment and strong reform momentum could help restore confidence in the economy.

The potential Afghan private sector has not been optimised as an engine of economic growth or an instrument of social inclusion. To break the deadlock, bold economic reforms and new government partnership modalities with the private sector and the international community are needed.¹⁴ A recent Stockholm International Peace Research Institute report offers a review of the Afghan private sector and concrete recommendations on how to facilitate a more inclusive, productive and competitive private sector. Recommendations for the Afghan Government include: providing direction for growth of private sector; increase the capacity of state economic institutions that support the private sector; tailored measures to curb corruption; improve business climate; update trade policy and digitise custom procedures; mobilise state landholdings for use by private sector; invest in infrastructure critical to economic activity, and; ensure equal participation by women.

Recommendations to the international community include: support Afghan Government including direct but careful market intervention; set up formal cooperation and coordination mechanism for development of private sector conjointly; establish formal international aid database; support full value-chain development projects in the agricultural sector, which have high labour intensity and job creation potential, including for women; aid interventions should aim to target communities based on need rather than on political or security priorities; and; incorporate consumer demand perspectives. India should play a lead role in assisting Afghanistan in coordinating such activities since for both the CBMs of 'Chambers of Commerce' and 'Commercial Opportunities' agreed to at the June 2012 Kabul Ministerial Meeting, India was allotted the lead role. The bottom-line is that the world needs to give more attention to Afghanistan before the situation in this region deteriorates like Iraq and Syria.

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Introduction

Revolutionary/guerrilla warfare, though ancient in its character and practices, its implications, brutalities and nuances have been painfully experienced, across the globe, in the post Second World War period. Spurt in violence perpetrated by partisans, in different forms, has shaken the fabric of coexistence and world peace. This disturbing trend has now found resonance amongst radical Islamist groups – Al Qaida, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Boko Haram, Al Shabaab, Taliban (in different hues) and now the Islamic State (IS). The rise of Left Wing Extremism (LWE) in India is causing grave concern to the internal security of the Nation. These outfits have enough military potential to combat the most modern armies of the world, to realise their political and ideological dreams. Regrettably, the leading armed forces, known for their military prowess and proven credentials, have failed to defeat this shadowy, dirty war. The US Army, first in Vietnam and later in Iraq and Afghanistan; France, in Vietnam and Algeria; Russians in Afghanistan and British troops (as part of the coalition forces) in Iraq and Afghanistan had to abandon their missions in the face of resilient, stubborn and defiant opposition offered by these ‘rag tag forces’.

In all insurgencies the population is the vital ground; so, to understand people’s needs and insecurities, you have to live among them.¹ Counter-insurgency (CI) operations are not only about killing of militants and recovery of weapons but also weaning away the civil population from the influence of the militants through sustained, transparent and carefully planned civic action programmes. This is, humanely called ‘Winning Hearts and Minds’, a term coined by Sir Henry Gurney, the British High Commissioner in Malaya, in early 1950’s.² Affected people are the major stakeholders in defeating insurgency and in finding an amicable solution to the conflict. The Armed Forces can play a decisive role in ‘winning hearts and minds’ due to their inherent characteristics of discipline, commitment, mobility, reach to the remotest areas and the immense resources at their disposal. It will be a futile exercise to list out measures that may be taken to win hearts and minds as these are invariably area/region/population specific. The aim of this paper, therefore, is to emphasise the significance of winning over the population trapped in a conflict zone.

Guerrilla Warfare, Politics and People

The Clausewitzian theory – ‘war is simply a continuation of politics by other means’ – is equally applicable to all kinds of warfare, guerrilla being no exception. Mao Tse Tung, the great protagonist of revolutionary warfare, further emphasises, “politics is war without bloodshed and war is politics with bloodshed”.³ Political mobilisation is the first step towards such a warfare and entails enlightening the population about the cause of the revolutionary struggle and to inspire the masses for their support for the rebellion. Guerrillas, through a carefully conceived strategy would like to portray themselves as protectors of the people and by extension, their direct or indirect representatives. Thus, they would try to assert their claim on the wholehearted support of the population in terms of bases, shelter, recruitment, rations, financial support, intelligence and a propaganda tool to show the government and security forces in poor light for their insensitivity or misadventure against the population. A careful analysis will show that every military action of the insurgents is generally aimed to draw political mileage in order to achieve their ultimate political aims and objectives. This interplay amongst guerrillas, politics and people clearly illustrates the overwhelming importance of the affected people. David Galula has very aptly amplified, “if the insurgent manages to disassociate the population from the counter-insurgents, to control it physically, to get its active support, he will win the war; because, in the final analysis, the exercise of political power depends on the population or, at worst, on its submissiveness. Thus the battle for the population is, in essence, a major characteristic of counter-insurgency operations”.⁴

LWE in India-Uprising from Abject Degradation. LWE is a continuation of the Naxalite movement that erupted on 25 May 1967 because of a violent clash between the landless and the feudal lords, in Naxalbari, a village in Darjeeling district of West Bengal. As a political gambit, the incident was exploited by the Communist Party of India (CPI) and Marxist (M) and still remains the mainstay of LWE. It fired the imagination of the youth and the downtrodden and spread like wildfire in certain parts of the Country. A massive crackdown on the CPI (M) cadres and land reforms introduced in West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh (AP) (the two worst hit states) subdued the movement. Its simmering discontent however remained in a few pockets and proved to be the fuel that lit the Naxalite fire in 1990. The scene has shifted to the central heartland of India, inhabited by the Adivasis, Dalits and the marginalised, who for centuries have been languishing in deplorable living conditions and abject poverty.

Till recently, the Central government perceived the uprising as a socio-economic or a law and order problem (a state subject), failing to gauge the ground swell that had attained alarming proportions and had manifested into a full grown insurgency. In the last 20 years or so, it has spread in a large swathe of the Country covering 223 districts (out of 626) across 23 states – roughly 40 per cent of the geographical area and 35 per cent population.⁵ North Bihar and hinterland of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Maharashtra, AP (undivided) and Karnataka are the worst affected, a virtual ‘Red’ bastion where the writ of the Maoists runs large. National response to this menace has been somewhat ambivalent, whether to defeat insurgents first and then undertake development or address both concurrently. The first defies the basic characteristics of this warfare, it being protracted in nature, and hence may not be achievable in a predictable time frame. The second needs clarity and focus. Militants cannot be defeated by saturating the embattled area with untrained, ill equipped forces who will be an easy prey for the guerrilla hawks and a drain on the national exchequer.⁶ It requires a highly skilled counter guerrilla task force with good leadership, equipped with state of the art weaponry to carry out surgical operations, based on reliable and actionable intelligence. Greyhounds, raised by AP police have achieved remarkable results in degrading the military potential of the Maoists in their area of responsibility. The aim should be to defeat militancy and not just militants. Priority must therefore be accorded to address the real cause of the uprising – extreme poverty and pathetic living conditions.

Predicament of the Civil Population

The biggest sufferers in such a warfare are the innocent people trapped in the crossfire between the security forces and the insurgents. Recent surge in violence in the strife torn Af-Pak Region, Middle East and a few African countries, at the hands of radical Islamists, has displaced millions and countless numbers have been killed. In addition, thousands of people who have been maimed and incapacitated are now seeking refuge in various European countries. Heart-rending scenes of unabated miseries have been witnessed by these unfortunate ones staring at an uncertain and a bleak future. Regional and super powers have failed, so far, to arrive at a common platform because of their vested political, economic and religious interests in containing and defeating this growing menace.

Tall claims made by General Vo Nguyen Giap, in his book 'People's War People's Army,' are not substantiated by historical facts.⁷ Thousands who opposed the communist led Viet Minh were terrorised, coerced, intimidated and tortured to accept the Communist diktat. Majority of Vietnamese wanted freedom from France, but free of Communism. Had the French granted independence to Indo-China, as it had declared in 1946 and 17 times thereafter, lives of millions who perished in the war may have been saved and this part of the world may not have witnessed Communism. The French would have also saved themselves the ignominy of their worst defeat at the hands of the Viet Minh in the battle of 'Dien Bien Phu' (07 May 1954), the death knell of French rule in Indo-China. The French ignored the masses that were left to the mercy of the Communist guerrillas and instead concentrated solely on military actions to defeat Viet Minh.

This writer had the opportunity of serving in Naga Hills and Tuensang Areas (NHTA - as it was then called) during his formative years (1968-1970), when insurgency reverberated in the State because of the return of 1100 fully armed and trained guerrillas (allegedly by the Chinese), under the leadership of self-styled General Mao Angami. The people were certainly dazed to see swarms of security forces milling around their villages, hamlets and homes. The majority had no clue of what was happening. What to talk of supporting the cause of the rebels (secession from India), they had little or no knowledge of their National or State identity. The Nagas, comprising 16 different tribes, each with a distinct language, customs, rituals and traditional inter-tribal rivalries, could not have overwhelmingly supported the rebel cause. Marginal support, willingly or under duress, was understandable. They lived in ramshackle houses in filthy environment bereft of all amenities and development. Despite this backwardness the locals had no complaints against the administration as long as they were left to themselves to romance in their tribal freedom, customs and traditions. Obviously the Nation had failed to integrate them into the national mainstream. Had the people been accorded a sympathetic and humane approach at the initial stages of insurgency, course of events could well have been different. Despite suffering the trauma lasting over sixty years, the people have played a pivotal role in the recent framework for the Nagaland Peace Accord signed on 03 Aug 2015. Immense contribution made by the Indian Army in creating conducive environment in which the warring factions, locals and the Government could freely exchange views towards finding a lasting solution to this complex issue is indeed laudable.

Compassion - A Key to Winning Hearts

Approach. Often the security forces are rushed into insurgency affected areas as a consequence of the total collapse of the civil administration in somewhat alien environment - difficult to distinguish between friends and foes, "la guerre sans front"⁸ - a war without fronts as the French called it. In such a state of flux, the ire of pent-up frustrations is, generally, suffered by the civil population. This must be avoided at all costs. Few basic rules of this game merit elaboration. Firstly, everyone must be on board to understand the basic characteristics of this warfare as relevant to the area/region and the CI strategy. This is particularly so for the junior leaders as they play a decisive role in this war. Secondly, it is a protracted war and there are no quick fix solutions. Hence, there is a need to avoid rushing into events in a bid to produce instant results. In any case, a few tactical victories are irrelevant in this long drawn campaign. Patience is a prerequisite. Thirdly, intelligence about the civil population is as important as military intelligence in order to address their basic needs and insecurities. Fourthly, physical and psychological security of the civil population from hostile threats is the prime requirement in regaining their trust and confidence. Fifthly, follow the dictum of General Giap, "respect people, help people, defend people."⁹

Comprehensive Analysis of the Civil Population. General David Petraeus (Retd), US Army, after his bitter experience in Iraq said, "CI operations are 90 per cent political and economics and only 10 per cent military".¹⁰ Subsequently, after taking over the command of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), in Afghanistan in 2008, he was surprised to find that there was no intelligence available at his headquarters about the civil population. The entire intelligence at hand was military related. Once this anomaly was corrected there was greater flow of actionable intelligence and the drone strikes against Taliban became more effective.

Malay Campaign (1948-1960). It is a classic example which changed the complexion of CI operations in that country. At the commencement of hostilities the ethnic Chinese population was approximately 38 per cent (excluding the Chinese population of Singapore). The guerrilla warfare was spearheaded by the Chinese communists, on the popular support of the ethnic Chinese. The majority ethnic Malaysians, though wanted independence, but certainly not under the Red banner of Chinese communists. In 1952, when General Sir Gerald Templer took over as the British High Commissioner and Supreme Commander of all forces in Malaya, he, after a careful analysis of the demography of the peninsula, appreciated that there was a wide, political, social and cultural void between the ethnic Chinese and the majority ethnic Malaysians. A two pronged strategy was conceived - one to win over the majority ethnic Malaysians and second to break the nexus between the rebels and their supporters. In a masterstroke of diplomatic sagacity and political acumen, the British assured the nation of complete independence once the Communist guerrillas were defeated and Communism eradicated from the State. This declaration won the sympathy and loyalty of the ethnic Malaysians. As the second part of this strategy, a follow up of "Brigg's plan",¹¹ the two potential sympathisers/supporters of the Communist cause were identified - Chinese 'Squatters'¹² (four to five lakh Chinese who had fled to the jungles due to economic distress and Japanese occupation during Second World War) and the 'Sakai Aborigines' (who lived deep inside the forests). The 'Squatters' were completely isolated from the rebels by regrouping

them in temporary villages, under strict observation and security of the establishment. The aborigines were kept under surveillance by establishing a number of “Jungle Forts”¹³ deep inside the forest. This strategy worked with resounding success. Communists were defeated by 1959. The British left Malaya in 1960 after granting complete independence and self-rule to the Malaysians. Incidentally, Communists failed to win even a single seat in the first ever free and fair election held in 1960.

Philippines. Similar analysis in Philippines paid dividends. Historically, the Muslim dominated southern islands of the country had remained neglected because of the indifferent attitude of the Central Government. This provided an ideal platform for the Abu Sayyaf Group to raise the banner of revolt against the Government. In 2002, the southern island of Basilan was recognised as a safe haven for the Abu Sayyaf Group. While the national security forces concentrated on military operations, the “US Joint Special Operation Task Force”¹⁴ (JSOTF-P) , operating in the area, focussed primarily on civic action programmes after carrying out a detailed survey of the needs of the people. The task force carried out extensive development work – construction of roads, medical facilities, water supply, better educational infrastructure, building mosques etc. Within two years the presence of Abu Sayyaf Group was eliminated.

Population ‘Regrouping’ - A Dubious Option. Regrouping of population into temporary villages/camps is a circumspect option to isolate the people from the rebels, thereby denying the latter any recruitment, logistic support, intelligence and propaganda against the government. Due to its inherent contradictions, however, more often than not, it becomes a self-defeating exercise. As such its efficacy must be realistically assessed against the backdrop of the size of the population to be replaced , economic/logistic viability, humungous effort required to provide hygiene, sanitation, water, electricity and above all an elaborate security arrangements around these camps. Success of this operation in Malay is attributed to two main reasons. First, the majority ethnic Malaysians had cast their loyalty with the Government. Secondly, a relatively small segment for regrouping – ‘the Squatters’ – was manageable and resettlement executed to the minutest detail. But a similar operation in South Vietnam, Algeria and nearer home in Mizoram met with disastrous consequences. Creation of ‘strategic hamlets’ in South Vietnam under the care of ill equipped, untrained militia failed as they were no match to the skilled, wily guerrillas who could break the security network with impunity.¹⁵

A Failed Experiment (Relocation). Indian Army, too, carried out this controversial population relocation plan to curb the rebellion launched (Nov 1966) by Mizo National Front (MNF) under the leadership of Mr Laldenga, seeking secession from India. For two years (1967-1969) approximately 80 per cent of the civil population was relocated in temporary villages, euphemistically called regrouping into “progressive villages”.¹⁶ After vacating them, villagers were asked to torch their permanent houses to deny shelter to MNF guerrillas. This forced living, miles away from their permanent habitat, had infuriated the masses who felt it was inhuman, an infringement on their freedom and violation of fundamental rights. In the face of mass protests and resentment the operation had to be called off within two years. The population control had become a bigger headache than the control of the rebels. It was indeed political sagacity of the Indian Government that granted statehood to Mizoram in 1986 to the satisfaction of all stakeholders. Today Mizoram is the most peaceful State in the Northeast.

Role of Junior Leaders in ‘Winning Hearts and Minds’

Junior leaders can play a decisive role not only in winning hearts and minds but towards a final resolution of the conflict. They are the ones who frequently come in contact with the people and are the best emissaries of the Nation and the security forces. It may be a tall order, but the call of duty demands that they should be prepared to wear many hats – a diplomat, a teacher, a preacher, a friend and a guide of the population; at the same time be ruthless towards the insurgents. CI is a war of ideas. As Nathaniel Fick, a former US marine, with rich experience of this type of warfare said, “counter-insurgents must excel at finding creative, non-military solutions to military problems”.¹⁷ Accordingly, the soldiers need to be trained, motivated and indoctrinated to defeat a guerrilla at his own game. It may often be a painstakingly slow, frustrating struggle, with odds packed against the security forces due to the intrinsic elusiveness of the insurgents with their ‘shoot and scoot’ tactics and deadly, ghastly strikes. As a result of such frustrations the soldiers at times tend to lose their sense of propriety and judgment and vent their fury on innocent people.

My Lai massacre (South Vietnam) is an apt example to drive home the above point. On 16 Mar 1968, in broad daylight, “300-500” unarmed, innocent civilians including women, children and the aged were done to death, from hell to hurt by the US troops, on a bizarre and senseless order of their company commander, Lieutenant William Calley.¹⁸ That was the doomsday for the US CI operations in South Vietnam leading to a humiliating defeat at the hands of Viet Cong. There also have been instances where individuals and even subunits, have taken recourse to unlawful, inhuman acts – torture, fake encounters, custodial deaths, extra judicial killings, to earn brownie points and gain professional advancement. Such wanton acts must be dealt with expeditiously and in an exemplary manner as these not only tarnish the image of the armed forces but also offer an unwarranted fillip to the hostile propaganda. In this context, ten commandments for Indian troops engaged in CI operations issued by the COAS are an excellent example of the rules of engagement to be observed.¹⁹ These are reproduced below :

- (a) No rape.
- (b) No molestation.
- (c) No torture resulting in death or maiming.
- (d) No military disgrace (loss of arms, surrender, loss of post or imbibing of an un-army like culture).
- (e) No meddling in the civil administration (i.e. land disputes or quarrels).
- (f) Competence in platoon/company tactics in counter insurgency operations.
- (g) Willingly carry out civic actions with innovations.
- (h) Develop media interaction modus (use it as a ‘force-multiplier’ and not as a ‘force-degrader’).
- (i) Respect human rights.
- (j) Only fear God, uphold dharma (ethical mode of life-the path of righteousness) and enjoy serving the Country.

Conclusion

Wining hearts and minds, may sound philosophical even theatrical, but when viewed in the context of a revolutionary war or CI operations, its complexities and dimensions magnify into a humungous task. In essence, it entails accepting the ground realities and then taking concrete, deliberate steps to draw people out of neglect, deprivation and poverty, and addressing their genuine political, social or religious grievances, if any, and finally to assimilate them into the national mainstream. Soldiers, by their exemplary conduct can set the pace of this process by respecting the dignity, self-pride, religious beliefs, social customs and traditions of the local population. "Insurgency is a two dimensional war fought for the control of the population".²⁰ Both sides, insurgents and counter-insurgents, will be working zealously to gain the favour and sympathy of the population. The rebels cannot afford to have a large neutral population and would ensure maximum participation by any means possible – persuasion, terrorism, coercion, intimidation, psychological warfare, to make the revolution a success. On the other hand, the government, with the help of security forces and various administrative agencies, will have to adopt a more humane and conciliatory approach – rehabilitation, reconstruction, development and a carefully orchestrated counter hostile propaganda to thwart the designs of the rebels. In a subtle but cautionary remark, General Patreaus has said, "every army of liberation has a half-life, beyond it, it turns into an army of occupation. This half-life can be extended through humanitarian work".²¹ The tide of CI turns in favour of the government when the security forces and the people are seen on the same side of the fence. The counter-insurgents must appreciate that insurgency is a protracted war and moves at a painfully slow pace and must set the momentum accordingly.

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Combat Stress in Fast Changing Paradigms of Conflict

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Introduction

Combat Stress is a deep rooted problem and the effects are more pronounced in the present day world due to the rapidly evolving operational environment of International Conflict Missions and the huge outreach of social media. An effective solution towards stress management of soldiers deployed in international conflict missions lies in the scientific prognosis based on experience, feedbacks, research and psycho-medical analysis. Two areas of concern come into sharp focus, viz., the complete breakdown of certain well established and respected rules of war which hitherto broadly guided conduct of the warring parties and a hyperactive human rights ecosystem that is calling for greater accountability from those charged with oversight of war and peace. Both these factors have potential to be a very significant source of stress on peacekeeping forces as well as their leadership. The combat stress emerging out of 'no war rule situation' deeply effect the perception, emotions and quality of life of soldiers. Dealing with the negative impact of combat stress on subjective well-being and morale is posing a new challenge for military leadership.

Evolving Operational Environment of International Conflict Missions

On a grim Tuesday morning of 03 Feb 2015, the world woke up to watch with horror a 22 minute video titled "Healing the Believers' Chests". Released by the Islamic State (ISIS), the video showed captured Jordanian Air Force pilot Mu'ath al-Kaseasbeh being burnt alive in a cage. The pilot is put in a cage, with flammable liquid splashed on his orange clothing and trailed along the ground. After the trail of fire to his cage is ignited by one of the masked fighters, he is seen standing as the flames consume him and he slowly dies, falling to his knees. Fighters then pour debris, including broken masonry, over the cage which a bulldozer subsequently flattens with the body still inside. Jordan, in response, executed the ISIS prisoner (failed female suicide bomber) Sajida al-Rishawi whose release had been demanded by ISIS.

Thus opened a new chapter in brutality and a whole new interpretation of what was hitherto understood as settled international humanitarian laws covering soldiers captured in combat. The assurance of decent treatment of prisoners of war (PWs) as per the Geneva Conventions is possibly no more a reasonably assured expectation. There is a tectonic shift in the way warfare is shaping up throwing out the well-established rules of war that provided the much needed blanket of security, predictability and protection to the combatants fighting a war out in the frontiers or for the peacekeepers deployed for building or maintaining peace under international commitments. Only recently, in the third week of May 2015, shells were fired at a UN compound in the town of Mulet near South Sudan's Paloch oilfields killing eight civilians. A United Nations Relief and Works Agency run school in Gaza was bombed by Israel killing numerous children. Nothing is sacrosanct anymore.

From Manhattan to Mindanao, religious zealots draw no distinction between combatants and non-combatants. Jihadists target women, children, and the elderly without even the pretense of discrimination. Earlier in June 2004, an Al-Qaeda affiliated group had distributed a video proudly documenting the beheading of a US civilian, proclaiming: "the mujahedin from the Fallujah Squadron slaughtered the American hostage Paul Johnson." By spurning the laws of armed conflict, the new age terrorists have created a conundrum for democracies: how do you fight people who throw the rule book of warfare out of the window? And how does a peacekeeping or peacemaking force under a Chapter Six or Chapter Seven UN mandate formulate its Rules of Engagement (RoE) under such chaotic circumstances to provide a legal framework for its deployment and operation?

The brutal burning of the Jordanian pilot of course raises the question whether captured belligerents such as the ISIS fighters should be considered PWs and deserve to be treated according to the Geneva Conventions? But the larger question is what rules to follow for diverse but similar situations emerging in different flash points in the Middle East and Africa where a variety of belligerents are fighting violent wars with multiple parties? Groups like ISIS and Boko Haram behead their captives, including non-combatants. They massacre civilians. They do not behave in accordance with the accepted rules of warfare. And, they represent no established state or government. Does this make them brigands or criminals who deserve no consideration whatsoever? Even more important and relevant is to figure out the impact of these developments on peacekeeping or peace building missions under UN/regional grouping banners.

Peacekeeping doctrine is in full evolution.¹ The post-Cold War world is fragile. Regional, ethnic and religious antagonisms are on the rise. In many nations, governments as we know it are disappearing in the face of civil war. For example, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNIMIS) has received credible reports of kidnappings of boys as young as 10 and the rape and abduction of girls and women amid killings in a northern region that the UN and aid agencies had to abandon because of the danger. The fighting in Unity state between government troops and rebels brought the International Rescue Committee to announce that it had withdrawn from the area, leaving 35,000 displaced South Sudanese without food, water and health care that it provided.

As we wrestle with this problem, we come to appreciate the important difference between traditional peacekeeping operations, which have always assumed the consent of the parties, and the new peace enforcement operations, which involve the use of force.

A new development is taking place with respect to the post-Cold War détente. The line of confrontation is closest in Ukraine and looming large in the Baltic. The German intelligence service estimates (as per German media reports) the real losses in the Ukrainian civil war at 50,000 dead (civilians and servicemen), which is nearly 10 times higher than reported by the Kiev authorities. No UN force has ever been deployed between the two super power centres of yesteryears; yet, the situation may be hurtling in that direction.

Recently, Yemen's mission to the UN has called for a ground intervention to push back a Houthi rebel offensive in the south of a country where conditions are deteriorating after weeks of fighting. "We urge the international community to quickly intervene by land forces to save Yemen, especially Aden and Taiz," Khaled Alyemany, Yemen's Ambassador to the UN, said in a letter to the Security Council.² The letter also called on the international human rights organisations to document "barbaric violations against a defenceless population". Yemen is not alone. Let us review the situation in Libya. There is a Mediterranean migrant crisis brewing: thousands of migrants are floating on the sea in wooden boats abandoned by human traffickers. The EU is seeking UN approval for gunship plan and 'use of force' to deter boats from Libya. The political instability and crimes against humanity that accompanied and followed the uprising which overthrew President Muammar Gaddafi in October 2011 drove tens of thousands into displacement.

Under such circumstance, should the UN decide to deploy a peacemaking force, it would be unimaginable how RoE are going to be framed and the kind of stress that would come upon the peacekeepers so deployed in atmosphere of complete uncertainty. How does a UN peacekeeping force intervene in such a situation? How are commanders and peacekeepers going to be able to discern the belligerents and the civil populations they are mandated to protect? The dilemmas are increasing manifold and such fluid and confused arenas have the potential to pose great stress to troops on ground.

Psychological Perspective on Combat Stress

The soldiers on peacekeeping mission are also human beings. the relevance of this statement increases in today's scenario because of increasing insensitivity and brutality of the Jihadists. The various terrorist groups crossed all the boundaries of brutality for their own self-satisfaction. How do these incidences of brutality influence the subjective well-being of the soldiers who could be their next victim? Are they ready to accept the death like the Jordanian pilot? What about the well-being of an army person who has no security for his family. All these questions are relevant if we consider them not machines that move to the battlefield for fight and come back home either on their own feet or on shoulders of fellow soldiers and remain equally cool, calm and well prepared for another battle. According to a study conducted by the US Army Research Institute for the Behavioural and Social Sciences at Cincinnati (ARBSS, 2002)³ majority of the army officers plan to leave army because of the perceived imbalance between the commitment of the individual to the army and the army's commitment to the individual. Here the perception of individual's need and expectations from army and nation play important role in development of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to fight. Increasing level of motivation improve the performance and lowered the level of combat stress (Brig Gen Gilbert, 1987).⁴ The limited opportunity for career progression, disrupted family lives are the major reason for dissatisfaction among soldiers in army (Reynolds and Hall, 1987).⁵

Research on Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) Veterans suggests that 10 to 18 per cent of OEF/OIF troops are likely to have mental health problems after they return.⁶ Many soldiers take years to overcome the post-traumatic stress they face after the war and face problems in living a normal life with family and friends. In the absence of proper mechanism to address their psychological and emotional problems the first reaction is denial of the problem and then loneliness. Acceptance of psychological problem is also associated with the weak personality and how can a soldier show himself as a weak person; this social pressure left him with the only solution of increasing intake of alcohol and suicide at a later stage. A British soldier Fitzsimons, deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq who joined army at 16 when asked for extending his contract after eight years in 2004 was discharged because of anxiety disorder.⁷ Army did nothing to treat him but on the contrary left him alone in civil society. He was having nightmares, vivid dreams, visual flashbacks and he could also smell burnt flesh and feel the smell of death. He was also having trouble with the law and was sent to prison for nine months. He was convicted for firing a flare gun over the heads of teenagers climbing on his roof, and was charged with a racist assault. His defence was that he thought he was being followed. Then in 2009 he was reported as suffering from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

One of the biggest challenges that mental health care professionals face is the stigma and barriers to care. In one study, among those who screened positive for a mental health disorder, only 23 to 40 per cent received professional mental health care in the last year and only 38 to 45 per cent were interested in receiving help. Furthermore, those who screened positive for a mental health disorder were twice as likely as those who did not meet screening criteria, to report stigma and barriers to care for seeking mental health care.

The US military has started working on the ways to control increasing incidences of PTSD among army personnel (IB Times, 4 May, 2011).⁸ A recent RAND study found that 1 in 5 veterans deployed in Iraq or Afghanistan suffered from PTSD or major depression.⁹ These figures are somewhat similar to those reported in other scientific studies. An initial report by CW Hoge and colleagues (2004) indicated that 16 to 17 per cent of returning OIF combat veterans and 11 per cent of returning OEF combat veterans met screening criteria for at least one mental health disorder. Hoge and colleagues (2006) found that the prevalence of screening positive for a mental health problem was 19 per cent among service members returning from Iraq and 11 per cent after returning from Afghanistan. Among OIF/OEF veterans seen at Veteran Affairs (VA) healthcare facilities, 25 per cent received mental health diagnoses, with 56 per cent of these meeting criteria for two or more mental health diagnoses (Seal et al., 2007).

American Army is an example of working actively for providing mental health care to its soldiers. Veterans who served as part of OEF/OIF can currently get five years of free treatment at their local VA hospital. Many VA hospitals have designated PTSD Clinical Teams (PCT) that provide a wide array of treatments to returning veterans. At the San Francisco VA Medical Centre, they offer a comprehensive PTSD diagnostic evaluation, skills-based therapy (e.g., stress and anger management), exposure-based therapies (e.g., Prolonged Exposure Therapy and Cognitive Processing Therapy), couples/family therapy and OIF/OEF adjustment groups. Prolonged Exposure Therapy and Cognitive Processing Therapy are two evidence-based treatments which have been shown to improve PTSD symptoms in veterans returning from war. There is currently a national effort to train mental health professionals across the nation to provide one or both of these treatments. However, it is really difficult to find any such health care services in the Indian Army. There are counsellors working as all-in-one help to the soldiers but in the absence of proper training and skill they are

not very effective in dealing with the mental health issues of the veterans. It is time to develop a psychiatric unit in the Indian Army to deal effectively with the mental health issues of soldiers.¹⁰

Position of Law on Human Rights and Impact of Human Rights Activism

In the past few years, a number of incidents and actions under the UN watch have come under deep scrutiny by various Human Rights organisations. Such scrutinies are of course, necessary to ensure that rule of law is followed by peacekeeping contingents and the right leadership is provided to UN missions. This process also enhances the credibility of the UN as an honest broker for peace. This is paramount.

However, there is a flip side to this kind of scrutiny, especially if they fail to maintain impartiality and vilify forces that may have otherwise done an honest job allowing for the difficulties of the ground situation. Added with the speed, vast expanse and influence of social media, close scrutiny of actions and reactions of peacekeepers in ugly situations in the past missions as well present can cause great stress to soldiers who are now increasingly expected to defend themselves personally. It is of course not lost on anyone that the situations that evolve on the ground are not ideal and do not conform to all possible contingencies that may have been framed in the RoEs. However, the peacekeeper now may have to keep exact account of the how the situation developed and precisely how he or she reacted.

The Human rights organisations while pillorying peacekeepers and leadership for situations gone wrong, sometimes really horribly like Srebrenica, at times ignore the fact that the so called Rules of War are also conventions with huge limitations and restricted mandate. In the wake of World War II, the international military tribunal at Nuremburg declared that the 1907 Hague Regulations Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land to be the customary international law. Yet, jurists have reached no such consensus about whether the 1949 Geneva Conventions have made such a transition. Many leftist academics and activists insist that the Geneva Conventions must be universally applied. Yet, that argument is undercut by those treaties' texts. The Third Geneva Convention¹¹ explicitly states that parties need not apply it to all conflicts, especially when the foes are not parties, and when enemies do not abide by its terms.¹²

No terrorist group is party to the Geneva Conventions. They have not signed, much less ratified, those treaties. Moreover, it is evident that Hamas, Hezbollah, and members of the global Al-Qaeda network spurn both the spirit and the letter of international treaties designed to ameliorate the cruelty of war. Bloody attacks in New York, Jerusalem, Bali, Madrid, and Beslan are testament to the fact that these groups seek to kill civilians rather than take captives. And when Islamist terrorists do seize hostages, brutality rather than protection appears to be the rule. Distinction between permissible and impermissible violence is the cornerstone of international humanitarian law. In the words of an International Committee of the Red Cross educational pamphlet, "It is a basic principle of international humanitarian law that persons fighting in armed conflict must, at all times, distinguish between civilians and combatants and between civilian objects and military objectives."¹³

The Srebrenica conundrum has important lessons. A Dutch high court ruled on Wednesday, 29 Apr 2015 that retired General Thom Karremans could not be held criminally liable on grounds of command responsibility.¹⁴ A Dutch high court has ruled that a retired general who commanded Dutch peacekeepers in the Bosnian enclave of Srebrenica when Bosnian Serb fighters overran the town and massacred some 8,000 Muslim men should not be prosecuted for involvement in the slayings. Srebrenica in 1996 was a sinister, haunted place. After the Muslims of the town had been murdered and raped, and the survivors trucked to the Muslim lines opposite Tuzla, Serb refugees had taken their place, stuffing their families into the smashed homes of the victims of the Srebrenica massacre, living on hand-outs, loot and UN funds. However, the fact is that even twenty years after a UN deployment went horribly wrong, the leadership which possibly was constrained by RoEs and realpolitik issues continues to be hounded by Human Rights bodies. In the instant case, the Dutch government has gone to great lengths to protect its military, but not every government can be expected to be as caring.

At Srebrenica, the Dutch meekly surrendered their weapons, their armoured vehicles, even their uniforms.¹⁵ The Serbs were allowed to hunt through the UN headquarters for Muslims they had not already trucked off to the killing fields. But does this mean that the Dutch are now absolved, permitted to remain silent, to encourage Karremans to keep his mouth shut? The Dutch Government in its defence may remind the rights activists of Serb war crimes. Rightly so, but maybe we should also remember the Dutch officer who abandoned the innocents, the NATO soldiers who let the war criminals roam around Bosnia for years after they had committed their atrocities and the way in which they so arrogantly refused to safeguard the Serbs' next victims. So how do we resolve these paradoxes?

Conclusion

It is true that there are no ideal situations and thus peacekeepers have to operate in situations which are fluid, less than well defined and under RoEs that do not provide solutions to their dilemmas. So the best possible measure to ameliorate the potential stressors in these operating conditions is to provide the soldier with as much information as possible on past experiences and for the leadership to be fully backed by contributing governments. Training and counselling are valuable keys.

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**Nepal Crying : April 2015 Earthquake
(First Hand Experience of Relief and Rescue by a Young Officer)
Major Vikrant Roy Choudhury@**

Introduction

The April 2015 Nepal Earthquake killed more than 9000 people and injured more than 23000. It occurred at 11:56 NST on 25 April with a magnitude of 8.1 on the Richter Scale. Its epicentre was east of the district of Lamjung and its hypocentre at a depth of approximately 15 km. It was the worst natural disaster to strike Nepal since the 1934 Nepal-Bihar Earthquake. Hundreds of thousands of people were made homeless with entire villages flattened, across many districts of Nepal. Centuries old buildings were destroyed at UNESCO world heritage sites in Kathmandu Valley, including some at the Kathmandu Durbar Square, the Paltan Durbar Square, the Bhaktapur Durbar Square, the Changu Narayan Temple and the Swayambhunath Stupa.

Rescue and Relief Operations

About 90 per cent of soldiers from the Nepalese Army were sent to the stricken areas in the aftermath of the earthquake under Operation "Sankat Mochan" with volunteers mobilised from the other parts of the country. Operation "Maitri" was a rescue and relief operation in Nepal by the Government of India and Indian Armed Forces in the aftermath of the 2015 Earthquake. It started on 26 Apr 2015 and also involved Nepali Ex-servicemen (ESM) from several Indian Gorkha Regiments for interface, guidance, relief and rescue. The Indian Army initially set up a Task Force Headquarters with Major General JS Sandhu controlling and coordinating operations in Kathmandu and Brigadier J Gamlin in Barpak. In addition, Pension Paying Office (PPO), Pokhara was functioning as Headquarters for relief operations.

206 and 301 Army Aviation Squadrons were inducted and an aviation base was set up with five Army ALH and two MI-17 helicopters at Pokhara Airfield. The Army Helicopters conducted repeated sorties to evacuate people from inaccessible areas and more than 1000 civilians were evacuated to safe areas. Army helicopters in conjunction with IAF delivered approx 900 tons of relief materials. Appreciating the criticality of communication and coordination, a direct hotline was established between Indian and Nepalese Army HQ. Sufficient INMARSATs and HF Radio sets were also sent to ensure intercommunication of the relief teams and detachments operating in Nepal. 10,000 blankets and 1,000 tents were also dispatched to the affected areas.

18 Medical teams each comprising 10 personnel and ambulances from three Field Hospitals; namely, 4004, 4033 and 60 Para Field Hospital, were inducted. They operated in Kathmandu and other remote locations. Medical assistance was given to 4762 injured persons which included 300 surgeries, 216 hospital admissions and 4174 outpatient department cases. A mammoth humanitarian assistance and disaster relief was carried out successfully by the Indian Army and the troops were deinducted completely by 04 Jun 2015.

My Voyage. On 25 Apr, I was on leave in Kolkata. At 1130 hrs suddenly I felt a little dizzy as tremors were shaking my house. I rushed to my parents and immediately evacuated the house; everybody was shouting and it was a complete chaos. The front boundary wall of my house was completely demolished. We all were in a state of shock. Every news channel was broadcasting about the catastrophe in Nepal.

Please refer to Map showing main area of impact. On 26 Apr, I got a call from my Commanding Officer to immediately proceed to Nepal for relief operations. Necessary information was constantly sent on my cell phone. I packed my bags and boarded a flight to New Delhi. A team of one JCO and two Other Ranks also reached New Delhi on 27 April from our Paltan for the same reason. We were getting constant updates about the catastrophe and necessary guidance from 1 GR Secretariat. It took us almost a day to reach Gorakhpur-Sunauli border. There was complete chaos on the border; buses were flooded with passengers to go to Nepal. Thousands of Indian tourists were stranded. We spent a day in Sunauli as there was no transport available to Pokhara. We left for Pokhara on 30 Apr by road. Pokhara was not much affected by the earthquake. The shops were open, normalcy could be seen everywhere. We reported to Pension Paying Office (PPO) Pokhara which was functioning as headquarter for relief operations. We were immediately asked to report to Pokhara Airfield, from where the relief operation was going on. Several ALHs and MI-17 Helicopters were operating from Pokhara Airfield. In conjunction with Nepalese Government and Nepalese Army, tonnes of relief materials were dropped in the worst affected areas. Our team assisted in loading of relief materials in the helicopters.



Map Showing Main Area of Impact

Gorkha. Since maximum damage had occurred in the Gorkha district, we decided to proceed towards Gorkha and its

adjoining areas. We were guided by Lieutenant Colonel SS Moole, OC, PPO Pokhara and his team giving us all the relevant information about the route, transportation and the worst affected areas. We reached Gorkha by the evening of 01 May. Enroute we witnessed the ravage caused by mother nature; villages after villages were damaged, with not a single house standing and people were sleeping in open fields. After reaching Gorkha, we went to the villages of Simalgarhi, Birendranagar, Godhuli and collected information about the damage from our serving soldiers and ESM. The damage in these villages was severe. The majority of people in these villages were ESM from various Gorkha Regiments of the Indian Army. Rifleman Roll Bahadur Rana of 'C' Company who was there on leave, acted as our guide and took us to various other affected areas, despite his own house also being damaged.

Barpak. Next day, we decided to proceed towards the worst hit area by the earthquake i.e. Barpak. Out of 1600 houses, only four houses were standing and more than 2,500 people had lost their lives and hundreds were still missing. The only road connecting Barpak was completely damaged due to several mud slides, the only way to reach Barpak was by air, but due to bad weather and poor visibility, no helicopters were flying. On the way we met Naik Bahadur Gurung and Lance Naik Dhan Raj Gurung of our Paltan who were on leave and proceeding towards their home; their village was approximately 150 km from Gorkha bazar named Manbu. After nine hours of bus journey, we covered 100 km and reached Arughat. Balance of the journey had to be done on foot only. There were approximately 350 houses in Arughat and now only debris was visible. Frequent aftershocks were recurring and people were getting more terrified. We kept on interacting with people and collected information about their losses. Weather was playing a spoilsport and suddenly the bright blue sky was covered with dark clouds and it started raining heavily. We took cover under a damaged house; the rain didn't allow us to move for a good six hours. We were completely drenched and hungry. Despite being in such terrible situation, the villagers gave us food. Next morning, we started our journey to Manbu. Our morale was high and we had to negotiate heights, springs and streams on our way.

Manbu. This was comparatively a large village with a population of approximately 800-900 people. It had been almost a week after the earthquake but no relief had reached there. Naik Hak Bahadur Gurung's and Lance Naik Dhan Raj Gurung's houses were completely damaged. Their families were forced to spend their days in open in a makeshift arrangement. Everything was under the debris. The eyes were moist and the future was dark. We had brought some cartons of noodles and biscuits which we distributed among the villagers but that was like a tiny droplet of water in the ocean. We started collecting our data, the loss was humungous. Relief and rescue helicopters were flying over us but nothing was happening. People were getting impatient and frustrated. With the help of some villagers, we cleared a cornfield to be used as a helipad. I immediately called Lieutenant Colonel SS Moole at PPO Pokhara and informed him about our location and he promised us necessary assistance. Meanwhile we went to the nearby villages to collect information about our veterans. Some locals were doing their bit and distributing food for the entire village which was a commendable effort. Our team also had a Battle Field Nursing Assistant, Naik Hom Bahadur Gurung, he attended to some villagers and provided them necessary medical assistance.

Expect the Unexpected. The next morning i.e. on 03 May, while we were busy in assisting the villagers, we noticed an ALH heading towards our location. It was flying low and the sound of rotors was a welcome treat to our ears. We immediately set fire to some rubber tubes to produce black smoke as a signal to land. The helicopter brought food, blankets, water and plastic sheets. There was a tide of joy amongst the villagers. The helicopter had come from Pokhara and to my utter surprise, Lieutenant Colonel SS Moole was inside the helicopter. We all thanked him from our hearts and proceeded to our next destination. While returning back from Manbu we were loaded with blessings and good wishes from the villagers. On our way back to Gorkha, our team also assisted a team of doctors from Red Cross in establishing a medical camp near Arughat village. During our five day stay in Gorkha, we visited approximately 30 villages and collected information of about 2000 ESMs and serving soldiers.

Kaski and Pokhara. We returned to Pokhara by 07 May and spent the night at Naib Subedar Yam Prasad's house. We made our plan and within the next two days, we went around seeking information about the damage in the affected areas. We covered nine villages; the extent of damage was not so severe as compared to Gorkha but still people were terrified by regular aftershocks. After covering Pokhara, our team proceeded towards Kaski. A team from 5/1 GR was also in that location. We shared our information to increase the speed of our work; up-to-date information was necessary for us. We decided to visit every District Soldier's Board in the affected area so that we could get accurate information about the damage to our soldiers. A small get-together was organised by our Bhut Purvs (Ex-servicemen) at Pokhara to felicitate our team. Honorary Captain Naina Singh Gurung (Retd), Honorary Captain Thakur Bahadur Thapa (Retd) and several other serving and retired ranks of the PVC Paltan were there. It was a great occasion for us to meet our oldies and to share their experiences in such difficult times.

Final Destination. By 09 May, the situation was slowly getting under control. Rescue and relief operations were in full swing. After covering Gorkha, Pokhara and Kaski our next destination was Syangja. Syangja was approximately 40 km from Pokhara and was well connected by road. Next day we met our Paltan's veteran Major Ram Singh Chhetri (Retd). He took us to some of the villages where there was damage and we collected all the necessary information. He also took us to District Soldiers Board in Waling where, several ESM were voluntarily running a medical camp. It was a noble gesture under such grave circumstances. Our journey was approaching its last stage. All the other rescue teams of 1 GR had started de-inducting. Our last stop was Butwal, which was near Gorakhpur border. On 11 May, we reported to District Soldier Board of Butwal and we met several retired and serving personnel of our Battalion. Though in this region, the damage was minimum, but people were reluctant to enter their houses. Convoys of trucks were coming from India, loaded with relief materials.

On 12 May, when we were in a village called Gopalpur of district Butwal collecting information, at 1245 hrs another heavy aftershock was felt. The duration of the tremor was about 6-7 seconds and the magnitude was reported to be 7.2 on the Richter Scale. The epicentre was on the border of Dolakha and Sindhupal Chowk. Minutes later, another 6.3 magnitude earthquake hit Nepal with its epicentre in Ramechhap, East of Kathmandu. The aftershock caused mass panic as many people were still trying to recover from 25 Apr earthquake. For the first few seconds, it was complete silence, after that everybody started to scream which continued even after the earthquake. The tremor caused

fresh landslides and destroyed some buildings which had survived the first quake. We immediately started dialling numbers of all the persons of our Battalion in the affected zone. However, mercifully all of them were safe and sound with no further major damages. Thus, on 13 May, we decided to return to India with an experience of fifteen days which will remain with us for the rest of our lives.

Conclusion

It will take probably years for Nepal to rebuild the Nation and to overcome the loss but no one will ever doubt how these brave Gorkhas ferociously stood against the disaster. Operations “Sankat Mochan” and “Maitri” continue in full swing but slowly and steadily, the land of warriors – ‘Nepal’ will rise again.

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Nepal and Its Constitutional Crisis

Major General Nitin P Gadkari (Retd)@

Introduction

Nepal witnessed large scale civil unrest in its Terai belt and protests in the capital Kathmandu in the month of Sept-Oct 2015. The protests still continue due to the stalemate between the Madhesi parties and the Government on the issue of federalism. The Joint Democratic Madhesi Front, the main group of the Madhesi parties, however decided to continue their nearly three-month agitation, amid a severe shortage of fuel in the landlocked country.¹ Most Nepalese are convinced that this blockade and Nepal's economic squeeze is with the tacit approval of the Indian Government. The prolonged Terai unrest and subsequent disruption in trade have created losses estimated at US \$1 billion to the Country, the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry has said on 03 Oct 2015.² The reason for this unrest is the passing of the new Nepalese constitution by their constituent assembly (CA) in September this year. But the Country which seemed to have been badly polarised in the midst of the constitutional crisis has found itself a reason to unite and the uniting factor has been "India".

Nepal has deep societal divisions which are primarily on account of the geography of the Country. The Country is divided into three distinct regions: the high mountains in the North, the hills and the valleys in the middle and the foothills and plains in the South. Ethnically the people inhabiting these areas are different and ideally they should have found separate identities based on this geographical division. Yet, Nepal has five developmental regions which are divided vertically rather than horizontally. Which means each division has a mix of people from high mountains valleys and plains. In this kind of model low caste Janajati Nepalese citizens who reside in the middle or the southern portion continue to have the same status in all five regions and high caste

Khas-Chhetri / Brahmin continue to enjoy the high privileges. The new constitution has retained the same model; thus the low caste communities have felt let down. This has led to the current crisis between the Government of Nepal and the Madhesis who now represent the low castes. The socially marginalised groups, like the Madhesis, who live mostly in the Terai area, Janajatis (indigenous people), and women have strong objection to the provisions of the constitution. They feel left out.³

Nepal's Journey to the New Constitution

Nepal was a monarchy from 1768 to 2008. The monarchy governed by its own constitution which was imposed to rule the Country. The constitution changed six times prior to the last one, yet in each case it represented the interests of the monarchy rather than the common man. This led to the Maoists taking on the government in a ten year long civil war (1996-2006). The royal massacre in 2001 was the beginning of the end for the monarchy in Nepal. Sustained violence and pressure from Maoists did not allow the new king, Gyanendra to rule in peace. In spite of imposing emergency and harsh measures to curb civil liberties, the ten year civil war took its toll on the monarchy, and it had to succumb to the popular wishes of the people. On 24 Apr 2006, after the Loktantra Andolan movement, the king agreed to give up absolute power and to reinstate the dissolved House of Representatives. On 21 Nov 2006, the Civil War ended with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord. On 15 Jan 2007, the King was suspended from exercising his duties by the newly formed interim legislature. Finally, on 28 May 2008, the kingdom was officially abolished by the CA and Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal was declared.⁴

In 2008 a CA was elected dominated by the Maoists. It was entrusted with the responsibility of drafting a new constitution, the seventh one, to fulfil the aspirations of the free Nepalese people. This CA had a mandate of two years in which they were to draft the new constitution. They failed to fulfil the mandate due to lack of consensus on multiple issues. The assembly was consequentially dissolved and fresh elections held in Nov 2013. The CA2 had the burden of drafting a constitution which would fulfil the aspirations of all parties, castes, regions and all sections of society. Due to extensive criticism that political parties received in the aftermath of 25 Apr 2015 earthquake, the main political parties galvanised the Nepalese CA and passed the long pending draft new constitution. Nepal became a Federal, Democratic, Secular, Republic on 20 Sep 2015.

Issues of Discontent

The new constitution met with strong objections from various sections of Nepalese society. The proportional representation in the new CA was an issue; one grievance is that a smaller percentage of the parliament will now be elected by proportional representation - 45 per cent, compared with 58 per cent under the previous post-war interim constitution.⁵ Second, the citizenship issue had the women groups of Nepal up in arms. If a Nepali woman marries a foreign man, their children cannot become Nepali unless the man first takes Nepali citizenship; whereas if the father is Nepali, his children can also be Nepali regardless of the wife's nationality.⁶ But amongst all, the issue of federal division of Nepal met with the loudest protests. The first draft had recommended six development regions which was strongly opposed by the Madhesis and the Tharus. However, the final draft which was passed by the parliament has seven developmental regions haphazardly carved out of earlier six divisions. This has become the main reason why southern Nepal is in civil unrest. The Madhesis and the Tharus have not accepted this hurriedly worked out compromise.

The discontent amongst the local population has its roots in the way the four major parties hurriedly went about the passage of the new constitution in the parliament. There are many who argue that there were vested interests of the high caste politicians in important governmental positions to keep their community's and party's interests paramount while drafting the new constitution. According to some, the biggest let down were the Maoist leaders on whom the under privileged and the lower castes had pinned their hopes of undoing the centuries of wrongs. But the

Maoists were party to the draft and its passage leaving the underprivileged class hopelessly abandoned. The gravity of the protests in the South is probably a reflection of this betrayal. It would be incorrect to state that everyone is unhappy. In fact, there are large sections of population in Nepal who seem very happy with the passage of the constitution. Very many Nepalis are simply relieved that the country has a new constitution after seven years of wrangling. “Now that we have a constitution let us hope there will be rule of law,” wrote one woman on Facebook.⁷ And they feel let down that their closest neighbour has not welcomed the new constitution, when all the major countries have shown their approval in respect of the passage of the new constitution.

Why is India the New Villain and China the New Hero?

In the aftermath of declaration of the constitution, Nepal seemed divided on sectarian lines: the high castes vs the low castes and janjatis. Things would have settled down by now, had matters not flared up at the Indo-Nepal border. The Madheshi groups who were protesting at the border towns blocked the no-man’s zone and stopped supply vehicles to move into Nepal. Crucial in this blockade was the halting of the supply of fuel tankers at the Indo-Nepal border. The Nepalese stocks of fuel ran dry and a crisis like situation developed in the hinterlands. The shortage of petrol, diesel and kerosene affected all. This drew wide range criticism of India and the blockade. The Indian Government’s denial of causing the blockade was not convincing enough for the ordinary Nepali citizen, who suffered on account of acute shortages of essential supplies that included medicines. Doctors in the Nepalese capital, Kathmandu, say hospitals are running out of medicines because of the blockade.⁸

Nepal has an anti-India sentiment running across the country. Being a landlocked state, Nepal is very sensitive to blockades. China meanwhile, has taken full advantage of India’s foreign policy debacle and, since the crisis, has signed numerous pacts with Nepal starting from supply of oil to opening up multiple border points; amongst them, a historic oil trade deal with China on Wednesday (28 Oct 2015), ending a four-decade supply monopoly of the Indian Oil Corporation.⁹ Nepal and China have also agreed to operationalise seven other border trade points effectively, besides making customs offices in earthquake-affected areas - Rasuwa and Tatopani, functional. Nepal has been bringing fuel gifted by the Chinese government through the Rasuwa route for the past few days. According to the statement, China has given a high priority to operating the Khasa-Tatopani route as per Nepal’s request.¹⁰

It will be interesting to analyse the feasibility of large scale trade from Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) into Nepal. The 25 Apr 2015 earthquakes in Nepal have badly damaged all the arterial roads. To the North, the Himalayan Mountains are a formidable barrier to trade with China.¹¹ It would require extensive work for both countries to make the supply route through China a substitute to the supplies received through India. Today, out of the eight possible trade routes only one is operational - the Rasuwagadhi- Kerung route. Nepal and China formally announced the reopening of Rasuwagadhi customs on 15 Oct 2015, according to officials. China has already repaired the 22 kms road that links the customs point with the Chinese town of Kerung. Rasuwagadhi is the second largest trade route with China after Tatopani, which is still shut as Chinese authorities are yet to open their customs and immigration offices, stating that Khasa bazaar is unsafe.¹²

The Chinese and Nepalese are working hard to get the main trade route of Tatopani operational as they are hoping to restore supply of fuel through this route to ease out the very grave fuel crisis. Any student of TAR region would understand the difficulties in opening and sustaining roads in very high altitude mountainous terrain. It requires colossal effort and modern technology to keep the supply routes open throughout the year, and if China was to invest in it, then it would be at a cost for Nepal. The reality of this situation is: Nepal will find it extremely difficult to substitute China with India as the main entry point for its supplies. This is on account of relative difficulty of sustaining the desired volume of trade to materialise through Tibet; yet, the Nepalese Government and citizens are in no mood to relent and their resolve grows with each passing day. Social media is full of hate India posts and appeals to all including the Government not to bend to India’s strong arm tactics. Is India guilty?

What Is India’s Stance?

In the current crisis India has maintained that there is no blockade or attempt by the Indian Government to stop the flow of fuel into Nepal. Indian Foreign Minister, Mrs Sushma Swaraj has defended India in the UN. Swaraj had a bilateral meeting with Nepal Foreign Minister Mahendra Pandey where she said that the allegation that India had imposed a blockade was “totally false”. “We can only take goods up to the border and beyond the border it is the responsibility of the Nepalese side to ensure that there is adequate safety and security for the trucks to enter that side,” Swaraj said. She said that 4,310 trucks are waiting at the border but cannot proceed into Nepal due to the disturbed security situation. She added that Indian transporters had voiced complaints about the difficulty they were facing in movement within Nepal and the security fears due to the prevailing unrest.¹³

India has been advising Nepal through its Ambassador Shri Ranjit Rae and the Foreign Secretary Shri S Jaishankar about the necessity to have an inclusive and comprehensive constitution which would address the needs of all classes. That the advice went mostly unheeded is obvious. Yet, there is a popular argument even in India that the Modi Government got the Nepal situation wrong. Someone in the party or the MEA has seriously miscalculated the way this crisis would evolve. What in effect the situation has developed into is that it has galvanised all the main political parties in Nepal, even those who initially opposed the Government on the drawbacks of the constitution to throw aside their differences and show a united front to fight India’s anti-Nepal stance. Why the Government took such an extreme stand, which might appear damaging to India’s core interests in Nepal, can only be a matter of conjecture. Some of the possible arguments are: to ensure that Nepal tows India’s line, the RSS and BJP’s combined desire to make it a Hindu Rashtra, to counter China’s growing influence in Nepal; which some say is reflected in the new constitution, or the Madhesi influence in the Bihar elections. No matter what the argument, the civil strife in Nepal has been blamed on India.

It may be unfair to hold India accountable to all the ills that ail Nepal. It is not in India’s interest to allow matters

to deteriorate beyond a certain point. In view of the fuel crisis, China's pact to supply oil to Nepal is a great setback for India. India cannot allow the state of affairs in Nepal to slide because such a downward spiral would harm India's long term interests and potentially pave a way for China to make deeper forays into Nepal. India must act now in a tough yet, fair manner to impress upon the leadership in Nepal to contain the current unrest by bringing the disgruntled parties to the discussion table. India also must keep the Nepalese sentiments in mind. Outright condemnation of the new constitution is not in order. Professor SD Muni, writes that "to jump into such a polarisation by taking sides is neither a prudent policy nor effective diplomacy. India's effort should have been to nudge both sides of the polarised debate through quiet and sustained diplomacy so that an amicable resolution could be found."¹⁴

Conclusion

The current crisis in Nepal is a deep rooted ethnic and sectarian mistrust within the Nepalese society. The new constitution was supposed to have addressed this problem yet, the expectations were belied. If one takes into account the history and the journey undertaken by Nepal to reach here, it would be hard to deny that the new constitution is a big achievement for Nepalese polity. India must also celebrate in Nepal's success to convey a sense of good neighbourly relations. The ethnic strife of the Madhesis, Tharus and the indigenous Janajatis cannot be condoned indefinitely. Their sustained strike is damaging India's long term interests and pushing Nepal more in the fold of its northern neighbour. It would thus be prudent that they be advised to work out their differences within the framework of the new constitution with the Government of the day. There are deep divisions as to how federalism should be implemented in Nepal. It is time for India to take a lead and be seen to be just and fair in helping Nepal reach an amicable solution.

An Update as on 31 Dec 2015

On 20 Dec 2015, the Nepalese Government decided to resolve the crisis by amending the new Constitution to address two key demands of the Madhesis; namely, 'proportional representation' and 'constituency limitation'; and it also agreed to set-up a political mechanism to recommend solution for demarcation of provinces within three months of its formation. However, the protesting United Madhesi Democratic Front have not agreed to the Government proposals and want the question of demarcation of provinces addressed on priority. Hence, the stand-off continues. The Government of India have made appropriate diplomatic moves to bring the parties together without appearing to interfere in the internal affairs of another country.

As per the latest reports China has agreed to give a further grant (second such grant since Oct 2014) of fuel worth RMB 10 million which will amount to about 1.4 million litres.¹⁵

Editor

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A Chapter Ignored: How India's Congress Stalwarts reacted to the Great War during 1914-15

Shri Anubhav Roy@

Introduction

A century ago, the Great War (1914-18), being a culmination of Europe's great power rivalries, was proliferating across imperial folds to fast become the First World War. For India – then the brightest jewel in the British crown – the period held immense significance, as the local Home Rule campaign resuscitated demands for self-rule and unified drifting political factions towards a nationalist upsurge. Yet, conventional discourses on Indian history often relegate these events to create more room for the coverage of Mahatma Gandhi's rise. As a sample, the National Council of Educational Research and Training's (NCERT) advanced history textbook for high schools, *Themes on Indian History*, Vol. 3, bears no mention of India's part in the Great War. Moreover, its detailing on Gandhi begins from 1916, with his first national address from Benaras.¹

While the Great War served a fertile ground for the revival of India's nationalist movement, the link between the two pivots of modern history remains quite obscure. Consequently, populist perspectives often see the Great War as a harbinger of retribution for the oppressive colonist, recalling how Anglophobic protestors endured British lathis (batons) at chowks (town squares) to defiantly chant 'German ki jai (victory to the German)' in India.² Often forgotten is the fact that, by 1918, over a million Indian soldiers willingly – without any conscription – fortified Allied frontlines in theatres between Flanders and Palestine, having earned 9,200 decorations to their credit. The domestic political response that legitimised such massive contributions from India towards the colonist's cause is hard to miss, despite being evidently overlooked.

The narration that follows retraces British India's political atmosphere of 1914-15, as pivoted by the Indian National Congress (INC) – which continued as the nation's political mast despite its weakening – to fathom its national position amidst an event pressuring its overlord. Why is such an inquiry crucial? Due to the populist historian's unconcern towards the era, the ensuing factual gaps impede an objective comprehension of India's past. The consequent parochial viewing of the colonist as the binary opposite of the colonised promotes the politicisation of India's freedom struggle, handpicking chapters that help cobble up a relatable, heroic script. In doing so, several heroes get buried, such as the Indian men who served overseas during the Great War, shoulder-to-shoulder with their White masters, pound-for-pound against their White foes, to assert the marginalised Brown man's martial worth affront the world.

The 'Old School' Shows the Way

In 1914, India's nationalist charge had lost steam. Bifurcated into moderate and radical camps since 1907 due to internal differences, the INC faced the threat of losing relevance. However, the Great War's advent stimulated British socialist Annie Besant to shelf her isolated theosophist pursuits and help reignite Indian nationalism with a local Home Rule stir, inspired by the original movement in Ireland. The Indian rendition of the campaign was slow to start, with Besant failing to reunite the pacifists and extremists of the INC. Simmering disputes motivated Bal Gangadhar Tilak to set up his own Home Rule League, louder than Besant's. Soon, however, both Leagues merged to capture mass imagination by 1915, thereon pushing the divided INC and the Muslim League towards the agenda of demanding self-rule for India in exchange of support to Britain's war effort. This convergence, as part of 1916's Lucknow Pact, was a turning point. India rallied behind the political shift triggered by Besant, whose arrest in 1917 only heightened agitations. Interestingly, though, most INC bigwigs had begun backing the British intent to save Europe from a collapse amidst the Great War even before Besant's activism could gain momentum.

The prominently outspoken Bal Gangadhar Tilak was India's Lokmanya (the regarded) and had led the walkout of the radicals from the INC at its Surat session in 1907, after bombarding the party's moderate faces with allegations of timidity. However, his prided ferocity proved taxing. For publicly endorsing an attempt on the life of a British magistrate by young revolutionaries, Tilak was booked for sedition and imprisoned at Mandalay in 1908. The severity of the prison time, worsened by diabetes, strangled his zeal. Upon his release in June 1914, he returned to Poona only to discover that the British police was already on its toes to monitor his moves. His old ally, Motilal Ghose, saw Tilak reduced to a 'bereaved old man [wanting] to live peacefully during the rest of his life'. Ghose's assessment, however, soon proved an overstatement.

As the battle lines got drawn across Europe, Tilak issued a statement to the press on 27 Aug 1914, which bore a unique sense of camaraderie for the very British State he detested. As Stanley Wolpert saw it, Tilak, in that statement, 'sounded [...] more like Gokhale than the pre-Mandalay Lokmanya.'³ He claimed:

'[There is] a marked increase of confidence between the Rulers and the Ruled. [...] The view may be optimistic to some, but it is an article of faith with me. [...] I may state once [and] for all that we are trying in India [...] for a reform [...] and not for the overthrow of government; and I have no hesitation in saying that [...] acts of violence [...] may have [...] unfortunately retarded [...] our political progress.'⁴

Irrespective of whether Tilak's declaration was a guise for distraction, or a temporary spurt of despair, it did repair his controversial image. Soon, Tilak's friend-turned rival, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, announced that he saw 'reasonable prospects of a reunification' of the INC.⁵

Since the Surat Split, the flag-bearer of the largely mellowed INC was Gokhale, who, upon the Great War's arrival, was on his last legs. Juggling his duties towards the Imperial Legislative Council, his Servants of India Society and the INC had exhausted him. Yet, despite medical worries, he kept a balance between his administrative and nationalist

priorities. Gokhale oversaw the Royal Commission on Expenditures, just as he opposed the disparities between Indian and British officers of the Public Service Commission. Moreover, he declined Knighthood in June 1914.⁶ He longed for a political heir – for which, he eyed Gandhi – and a return to his homeland. Nonetheless, despite the war prolonging his stay in London, Gokhale, in November, personally suggested Lord Robert Crewe, the Secretary of State for India, to ‘open the King’s Commission to the Indian youth’, so that even they may serve Britain on its war fronts.⁷

The newfound compatibility between Tilak and Gokhale amidst the war hinted an INC reunion, much to the joy of Besant. However, upon his return to India, a bedridden Gokhale skipped the 1914 session of the INC, which was slated to wash away the enmity between the extremists and the moderates. His demise, a few months later, quashed all optimism.⁸ The session was hosted at Madras under the presidency of Bhupendra Nath Bose, the esoteric Bengali politician, who had foregone his career as a legislator to consolidate the Swadeshi agitations in his partitioned home province in 1905-06.⁹ His verdict on the Great War, though, was quite distant from the staunchly anti-colonial ethos of Swadeshi:

‘Moslem and Hindu in India are, alike, united in their unswerving devotion and loyalty to the Empire in this crisis. Nobody doubts [...] that we shall emerge victorious out of this terrible chapter in our history, [...] for [...] India and overseas dominions shall stand and grow together united in bonds sanctified in the field of battle.’¹⁰

By then, the founding patriarch of the INC, Dadabhai Naoroji¹¹, was on the brink of political extinction. At his peak, Naoroji had unsparingly critiqued the British Raj with his seminal ‘Drain Theory’, which exposed the hazards of colonial economics to soundly intellectualise India’s anti-imperial discourse. However, Naoroji came out of retirement to side with his nation’s colonist at war, lauding the British repelling of Wilhelmine Germany.¹² On August 10, 1914, he wrote to the Viceroy of India, Lord Hardinge: ‘I trust this is the greatest struggle for liberty [...] and will end gloriously to the credit of England and the good of mankind.’¹³ Two days later, as part of a message to the nation, he pledged:

‘Fighting as the British people are [...] is a righteous cause, to the good and glory of human dignity and civilization, and moreover, being the beneficent instrument of our own progress [...]. Our duty is clear: to do everyone our best to support the British fight with our life and property.’¹⁴

Such appeals by the likes of Bose and Naoroji were cited as representations of India’s voluntary will to enter the Great War, in a Government volume, *India and the War*, published in 1915. The treatise flaunted an introductory note by Lord Sydenham.

As the Governor of Bombay, in 1914, Sydenham was engaged in a personal war of his own against Pherozeshah Mehta. He could not tolerate ‘Ferocious’ Mehta’s imposing sway over the province’s legislature and municipality. Meanwhile, the office rivalry’s heat took a toll on the septuagenarian Mehta’s health. Until then, as the sixth President of the INC and amongst the party’s earliest molders, he was revered as an educated critic of colonial meddling. Despite his softening, one of Mehta’s last speeches, delivered to Bombay’s Town Hall on August 13, 1914, met a ‘rousing reception’. The address expressed ‘feelings of loyalty and devotion which the [Great] War had aroused.’¹⁵ Mehta, disobeying his doctor’s orders to avert excitement, argued:

‘At this solemn moment, [...] we owe sacred duties and hold obligations to that British rule under whose [...] wise, provident, and righteous statesmanship, the welfare, happiness, and the prosperity [of India] are being incessantly promoted.’¹⁶

The Town Hall gathering went on to resolve ‘that the citizens of Bombay [...] desire to give expression to their feelings of unswerving loyalty and devotion to the British Crown.’¹⁷ Since the Great War seemed as a prized opportunity for India to demand self-rule, Mehta wanted the INC in ‘firm and sagacious hands’. Due to his lasting distrust for the extremists, thus, he ensured the hosting of the INC session of 1915 at his bastion, Bombay, ‘where he could control [its] every phase’. However, weeks before the session could be held, he passed away, leaving the door open for an eventual absorption of the radical camp into the INC by 1916.¹⁸

The ‘New School’ Follows Suit

A similar community congregation was organised at Allahabad, led by four-time INC President, Madan Mohan Malaviya. Known for his conservative reserve, Malaviya’s censuring of the call for separate Muslim electorates during the Lucknow Pact deliberations in 1916 hinted at his more defiant side. He went on to steer closer to unhesitant anti-colonists such as Lala Lajpat Rai, and even inspire Hindu hyper-nationalists like Madhav S Golwalkar. Much before, however, at the Allahabad assembly of 1914, Malaviya’s say on the Great War conformed to the trend:

‘The destinies of our dear country are linked closely with the destinies of Great Britain. Any reverses to Britain means a serious menace to India. [...] I do not hesitate to say that I am loyal to the British throne because I love my country.’¹⁹

Notably, unlike the champions of restraint within the INC – who egged on the onslaught against Germany in Europe as a just cause – Malaviya was amongst the few to conspicuously iterate his support for the British war effort in favour of his own nation’s interest. His was not the only prominent voice on the issue to emanate from Allahabad, nonetheless.

The ailing Pheroze Shah Mehta's prized local daily, the Bombay Chronicle, was effectively run by its influential left-liberal editor, Benjamin G Horniman, a friend of Jawaharlal Nehru's. In a letter, dated July 1, 1917 – the day Russia's last offensive in the war commenced – Horniman wrote to Nehru about the proposed protests against the British internment of Annie Besant. The letter brought to fore the mention of a certain 'JDR':

'As regards the JDR, I am sorry to say that our [British] people here, or most of them, are not in favour of your action [of withdrawing contributions to it]. Jinnah, who with great trouble was originally persuaded to support the recruiting movement, is now strong on not dropping it as a protest, and I seem to stand alone.'²⁰

The JDR, in Nehru's own words, was a 'reserve military organisation which was then proposed for training to be given to educated Indian young men.'²¹ Long before becoming India's first Prime Minister, Nehru, even as a Cambridge-trained barrister in his twenties, was intellectually loud. For his probing criticism of political mildness, he was then seen as a Fabian-turned radical with a liking for Gandhian resistance, which was considered no less unorthodox in 1914-15.

Jawaharlal's truculence was, in part, a bid to evade the shadow of his father, Motilal Nehru, who, at the time, attracted adequate attention within the INC. While the Nehrus, led by him, managed the Allahabad wing of Besant's Home Rule front, Jawaharlal was 'more sympathetic politically to the Tilak League'.²² Like Gandhi, the younger Nehru was upset by the populist Anglophobic responses to the Great War, which he despised as uncivil acts of 'vicarious revenge', led by the 'middle classes, [who] despite their declarations of loyalty, [had] little enthusiasm for the British cause.'²³ Therefore, when the British set up the JDR to form a unit of educated Indian reserves for the fronts, Nehru readily enlisted as a loyalist. However, the outfit never served any recorded utility, as Besant's arrest led to the withdrawal of applications, including that of Nehru²⁴ who went on to serve the St John's Ambulance in Allahabad as compensation.²⁵

Notably, Mohammad Ali Jinnah – the future founder of Pakistan, then a moderate supporting the Lucknow Pact – was amongst the few who opposed the JDR's retaliatory disbandment in 1917.²⁶ In 1914, albeit, he stood amongst the Indian elites in London reluctant to publicly endorse the colonist's war.²⁷ Alongside him was Lala Lajpat Rai, a top INC extremist. Rai spent the Great War years in North America, even investigating the Komagata Maru fiasco in Canada.²⁸ Before leaving London, though, he was caught in an episode he later deemed embarrassing. In August 1914, a team of influential Indian Londoners, led by Bhagwan Din Dube, chose to extend a joint declaration of support to war-struck Britain. Despite much persuasion, Rai refused to hop onto the bandwagon due to his unhindered dislike for imperialism. By then, however, the statements of Naoroji and Mehta were winning over Britain's press, mounting pressure on him to respond. Frustrated, Rai eventually stormed into the city's National Liberal Hall and signed Dube's letter, committing 'loyal cooperation in the war [for] the interests of the Empire'.²⁹

The letter from Dube's delegation was posted to Lord Crewe. Another Indian in London, at the time, was influential enough to reach the Secretary of State for India personally. That man was Mohandas K Gandhi, the barrister who had set the benchmark for peaceful resistance in South Africa. When the Great War began, he set sail to India, with a halt at Britain. Upon disembarking at Southampton, he could not avoid the anxiety and fervour predominant across British society. In Chapter 115 of his autobiography, Gandhi rationalised his response to the circumstances:

'I felt that Indians residing in England ought to do their bit in the war. [...] A number of objections were taken to this line of argument. [...] We were slaves and they were masters. [...] Was it not the duty of the slave, seeking to be free, to make the master's need his opportunity? This argument failed to appeal to me then. [...] If we would improve our status through the help and cooperation of the British, it was our duty to win their help by standing by them in their hour of need. [...] The opposing friends felt that [it] was the hour for making a bold declaration of Indian demands [...]. I thought that England's need should not be turned into our opportunity, and that it was more becoming and far-sighted not to press our demands while the war lasted. I, therefore, adhered to my advice and invited those who would to enlist as volunteers.'³⁰

The credulous reputation commanded by Gandhi as early as in 1914 was attested by the response his call for volunteers received. He swiftly gathered about 80 recruits of Indian ethnicity for an Ambulance Corps, ratified by Lord Crewe himself, to tend to war casualties in London. Medical and military skills were duly imparted to the unit before it began its aid services. Sarojini Naidu – an accomplice of Annie Besant and, later, the first woman President of the INC – was a part of London's Lyceum Club that year. Almost instantly drawn to Gandhi, she 'threw herself whole heartedly into the work' of the Corps.³¹

Conclusion

As evident, despite their stature as anti-colonists, the most noted political voices – young or old, moderate or radical – from India's leading political outlet echoed unequivocal solidarity to the British Empire during the Great War, without any coercion or coaxing from the colonist. While a radical like Tilak cited a rise in Anglo-Indian fraternity, a Swadeshi such as Bose made sanguine predictions about British victory. Indeed, Naoroji saw the war waged by Britain as a 'righteous cause' and a 'struggle for liberty', but for the likes of him and Mehta – the elders of anti-colonial skepticism – to praise the British Raj was no co-incidence. One might suspect them as appeasers, for their moderate inclinations. However, with uncertainties looming, the more sprightly faces of the INC, too, hummed a chorus advocating the colonist's case. In fact, the INC's new school of the day was more active in its backing of Britain. Nehru enlisted in a reserve military unit, just as Gandhi and Naidu willfully undertook medical duties in war-hit London. Even reluctant figures like Rai and Jinnah failed to resist the soaring Anglophile tempers.

The INC stalwarts surely had their own rationales for standing by Britain during its days of distress. Quite like Malaviya, perhaps all of them tacitly tied their decisions to India's national interests. However, these leaders, despite their internal disagreements, were seasoned enough to know their public responsibilities. The dangers of thumping immature proclamations at a fragile time in history did not elude them. For national benefit, no INC member could afford to lose the advantage of being the trusty conduits between London and India's masses. Their responses to the Great War, thus, had to be well thought out, even if with crude Machiavellian intents. Despite being spontaneous and sporadic, the reactions on the war from leading INC affiliates emerged on the same page, resultantly going on to unify a discourse for the nation to follow.

In clarifying their optimism as early as in 1914-15 – before the Home Rule campaign could turn nationwide – India's nationalists exhibited wisdom, not populism. For the gain of history, it must be upheld that had India not marched by Britain's side during the Great War, it would have lost its *raison d'être* to repel colonialism, by attracting the tag of a savage opportunist from its prowling critics in the West. Consistent with its long trajectory of patient politics, India did not stab its colonist in the back, but chose to earn the heeding of its wants by fulfilling prior needs for a virtuous cause. Thus, by 1918-19, after Indian blood curbed Europe's implosion, as Britain did a volte-face on its assurances and unleashed a fresh wave of repression – including the Rowlatt Act clampdowns and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre – India rightfully funnelled its protest into a persistent, organised nationalist movement led by Gandhi. For revilers of India's stance during the Great War, the Mahatma reserved a wise answer: 'he who is not qualified to resist war, may take part in war [to] try to free himself, his nation, and the world from war.'³²

Endnotes

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- 3 Wolpert, Stanley A Tilak and Gokhale: *Revolution and Reform in the Making of Modern India*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962, p. 264.
- 4 Ibid, p. 264-65.
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- 6 Gupta, VP, and Mohini Gupta. *The Life and Legacy of Gopal Krishna Gokhale*. New Delhi: Radha Publications, 2000, p. 92.
- 7 Khan, Mohammad Shabbir. *Tilak and Gokhale: A Comparative Study*. New Delhi: Ashish Publishing House, 1992, p. 278-79.
- 8 Ibid, p. 300-301.
- 9 De, Amalendu. *Raja Subodh Chandra Malik and His Times*. Kolkata: National Council of Education, West Bengal, 1996, p. 96.
- 10 India, Government of. *India and the War*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915, p. 72.
- 11 Dadabhai Naoroji's grandson, KAD Naoroji, joined the British Army's Middlesex Regiment upon the Great War's outbreak, and briefly served in France. Along with a young AA Rudra, he re-enlisted at the Inns of Court's OTC in 1918, and formed part of the 17th OTC Battalion. However, before his course could meet completion, the Armistice of Compiègne ended the war. See: Barua, Pradeep. *Gentlemen of the Raj: The Indian Army Officer Corps, 1817-1949*. Santa Barbara: Greenwood Publishing, 2003, p. 47.
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