

Shri Adil Chhina@

During the period under review (January - May 2016) a two-day symposium titled ‘Meeting of the Minds’ was held on 25th and 26th May in Brighton, the UK. The symposium was organised jointly by the USI Centre for Armed Forces Historical Research (CAFHR) along with the Imperial War Museum (IWM), the Royal Pavilion and Museums, Brighton and Hove, and the Golden Tours Foundation (GTF). The symposium brought together like-minded individuals and organisations to discuss their work on the role of Indian soldiers in WWI and WWII. Speakers came from a wide spectrum with varied interests and backgrounds and included academicians, museums, archivists and cultural groups. The keynote address was delivered by Professor Sir Hew Strachan, till recently Chichele Professor of the History of War at All Souls College, Oxford, and member of both the United Kingdom’s and Scotland’s national advisory panels for the centenary of the First World War. Professor Strachan ended his address by pointing out that the centenary commemorations of the Great War had also served as a catalyst for reconciliation and improved relations between countries.

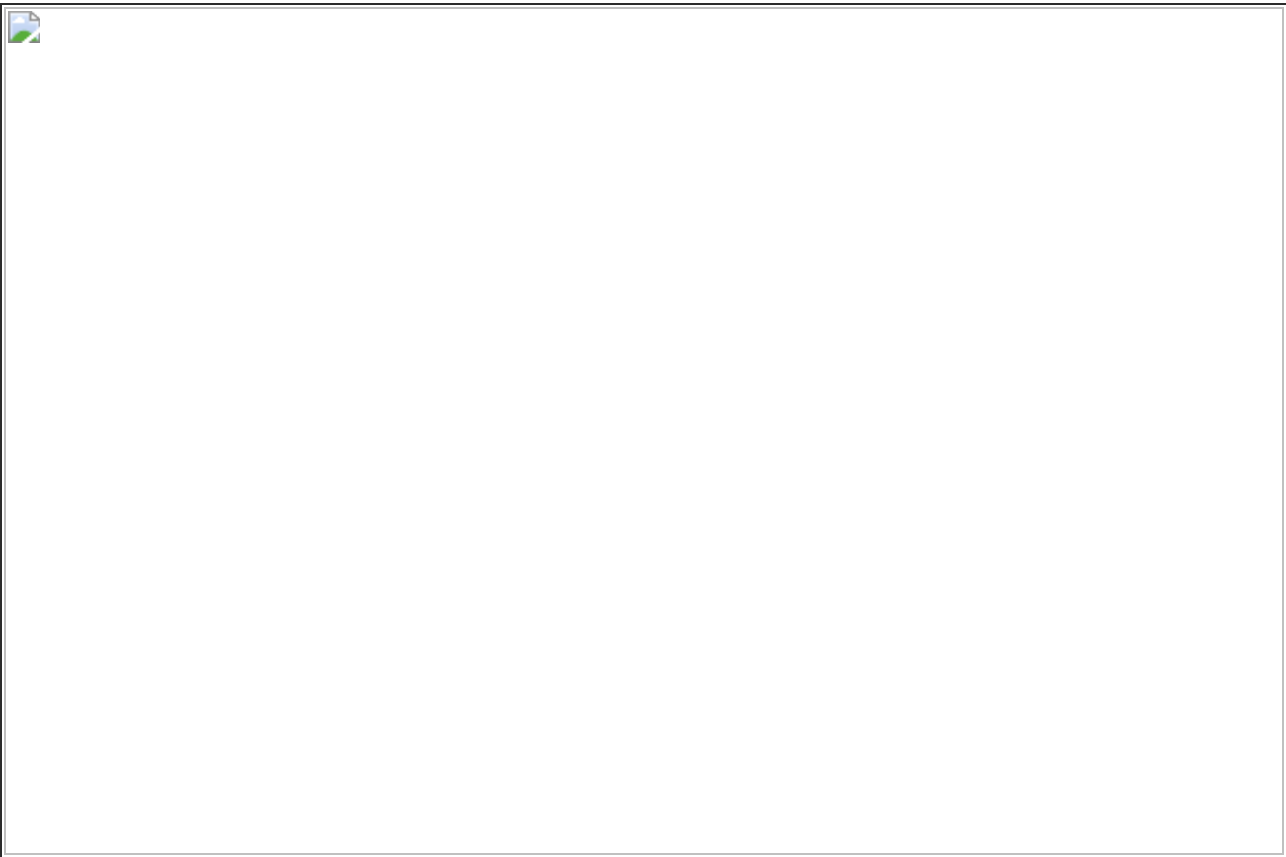

All symposium participants provided an insight into various projects as well as the work of their organisations and, got an opportunity to interact and collaborate for future projects as well. This was the first international symposium of its kind which focussed on the role played by India and its armed forces in the two world wars and reflected the growing interest in the military history and culture of the Indian Armed Forces. The Indian High Commission in London was represented by Brigadier Rajesh Jha, the Defence Adviser who was present throughout the proceedings on both days.

The symposium concluded with a reception organised in the House of Commons where a message was read out on behalf of Prime Minister David Cameron who was unable to personally attend since he was out of the country on that day.

In addition to its work on various aspects of Indian military history, the USI CAFHR has also proposed the ‘India Remembers’ project in order to institutionalise a national culture of remembrance. The intent is to generate awareness across a broad spectrum of society about the valour and sacrifice of personnel of the Indian Armed Forces in the service of the Nation, both before and after Independence. The project will have as its symbol the marigold flower and will work towards institutionalising a National Day of Remembrance or Sainik Smriti Diwas, which can coincide with the Armed Forces Flag day held annually on 7th December. In order to achieve its objectives, the Centre will be working closely with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC). The CWGC is responsible for maintaining various memorials and cemeteries around the world where Indian soldiers, sailors and airmen are commemorated or buried. In addition, the Centre is collaborating with the Bengaluru-based Flags of Honour Foundation, which has done yeoman service under its founder, Mr Rajeev Chandrashekhar, Member of Parliament (MP), towards commemorating and honouring the sacrifice of personnel of the Indian Armed Forces in the various conflicts fought since Independence.

A concerted action programme for community engagement is being developed through the development of education modules which can be used by schools, colleges, the National Cadet Corps, etc. On that particular day, citizens will be encouraged to identify a serving or retired serviceman or servicewoman and present them with a marigold flower and thank them for their service and sacrifice for the Nation, as is the custom prevalent in the United States. This will inculcate greater respect for the values and ethos of the armed forces. It will also work towards a transformation in society by highlighting a national duty of remembrance and commemoration of the sacrifice of those who died so that others may live.

The project also seeks to highlight the valour and sacrifice of Indian soldiers before a global audience and for this, the CWGC will integrate their commemorative activities into the larger Indian Remembrance Project. The CWGC looks after memorials the world over and works extensively to commemorate all Commonwealth soldiers (including Indians) who died during the First and Second World Wars. The project will be officially launched on 14th July 2016 at a formal event being organised at the USI. The project is functioning under the guidance of a project advisory panel comprising Major General Ian Cardozo, AVSM, SM, (Retd), Brigadier KP Singh Deo, AVSM (Retd) and Mr Rajeev Chandrashekhar, MP.


Participants at the 'Meeting of the Minds' symposium in discussion.

Group photograph from 'Meeting of the Minds' symposium.


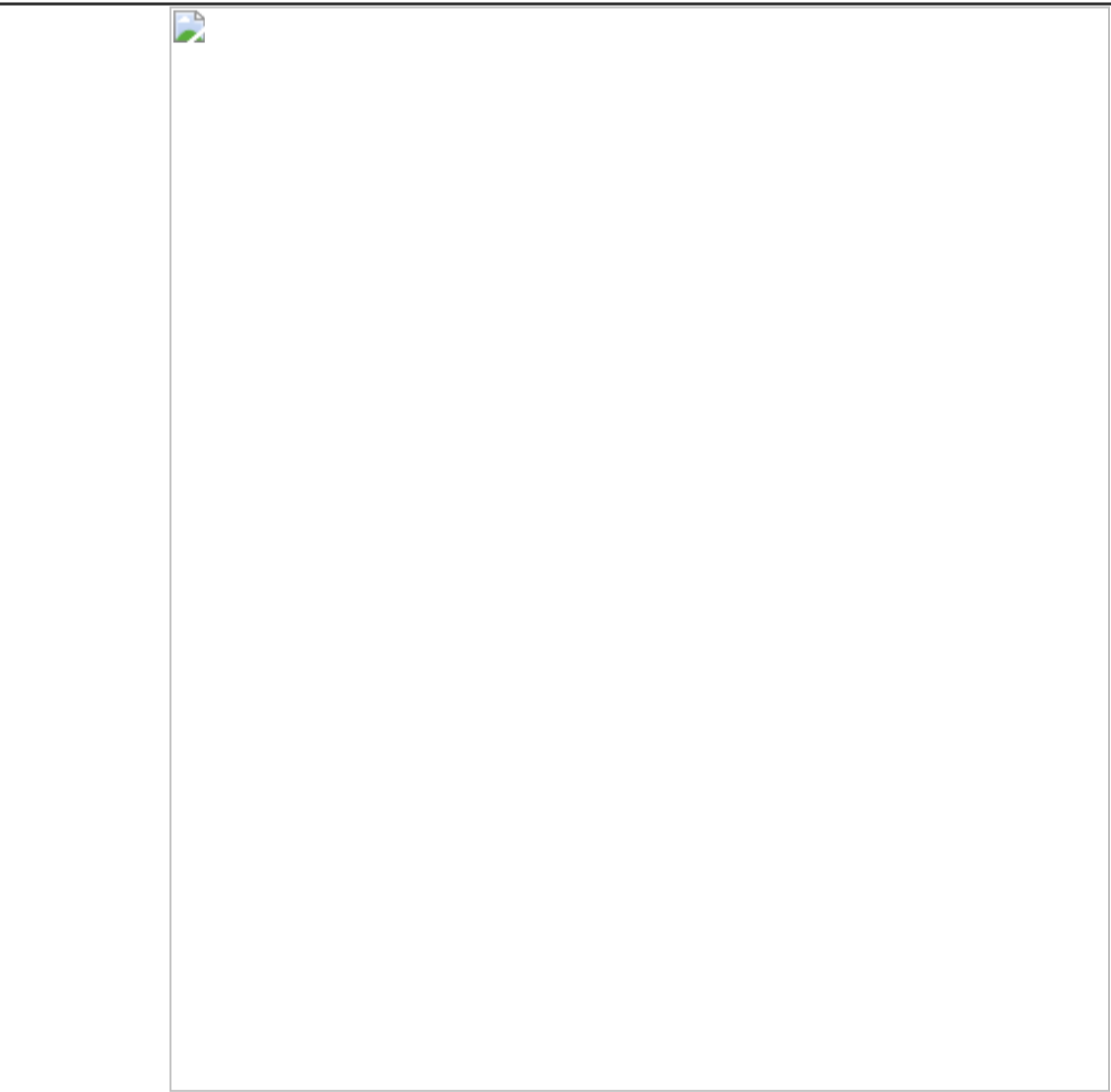
@Shri Adil Chhina is a research assistant with the USI Centre for Armed Forces Historical Research. He is working on the India and the Great War Centenary Commemoration Project.

Major Uday Sathe, VrC (Retd)@

The World War 1, also known as “The Great War for Civilisation 1914 -1919” was a remarkable event in the World History and that of India. In this War, 1.4 million Indian soldiers participated, of which more than 74,187 attained martyrdom, and over 1,37,000 were injured. Of all the tributes paid to the Indian Army, none was more poignant and heartwarming than the one by Field Marshal Ferdinand Foch, Commander of Allied Forces in France. He said, “The Indian Troops were thus amongst the first to show the way to a victorious offensive!” It would thus be an understatement to say that it was because of the exceptional valour and sacrifices made by the Indian soldiers that the British could manage to defend ‘The British Empire’ successfully.

The Last Post Ceremony has been conducted at the Menin Gate Memorial in Belgium continuously since 1928 without a break – even during the WW II. Menin Gate was chosen as the specific location for this ceremony because of its special symbolic significance; it was from this spot that countless soldiers set out for the front in the European Theatre of World War 1; many of them destined, never to return.

I had the singular honour to lay the wreath on 15 Oct 2015 in memory of my grandfather, Subedar Shripad Hari Sathe, ‘Bahadur’ OBI, IMSM of the Indian Subordinate Medical Department and also do “the Exhortation” – a singular honour which was bestowed upon me by the Last post Association.

	
Major Uday Sathe, Vir Chakra (Retd) proceeding to lay the Wreath along with his escort from Belgium Army, Airborne Commando Lt Col christopher ONRAET	
Exhortation of the Assembly by Major Uday Sathe, Vir Chakra (Retd)	
	
"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old: Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them"	

@Major Uday Sathe, VrC (Retd) was commissioned into the Regiment of Artillery on 15 Jun 1966 and was decorated with Vir Chakra during the 1971 War. He belongs to a family which has served the Indian Army for five generations.

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Introduction

During the first week of Oct 1950, as Tibet was invaded by the People's Liberation Army, Communist China stated that it was 'liberating' Tibet. It is not the place here to enter into this debate, but one can see that several decades later, the Tibetans, particularly the first ones to be 'liberated' in Eastern Tibet, still disagree with this interpretation. The Battle of Chando, the first and only encounter between the Tibetan and Chinese forces is, however, interesting to look at for several reasons. Tibet, a Buddhist nation was not militarily and tactically ready to oppose the seasoned troops of Mao (and some of China's brilliant commanders). From the start, The Land of Snows stood no chance, especially without outside support.

Many in Tibet still believed that increasing the number of gips (recitation) or parkramas (circumbulations) around the monasteries and stupas of Kham, would be sufficient to make the Truth Prevail. As Robert Ford, the British radio operator posted in Chamdo, remarked, "The gods are on our side" - was the mantra most oft-repeated in the town, "but it seemed to me that something more Churchillian was needed". For the Chinese, it was a well-prepared operation in two stages: the fall of Chamdo, the capital town of Kham province during the Fall of 1950 and then the advance to Lhasa during the next season. I

India was fooled into believing that Communist China wanted a 'negotiated' settlement with the Tibetans: it was never the case. Marshal Liu Bosheng in a message in Aug 1950 made it clear that he was going to 'liberate' Tibet. Opposite the Chinese strategists was Ngabo Shape (Ngabo Ngawang Jigme), the Tibetan Commissioner for the Kham province, a weak leader, ready to surrender; he was obviously not the military chief de guerre that Tibet needed at this point in time to defend itself against the onslaught of the PLA.

It has to be noticed that Mao Zedong entered the Korean campaign on the same day (07 Oct) as the PLA crossed the Yangtze and started its Tibet campaign. It shows the confidence the Communist leadership had in the local PLA commanders. What follows is a narration of the Battle of Chamdo, the opening battle for 'liberation of Tibet' which has been primarily compiled from Chinese and Tibetan sources.

Marshal Liu Bosheng Communique

On the first day of Aug 1950, a message from Marshal Liu Bosheng, the Chairman of Southwest Military and Political Committee, was widely distributed by Xinhua: "[The] People Liberation Army will soon march towards Tibet with the object of driving out the British and American aggressive forces so as to make Tibetans return to the Great Family of the People's Republic of China (PRC)." The general lines of the 'liberation' were given as under :-

"As soon as the Liberation army enters into Tibet they will carry out the Programme of National Regional Autonomy, religious freedom, protection of Lama church and will respect the religious belief and customs of the Tibetans, develop their languages and characters as well as their educational and their agricultural, pastoral, industrial and commercial enterprises, and work for betterment of the peoples living standard."

Did the CCP's Central Committee have the intention to seriously implement these policies? It is difficult to say.

Liu's message continues, "The military and political systems prevailing in Tibet now will remain as they are and will not be changed. However the present Tibetan Army will become a part of the National Defence Force of the PRC". It was ominous for the Tibetans. Liu generously added: "All expatriate of the People's Liberation Army when they enter into Tibet [will be here] by this Central People's Government so as to reduce the burden of the Tibetans."

The die was cast.

Terrain – The Province of Kham

Please refer to Map 1. The map gives a good idea of the terrain of Kham Province in which the operations were conducted. The province of Kham (Dotoe in Tibetan) was traditionally known as Chuizi Gangdruk, ('four rivers and six ranges'). The four rivers are: the Salween, the Mekong, the Yangtze and the Yalong. The six ranges which form the watersheds for these river systems are : the Tasawang range (5100-6700 m) which includes Mount Kawa Karpo (6702 m), it lies between the Salween and the Mekong; the Markhamang range between the Mekong and the Yangtze; the Zelmogang range (4800-5400 m), between the northern reaches of Yangtze and Yalong; the Pobogang range (4800-5600 m), between the southern Yangtze and the lower Yalong; the Marlungang (5100-5700 m), between the upper Yalong and the Yellow river; and the Minyak Rabugang range (4800-7750 m) with Mount Minyak Gangkar (7756 m), the highest mountain in Kham, between the lower Yalong and the Gyarong.

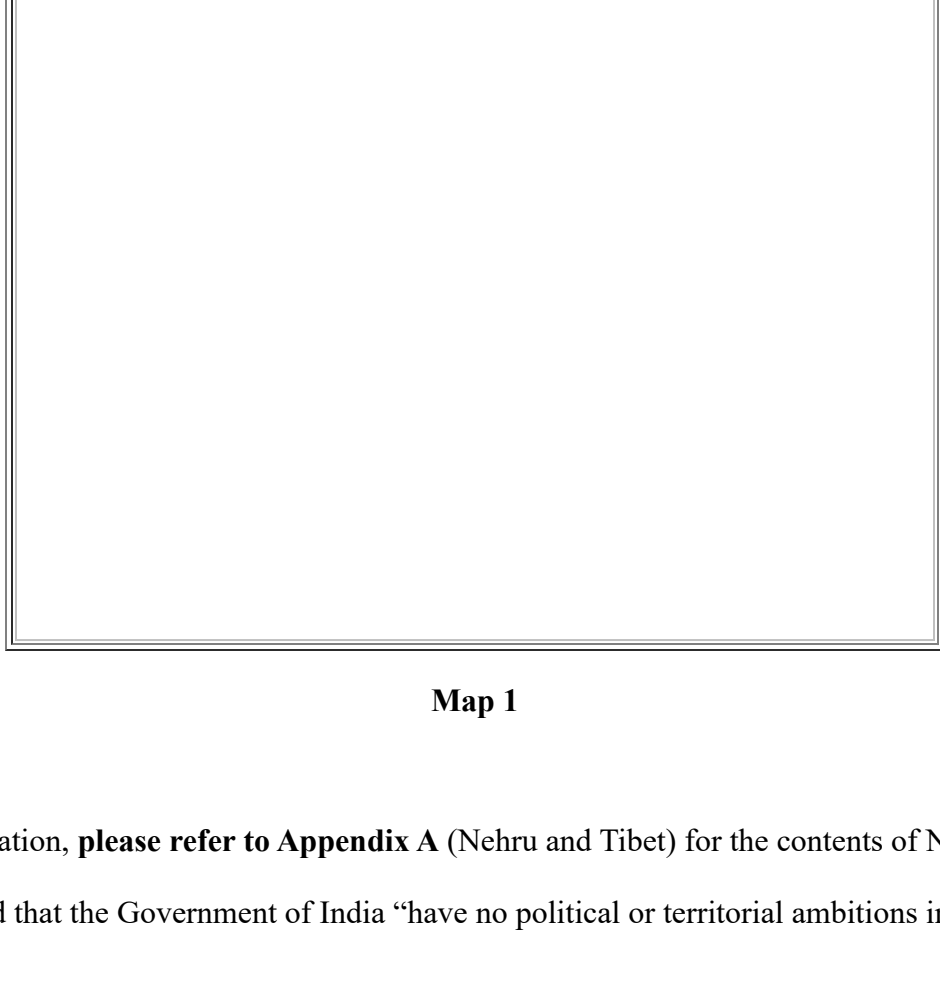
The Military Plans for the 'Liberation'

On Aug 23, Mao Zedong sent a telegram to the Southwest Bureau of the Central Committee; it is entitled: "Strive to Occupy Chamdo This Year and Advance to Lhasa Next Year". This cable, repeated to the Northwest Bureau in Qinghai (Ando Province), lays down the Communists' military plans for the year 1950 and 1951.

Answering a note that he had received three days earlier (probably from Liu Bosheng) Mao writes: "The plan to push for occupying Chamdo this year and to leave three thousand men to consolidate Chamdo is good. You can actively make preparations according to this plan, and when it is ascertained by the end of this month or the beginning of next month that the road has reached Ganzi (also written Kande) without obstruction, the advance can go ahead. It is expected that Chamdo will be occupied in Oct. That would be advantageous for pushing for political changes in Tibet, and marching into Lhasa the next year."

Indian Perspective

A few days earlier, KM Panikkar, the Indian Ambassador in China had met Zhou Enlai, the Chinese Foreign Minister. The Ambassador reported to Delhi: "I am satisfied that the representations we have made have had two important results; the Chinese will not now proceed to attack Tibet unless all means for peaceful settlement have been exhausted... Short of giving Tibet its privileged position; China, I am convinced, would do everything to satisfy Tibetans, at least for the time, and will not proceed to military action." **In retrospect, an unrealistic assessment!**



Map 1

This is further borne out by the thinking then prevailing within the Indian foreign establishment. As an illustration, **please refer to Appendix A** (Nehru and Tibet) for the contents of Note from the Prime Minister to the Foreign Secretary. On Aug 22, the Ambassador had handed over an aide-mémoire to the Chinese Government in which he stated that the Government of India "have no political or territorial ambitions in Tibet and no desire to seek any novel privileged position for themselves or their nationals in Tibet."

Setting the Stage

The next day, the Great Helmsman could affirm: "Now India has issued a statement recognising Tibet as China's territory, only expressing hope that the issue can be settled peacefully, not by force. ...If our army can occupy Chamdo in Oct, there is the possibility of pushing the Tibetan delegation to Beijing for negotiations, begging for a peaceful solution... Right now we are using the strategy of urging the Tibetan delegation to come to Beijing and reducing Nehru's fear."

The strategy was clear. The PLA had to occupy Chamdo before the winter stop the advance for a while; get time to force 'an agreement' with the Tibetans and then complete the 'liberation' by advancing to Lhasa in 1951. In his telegram to Chengdi, Mao explains: "When Tibetan representatives arrive in Beijing,2 we plan to use the Ten Points already decided as the basis for negotiations, urge the Tibetan representatives to sign it, and make the Ten Points an agreement approved by both sides. If this can be done, it will make things easier for advancing into Tibet next year."

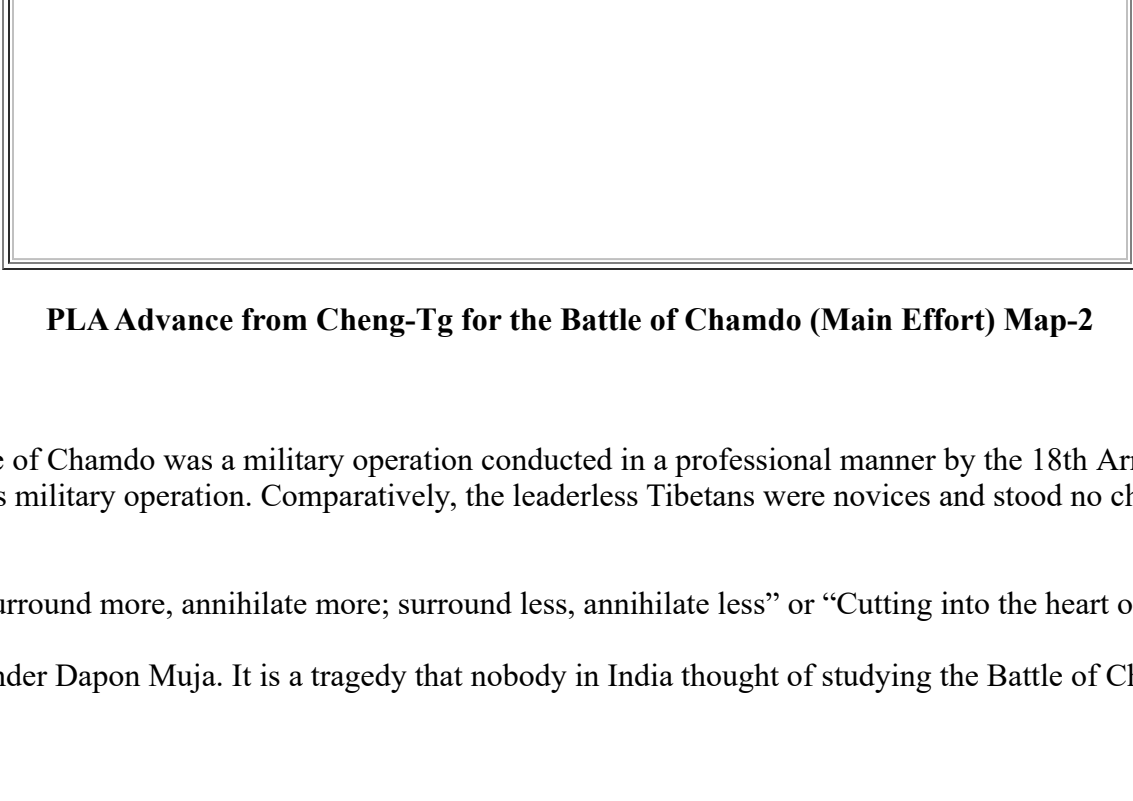
In other words, it would be a 'peaceful liberation'.

It is what happened in May 1951 when the Tibetan 'negotiators' were forced 'under duress' to sign the 17-Point Agreement; the road to Lhasa lay open. In Aug 1950, Mao rationalises further: "Your plan to leave 3,000 men in Chamdo for the winter after occupying it, not to advance into Lhasa this year, and withdraw the main force back to Ganzi may be seen by the Tibetans as a gesture of good will. The matter of 30 airplanes is in process, but it takes time. You should not count on them in the short term. All the provisions for the 16,000 men marching from Ganzi to Chamdo have to be carried by manpower and yaks, and 3,000 men among them will need provisions for winter. ...Part of the grain and meat (needed by troops) may be purchased in Chamdo etc., and have you prepared some gold, silver and goods that Tibetans need, such as silk, to take with you?"

That was it. The military operations could start.

The Battle of Chamdo

Please refer to Map 2. For the description of the Battle of Chamdo, our source is a Chinese text called Detailed Report on Battle of Chamdo by the 52nd Division of the 18th Army of the People's Liberation Army. It is part of a Chinese report, The Liberation of Chamdo, which was translated by two independent researchers, Jianglin Li and Matthew Akester.3



PLA Advance from Cheng-Tg for the Battle of Chamdo (Main Effort) Map-2

While reflecting the views of Mao Zedong and the Communist Party of China, it shows that the Battle of Chamdo was a military operation conducted in a professional manner by the 18th Army of the Second Field Army, with the possibility to receive support from the North (Qinghai), the South (Yunnan) and even a few troops from Xinjiang. What is surprising is the elaborate planning of this military operation. Comparatively, the leaderless Tibetans were novices and stood no chance in front of the calculated tactical moves of the PLA. We shall see that the Chinese learned a lot during the Chamdo operations; this is apparent in their 'Summary'.

While Panikkar in Beijing was talking peace and dialogue, the PLA's slogan in Eastern Tibet was: "Surround more, annihilate more; surround less, annihilate less" or "Cutting into the heart of the enemy position, penetrating, separating, surrounding and annihilating the enemy."

It did not mean that some of the Tibetan troops did not fight well, particularly the Gading regiment under Dapon Muja. It is a tragedy that nobody in India thought of studying the Battle of Chamdo. It might have prepared us better for what was to follow 12 years later!

The Chinese Narrative of the Battle of Chamdo

The Chinese report tells us that after crossing the Jinsha river (Driichi in Tibetan or Upper Yangtze) from Oct 06 - 09, the troops reached the vast plateau of a thousand 11.4 in length and width and in coordination with supporting troops, units of this division were divided into three wings - Left, Middle and Right, for the attack on Chamdo, a powerful pincer attack targeting the 1500-ft-long position of the Tibetan army commanded by Chamdo Governor Lhalu. 5 ft has to be noted that before the operations started, Governor Lhalu had been transferred to Lhasa. Robert Ford was not happy with Ngabo who 'seemed too cool and confident'. It was one could say, 'a British underestimation'.

The report continues: "During the fourteen days of rapid advance and fighting, all units were moving across the unfamiliar plateau without accurate maps. Soldiers carried loads of 60 or 70 jin6, climbed more than 50 high mountains and crossed rivers over 60 times. On an average, foot soldiers covered 72 ft (36 km), cavalry 80 ft (40 km) a day; those who had to march day and night moved up to 36 hours continuously without enough food. However, all units answered the call by party committees of both the army and the division and endured extreme hardships, annihilated all the defending troops in Chamdo on schedule, and successfully completed the capture of Chamdo." The battle of Chamdo commenced on 06 Oct 1950 and was concluded on 24 Oct 1950.

How such a quick success?

It is explained in detail: "(the PLA) annihilated five Dapons,7 the main force of the Tibetan army, and over 2,000 militia, liberated the region North to Qinghai, 8 South to Yunnan, 9 East to Jinsha river, West to Luolong (Lhorong Dzong) and Leiwiqiu (Riwoche), a vast area more than one thousand square ft. The success further strengthened our unity with Tibetans, West of the Jinsha river, laid the foundation for advancing next year (1951), struck blows directly and indirectly at the British and American imperialist invaders, inspired people in the near east and repaid the people of the whole country who had warmly supported us."

Of course, apart from the poor Robert Ford, who would soon be captured and kept for five years in a Chinese prison, there were no imperialists around. But the Tibetans had to be 'liberated' from something or somebody. It was an easy alibi for the world at large, and particularly for the gullible Indian Ambassador in Beijing. The military operation to 'liberate' Tibet also demonstrates how Mao's concept of a 'Liberation War' was applied on the ground.

The Report continues: "... Tibetans have warmly supported us (taking in and escorting individual stragglers, delivering information, guiding the way, providing transportation, building bridges, preparing firewood and fodder, etc.), all of this shows that we had good influence by carrying out the policies conscientiously before the attack and shows the tangible benefits brought to Tibetans during our westward march. This is a small accomplishment we achieved in the past, and it is also a major pointer for the future in the liberation and construction of Tibet."

The 'political' instructions to the ground forces were: "Three Keep-in-Mind 10 and 'Eight Things-to-Do' 11

The Political Department of Tibet Military Area Command in Chengdu later prepared "A Brief Report on the Battle of Chamdo by Southwest Military Area Command". One gets an idea of the role of the 'liberated populations' (the Tibetans) in the military operations: "Before the battle, troops had gone through comprehensive education on minority policy and conducted work aimed at uniting with the minority people in a planned way. This work contributed greatly to accomplishing the battle smoothly," notes the Report.

Of course, the situation rapidly changed and by mid-1950s, the Khampa guerrillas started resisting the 'liberation', but that is another story.

To come back to the Report of the Battle, it notes: "In this battle, troops advanced rapidly for 15 days with heavy loads across the high plateau a thousand kilometers in length and width, wrapping up... entire enemy position 1500 ft (750 km) in length and accomplished the task on schedule, completely annihilated the third, the seventh, the eighth, the fifth and the tenth Dapon, altogether five Dapons (battalions) under Tibetan Frontier Envoy Commissioner General (Ngabo, the 'Domey Chikpa'), captured ...over 3,000 men. This victory is fundamentally due to correct leadership by strong support from the people of the whole country, coordination from supporting troops (particularly engineers), and the eight-month long preparation."

In some places, the Tibetans fought quite well. As noted by Melvyn Goldstein, already in Aug, the Tibetans fought a pitched battle at Denkok: "The battle of Dengo (Denkok) was technically a victory for the Tibetans, in that they had pushed the Chinese back and demonstrated they could contend with the People's Liberation Army. The battle boosted the morale of the Tibetan forces in Kham, but it did not alter the basic military situation of the Tibetans, who were woefully undermanned and underarmed." **But at the time, Mao and his generals had not completed the preparations for the Battle of Chamdo.**

Analysing the Tibetan Opposition

We shall not go into the details of the operations, but it is worth stopping for a moment at the Chinese analysis of their opponents, the Tibetan troops:

- (a) The enemy had no focus, no depth and attached no importance to flanks.
- (b) Enemy lacks systematic strategic planning and command; they fought wherever they were attacked and were easily misled (deceived) by us. After we crossed the river from Dengke (Dengo or Denkak on the Yangtze River), it was quite possible that the enemy might mistakenly believe, based on historical experience, that the Chinese could be stopped.
- (c) The enemy had never experienced large scale battles.
- (d) The Tibetans had no knowledge of modern military science and were equipped with few heavy weapons.
- (e) Their combat capability was not strong.

The Chinese estimated that there were three possibilities:

- (a) The Tibetans would retreat without fighting and escape without hesitation ("if this happened, it would definitely make it more difficult for us to annihilate them")
- (b) The Tibetans would scatter at the first contact, everywhere in the mountains and wilderness to entangle us ("this would make it more difficult for us to annihilate them").
- (c) The Tibetans would concentrate forces and put up strong resistance in strategic locations ("this was exactly what we were hoping for, for we were absolutely sure that we would annihilate them thoroughly and completely").

After the first encounter in Denkok in Aug, the Chinese report comments: "we did not seize the moment of strength to strike the enemy a fatal blow. The enemy might mistakenly think that our combat capability was not strong". But this was not the real Battle of Chamdo. Mao wanted to complete the logistic preparations before delivering the fatal blow to the Tibetans as also perhaps, a sense of complacency amongst Indians.

A First Step - Well Accomplished

The Report gives insight into the strategy, the Battle of Chamdo was the first step towards Lhasa: "Liberating Chamdo, annihilating the main force of the Tibetan army in the area east of Upper Mekong, Enda (South of Chamdo) and Riwoche lays the foundation for advance into Lhasa next year 1951 and liberate the entire Tibet." The report further describes the battle, "We decided to deploy a powerful right-flank pincer composed of infantry and cavalry, providing strong points to offset each other's weaknesses, making a detour via Batang and Nangchen and pushing forward vigorously and aggressively. Troops should not be blocked by small numbers of enemy, doing everything possible to clear away obstacles and encircle heavily... the entire force, cutting off the enemy's routes of withdrawal from Enda to Gyamda Dzong in Kongso (on the way from Chamdo to Lhasa, North of the NEFA) and from Riwoche to Nagetha, the two main escape routes, making it impossible for enemies to escape even if they intended to slip away without fighting. Performance of troops in this wing is the key to success or failure in annihilating more than three Dapons of the enemy force."

The whole wing (of the force) should cut into the heart of the enemy position by way of penetrating, separating, surrounding and annihilating the enemy within the entire enemy position and advancing straight to Chamdo". If the enemy did not rest, we wouldn't rest; when the enemy took rest, we annihilate them.

The left wing force crossed the river at Kamtok, marching slowly by way of Donggu, Jonda and Juexuo to draw in the enemy. They seized the Damala Pass (between Derge and Chamdo) and controlled Sichuan bridge. The order of battle and missions for each of the three forces (Right, Centre and Left) are given at **Appendix B**.

The Chinese also wrote down the lessons of the battle and analysed the strengths and weaknesses of the Tibetan Army. It makes interesting reading:

- (a) All Tibetan troops were organised in a comparatively primitive way. Troops have neither controlling HQ, nor maps.
- (b) Everything was handled by one single officer-in-charge.
- (c) Special reconnaissance troops and communication equipment were very outdated.
- (d) They did not fight aggressively and lacked counter attack capability. In several battles we did not find the enemy launching any counter attacks.
- (e) Lack of systematic strategic thinking.
- (f) No attention paid to protect flank and rear while deploying the forces. No knowledge of using the terrain to block our advance.
- (g) No night combat experience.
- (h) No guards posted at encampments.
- (i) Enemy were slow in climbing mountains; the PLA 156th regiment's speed was nearly one third (33 per cent) faster than the speed of the enemy.
- (j) In terms of tactics: the Tibetans were good at riding horses, highly skillful at shooting and utilising terrain and ground, but not good at carrying out coordinated operations.

There is certainly some exaggeration in the above account, but the lack of larger strategic thinking cannot be discounted. One should also not forget that the Tibetan troops were less than 5,000 (perhaps 7,000 if one includes the local militia) and the PLA along the main direction of attack numbered around 20,000.

The tactics used against Tibetan army are also mentioned in the Report:

- (a) The key is to encircle the enemy
- (b) No need to worry about breaking through Tibetan army's positions, the only worry is not being able to encircle them.
- (c) Once the supply line is cut, enemy will retreat in disorder without fighting.
- (d) Based on special conditions of the plateau, cavalry is the key to annihilate the enemy, and the guarantee of success.
- (e) Good coordination between infantry and artillery must be ensured.
- (f) Importance of good reconnaissance and information about the enemy through local sources by cultivating Tibetans.

Lessons for Future

Perhaps more interesting for India are the suggestions on the PLA structure and equipment required for future operations during the decades of 50s and 60s. The Summary recommends:

- (a) A division should have a cavalry regiment to fulfill the task of circling and surrounding the enemy.12
- (b) A regiment should have a mounted reconnaissance company to facilitate communication and reconnaissance.
- (c) Mounted reconnaissance company can perform tasks of circling and surrounding in small actions.
- (d) One engineers platoon should be allocated for building bridges, handling boats, and clearing away obstacles to increase speed of advance.
- (e) Reduce mountain artillery, increase recoilless rifles, high-angle guns, dynamite, detonators, fuses and explosives.
- (f) Quality and style of current field engineering equipment needs to be improved.
- (g) The current pattern of uniforms must be changed and quality must be improved, otherwise it will not be able to last the season. It is better to make the uniform with strong and durable cloth; shoulders, backside and knees should be reinforced.
- (h) Weight of coat should be reduced. Comforter should be changed into soft, warm, damp-resistant, lightweight, larger size wool blanket which can be used as mattress pad as well as comforter.
- (i) Raincoat and damp-resistant canvas should be combined into one, based on current raincoat size and shape, adding more rubber to make it thicker so it can be used to wear and to spread as bedding. Quality of shoes should be improved, soles should be softer and the upper part should be higher, water-proof and damp-resistant.
- (k) Headgear should better be a helmet with goggles fixed on.
- (l) Regiment and above level should be equipped with larger radio sets of 50 watts or more.
- (m) All food should be of high quality, less quantity, long-lasting and easy to carry; otherwise it increases soldiers' burden, reduces their physical strength, slows down marching speed and has negative impact on accomplishing missions.

Conclusion

It is generally known that the PRC had annexed Tibet through the use of military force in 1950-51 but not enough is known or written about – how it was achieved ? In that context the Battle of Chamdo is an important landmark, for it was this battle that opened the door for the PLA to march into Tibet. Yet, the PLA on Mao's directions chose to halt here and wait till the 17 Point Agreement between the PRC Government and the local Government of Tibet could be signed in Beijing on 23 May 1951 which opened the way for peaceful 'liberation' of Tibet by the PLA.

The occupation of Tibet was quite different from the annexation of Xinjiang which was primarily a military operation and was completed within 3-4 months, commencing on 12 Oct 1949. It may be remembered that the PRC came into being on 01 Oct 1949. As against this, for the 'liberation' of Tibet the PLA carried out preparations for nearly eight months (Jan-Aug 1950). Further, according to Mao's instructions, the 'liberation' of Tibet was to be as much, if not more, a political affair than a purely military affair. Obviously there were sensitivities involved and these were well understood by the communist leadership of the time.

Notwithstanding the above, the PLA preparations were thorough and deliberate and no aspects; political, social or military were overlooked. The force level employed (a field army plus some other units / formations) was overwhelming, an extremely well thought out military strategy (advance from four directions) and above all, a favourable international environment left nothing to chance. Thus the Battle of Chamdo, the opening gambit sent a very powerful signal to the Tibetans and the world about the Chinese intentions. In terms of ground strategy the annexation of Xinjiang and Tibet was a masterly stroke towards securing and consolidation of frontiers of a newly emerged state soon after the Second World War.

Endnotes

1. The PLA entered Lhasa on September 9, 1951, as planned.
2. They would come in May 1951.
3. The entire text in English is available on the blog: War in Tibet. See <http://historicaldocs.blogspot.in/2013/03/documents-related-to-battle-of-chamdo-1.html>
4. Two Li roughly equals one km.
5. His title was 'Domey Chikpa' or 'Eastern Commissioner', one of four regional commissioners looking after the administration of the Tibetan provinces. Jianglin Li and Matthew Akester commented: "It was a wishful title, since the Lhasa government actually governed no more than half of Dotoe (Kham), and none of Domey (Ando), in this period".
6. 30 to 35 kg.
7. Tibetan forces consisted of small regiments (800 to 1000 men) each commanded by a Dapon, equivalent of a colonel, though it was the highest rank in the Tibetan Army.
8. The First Field Army of Marshal Peng Dehuai..
9. 42nd Division of the 14th Army.
10. You must obey orders; you must not take even one needle from the masses; you must turn over to the government things acquired from the enemy.
11. "You must speak gently to the people; you must buy and sell honestly; you must return the things you borrow; things which are broken or lost must be replaced; you may not beat or scold even one people; you may not destroy or harm the crops; you may not tease or bother females; you may not abuse prisoners of war."
12. During 1962 Operations, PLA forces operating in Ladakh had a Cavalry regiment consisting of four companies which were repeatedly used for cutting of routes of withdrawal and as mobile troops.

Appendix 'A'

Nehru and Tibet

As the PLA were making lightning advances in Kham, the Indian Prime Minister talked of Peace. On November 19, 1950, Nehru wrote a note to KPS, the Foreign Secretary; he was deeply upset with tile notes/cables received from Harishwar Dayal, the Political Officer in Sikkim and Sumal Sinha, the head of the Indian Mission in Lhasa. Why?

Nehru explained: "I am a little tired of reading the telegrams that come to us from our Mission in Lhasa and our Representative in Sikkim." As a fire-reaching drama unfolds on India's borders, the Prime Minister (who is also Foreign Minister) complains that he is 'tired' of these two remarkable diplomats: "They are full of their advice to us as to what we should do and criticism of us for what we may have done. I think that it is about time that we reminded these representatives of ours what their functions are and what they are supposed, and what not, to do," remarked Nehru.

The note to the Foreign Secretary continued: "We want from them full information and appraisal of the situation. We want also our recommendations. But, it seems to me that their messages go beyond this and indicate a lack of confidence in the Government of India and an apprehension that we might do the wrong thing unless they step up from doing it. They live in remote parts, cut off from the rest of the world, and judge all world events from their own immediate environments. They appear to have hardly any conception of broad policies in terms of what is happening in the world."

Dayal and Sinha were probably unable to 'understand' the implications of what was happening in the Korean peninsula and in particular the 'mediator' role that Nehru wanted to play in the crisis, but these two officers were witnessing one of the greatest tragedies of the 20th century, a peaceful independent nation being swallowed by a powerful one, in the name of 'liberation'.



@Mr Claude Arpi was born in Angoulême, France and graduated as Dental Surgeon from Bordeaux University in June 1974. Soon after, he decided to come and live in India. He has authored several books on Tibet, China and French India. Recently, he published '1962 - The McMahon Saga' (Lancer Publishers) and 'Glimpse of Tibetan History' (Tibet Museum, Dharamsala). He regularly writes on Tibet, China and Indo-French relations for Indian publications. Presently, he is the Director of the Tibetan Pavilion at Auroville, India.

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01 Apr 1987 will remain a landmark date in the history of Defence Budgetary System. It may be recalled that until then the Ordnance Factories (OFs) had been in existence for nearly two centuries. They had, however, functioned as departmental units under the overall control of the Army. The system and procedures for various activities were well laid down and, by and large, these were followed by all concerned.

However, on 01 Apr 1987, this system underwent change and the Director General of Ordnance Factories (DGOF) budget was separated from the Army budget. What prompted the Government to bring about this landmark change in the functioning of OFs? The basic rationale was to bring in fiscal discipline both in the OFs (manufacturing units); and the Directorate General of Ordnance Services (DGOS), the prime procurement agency of the goods produced by the OFs. In the changed system OFs had to prepare pre-determined price list of all their products as against simply passing on the product cost much after manufacturing the entire lot of items taken up for production in a lot called ‘Warrant’. The DGOS on the other hand had to ensure that they procured their yearly requirements within the stipulated amount in their budgetary allocation.

As a result, whatever the Army was procuring from their own OFs, considered as free issues to the Services till then, had to be henceforth procured from the DGOF at a predetermined ‘price’. The DGOF now became a separate entity with its own budget, under separate Major Head 2079-DGOF. This will remain a landmark event, as on that date the umbilical cord between OFs and the Army was severed. This gave birth to a new budgetary system for the OFs. From the concept of being owners of OFs, the Army and the OFs started to have a relationship of a ‘buyer’ and ‘seller’.

The objectives of the DGOF under the new defence budgetary system had to be redefined. The OFs which were earlier producing all the items for the Army had their own priorities. Like any other customer, the Army wanted to procure the best out of its own budgetary allocations. This required emphasis on getting the best value for money. The Army now had a choice in selecting the ‘party’, from whom to procure items that they needed. Earlier, the erstwhile British Indian Army had established OFs for producing and procuring arms, ammunition and equipment to meet all their requirements. They had never considered the idea of having a choice in the matter of buying these items from any other source except their own manufacturing units to fulfill their fast changing demands. Overnight the Army had now become the customer, and this changed the equation between the two. The issue under consideration now was: would this sudden change in relationship bring about a comprehensive change in the organisational work and culture of the OFs?

At that time, the DGOF had 39 OFs with a manpower of 1.7 lakh workers spread all over the Country. Even with the best of intentions, the process to disseminate the concept of new budgetary system took considerable time as it required educating and training officers and staff at various levels. This segregation of OFs from the Army involved adoption of a new budgetary system.

The new budgetary system had more than one variable; therefore, it needed precise understanding and workable linkages. The new system required periodic review of DGOF’s efficiency with reference to managing its ‘Net Budget’. This concept was something totally new to the organisation. The DGOF under its major head would get budgetary allocation under various minor heads to incur expenditure on producing the end product as well as intermediary products. Simultaneously, the DGOF had to sell its products to recover the cost of production from its buyers; primarily, the Army, Navy and the Air Force. Spare capacity was also to be utilised for meeting the requirements of Central Police Forces (CPOs) and any other civilian organisations, in order to maintain the ‘net budget’ as provided for in the budget estimates. Here came the complication. While the OFs made all their investment in establishing plants and machinery, creating infrastructural facilities and engaged fixed civilian manpower through the Army’s Budget till 01 Apr 1987; now suddenly, they had to ensure that their product prices were viable so that they could sell all that they produced and recover the cost which they had incurred to be able to manage ‘Net Budget’.

While these developments were taking place in OFs to cope up with this paradigm shift, for the first time, the Services’ own ‘Budget Allocation for Modernisation’ was categorised as ‘Capital Budget’ and the provision for other stores needed for normal maintenance and replacements was made under ‘Revenue Stores Budget Head’. Specific ceiling in Stores Budget led to DGOS also becoming more cost conscious. Considering the limited allocation of their Stores Budget, they started going into the details of the product requirements and product prices. Even where indents were placed to cover four yearly requirements, the DGOS started taking a holistic review of Inventory Lists to determine whether it should continue with the indented items or go in for new products keeping in view the latest technology and fire power of the latest weaponry.

This resulted in large scale cancellation of indents, as all the indented items were not included in the Annual Production Programme in the Target Fixation Meeting between the DGOF and the DGOS. The DGOS justified its stand stating that their budget allocation was on an annual basis and total funds were so limited that they could neither entertain all the past indents nor place indents on a long term basis. Besides, the Army desired to have the best value for money within their allotted budget. This resulted in OFs facing severe criticism for unrealistic pricing of their products.

The interesting point was that while the products and the manufacturing units were the same (as they were prior to 01 Apr 1987), the change in the budgetary system brought about the relationship of ‘buyer’ and ‘seller’. From being departmental units of the Army, OFs were made into separate manufacturing units. As a result, products which were earlier accepted as ‘free issues’ without any reservation, the reasonableness of their pricing was now being questioned. In a way these were interesting developments. The Army which had earlier never cared or inquired about the cost of the products which were manufactured in their own OFs, suddenly became cost conscious. Besides, there was a basic change in attitude. As a customer, the DGOS could look into the available alternatives and, therefore, could decide : how much to procure, from where and at what price? In a way this was a good development as they switched over to procuring the items within their budgetary allocation. This brought in an element of cost consciousness as well as some fiscal discipline as both the organisations had to manage within their available resources.

The major repercussion of this separation was that both were compelled to renew and overhaul their thinking process. They had a herculean task before them. They were required to determine the price of their products much in advance, taking due care of the anticipated inflation. They were also expected to keep the factories engaged in productive work. This would allow them to spread fixed overhead costs over a larger number of products to keep the pricing under control. Only this could have helped them to manage ‘Net Budget’, as catered for in the budgetary estimates.

The reality was so different since OFs did not produce consumer goods for which they could find an alternative market. The OFs capacities were created to meet the surge in ‘war time requirements’ of the Services. Some of these factories were set up more than a century ago when the infrastructural facilities were limited; hence, factories provided backward linkages. Right from melting of steel scrap, to producing the most sophisticated guns and tanks, had been the strength of these factories. These expensive sophisticated plants and machinery were neither needed nor considered cost effective for production of goods for the civil market. Hence, the scope to find alternative market to keep the factories loaded with work was an extremely difficult task.

With the short closure of indents or the indented items not being included in the Annual Production Programme, the situation faced by OFs was very peculiar, as a number of ‘intermediate goods producing factories’ (IGPFs) which supplied their product to the finishing factories had already produced the items which became their ‘blocked inventory’. It raised a big question mark : what to do with this excess blocked inventory?

Top echelons of OFs were compelled to learn new lessons from these rapid developments. Instead of considering Indents as the basis for determining the production programme for each factory, inclusion of Indented Items in the firmed up Annual Production Programme by the DGOS was also to be taken as the basis to proceed with the production of items; whether these items were to be considered for production as ‘inter factory demand’ or the end product items? This exercise, no doubt led to forced reduction in the lead time for all stages of production from components to assemblies and then the end product. Sister factories producing inter-factory demands were also compelled to reduce their lead time to ensure that they would meet the requirement of connected factories but would not unnecessarily increase the inventory of finishing factory. This required close coordination to ensure that items produced by IGPFs should come to finishing factories within a fixed time schedule and limited to demands acceptable to the Services for the end product.

These conflicting issues and the DGOF’s aim to manage within the ‘Net Budget’ required meticulous planning for determining the purchase budget for the OFs. It was made obligatory for each OF to prepare a detailed purchase budget and to spell out the material and components to be procured either from sister factory or from trade, after taking note of availability of each item and duly linking the same with the annual production targets. A culture, unknown to OFs became the order of the day as detailed scrutiny started being carried out for procuring all ‘A’ and ‘B’ category items so that the IGPF and the finishing product factory could plan their production programme in a detailed manner and link their procurement plan with their monthly/quarterly production programme. No doubt, this required very close monitoring of availability of material for production as the cycling time for procurement had also to be shortened to meet the end production target.

The thrust given by the Army to make available the price list much before the target fixation meeting was no mean challenge for OFs who were used to passing over product cost to their customer. The repeated questioning of prices of the end product by the Army also brought in an entirely different approach in the annual accounts prepared by the factories. In spite of OFs being in existence for nearly two centuries, and there having been an elaborate system of preparation of annual accounts in each of the factories and consolidation thereof for the entire DGOF, the challenge of segregation of OFs revealed that these accounts complied with the statutory requirements but they rarely made use of the Management Information System. While there were wide variations in the year to year costs of the products, no analysis was available as to : why was this happening and the action to be taken to rectify the same?

Since the price list of Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) product had to be prepared before determining the quantity in the DGOS / DGOF Target Fixation, OFB had little option but to take this exercise seriously. To begin with, OFB could at best use the data available in the annual accounts for determining the price of any product. Since the cost of production as reflected in the accounts had lot of variations, a number of steps had to be taken to make annual accounts more reliable so that these could be used for determining the right price of the product for the ensuing financial year. This required not only continuous updating of the average cost of material used for production of items, but also ensuring that IGPFs close their Indents well in time to facilitate finishing factories to include updated cost of IGPFs products while determining the cost of finished product. This was a major step in bringing financial discipline in the IGPFs. It ensured the finishing factory to reflect updated cost of the product in the annual accounts which in turn facilitated them to work out next year’s product price much more realistically.

The OFs were also compelled to take a genuine look at what they ought to produce in-house and what ought to be ‘bought-out’ items which were readily available in the market and did not involve any sophisticated technology. There was a famous case of a ‘Tent Pin’ which in 1990 was being manufactured at a cost of Rs 67 in the Gun and Carriage Factory; whereas the same was available in the market for Rs Seven only.

To get the OFs optimum work load, they had to produce items at ‘a’ cost instead of at ‘any’ cost. Besides, OFs learnt to diversify to the extent possible to get orders from customers other than Services, which included the CPOs and civil organisations. The large scale computerisation in OFs as well as the Controller of Finance and Accounts, facilitated generation of information much more quickly and accurately. This went a long way in carrying out the systemic changes that were called for to handle challenges that the organisation faced at that time. After a gap of three years or so, the DGOF did succeed in preparing a price list in advance of production for all major finished products to be supplied to the DGOS after taking note of updated production cost of components and materials supplied by the IGPFs.

In order to bring cost consciousness and efficiency in repair and manufacturing unit, it would be desirable to create similar self-accounting units within the Services. That would be a right step towards programme budgeting. It would require separate budget allocation for these units to meet all elements of cost whether that is for stores/material, manpower or overheads. Each of these repair/manufacturing units would need to determine ‘assessed cost’ prior to undertaking production work to ensure that they adhere to the quoted price. Variations in actual cost and predetermined price would need to be examined like any other similar units. To begin with, this may be a difficult exercise as was in the case of OFs but because of increased computerisation it should not be too difficult to start, as gains would far exceed the initial discomfort. All steps required to bring about financial discipline and cost consciousness will be in everybody’s interest as allocations in the Defence Services Estimates would be put to better use.

@Ms Somi Tandon joined Indian Defence and Accounts Service in 1967 and retired as the Secretary (Defence/Finance) in Jul 2005. Presently, she is working as a Consultant with Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts and as an Independent External Monitor with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. She is also engaged in teaching underprivileged children to improve their learning capabilities.

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It was a few months ago that a friend drew my attention towards an article titled “Putting Our Children in Line of Fire” by Lieutenant General Shahid Aziz (Retd), a Pakistan army officer and a former Corps Commander.¹ The opening paragraph of this reads, “Kargil, like every other meaningless war that we have fought, brings home lessons we continue to refuse to learn. Instead, we proudly call it our history written in the blood of our children. Indeed, our children penning down our misdeeds with their blood! Medals for some, few songs, a cross road renamed, and of course annual remembrance day and a memorial for those who sacrificed their tomorrow for our today; thus preparing more war fodder for our continuing misadventures. Since nothing went wrong, so there is nothing to learn. We shall do it again. We decide. You die. We sing.” A very scathing condemnation indeed; which set me thinking about the whole Kargil episode once again with an urge to put together the basic facts and details about that confrontation and views of some knowledgeable persons in the aftermath of these happenings; more of these from the other side.

Unfortunately, the importance of Gilgit and, in fact, of the entire Northern Areas was not appreciated by our leaders in power right from the day India became Independent. In stark contrast most of the strategic region of Northern Areas consisting of huge land mass of J&K territory, more than seventy thousand square kilometers of territory, was illegally occupied by Pakistan during the 1947-1948 Indo-Pak war. The successive governments of Pakistan have not only ruled this area directly by the central authority with a deliberate policy of suppression, deprivation as well as absence of civil rights and constitutional status; but also a large population of Afghan and Pakhtoon settlers has been encouraged and inducted into this region with an effort to dilute the Shia demographic profile of the region.

For some reason the policy framers of India did not appear to have sufficiently realised the importance of Northern Areas from the national security point of view and practically made no efforts to wrest back Skardu and Gilgit from Pakistan during the 1947-48 conflict. In fact even Leh and Kargil were saved from Pakistani occupation, literally by skin of the teeth.² Thus at the time of the UN brokered cease-fire coming into effect from 01 Jan 1949, the existing position on ground remained unchanged in the Ladakh region. Subsequently also this area continued to be neglected and this resulted in major gaps in India’s knowledge of Northern Areas and our intelligence agencies had difficulty in collecting credible human intelligence in this important sector.

The 1971 War with Pakistan, which resulted in the creation of Bangladesh, did not change the position on ground much, except that in Kargil Sector the Indian troops succeeded in capturing some of the important enemy posts overlooking Kargil town, removing the threat to Srinagar-Leh highway as also to the town itself which could be under direct observation from these posts. The most important gain for India was the capture of a mountain-top known as Point 13620, being height in feet of the feature. This fortunately denied direct observation to Pakistani troops, which otherwise could have proved very dangerous and costly to the Indian side as the hostile events started unfolding in the late nineties. However, notwithstanding its comprehensive defeat in 1971, Pakistan made yet another sinister attempt to destabilise things in J&K less than two decades later. The Pak inspired and aided militancy erupted during the middle of 1988 and gathered momentum slowly, assuming full blown proportions during the beginning of 1990, putting huge strain on the Indian Security Forces and inflicting untold miseries on the people of the State. From January 1990 to end September 1998, 43305 incidents of violence had taken place resulting in the death of 11307 civilians, 10429 militants and 1962 security forces personnel.³

Effective and forceful exertions of the security forces coupled with rising alienation of the local population with the militants, brought a turnaround in the situation which resulted first in the conduct of Parliament elections in May 1996, followed by Assembly elections in September the same year which brought back into power the popular government in the State. This gave a serious setback to Pakistani plans and delivered a grievous blow to the militancy apparatus. This also marked the significant induction of foreign militants in J&K, their numbers and role was to progressively increase in the years to come. Thus, even after the mayhem created and sustained efforts of the past one decade, Pakistan had not achieved anything other than hurting and alienating people of the State. It was in this backdrop, and in sheer desperation that Pakistan seems to have focussed her attention towards Kargil. It embarked upon a desperate act and a reckless gamble. Lieutenant General Shahid Aziz has graphically and expressively described this venture as, “An unsound military plan based on invalid assumptions, launched with little preparations and in total disregard to the regional and international environment, was bound to fail.”⁴

It must also be remembered that no part of the predominantly Shia population of Kargil district supported the game plan of Pakistan, nor Pakistan ever succeeded in clandestinely making inroads into Kargil. The people there have steadfastly remained uncooperative with the ISI and its militant organisations. If anything, the colonial type of rule imposed by it on the people of Northern Areas alienated the Kargil population even more. The pattern of Pak troops’ infiltration across the Line of Control (LC) in this sector and occupation of some positions clearly indicate that they entered our area in such a manner so as to deliberately avoid any contact with the local population.

In most of the accounts pertaining to this period, one finds that not much has been written about travails of the local population as well as the problems faced by the civil administration and their exertions during this difficult and trying period. It is generally believed that the problems for the people and administration of Kargil started with the unprovoked military adventure of Pakistan in May 1999. But the difficulties there actually began almost two years earlier. It was on 13 Apr 1997 that Pakistanis shelled Kargil town for two hours creating large scale fear and scare amongst the local population. Then after a gap of six months the nuisance was repeated on 28 Sep. But the next day, things really became desperate when within a span of two hours, between two and four p.m., almost 60 shells landed in the town resulting in the death of 10 persons and inflicting injuries on 13 others. This practically turned Kargil into a ghost town, seriously disrupted the functioning of civil administration and put an unbearable burden on the already overloaded medical services. The seriously injured patients were managed and operated upon with the active assistance of the army doctors and by sharing their facilities. This shelling continued intermittently through the whole of 1998 targeting the Kargil town and parts of the Srinagar – Leh national highway in the Drass sector. Some segments of this road around Drass were visible to the enemy and it brought down accurate artillery fire on the vehicles moving there, thus seriously disrupting the winter stocking and regular maintenance of the Indian Army in the entire Ladakh Sector.

During the winter months, corresponding roughly with the period between Nov 1998 and Feb 1999 there was respite from the Pakistani shelling. This period the district administration utilised to tie up loose ends and further shore up its preparedness to meet unforeseen situations. Even though at this stage nobody could predict the exact nature of Pakistani mischief as it later unfolded, but one thing was certain that the dreaded shelling would be resumed with nauseating regularity during the summer of 1999. By Mar that year the Deputy Commissioner’s office was shifted from its regular location at Baroo, about two kilometers South of Kargil, to the Suru View Hotel in Kargil town. This served its purposes. It was now much closer to the population of the district headquarters and was also at a safer place, being located in the shadow portion of the town, as viewed from the Pakistani side. Assured of safety every one could work there in peace. However, this arrangement was not to last long.

Towards the end of Apr the regularity and intensity of Pakistani shelling increased to a menacing level making the Deputy Commissioner to think about moving his headquarters to a totally safe and yet not very far location from the town. About ten kilometres South of Kargil, down the Suru valley, a 50 MW Hydel project was under initial stages of construction at Chutuk village and some office as well as residential units had been completed by the project management. He now decided to shift the important components of the district administration, including his office, to Chutuk. And that is where the entire set up remained till the situation fully stabilised. He also ordered moving of the civil hospital from the centre of Kargil town to the TB hospital premises at Titichumik, couple of kilometres to the South. Thus as the things began hotting up in Drass and Batalik Sectors as well as in Kargil town during the month of May, important components of the district administration, including medical facilities, had been very sensibly, and with appreciable foresight, shifted to much safer locations from where these could function unmoleted and without much disturbance.

It is now evident that Pak Army regulars, along with some elements of Lashkar-e-Toiba and Hizb-ul-Mujahideen were precisely prepared for crossing the LC and occupying important heights as well as areas of tactical importance right from Mushkoh Valley in Drass to Chorbat La in Batalik and beyond to Turtuk in the North. The exact timing of this ingress and preparation of defences in each location is still not precisely determined; one can safely premise that this was managed during the autumn of 1998 and the spring of 1999. The infiltration appears to have taken place in two phases. The first and the deliberate one must have commenced sometime during the summer of 1998 and culminated in preparation of regular defences, stocking and arrangements for occupation of these new posts during long and harsh winter. In the next phase, the intruders either took possession of some of the Indian positions held during the winter before these could be recouped by our troops as per established routine, or moved forward and laterally from the prepared defences to enlarge the arc of infiltration. Even by the beginning of May 1999, when our forces on the ground became aware of the broad contours of Pak designs and the situation was pretty serious and grim, from the Indian point of view, the extent of Pakistani ingress had not been fully realised. By the middle of May, the army was discovering fresh Pakistani held positions on an alarmingly regular basis spanning the entire Kargil Sector.

Over the years many accounts, especially from the Indian side have been published which give a fairly accurate account of the force levels employed and the conduct of military operations. In this context, a special mention can be made of the book “Kargil : Turning the Tide” authored by Lieutenant General Mohinder Puri, PVSM, UYSM (Retd) who was commanding 8 Mountain Division and was a first-hand account of the war. The Pak manpower in this sector appeared to be about eleven battalions comprising elements of Regular Army, Northern Light Infantry units, SSG troops and militants of different outfits. The Indian Army reportedly deployed artillery pieces, including 100 Bofor guns. The Air Force logged 550 strike missions, 150 reconnaissance missions and 500 escort missions. In addition 2185 helicopter sorties were also put into operations. The cost of the conflict in monetary terms for India has been projected as ₹1100 crores. In terms of manpower, the most precious national resource, Indian losses were 527 all ranks killed and 1363 wounded. Pakistani casualties were estimated to be 1042 killed (Indian estimate); Pakistani official figure being 453 killed.⁵

Apprehending the escalation of this crisis into a major conflict, the American efforts to defuse the tension between India and Pakistan and disengage the two armies started on 15 Jun when President Clinton urged Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to withdraw Pakistan forces from the Indian territory. This was the beginning of the Indian diplomatic ascendancy which resulted in intense diplomatic activity over the next few weeks. The American pressure, widespread condemnation from the world community including China, coupled with Indian forces increasingly gaining an upper hand on ground, forced the Pakistani Army to start withdrawing its elements from middle of July and fully vacate the Indian territory before the end of the month. “Operation Vijay” was declared a success by the Indian Prime Minister. On a different plane, the most important assets were identified by a war-veteran of this area as, “Kargil proved that both young officers and the Bofors were a winning factor”.⁶

Notwithstanding the advantage of initial surprise gained by the other side, it does go to the credit of Indian Army that after the details of infiltration became apparent and seriousness of the incursions evident, it reacted swiftly and decisively, without taking any more chances. According to an estimate almost five additional brigades were moved into the area of conflict, almost post- haste, along with sufficient artillery components. The logistics for such a large scale movement and maintenance thereafter were also managed competently.

The induction of such large body of troops into Kargil, within a short time, necessitated shifting of a number of units, as well as formation Headquarters, from the Valley. These were successfully engaged in the counter-insurgency (CI) operations, being highly experienced and effective entities, against the militants. Even though some additional units of BSF and CRPF were provided in lieu, but these were much less in numbers as well as effectiveness. Thus Pak moves in Kargil did seriously and adversely impact the security forces’ drive against the militants. This gave the ultras time to regroup and rework their strategy leading to a marked increase in the level of violence over the next few years. In fact from 1990 onwards till 2015, as per records maintained by the J&K Police, the security forces casualties exceeded four hundred annually only during the four years from 1999 to 2002. The maximum spurt in the escalated levels of militant activities became evident during the year 2001, which recorded 4536 incidents of violence in which 1098 civilians died, 2020 militants were killed and also 613 security forces’ personnel laid down their lives. The CI Grid, so effectively established earlier by the forces, became strong and potent once again only in 2003. The CI measures were also significantly bolstered by the erection of Border Fence all along the LC in 2003-04. The fact, however, remains that the thinning of the CI grid on ground and loosening of the grip of the security forces deployed in the Valley was a direct result of the Pakistani intrusion in Kargil and it took considerable time and effort to regain the earlier levels of effectiveness.

During the months of May to Sep that year, the Kargil Operations gave rise to comments and analysis ranging from considerable admiration for the heroic performance of the Indian forces, in the face of very heavy odds, to the failure of the commanders and the units in not being able to track the enemy ingress well in time and take immediate counter measures. Overall handling of the problem and emerging scenarios, both at the military as well as the political levels also came under criticism. The expert commentators ranged from senior retired army officers to noted journalists and experts on security related matters. One expert opinion succinctly described the Pakistani game plan as, “Pakistan relied primarily on troops from the Northern Light Infantry because soldiers from this regiment are mostly young local men from the mountainous regions of Skardu, POK, Baltistan, Gilgit and the North West Frontier Province. They are fully acclimatised to military activities at high altitudes. They were ordered to shed their uniform, put on salwar kameez, grow beards and wear skull caps. Most of the military operations were carried out by regular Pakistani officers and soldiers....” The Force Commander Northern Areas (FCNA) and the higher command of the 10 Corps of the Pakistan Army provided command and backup for the military operation”.⁷ Noted defence analyst K Subrahmanyam reflected on the more effective management of national security issues as, “Kargil proves that national security cannot be handled as a part time vocation. It requires full time attention of a National Security Adviser and a fully and adequately manned National Security Council Secretariat and well-coordinated procedures to ensure that there are no lapses in intelligence assessment, policy formulation and purposeful direction in matters relating to country’s security. That calls for a total revamping of our national security set up, which has to be undertaken after the elections”.⁸ It was due to the voices raised by veterans like him that the famous Kargil Review Committee was constituted and later parts of its Report also made public.

It would also be useful to glance at and have a bird’s eye view of the comments and views of experts on the other side that could come in the public domain. The first important reaction in the Pak media appeared immediately after the cessation of hostilities. It was a severe indictment of the system and makes interesting reading, as “The finest institution in this land, the bedrock of our existence, is now directly under attack because an initiative was not fully thought out as to possible consequences. More than a hundred officers and men of this magnificent army have paid a terrible price in blood for this negligence. On the other hand, though belated, we have begun to recognise the sacrifice and valour of the Northern Light Infantry (NLI). This was a must., because of mishandling the Indians have turned their military disaster on the ground into a victory in the media”.⁹ It is obvious that after this damning piece appeared in the media, further public criticism was stifled by the combined efforts of the Government and the Army. The 4th, 5th, 6th, 11th and 12th battalions of NLI that took part in the operations had suffered a large number of casualties. When the bodies of dead soldiers started reaching home, it led to a wave of unrest and some public demonstrations in the Northern Areas. After little over two months on 12 Oct, in a high drama of fast moving events, the democratically elected Government headed by Nawaz Sharif was deposed and once again the military rule imposed in Pakistan by the Army Chief General Pervez Musharraf. This development further put a strong lid on any potential criticism of the Kargil fiasco.

However, one year after the Kargil episode, in Jun 2000 a series of write-ups appeared in the Pakistan print media. Some of them made scathing criticism of the handling of Kargil operations and also asked for a comprehensive inquiry into various aspects of the debacle, including role of the army there. Few representative samples are reproduced. “The Kargil story begins in the Sep of 1998. Brigadier Suminder Singh of 121 Infantry Brigade had ordered, as has been the usual routine, his troops to descend from the heights of Kargil. Every winter, half a dozen battalions of Indian troops come down leaving behind some ten dozen well-stocked posts. The terrain is extraordinarily rugged and when snow sets in patrolling the 220-kilometer stretch is next to impossible. On the other side of the LC, it was going to be a busy winter. The force commander (Northern Areas), headquartered in Gilgit, commanding Pakistan’s NLI, along with his superior the commander of 10 Corps in Rawalpindi, had set their eyes on unheld Indian posts around eight kilometres across the LC. In Oct 1998, by the time the withdrawal of Indian troops was complete, there was a change in command at the Pakistan Army. General Jehangir Karamat had to go and Lieutenant General Pervez Musharraf, Commander 2 Corps headquartered in Multan, took over as the new Chief of the Army Staff.... General Musharraf visited the Northern Areas twice during the winter of 1998-99.... In Feb 1999, oblivious of what was going on at the top of the world, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee launched his ‘bus diplomacy’. By the time Vajpayee arrived in Lahore, the initial logistical support and preliminary formulation of the ‘Kargil Operation’ must have been in place. People in the know must have included the COAS, commander 10 Corps, the Force Commander Northern Areas and DG ISI..... Pakistan’s aim behind Kargil was to ‘internationalise the Kashmir issue’. It backfired both internationally and domestically. The entire civilised world took it as an act of ‘aggression’. Even China told Pakistan to back off. Within the Pakistan Army it proved to be highly divisive. Young army officers felt deeply betrayed”.¹⁰ On the same day demand for an inquiry was made in Dawn as, “There has almost been a universal demand for an inquiry commission to investigate the Kargil venture and this should be accepted. We have had too many convulsive happenings in our history left unexplained, most notably the fall of East Pakistan and the Ojri Camp disaster. A beginning should be made”.¹¹

On 21 Jun, Dr Iflat S Malik lamented in an article in the News, “From a Pakistani perspective the most humiliating aspect of Kargil conflict was the ignominious manner in which it ended..... There can be little doubt that India came out of the Kargil conflict in a much stronger position than Pakistan. New Delhi was successful in arousing international sympathy for its stance that it was the victim of Pakistani aggression and further that it had been betrayed by Islamabad, an accusation made in the context of the Lahore process..... As one looks back at Kargil one year down the line, the manifold mistakes that were made then are glaringly obvious. Unfortunately, realising where one went wrong does not alter what happened or the negative consequences that stem from it. Pakistan and the Kashmiris are still paying the price for Kargil”.

However, the most detailed, authentic and damning comments appeared in the monthly Herald.¹² The write-up also carried two box items titled, ‘Kargil – A Strategic History’ and ‘Minister Visits Hundur?’ Both of these complement the main narrative which needs to be quoted at some length. Here are few excerpts. “There are over 500 flags flying across the entire Northern Areas, home to the Pakistan Army’s high- altitude warriors. The tombs are of the heroes of Kargil who fought valiantly in a war that seems to have many losers but no winners. Behind each of these tombs lies tales of struggle and valour, of neglect and disavowal, and of betrayal and unfaithfulness. But a year down the line these tales still remain untold..... By Feb 1999, the area was rich with its own version of events that were unfolding in Kargil. True to their tradition of glorifying soldiers, the people of the area were loathe to accept the Government’s claim that the militants had infiltrated deep into Indian territory. For the residents of Ghizer, Hunza and Baltistan, the districts which supply the bulk of NLI’s manpower, it was only NLI soldiers who were involved in these heroic deeds..... The area was rife with rumours that there may soon be serious skirmishes in the Drass-Kargil sector. But there was no information on what was actually happening on the frozen heights. The uncertainty gave way to panic in early Jun last year when bodies of soldiers started arriving at the villages more frequently..... Over the next month, 105 bodies passed along the jeep track that leads up to Yasin, Puniat and Ghizer valleys in the central Northern Areas. Similar traffic appeared in the valleys of Hunza, Nagar, Gilgit and Baltistan.

Residents of the area claim that the NLI soldiers who accompanied the bodies took care to move them at night to avoid publicity. As a rule, only one soldier accompanied the body, Shakoor Jan’s body, for instance, was brought by two soldiers in a private jeep which also carried the body of Sepoy Ibrahim. Both Ibrahim and Shakoor Jan were in truck suits..... In both cases there were no military honours at the funeral, no hoisting of the national flag and no gun salutes. The soldiers who brought the body did not even offer a simple salute..... The miseries of locals were compounded by the stories of starvation and shortage of ammunition at the frontline that emerged around this time..... According to circles close to the top military authorities in the Northern Areas, by mid Jun 1999 almost the entire strength of 6 NLI on the Kargil front had been wiped out, while 12 NLI had also suffered heavy casualties. Though the Indians took more casualties than the NLI, they were able to clear the heights commanding the Srinagar-Leh highway by 26 Jun, thereby taking the sting out of Kargil operation.... According to another veteran of the Kargil war, the NLI high command had made a specific promise of establishing supply lines to positions on the heights. But it was not fulfilled..... Many residents also allege inaction on the part of commanding authorities of the NLI, claiming that an SOS was sent to the GHQ for reinforcements only after the troops in the forward positions had suffered a fatal set-back. Even then, the hurriedly called regiments from the Punjab could offer no help because they were not acclimatised.... On 26 Jun, the anger of the people spilled into the streets of Hunza where activists of the Karakoram National Movement (KNM) held a peace march between Karimabad and Aliabad and openly raised slogans against the manner in which the Kargil operation was being handled. At least a dozen leaders of the march were later arrested on sedition charges and kept in Gilgit jail for three months”.

The above mentioned article comprehensively describes and records the feelings of disappointment and frustration of the NLI troops and the people of Northern Areas during the critical six months of 1999. This is something which hardly came to the notice of Indian population or reached rest of the world. Also elsewhere in the same publication, monthly Herald of Jul 2000, Idrees Bakhtiar mentioned, “Mr Nawaz Shari’s claims notwithstanding, the Government insists that all the key players during the Kargil affair were kept fully informed of all developments.... However, independent observers feel that there is still a lot about the Kargil affair that has not come out in the open.... While India has already conducted a detailed post-mortem of the event and made its findings public, albeit with appropriate security deletions, it seems that this crucial chapter in Pakistan’s history will continue to remain shrouded in controversy”.

And enveloped in secrecy and unanswered questions the whole Kargil affair has remained in Pakistan over the last seventeen years. No inquiry was ever ordered by the Pakistan Government and not even an in-house exercise carried out by the Army there to absorb and benefit from the lessons learnt from this messy and totally avoidable conflict. This was so because the persons in authority there, particularly the all powerful army high command, were never interested in the truth coming out and relevant facts becoming public. To quote Lieutenant General Shahid Aziz (Retd) again, in this context, “Whatever little I know, took a while to emerge, since General Musharraf had put a tight lid on Kargil. Three years later, a study commenced by GHQ to identify issues of concern at the lowest levels of command, was forcefully stopped by him. “What is your intent?” he asked.”¹³

In all the problems that have been created for India by Pakistan, the Pakistan Army has been a common denominator. It has also been a constant factor in the power equation in Pakistan, even when the Country is governed by the civilians. The Army there not only manipulates the levers of power, it has arrogated to itself the controlling role in all defence and external affair matters. No deviant behaviour is tolerated and levers of the state power are craftily manoeuvred to achieve the desired ends. On the other hand, as a society, government and the nation we have never displayed firm resolve in our dealings with Pakistan. Whenever India was forced to take up arms against this adversary, we have not shown willingness to fight to the finish and also displayed a lack of ruthlessness. India was always hesitant to enlarge the arc of conflict with Pakistan and has ever been magnanimous in its victory.

The story of our performance in managing the external affairs competently and taking meaningful diplomatic initiatives, at least in respect of Pakistan, has not been encouraging since then. There is an urgent need to undertake critical analysis in this respect. What the Country needs are foresighted statesmen at the helm of affairs, ably assisted by talented diplomats and military commanders who are not only professionally competent but also have a clear vision and then capacity to take long term view of the issues involved, piercing through the fog of past events and current happenings. We need to build a capacity for long term strategic view and carry it through using all instruments of state power. Kargil affair caused India a lot of anguish. It also stirred her soul. But it did not become a watershed or a defining moment in the course of our history since Independence. Let the sacrifices of those who laid down their lives on those high mountains during that period, as also the ones who have died for the Nation since then, not go waste. Too much blood may have been spilled already.

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@ **Captain Sudhir S Bloeria, PhD, IAS (Retd)** was commissioned as a Short Service Officer into 2 JAK RIF in 1966 and served in the Army till 1972. Thereafter, he joined IAS and was seconded to the J&K Cadre. He was Chief Secretary J&K Government from Nov 2002 till his superannuation in Sep 2005. In Jul 2008, during Governor’s Rule, he was appointed as Adviser to the Governor. He was also the Vice Chancellor of the Central University of Jammu from Aug 2011 to Aug 2014.

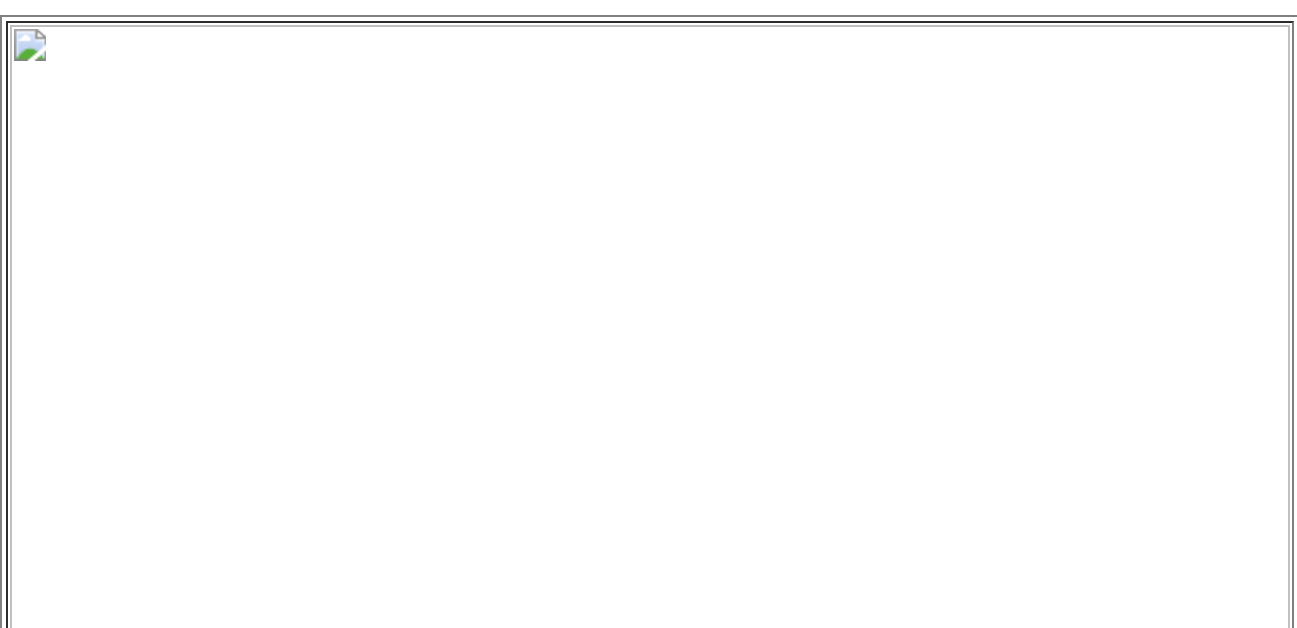
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Introduction

Homeland security is a uniquely American concept, which came to prominence after the 9/11 attacks in the US. Fundamental to the concept of homeland security is grouping counterterrorism initiatives, security from natural disasters and public health hazards with that of national security from any outside adversary. The concept of homeland security for the US was born out of the fact that the landmass that constitutes America was geographically isolated and a strong historic belief that issues and problems of outside world were vastly different from those inside the Country. This belief led the Americans to create legal and constitutional tools to deal with threats from outside which were vastly different from what existed inside the US. Thus when 9/11 strikes occurred in the US, the Government found it very difficult to implement rules and regulations to fight terror inside the US. This was the raison-de'être for the Department of Home Security to come up with a new legislation. Later, due to the catastrophic aftermath of hurricane Katrina, the aspects of natural disasters and health hazards were also brought within its gamut.¹ In India, the demand for an American-style homeland security model is gaining popularity due to the inability of domestic law enforcement agencies to stop terror attacks in the Indian towns and cities. Probably, such a demand comes more from frustration than a clear understanding of the concept of Homeland Security.

Concept of Homeland Security in India

Homeland Security is not a term widely used in the security lexicon in India. The Indian equivalent is Internal Security (IS) and is looked after by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). Currently, it encompasses an assortment of responsibilities from border management to internal securities. Together with Department of Home, Centre-State relationship, J&K Affairs and Official Languages, it makes six departments within the MHA. In between the spectrum would lie countering terrorism, a subject which currently has no dedicated department in the Ministry. In 2010, the MHA categorised six departments which could fall under the gamut of homeland security in India² in a futuristic thought scenario as given below:



Source: KPMG Report on Homeland Security in India, 2010

Organisations Responsible for Internal Security in India

In India, presently the issue of Internal Security (IS) is being dealt with by many ministries. These are : Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Ministry of Defence (MoD), Ministry of Law and Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). The two lead ministries which manage the security needs of the Nation are the MHA and MoD.

The MHA is responsible for maintaining law and order situation in the Country and it has multifarious responsibilities: important among them being internal security, management of para-military forces (PMF), border management, Centre-state relations, administration of Union Territories, disaster management, etc.³ The MoD is responsible for security of the Nation which manifests through an external threat. For the critical functions of border management and management of internal security, MHA has under its control a combination of PMF (Assam Rifles and Coast Guard); Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) comprising the Border Security Force (BSF), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Central Reserve Police force (CRPF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB); special forces like the Special Frontier Force (SFF)⁴ and National Security Guard (NSG) and a host of intelligence/investigative agencies like the Intelligence Bureau (IB), National Investigation Agency (NIA) etc. Parallel to this, some organisations like the National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO) and Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) function under the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and the Cabinet Secretariat respectively. With hosts of agencies under command, the MHA is heavily burdened with the task of border management and internal law and order situation.

The division of subjects under the Centre and State Lists has further complicated the problem for the MHA. The state police are under the direct control of the respective state governments. With the growth of terrorism and that of Maoism and Naxalism, majority of states have tried to set up and train their own elite police force. For example, Punjab has the SWAT commando team, Andhra Pradesh has the Greyhounds, Maharashtra has the Force-One, etc. All these Special Forces fight under command and control of their respective states and display little sense of cooperation with each other or with the central agencies which are under the MHA.

The US Concept

The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is a cabinet department of the US Federal Government, created in response to the September 11 terror attacks, with the primary responsibility of protecting the territory of the US and protectorates from and responding to terrorist attacks, man-made accidents, and natural disasters.⁵ It has 22 agencies, chief amongst them are customs, immigration, environment, coast guard, cyber security and the US Secret Service.⁶

The paradigm of national security in the US is classified under two distinct heads: the Homeland Defence (HD) and the Homeland Security (HS). Broadly, the Department of Defence (DoD) is the lead Federal Agency (LFA) for HD and the DHS is the LFA for HS. The roles of the DoD and the DHS have been clearly defined in the document called National Strategy for Home Security (NSHS). The document makes it clear that the HD would be the primary responsibility of the DoD⁷ and HS is looked after by the DHS. The Armed Forces support the HS strategy through two distinct but interrelated mission areas – HD and civil support (CS).

The HS at the national level specifically focusses on terrorist threats.⁸ The areas which the DHS handles are large; and include, preventing terrorism and enhancing security, securing and managing the US borders, enforcing and administering US immigration laws, safeguarding and securing cyberspace and responding to natural disasters.⁹ The leadership at the top is political, as the DHS is led by a secretary level rank who is assisted by a deputy secretary. They have with them Chief of Staff and a military adviser of two star rank. Balance of the structure comprises Under Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries who control the different agencies under the DHS.

Drawbacks of the Current Indian System

Since the Mumbai terror attacks in 2008, the Indian Government has been struggling with evolving a suitable security apparatus to deal effectively with the challenges of terrorism. It toyed with the idea of the National Security Adviser (NSA) as the single point authority, but it came under severe criticism after the Pathankot terror attacks. Similarly, there seems to be an absolute lack of control of the numerous intelligence agencies. Each of them has been serving its respective master and not the common threat. Last two Governments have toyed with the idea of creating a central intelligence agency for collation of intelligence inputs – the National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID) concept. It also discussed the idea of a National Centre for Counterterrorism (NCTC). Yet, these experiments have not borne fruit commensurate to their expectations. Some of the major drawbacks are enunciated in succeeding paras.

To start with, India has not been able to come up with a joint doctrine or strategy for counterterrorism. Such a document is the need of the hour and should define the scope of the various agencies in the role of counterterrorism operations and the command and control structure under different situations. In absence of such a doctrine, there is duplicity in their roles which is counterproductive in fighting the terrorists.

Connected with the above is lack of clarity on the issue of which would be the lead agency for conducting counterterrorists operations in the Country. Presently, depending upon whether the operations are in urban or disturbed areas, the National Security Guards (NSG), Local Police or the Armed Forces are tasked to tackle the situation. Also, there is no clarity on who issues orders or controls these operations. The MoD chain of command is in place whenever a situation develops in either J&K or Northeast. Yet the same cannot be said when an incident occurs in the International Border (IB) region of Punjab; for example, in Gurdaspur (Dinanagar) in Jul 2015, or Pathankot in Jan 2016. In the case of former, SWAT commandos of Punjab Police and J&K Police were called upon to flush out the terrorists¹⁰, whereas in Pathankot, the NSG was summoned to do the same job.¹¹

The sharing of intelligence inputs across agencies is probably the weakest link in the chain. There are multiple agencies seeking for similar intelligence and yet there is no mandated lateral connectivity between them. Sharing of intelligence as of today is at best on an ad hoc basis. This was aptly demonstrated in all the terror attacks in the recent past on the IB running through J&K and Punjab. Lack of timely information or inability to take action on given intelligence has resulted in loss of many lives in these incidents.

The NCTC was an initiative undertaken during the period of United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government in the aftermath of the Mumbai attacks. The idea was to create a single agency to deal with all aspects of intelligence in context of terrorism across the Nation. Shri Chidambaram, the then Home Minister had structured an organisation on the lines of the NCTC of the US. He had put the structure in place to a large extent and was very keen on its implementation; but it met fierce opposition from the Chief Ministers of 12 non-Congress states. They argued that the NCTC impinges on the federal structure of the Country as it had provisions which empowered it to 'search and arrest' people without keeping the State Government or State Police in the loop; and hence it could be misused by the Government at the Centre against the States.¹² Thus NCTC initiative still lies buried in the files and has never since implemented.

Nearly same was the fate of the NATGRID. It was an intelligence initiative to tie up inputs from 21 agencies like the Banks, Railways, Income Tax Department, Visas and Credit Cards etc. This combined data was to be made available to 11 Central agencies including the R&AW, the NIA, the CBI, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, the IB, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to help them prevent terrorist attacks and criminal activities. NATGRID is only a technical interface for intelligence agencies and not an organisation in itself.¹³ However, the concern was: if the law enforcement agencies had access to personal data of millions of Indians, then the possibility of its misuse was high and that it could be catastrophic for the privacy of the service oriented industry. Thus, it lay dormant for almost four years. But the NATGRID initiative is once again being resurrected by the Modi Government and is likely to be put under the supervision of the Intelligence Bureau.¹⁴

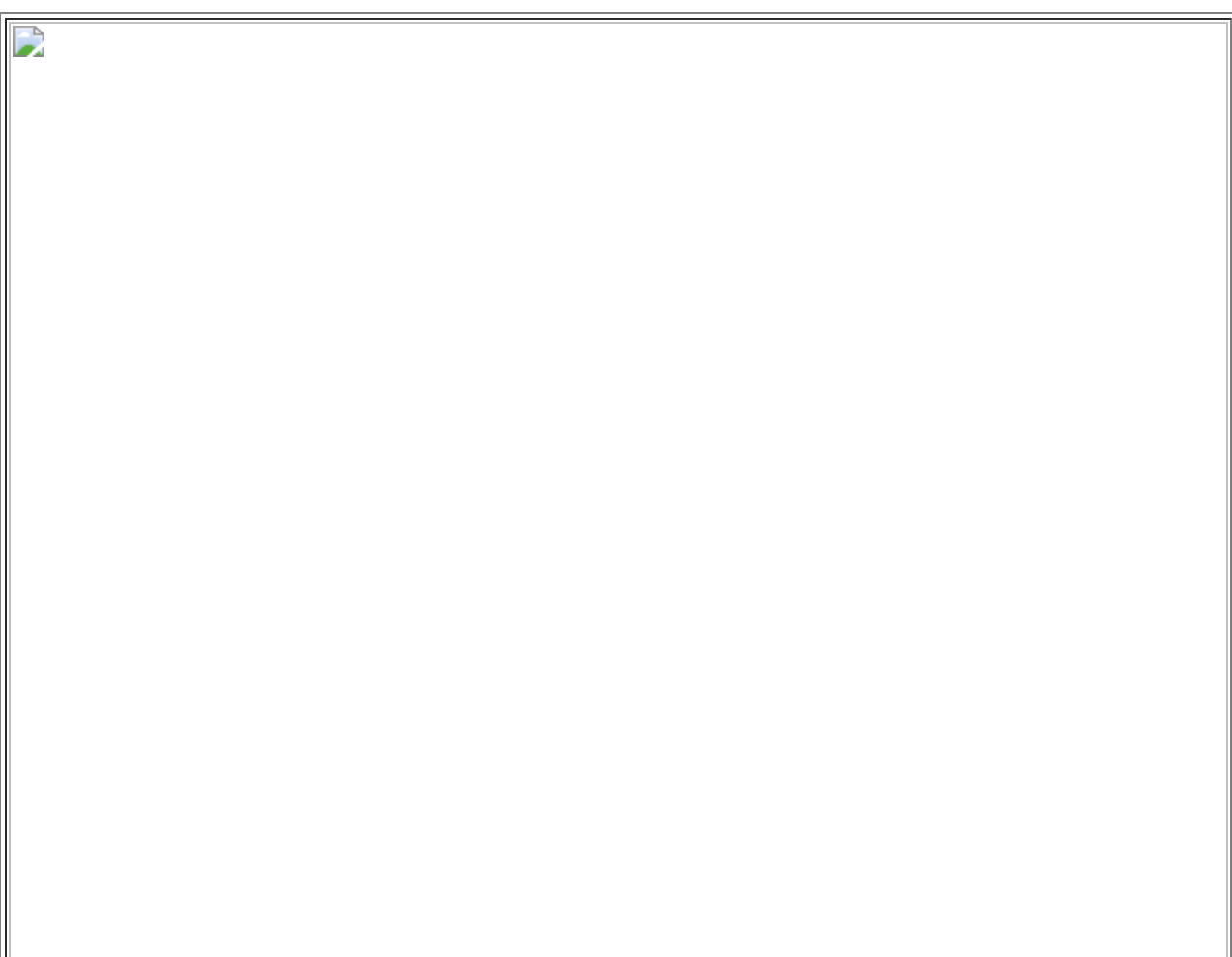
There is a huge dichotomy in the role and the levels of expertise available to the forces fighting terrorism. While the MHA is responsible for countering terrorism inside the Country, it does not have the requisite trained force to do so. With the exception of NSG, India's PMF are neither equipped nor trained to fight the increasingly well-trained, motivated and technologically savvy terrorist groups. The state police forces are trained but lack the perspective and the real time intelligence to carry out counterterrorism operations independently. Also their numbers are small; hence, they can be used for small counterterrorist operations or at best to handle the naxal operations.

Does India Need a Change in Its Home Security Organisation?

Given the current spate of criticism in tackling terrorists and the number of casualties suffered, it would be prudent to suggest that we need to completely revamp the concept of national security at home. It is time India grew out of archaic structures and moved towards a more focused, well-trained and well-equipped organisation.

The suggested new organisation is based on the premise that the definition of IS is broadened to include counterterrorism as its main focus. Also it includes disaster management and associated public health concerns being brought under its ambit. Border management, maritime security and external security are conjoint functions and hence, better handled by the ministry that looks after external threats, i.e. MoD. Because counterterrorism would be the main function of the new organisation, it would need to be adequately equipped and trained to do its job.

Currently, the Army is considered to be the most suitable force, with adequate experience, to do this job. It would therefore be prudent that all counterterrorism forces must have an Army component in the form of a trainer cum adviser at their apex. This could be reviewed after a period of ten years, once the CAPF gain adequate expertise in counterterrorism operations. It is recommended that Army be employed in counterterrorism operations at those places only where the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) has been promulgated or where a terrorist attack has targeted a military headquarters, institution or a military station. For all other places NSG should be employed. Wherever there is employment of the Army formations or troops including NSG, the operations must be commanded by the Armed Forces officers. They can be placed there on deputation with the Army and given to MoD. This would mean that BSF, ITBP, AR, SFF and Coast Guard would come under the MoD to have better synergy for counter infiltration, maritime security and other lesser degree of subversive acts like smuggling and illegal border crossings. A suggested organisation is given below:



The suggested new organisation for Ministry of Internal Security is a projected version of the future MHA. It would have five departments; namely, Counterterrorism, Immigration, Law and Order, Disaster Management and Public Health and Pandemic departments. A cabinet ranking minister would be heading the ministry supported by a secretary level bureaucrat. He would be assisted by a military adviser of two star rank specifically for counterterrorism issues. The counterterrorism department would have the NSG and local special police forces of the state to carry out operations in urban areas. Similarly business rules for other departments would have to be formed given that they would have been reorganised. A marked change in this organisation is the lack of any intelligence agencies.

It is recommended that all the central intelligence/investigative agencies including the IB, NIA, and NATGRID be placed under a central apex authority directly under the PMO. They would be responsible for collecting and sharing the terrorist related intelligence inputs with concerned ministries. The respective intelligence/investigative agencies like the CBI or Economic and Revenue Intelligence services and the Intelligence agencies of the three Services of MoD would continue to remain with their parent ministry to serve their respective immediate needs. This would enable timely and better coordination of intelligence inputs.

Conclusion

The question arises : Does India need a new homeland security organisation? The answer is "yes". The time has come for India to move out of its old archaic Constitutional structures and gear up to face the grave challenge posed by terrorism. All nations facing terrorist threat have revisited this aspect and evolved structure and mechanisms to suit their respective needs. The US has gone in for an elaborate Homeland Security Department called the DHS. The British have done it differently but changed nonetheless. So have Germany, France and Netherlands. India needs to define its own doctrine and a supporting structure. A suggested structure has been enunciated in this paper.

The proposed model seeks to overcome the drawbacks of the current system. It would be well in order to constitute an empowered committee to study this problem and to look into all possible options before a decision is taken by the Government. But this needs to be done soon, lest we face more pain and suffering account of terrorist attacks or unforeseen disasters.

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@Major General Nitin Gadkari, VSM (Retd) was commissioned into the Regiment of Artillery on 11 Jun 1977 and retired as Deputy Commandant, Army War College in June 2014. He is currently pursuing his PhD from Osmania University in Organisational Behaviour.

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General

North East India (NEI) today comprises of eight states of India, namely Sikkim and the “seven sister states” of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh (ALP), Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura and Meghalaya. NEI is bounded by Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar and Bangladesh. The region is rich in bio-diversity and untapped raw materials. It is connected to mainstream India through the 22 km narrow “Siliguri Corridor”. Thus it has strategic, political and economic significance for India.

NEI has been witnessing insurgency since 1950s and there is no end in sight. Even though some states in the NEI have remained peaceful after ending insurgencies, overall the situation in the region is not conducive to peaceful living and corresponding prosperity. This article covers the genesis of insurgency, the present day situation and makes some recommendations for future.

Historical Perspective

Present day Assam was ruled by the Ahom kings from 1228 till 1826. Due to incursion by the then Burmese kingdom into Assam, the Ahom kings requested the British East India Company for help. As a result, the British defeated the Burmese and then signed the Treaty of Yandaboo on 24 Feb 1826 thereby ending the reign of Ahom Kings and amalgamating Assam into British India. Thereafter, Assam was a province ruled by the British till Independence.

At the time of Independence, NEI consisted of Assam, North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) i.e. present day ALP, and the princely states of Manipur and Tripura which opted for merger with India in 1949. Present day Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram were then part of Assam and were carved out of it later – Nagaland in 1963, Meghalaya in 1972, and between 1972/1987 Union Territory (UT)/state of Mizoram. Sikkim was a monarchy which was amalgamated into India after a referendum in 1975. Thus, the present day NEI has been a melting pot of various tribes, languages, cultures, history and ethnicity.



Rise of Insurgency in NEI

The British had generally followed a policy of non-interference in the NEI. However, the newly independent India in 1947 had the formidable task of uniting various princely states not only of NEI but of the country as a whole. The integration of these distinct cultures of NEI into the “mainstream” was generally met with resentment. The insurgencies started with Naga Hills. Under the leadership of Phizo, the Naga National Council (NNC) declared independence from India on 14 Aug 1947. Despite efforts at political settlement by various leaders of that time, the unrest did not die. As a result, Indian Army (IA) was ordered to undertake Counter-Insurgency (CI) operations in Jan 1956, after the Government of India (GoI) declared Naga Hills as a disturbed area. Thereafter, various regions proactively voiced their demands for freedom/independence, and initiating insurgencies in the region.

Reasons for Insurgency in NEI

There are various reasons for the insurgencies to be born in NEI. These are as under :-

- (a) **Multi-Ethnic Region.** NEI is the most ethnically diverse region in India. It is home to around 40 million people including 213 of the 635 tribal groups listed by the Anthropological Survey of India.2 Each of these tribes is having its own distinct culture. Thus, each tribal sect resents being integrated into the mainstream India as it means losing their own distinct identity. As the GoI resorts to various methods for “integration” into the “mainstream” based on a myopic understanding of peoples and tribes, it leads to rise in insurgencies to protect their own culture. The situation gets further aggravated due to inter-tribal rivalries, which fuel tribal/ethnic insurgencies.
- (b) **Underdeveloped Region.** Due to the difficult terrain configuration of jungles and mountains, infrastructural development in NEI has generally been slow, often at a snail’s pace. This has widened the schism between the NEI and mainstream India, and further increased a sense of disenchantment with the GoI.
- (c) **Lack of Economic Development.** GoI’s economic policies have also fuelled resentment and insecurity amongst the people. Due to various factors, the development of NEI has lagged behind thereby resulting in lack of employment opportunities. Thus the youth are easily lured by various insurgent groups in order to earn easy money.
- (d) **Sense of Isolation, Deprivation and Exploitation.** Distance from New Delhi and meagre representation in the Lok Sabha has further reduced the vox populi being heard in the corridors of powers, leading to more disillusionment in the dialogue process, thereby making call of the gun more attractive.
- (e) **Demographic Changes.** The influx of refugees from former East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) into Assam led to a dramatic change in the demographic landscape of the region. In the Mangaldai by-election in 1979, there were about 45,000 illegal immigrants in the electoral rolls.3 This led to discontent amongst the people of the region, thereby giving rise to insurgency in Assam with the United National Liberation Front (ULFA), formed on 7 Apr 1979, leading the mass anti-immigrant agitation.
- (f) **Internal Displacement.** Internal displacement is also an ongoing problem. From the 1990s to the start of 2011, over 800,000 people were forced to flee their homes in episodes of inter-ethnic violence in western Assam, along the border between Assam and Meghalaya, and in Tripura. According to conservative estimates, some 76,000 people remain in internal displacement in NEI due to the prolonged armed violence.4
- (g) **External Support.** The insurgencies in the NEI have been supported by erstwhile East Pakistan in the late 1950s; and in early 1960s, in the form of training of personnel of Naga Army and giving them weapons. Later, China also provided weapons and moral support.5 The Chinese support for insurgency in India was at a high from 1967-1975 when China’s foreign policy advocated the spread of ‘revolution’ around the world. In a 2007 article, the present National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval stated that the Chinese support for the Indian rebels also experienced a ‘lull’ during the mid-1980s but that there was, of late, ‘increasing evidence’ of China’s revival of its ‘covert offensive’ in the region.6 Pakistan’s Special Services Group (SSG) also trained the Naga guerillas in the 1960s through their bases in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh).7
- (h) **Impact of Revolutionary Politics.** Members of the NNC, Thuingaleng Muivah, Thinsoclie Medom Keyho and an Angami Naga from Kohima, travelled across the Naga Hills of Myanmar reaching Yunan in Jan 1967, seeking support from the Chinese for their cause. This could be marked as the beginning of the Chinese involvement in NEI.8 The success of people’s revolution in China motivated insurgent leaders and further fuelled insurgency in NEI.
- (i) **Perceived Excesses by IA.** The promulgation of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in most of the NEI has further alienated the local populace. Though imperative for strengthening the hand of IA for CI operations, it is often portrayed as draconian by various Human Rights (HR) organisations and thus has been vilified by various insurgent groups.

Current Scenario

Even though the region has seen an overall decline in insurgency, however, the discontent continues. At present the scenario is less violent than the earlier times. Some of the important recent developments are covered in the succeeding paras.

New Umbrella Organisation. Nine insurgent groups of NEI have come together to form a new unified militant outfit known as United National Liberation Front of South West Asia (UNLFSWA). The initial idea was sown in 2011, by leaders of four North East insurgent groups; namely, Paresh Baruah of ULFA, Khaplang of National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang), (NSCN (K)) and heads of Meitei outfits; namely, United National Liberation Front (UNLFF) and People’s Liberation Army (PLA). These insurgent leaders met and decided to form a confederation to, what they call, “liberate the ancestral homes by total struggle unitedly.” It has taken four years to finally form this outfit on 17 Apr 2015. The outfits that comprise the UNLFWA are : NSCN (K), ULFA, National Democratic Front of Bodoland (Songbijit faction) (NDFB(S), Kamatapur Liberation Organisation (KLO) and six meitei outfits i.e. Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP), Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL), People’s Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK), PREPAK (Progressive), Revolutionary People’s Front (RPF) and United National Liberation Front (UNLFF).9 Khaplang has been announced as the Chairman and Paresh Baruah, either as Commander-in-Chief or Vice Chairman.

Call for Independence. The common objectives of UNLFSWA are, as they put it, “to gain complete independence, to secure sovereign political future from occupation and march ahead together in peace, progress and prosperity of the whole region”.10 Thus, rather than fighting the IA in splinters, the call for struggle for independence is likely to refine their violent operations.

Increase in Attacks on Security Forces. There was an upsurge in the violence against IA by various insurgent groups, in the immediate aftermath of the formation of UNLFSWA, specially the killing of IA soldiers in Jun 2015. However, by the end of 2015, the same has not shown any sign of increasing and seems to have been contained by the IA. In this context, CI operations conducted by the IA in the immediate aftermath of Jun 2015 attack are noteworthy.

Signing of Framework Agreement. On 03 Aug 2015, the 18-year long negotiations with the NSCN (IM) led to the signing of a ‘Framework Agreement’ between the GoI and the former. Details of the Agreement were not disclosed during its signing. On 07 Aug 2015, the NSCN (K) announced that the ‘Framework Agreement’ signed with NSCN (IM) was intended exclusively for that group alone and asserted that it was under no obligation to either agree or disagree with the accord. In Sep 2015, Government declared NSCN (K) a terrorist organisation under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. Finally, on 25 Dec 2015, the NSCN (IM) issued a statement in which it said the Agreement looked at a final solution in which the Nagas would have the right to exercise ‘sovereign power’ over their ‘territories.’ 11

Efforts by Civil Society. In Nagaland, the civil society is trying to bring the NSCN (K) back to the negotiating table. In Aug 2015, a four-member delegation of the Naga Mothers’ Association (NMA), a frontline Naga women’s group, walked across to Myanmar and held talks with the NSCN (K) leaders. After the meeting, the delegation informed that the NSCN (K) was not averse to reconsidering its decision. In Manipur, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar met Rajkumar Meghen alias Sanayaima, the detained leader of Manipur’s oldest insurgent group UNLF at the Guwahati Central Jail, on 17 Dec 2015. The response of the jailed leader has been good. This was the first major mediatory effort by anyone with the Meitei insurgent groups in Manipur and therefore, could be termed as a significant move towards achieving peace in the state.12

Spread of Islamic Radicalism. Islamic radicalism has started spreading its roots in NEI. The arrest of several persons in Assam, many of them directly linked to the Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), in the wake of the 02 Oct 2014 blast in West Bengal’s Burdwan area, is an indication of the fact that Islamist radicalism of the ‘Jihadi’ variety is very much a reality in the region.13

Recommendations

A peaceful NEI without insurgencies is a strategic necessity for India, especially for the success of the ‘Act East Policy’. In order to achieve the same, a few recommendations are outlined below:-

- (a) **Signing of Peace Accords.** To ensure peace and stability in NEI, however temporary, the GoI must sign peace accords with various remaining insurgent groups in the region, on the lines of ‘Framework Agreement’ signed with NSCN (IM) in Aug 2015. A similar accord may be signed with the NSCN (K), ULFA and other insurgent groups. Engagement of insurgent groups in talks is vital for conflict resolution and therefore must be pursued actively and persistently.
- (b) **Inclusion of Insurgent Leaders.** Now that ULFA’s General Secretary Anup Chetia, who was in prison in Bangladesh, has been brought back and has been released on bail in Dec 2015, he must become the pointsman of GoI for further talks with ULFA leading to an agreement with ULFA in a time-bound manner.
- (c) **Continued Efforts By Civil Society.** Notwithstanding the progress in peace talks, efforts by the civil society for rapprochement with the insurgent organisations must continue. This enables a respectable way out for the insurgent leaders and leads to a win-win situation for all the stakeholders.
- (d) **Increased Socio-Economic Development: Act East Policy (AEP).** In order to weed out one of the root causes of insurgency, GoI must accelerate its plans for the development of the region. PM Modi first used the term ‘Act East Policy’ in Nov 2014 at Nya Pi Taw, Myanmar. The stress of PM Modi on AEP is, therefore, a step in the right direction. The building of infrastructure like roads, hospitals, schools, sanitation facilities, et al are essential in inculcating a sense of oneness in the peoples of NEI.
- (e) **Emphasis on Identity, Not on “Mainstreaming”.** NEI is a pot pourri of various tribes, ethnicities, religions, customs, languages, et al. Therefore, the focus should more be on maintaining the individual identities of these peoples. Fear of balkanisation of NEI must not dictate the policies of GoI.
- (f) **Continued Military Operations against Select Insurgent Groups.** IA should continue to operate against those insurgent groups who have not shown inclination towards any peace talks, like NSCN (K), NDFB (S), ULFA, etc. This will erode their resisting power and will bring about stability in the region while political solution is being drafted. It is reiterated that a humane approach in these operations is imperative.
- (g) **Sanctity of Indo-Myanmar International Border (IB).** India shares approximately 1400 km long IB with Myanmar in states of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram.14 The sanctity of the same must, therefore, be strengthened to preclude insurgents from crossing the border at will. This is a herculean task and must therefore, be given high priority.
- (h) **Three Tiered Deployment.** In order to focus the military operations against selected insurgent in select areas, a three tiered deployment is imperative. This can be achieved by increasing the deployment of Assam Rifles (AR) along the Indo-Myanmar border in the first tier, IA in the second tier and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in the third tier. This will ensure cohesive operations thereby, further focussing the ongoing military operations in selected areas.
- (i) **Continuation of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA).** It is strongly recommended to continue AFSPA in regions where there are high levels of insurgency. In this regard, the verdict of Meghalaya’s High Court on the subject is unprecedented. Taking into consideration the situation in the region from Jan-Oct 2015 during which various militant outfits had abducted 87 people for ransom including 27 businessmen, 25 civilians, 25 employees of private firms, five government employees and five teachers, the bench comprising Chief Justice Uma Nath Singh, Justice TNK Singh and Justice SR Sen issued the order on 02 Nov 2015 for enforcement of AFSPA. “We have no option but to direct the Central Government to consider the use of AFSPA in Garo Hills area and deployment of armed and para-military forces to control the situation till life becomes normal and the incidents of rampant kidnapping and killing are totally stopped”, the order stated. The bench noted that the police and civil authorities, despite their best efforts, were not able to control the situation.15
- (k) **De-induction of IA from Select Areas.** Consequent to the peaceful conduct of state elections in Apr 2016 in Assam, it is amply clear that the situation in many parts of Assam and NEI has stabilised. Hence, in these areas, IA must go back to barracks and hand over these districts to the civil administration. If required, the CRPF can fill the void and assist the state police in maintaining law and order in these areas.
- (l) **Monitoring Spread of Radical Islam.** GoI must keep on monitoring the situation in NEI to prevent spread of Islamic radicalism by initiating appropriate socio-economic development measures including education. This will preclude youth from falling easy prey to radical Islamic propaganda.

Conclusion

The insurgencies of NEI have continued for the past seven decades despite various efforts by GoI for a permanent solution. However, with the older generation passing away and the new generation having little interest in insurgencies, the time is ripe to hammer out a long term strategy for elimination of residual insurgencies. A wise mix of socio-economic development and political settlement are the pillars of an everlasting peace in the NEI. Winning the hearts and minds should be the cornerstone for achieving conflict resolution in NEI.

As an instrument of state policy in accordance with goals of statecraft, IA has the key role of undertaking CI operations to prevent the insurgent groups from escalating violence. Towards that end, it has performed in an exemplary manner till date and must therefore, continue to do so whenever and wherever mandated. Resolving the ongoing insurgencies in NEI will be the harbinger of peace and consequent economic prosperity for the millions of people in NEI. It is therefore a step in the right direction, for the success of India’s AEP, and for India to emerge as one of the global powers in a multipolar world of the 21st century.

Endnotes

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@Colonel Kulbhushan Bhardwaj was commissioned into the Regiment of Artillery in June 1995. He has served in counter-insurgency operations in Assam and J&K and has had tenures in high altitude areas in J&K, Siachen Glacier and Sikkim. Till recently, he was in command of 223 Field Regiment and is presently attending the Higher Command Course at the Army War College, Mhow.

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Introduction

As an unprecedented landmark in political history of Taiwan, with the swearing in of Tsai Ing-wen as the new President on 20 May 2016, following her landslide victory in elections, with her Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) capturing 56.1 per cent vote, nearly twice as that of Kuomintang (KMT), and 68 out of 113 seats in parliament,I she became the first female President of Taiwan, which is still struggling for a well defined identity. She comes with great hope to people, who like a free democratic society and, economic prosperity. How DPP (historically perceived to be supportive of independence from China), transforms itself and acts, will impact future consequences on Taiwan’s economy, cross-Strait relations, freedom of their society, and future stand on South China Sea (SCS) and East China Sea (ECS). The new President has a very tight rope to walk, and faces an unprecedented challenge of balancing between national interests, meeting aspirations of the people and peculiar strategic concerns arising amid ‘Big Powers Play’ in the Asia-Pacific Region, involving other powers also. The political pressure is already evident with Beijing warning of no further talks with Taiwan, unless she accepts 1992 consensus, and President Tsai Ing-wen referring to her administration as the “Taiwanese government” during her first meeting as President, with the President of Republic of Palau.2

Strategic Importance of Taiwan

Taiwan, located halfway in West Pacific first island chain, is strategically crucial for People’s Republic of China (PRC) as it opens her gate to Pacific Ocean for future power projection, quest for oil, strategic domination of the sea lanes of communication (SLOCs), besides immediate control of SCS. It is relevant for the US to maintain her strategic domination and economic interests in East Asia. For India, Taiwan can be a potential source of FDI, technological and economic exchanges and extended strategic space in East Asia as part of “Act East Policy”. The natural gas and oil discovered North of Taiwan being claimed by Taiwan, Japan and China, and oil in SCS is also relevant and a bone of contention amongst claimant countries. Taiwan is also relevant for protection of global SLOCs in that region.

Economic Relevance of Taiwan

Historically, Taiwan demonstrates a successful model of rapid growth from poor agricultural society to a prosperous industrial democracy in six decades. Taiwan’s competitive and dynamic free market economy has brought unprecedented prosperity to all levels of society. Taiwan accounts for world’s third largest foreign exchange reserves, and has per capita GDP five times that of China, which is miraculous in view of its meagre mineral resources, small usable landmass for gainful economic activities and frequent natural disasters like typhoons and earthquakes. Taiwan with 98.5 per cent literacy rate3 has educated, tech-savvy human resource, which has been the key to her economic progress. Taiwan is promoting knowledge based economy and industrial modernisation and is domestically concentrating on high technology industries like semi-conductors and biotechnologies. It has heavy trade surpluses with many countries including China. Taiwan’s proactive commercial initiatives led to her joining the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2002, signing the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) with China in June 2010, a free trade deal with New Zealand in July 2013 (a country with which it does not maintain diplomatic relations), and inking a trade pact with Singapore. Electronics, machinery, and petrochemicals have constituted major exports driving the economy. Taiwan has been able to make smart cards for health for the entire population, indicating her determination for social growth and prosperity for all. It feels left out by World health Organisation (WHO), raising a question mark on the aim of WHO of providing health for all.

Taiwan’s economic growth faces some inherent problems and concerns. Besides diplomatic isolation, her heavy dependence on exports makes the economy fragile to fluctuations in world demand. In a sign of deteriorating economy, Taiwan’s export orders have consistently declined during the last 13 months, as demand in China and other global markets remained weak. Taiwan’s low birth rate (just over one child per woman) is among the lowest in the world), and rapidly aging population raises the challenges of labour shortages, falling domestic demand and declining tax revenues. With growing prosperity, its labour costs have shot up to ten times as compared to China, and maximum manufacturing industries have shifted to China to reduce costs of labour as well as transportation of raw materials (which are scarce in Taiwan). The Chinese growth had been a major factor for Taiwanese electronics industry to dominate the global production of computer hardware initially, but now with Chinese themselves becoming a competitor in this field, Taiwan’s challenges have increased. Taiwan’s economic dependence on China is so heavy that it has cut its economic growth forecast from 2.32 per cent to 1.47 per cent for the year 2016, due to China’s slowdown on export demand (Statistics Bureau, May 2016).4 Youth unemployment, housing prices and viability of small businesses are major concerns. President Tsai Ing-wen will have to find ways of reviving sluggish growth, social reforms and creating greater opportunities for youth.

Taiwan’s Search for Identity

Taiwan’s search for identity started after the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) took control over People’s Republic of China and Republic of China (ROC) Government fled to Taiwan in 1949. PRC continues to maintain the stance that Taiwan is an integral part of China. In 1971, the UN recognised PRC as the only China replacing ROC, and started following “One China Policy”. Most of the countries including the US and India are following “One China Policy”. Taiwan on the other hand claims herself to be a democratic sovereign society having a democratically elected Government, constitution, defence forces, currency, booming economy, and with a population comparatively more than 100 countries, and an area more than 150 countries, it feels that it qualifies to be recognised as a separate country by the international community. The ‘One China Policy’ has been a stumbling block in Taiwan’s diplomatic / political interactions with most of the countries and her membership in various international organisations like the UN and WHO. In fact, the Taiwanese historians go on to say that they represented entire China and lost mainland to PRC in a civil war, which has not yet been officially declared to be over (emphasis by the author). Taiwan is a member of WTO, Pacific Economic Cooperation Council, Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum as Chinese Taipei, and participates in Olympics also by the same name. Being an economic and technological giant, claiming to have all the requisites of an independent nation, Taiwan aspires for greater position and role in international environment.

Cross Strait Relations

The cross strait relations between Taiwan and PRC continued to remain frozen at the official level till 2008; however, economic, tourism, and cultural exchanges had been consistently increasing. The cross-strait ties, travel, tourism, communications, trade and investment improved considerably under the ex-President Ma’s administration. Roughly 25 per cent of Taiwan’s trade is now with China, its largest trading partner. Officially, Taiwanese businesses have invested at least US \$60 billion in China. Unofficially, the number is as high as US \$200 billion,5 with bulk of electronic industry included), with Taiwan having a trade surplus of approximately US \$ 30 billion with China.

Ma’s trade deals with China have been controversial, as common Taiwanese particularly the youth, did not feel the benefits of it, hence it resulted in the Sunflower protest movement in 2014. Taiwan has politically aware public with maximum women legislature percentage in Asia. People’s unhappiness has been adequately proven by election results of May 2016. Many surveys have proved that increasing number of people of Taiwan have started identifying themselves as ‘Taiwanese’ and feeling of nationalism is on the rise.

Despite such economic and social interactions between the two sides, Taiwan is apprehensive of the repeated threat of China to use military force for unification, should Taiwan declare independence or go nuclear. Beijing threatened Taiwan with missile exercises in the waters around Taiwan during 1995-1996, an episode which led the US to dispatch two aircraft carrier battle groups to the region, as a show of its determination to prevent Chinese use of force against Taiwan (an unofficial ally). Beijing in the third week of May 2016 held large-scale war games on its Taiwan-facing coast,6 to put pressure on Tsai. Notwithstanding the pressure tactics of China, presently Beijing, Taiwan, and Washington have no interest in escalating tensions in cross-Strait relations as all three have their hands full.

China’s Position

China treats Taiwan as her integral part, with reunification dream. PRC passed the Anti-Secession Law in 2005, authorising war if island formally declares statehood. The reunification of Taiwan continues to remain extremely high on Chinese agenda and they refuse to denounce the use of force in doing so, if required; however, Chinese regime is looking at ‘Peaceful National Reunification’ favouring economic integration of Taiwan, more so after the successful peaceful experience of reunification of Hong Kong.

Historically, China perceives DPP to be supportive of independence, and was trying to sideline them during President Chen’s tenure. Xinhua, the official Chinese news agency, warned that the DPP victory “poses new challenges to cross-Strait relations” and underscored Beijing’s opposition to “separatists”.7 The US response to the DPP victory was that “we share with the Taiwan people a profound interest in the continuation of cross-Strait peace and stability.” State Department spokesman John Kirby said in a statement, raising concerns in China.8 Tsai has been quite moderate vowing to “work towards maintaining the status quo for peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait” expecting both sides having responsibility to find mutually acceptable means of interaction, and prevent provocations/ accidents, in her inaugural speech. Beijing however has threatened to suspend regular talks with Taipei to put pressure on Tsai to acknowledge the “1992 consensus”9

China will continue to oppose anyone trying to recognise Taiwan or increase their military capability. They will continue to oppose their membership in international organisations like the UN, WHO as much as they can. China seems to be in no hurry for immediate unification because any such move besides causing turbulence in her relations with the US and other regional players, will affect her economic growth adversely. China also cannot rule out the possibility of her own people getting influenced by democracy, freedom, and prosperity for all segments of society, as being enjoyed by the people of Taiwan, and demanding the same. The recent troubles in Hong Kong adequately justify this fear. China will attempt to sideline any Government looking for democracy/constitutional amendments. China will avoid any tangible military action unless the red lines laid by them are crossed.

The US Position

In the “Shanghai Communiqué” the United States said that it did not challenge the claim that there was one China, and while restating its wish for a peaceful resolution to the issue, also agreed to reducing the US forces in Taiwan. The United Nations in 1971 voted for Beijing to replace Taiwan in the China seat. Finally in 1979, official US diplomatic ties with Taiwan were discontinued, in keeping with the US acknowledgement that there could only be one legitimate government in China. Many Americans were upset as they felt that it was “abandonment” of Taiwan. Soon after diplomatic relations were established with the PRC, in 1979, the US Congress passed the “Taiwan Relations Act” to ensure peace, security and stability in Western Pacific, which sought to grant Taiwan the same privileges as a sovereign nation, though it was no longer recognised as one, and it promised to make available “such defence equipment and services, as may be necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defence capability.”

In a joint Communication with PRC in 1972, the US had adopted the line of No declaration of independence by Taiwan, No UN seat and no representation in an international organisation, which requires only one membership for a country, in respect of Taiwan; however, the US are opposed to any unilateral changes in status quo by either side.10

Taiwan is crucial to the US for strategic dominance of South and East China Sea and the Asia-Pacific Region. The US has major trade interests (computer hardware and ease of transhipment of goods in Asia) in Taiwan besides strategic dominance. The US will, therefore, prefer to have a democratic, prosperous Taiwan as an ally, where they have adequate strategic and economic leverage, instead of Taiwan forming part of China.

The US is likely to follow one China policy in near term and may not like any major turbulence in her engagement with PRC by turning Taiwan Strait as flashpoint. The US will, therefore, prefer status quo there, as she has her hands full in other flashpoints and global commitments. The US will continue to help Taiwan build defensive capability. Based on 1979 Taiwan Relation Act, it will continue to provide all kinds of non-nuclear weaponry to include submarines, anti-missile equipment, anti-submarine aircraft, and air defence equipment to Taiwan in future.

Taiwan’s Position

The National interest of Taiwan is to ensure own survival, development, well being and safety of its people, protect its democratic system and fundamental rights. They want to enjoy their freedom, democracy and prosperity, but do not want to fight for independence at the cost of prosperity and economic disaster. Majority of Taiwanese population would prefer status quo to economically disastrous independence.

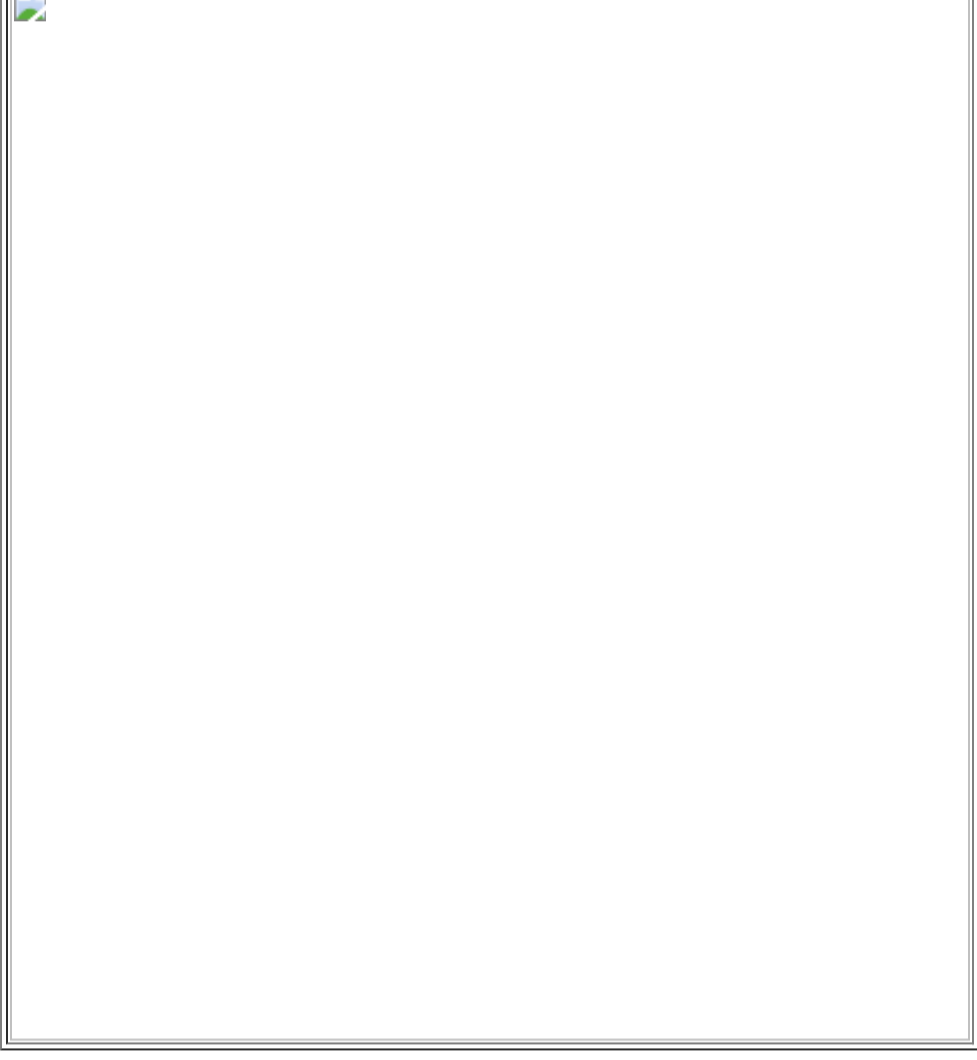
In accordance with the people’s will, Tsai has vowed to work towards maintaining the status quo, peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, expecting a similar responsible behaviour from China. Tsai has been cautious to neither dispute nor embrace the 1992 consensus. She said ambiguously during her campaign that the 1992 consensus is “one option.”11 In her inauguration speech, Tsai avoided mentioning the word “consensus”; instead, she said she respected the “historic fact” that a meeting took place in 1992, during which Taiwan and the mainland sought common ground and tried to set aside differences.12

To avoid overdependence on Chinese economy, Tsai wants to diversify its economy; wants Taiwan to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement and China’s Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), expecting the world community to accommodate her with more strategic space, as it was done when Taiwan joined Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) under the name “Chinese Taipei.”

Taiwan’s Position on South China Sea and East China Sea

Taiwan’s position on SCS and ECS is very peculiar as it tends to believe in legality of Nine Dash Line like the PRC from historical perspective; however, knowing overall global mood, and in a bid to resolve her own contradictory claims on islands and reefs with other countries including PRC, it still aims to follow international laws/conventions on the subject. Taiwan would also not like to have any major differences with the US on this issue; hence, it has focused more on the islands where she has interest, rather than the whole body of water in the Nine Dash line, suspending her claim to the entire waters within the line in December 2005, while still advocating its ownership of concerned land features within the line.

Taiwan has occupied the Taiping (Itu Aba) Island and some reefs (shown as black dots in the Map below) in the Spratlys, since it sent troops there in 1956. The island used to be the largest among the Spratly, (now surpassed by the PRC’s island reclamation and construction). Taiwan’s former Presidents have visited Taiping Island in order to reiterate Taiwan’s territorial claim. Taiwan has disputed Vietnam and Malaysia’s joint submission to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf of the United Nations on it. Taiwan has also blamed the Philippines’ initiation of international arbitration proceedings against the PRC at the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea in January 2013, without inviting Taiwan, as a concerned party in this arbitration.



In 2012, Taiwan mooted the East China Sea Peace Initiative (ECS Initiative) which ‘de-emphasises the territorial nature of the dispute and focuses on resource sharing and cooperation’ presuming that these disputes are not easy to resolve. They managed a Fishery Agreement with Japan in 2013 as a result of the same. Taiwan is proposing a similar SCS Initiative, to resolve SCS problem. However in a dramatic turn when China deployed missile batteries on Woody Island, giving inclination of changing the status quo in the region, the US increased her military posturing. China’s neighbours had appealed for restraint. The stance of Taiwan was no different, as President-elect Tsai Ing-wen responded by calling on “all parties to exercise self-control based on the principle of peaceful resolution of disputes in the South China Sea,” according to Taiwan’s official Central News Agency.

Future of Taiwan

In the immediate future, Taiwan could look for free, self-ruled, democratic entity, beyond Beijing’s jurisdiction, which in effect is ‘status quo’ to continue. The political statements from Taiwan for greater autonomy and international space will continue, but she is unlikely to cross the Chinese redline of declaring independence or going nuclear. None of the three concerned parties (PRC, US and Taiwan) seem to be interested in spoiling the existing peace and economic development and the economic integration between them has reduced the chances for any military conflict for all the parties. No major changes are therefore visualised in the near future.

A ‘Peaceful stability framework’ based on the principle of ‘no Chinese military intrusion’ and ‘no formal declaration of independence by Taiwan’ for next few decades may be a practical and popular solution between China and Taiwan.

Taiwan – an ‘Act East’ Destination for India

Out of all the challenges which the new President Tsai Ing-wen is confronted with, the most important is rejuvenating the sluggish economic growth of Taiwan, which is marred by shortage/excessive cost of labour, poor demand, lack of raw materials, and heavy dependence on export market, resulting in overdependence on China as manufacturing hub, which restricts her strategic choices. India is a credible alternative, which provides answers to most of these problems. Taiwan needs to diversify her investments, if she needs greater autonomy and freedom.

A growing India needs to propagate her ‘Act East Policy’ with greater vigour to address her strategic, economic and security concerns in East Asia. India needs new trade partners to sustain the proposed economic growth to meet her future aspirations, besides gaining well-deserved strategic space in Asia. In this context Taiwan, with her great economic potential, credible human resource and peculiar strategic concerns is a natural destination.

Indo-Taiwanese engagement has been improving ever since the establishment of trade and cultural offices in Taipei and New Delhi since 1995, the first such office of Taiwan in South Asia. India needs to invite investment and outsourcing from Taiwan, as well as create better investment environment to suit their investors. Taiwan is looking at developing alternate trade partners like India, as it is apprehensive of putting all eggs in one basket (PRC). Stable democracy, low cost labour, trained manpower and mega consumer markets make India, a good investment destination for Taiwan in mutually beneficial terms. Integration of Indian booming software market and Taiwanese information technology hardware and biotech industry has tremendous trade potential. For India, relations with Taiwan could prove useful both in terms of industrial development, economic growth and strategic security.

Conclusion

President Tsai Ing-wen has a very tough task ahead of reforming and rejuvenating the economy, maintaining their autonomy, without becoming a Chinese puppet, and addressing existing social concerns on priority. She needs to diversify her economic engagements with countries like India. She needs to protect democracy and freedom of her people, without upping the ante with China to endanger the security of Taiwan. She also needs to carve out more strategic and economic space for Taiwan amid Big Power play in Asia-Pacific. She has to engage with China and the US to work out a reasonable ‘Peaceful stability framework’ without crossing their red line and not coming under pressure to let them cross hers (emphasis added by author). This would need a step by step pragmatic and practical approach beyond the rhetoric of elections. The international organisations like the UN and WHO should rethink about their policies of leaving out a segment of population (Taiwan) from their social development programmes on political grounds.

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@Major General SB Asthana, SM, VSM (Retd) was commissioned into 7 ASSAM on 16 Dec 1978 and retired as Additional Director General Infantry on 01 Jun 2014. He attended a National Development Course in Taiwan in 2006. He is a well-known security analyst who has been speaking on strategic and international issues at various forums. Presently, he is the Chief Instructor at United Institution of India since 16 Mar 2015.

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Background

Due to the tectonic shift in the balance of power from West to East, the geopolitical scene in the Asia-Pacific has undergone profound change since the turn of the century, deeply impacting its security fabric. There are multiple factors which have contributed to redefining the strategic landscape. Far too many structures and organisations are competing for influence in the limited space. The US, a traditional Pacific power seeks to prevent emergence of competitors at the global level, while People’s Republic of China (PRC) harbours similar design in the regional perspective.

Asia-Pacific was the arena of conflict for over two decades from 1970-90, involving the US, Soviet Union and China. The US dual strategy of ‘hub and spokes’ and ‘regional pivot’ have been effectively countered by China through asymmetric stratagem and soft balancing. The tensions have escalated in the area due to increased friction over rival territorial claims in the East China Sea and South China Sea. With more stakeholders jumping into the fray, scope of these disputes has enlarged, assuming multilateral complexion, resulting in rapid militarisation of the region. Remarkable economic growth notwithstanding, the Asia-Pacific continues to be unstable, primarily due to lack of integration in the absence of an effective institutional mechanism and trust deficit.

Since 2011, the term ‘Indo-Pacific’ has found increasing usage at various global forums. It signifies fusion of two geopolitically sensitive and economically vibrant regions.¹ Given the strategic location and enhanced clout, India is being seen as an important player by the US. Delhi’s maritime interests demand review of its role; beyond being seen merely as a balancer. This paper undertakes an overview of the prevailing strategic landscape in the Asia-Pacific, analyses the dynamics of its militarisation and profiles the emerging architecture.

Strategic Landscape

President Obama during his address to the Australian Parliament on 17 Nov 2011 announced ‘Pivot to Asia’ strategy in view of the immense importance of Asia-Pacific.² It implies ‘rebalancing to Asia’ by deploying additional military assets in the region. Besides bolstering military presence, the new US strategy seeks to engage in greater geo-economic cooperation from its allies so as to synergise their collective power through major initiatives like the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP). The US Defence Doctrine is in a state of transition; marking a shift from the position of pre-eminence to multilateralism.³ America’s regional strategic framework encompasses the following –⁴

- (a) Ensure stability of the region and counter emergence of any dominant power or coalition that would threaten or impede its interests or that of its allies.
- (b) Prosperity and promotion of the regional free trade and market access.
- (c) Freedom of navigation and maintenance of status quo.
- (d) Peace time engagement including forward presence and crisis response, based on forward stationed forces.
- (e) Fight and win a local conflict, if the situation so warrants.

Asia-Pacific is of vital strategic significance for China. Historically, it wielded considerable influence in the area and even today considers the region as its under belly. The crux of China’s Asia policy has always been to prevent a competitor who could challenge its domination. Beijing’s policy towards the nations of South East Asia over the last decade was to underplay outstanding regional disputes, engage in multilateral dialogue and project an attitude of good neighbourliness. However, off late, PRC has scaled up its activities in South China Sea. Belligerent moves by China have raised serious concerns in the neighbourhood. Beijing’s strategic vision of ‘peaceful rise’ is premised on conducive periphery, regional stability, territorial integrity and sustained economic growth. China’s broad objectives in Asia-Pacific are:-

- New layer:-
- (a) Work towards diminution of US influence in the region.
 - (b) Ensure strategically passive, neutral Japan.
 - (c) Promote concept of Asian Security, managed by Asians.
 - (d) Sustain economic development and work for prosperous South East Asia.
 - (e) Seek sovereign authority over South China Sea.

Japan views PRC’s rapid military modernisation and North Korea’s nuclear programme very seriously; lingering dispute over Senkaku Islands further complicating the situation. Prime Minister Abe has paved the way for Japan adopting ‘New Defence Policy Guidelines’ aimed to re-craft its military strategy. He has also proposed that Australia, India, Japan and the US form a ‘diamond’ to safeguard maritime space stretching from Indian Ocean to Western Pacific.⁵ Having removed one per cent GDP cap on defence spending, Japan’s defence budget for the fiscal year 2016 stands at US \$ 44 billion, registering 4.7 per cent increase.⁶

Due to turbulent environment on the Korean Peninsula, Seoul remains deeply concerned about its security. It is also sceptical about the limitations of the US support in the event of a showdown. Consequently, it has undertaken a strategic defence review and allocated US \$ 550 bn over 15 years for the military modernisation.

Given the imperatives of geostrategic shift, Australia has realigned its national priorities accordingly. Liberal order in Asia-Pacific best serves Canberra’s interests. It has always been wary of new institutions which could sideline its allies. It regards Indian and Pacific Oceans as one strategic arena envisioning India’s special role. Australia is also investing in building trilateral partnership with the US, Japan and South Korea. To cope with the emerging security challenges, it has proposed a substantial increase of US \$ 72 bn in the defence expenditure in the coming two decades.⁷

The nations of South East Asia have taken a pragmatic view of the geopolitical realities in the region. They have made efforts to build consensus and evolve formal mechanisms to address internal disputes. Mistrust between China and ASEAN has grown due to the South China Sea disputes as Philippines and Vietnam are directly involved. To check Beijing’s growing influence, they have scaled up cooperation with the USA. There is a strong evidence of ensuing arms race in the region, evident from the weapon acquisitions by various nations.⁸

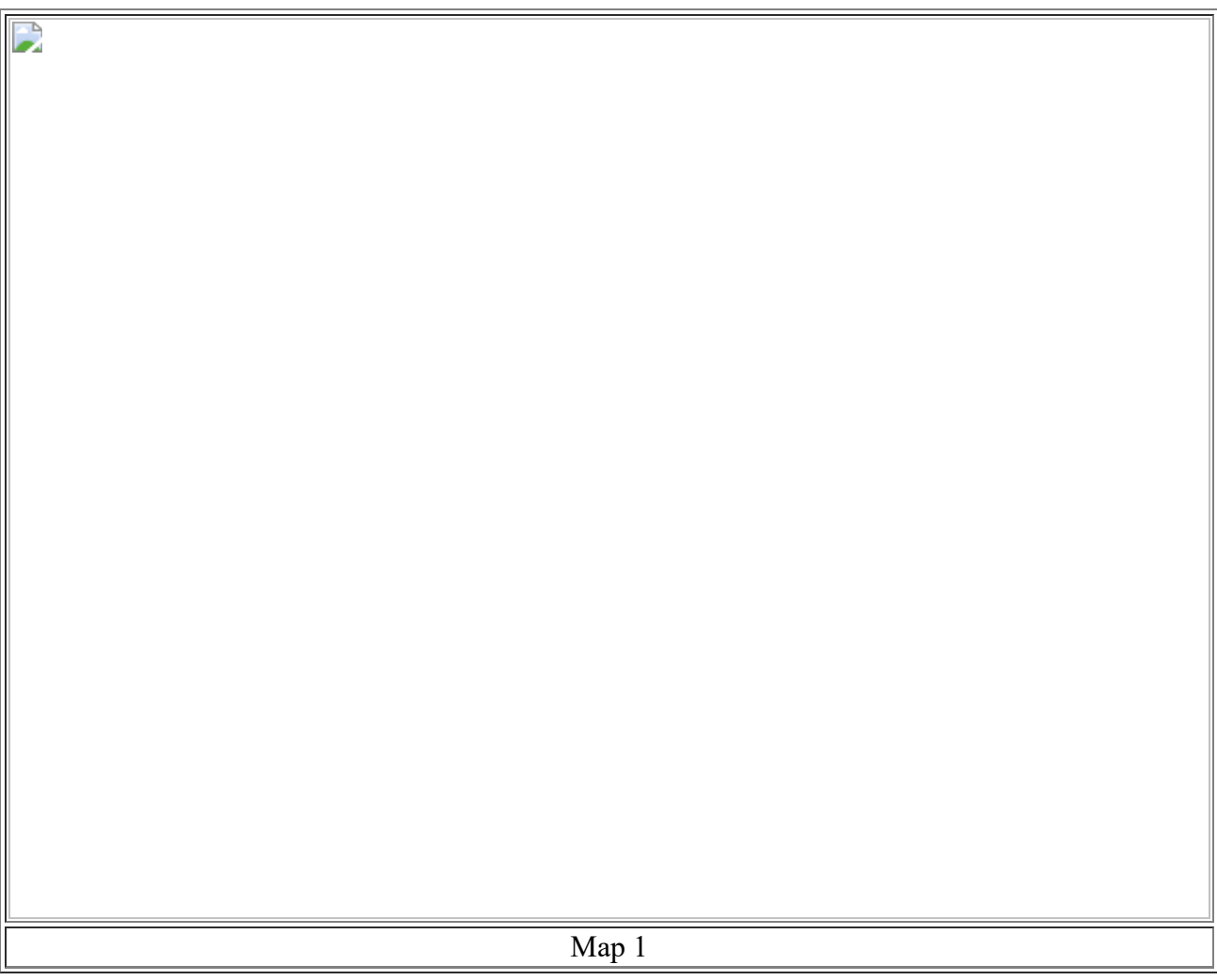
Russia is becoming markedly more visible player in the regional security. It plans to bolster the Pacific Fleet. However, Moscow appears uncertain on its strategic role in the Asia-Pacific. It has the option of seeking closer partnership with China to pursue its strategic interests.

Conflicting national interests, quest for strategic space and unresolved territorial disputes have led to intense competition in Asia-Pacific and have seriously impacted the balance of power equations. Consequently, the USA has also expanded scope of military cooperation with its allies and partners. “US-India Joint Vision for Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region” issued in January 2015, is an extension of President Obama’s ‘Rebalancing to Asia’ doctrine.

Militarisation Dynamics

In 1974, China surreptitiously annexed Parcels Islands, disputed by Vietnam and Taiwan. Reclamation of Spratly and Scarborough Shoal has been an ongoing process by various claimants. China took the lead by building an air base on Woody Island, part of Parcel group. Malaysia followed suit by reclaiming Swallow Reef in 2003 to build a runway. Soon Vietnam built 500m runway on the Big Spratly Island. In 2006, Taiwan constructed over one km long runway on Itu Iba Island and in 2014 Philippines constructed a runway on the Thitu Island. All these runways are capable of handling both cargo and fighter aircraft.

In the recent past, China’s efforts in reclaiming the islands in South China Sea have increased dramatically. Please refer to Map 1. Its construction activities are concentrated around Gaven, Mischief, Fiery Cross, Hughes and Johnson South Reefs. These islands are large enough to support essential infrastructure for the military installations. It has also dug deep channels for handling larger vessels. China declaring an ‘Air Defence Identification Zone’ (ADIZ) in the East China Sea has led to heightened tensions in the region. As per the ‘US Department of Defence China Report’, PRC is actively engaged in developing ‘Anti Access’ and ‘Area Denial’ (A2/AD) capabilities.⁹



Map 1

China is also upgrading its strategic arsenal both in qualitative and quantitative terms. Its naval strategy is to counter the US aircraft carrier based assets. It is concentrating on the nuclear powered stealth submarines, littoral class surface ships and land based anti ship cruise missiles (DF 21D – high precision heavy warhead aircraft carrier killer) alongside Fourth Generation warplanes. It is also known to have developed D 26 Missile, ‘Guam Killer’ with a range of 5500 km. Besides Liaoning, three more aircraft carriers are due join the PLA Navy (PLAN) by the end of the decade. PLAN has a fleet of 62 submarines and is expected to add another 15 in the coming years.

After redefining earlier ‘periphery policy’ incorporating the concept of extended neighbourhood, there has been marked increase in PRC’s activities in the region. China’s recent path breaking military reforms coupled with new maritime strategy marks a shift from its earlier ‘offshore water defence’ to include ‘open sea protection’; indicate its proactive design.¹⁰ Its recent forays into Spratly and creating military infrastructure there have given impetus to the militarisation of the region. Lately there were reports of China deploying HQ 9 Air Defence systems at Woody Island for the first time.¹¹

Post World War II, USA emerged as a major Pacific power and assumed the role of security guarantor in respect of large number of countries in the region. It has continued to maintain a strong presence in Okinawa, Guam and South Korea. In consonance with its ‘rebalancing strategy’, the US will be redeploying 60 per cent of its naval assets in the Asia-Pacific by 2020. It implies induction more submarines and surface vessels to strengthen its forward presence and adopting counter measures against the PLA’s missile threat. The US is expected to go in for a flexible military posture, ensuring both deterrence and punitive capability. Maintenance of generational lead in military technology over China remains an inherent component of the US strategy.¹² The US will also be investing in revamping the network of traditional alliances besides according priority to strengthening military ties with countries like India as also look for new partnerships in South East Asia.

While American focus is on the defence of South Western Islands, Japan has ensured that the US complements its deployment at Okinawa. This will be significant for the US operational strategy which lays emphasis on the ‘anti access-area denial’ environment. Between 2011 and 2015, Japan had earmarked US \$ 284 billion to modernise its Self Defence Force. Japan is in the process of acquiring five submarines, three destroyers, 12 fighter jets, 10 reconnaissance planes and 39 helicopters.¹³

Washington and Canberra have signed a 25 year agreement to boost the US troops in Australia from 1500 to 2500 by 2017. Arrangements have also been made to create larger ballistic missile defence shield in Asia-Pacific.¹⁴ Australia also plans to acquire new submarines, air warfare destroyers, frigates, cruise missiles and 100 Lockheed Martin Joint Strike Fighters.¹⁵

To counter China, in 2014, Manila signed a 10 year pact with the Washington, which expands the scope of US military presence in Philippines. In November 2015, Philippines and Vietnam signed “strategic partnership” that deepens ‘defence, trade and maritime cooperation’. The same month, Japan and Philippines signed an agreement to strengthen military cooperation, including transfer of military equipment.¹⁶

Emerging Scenario

Political, economic, security and socio-cultural factors which are concurrently at play in the Asia-Pacific have led to intense rivalry between the competing powers, destabilising the regional equilibrium. The USA is vigorously engaged in its quest to remain a dominant player in the region, although not as a security guarantor. Given China’s enlarged strategic interests as an aspiring super power, Asia-Pacific Region willy-nilly figures high on the list of its core national interests. Beijing has adopted more traditional realpolitik approach to address its security concerns.

The overlapping Strategic interests of the US and China, the two key players in the region have led to increased military build-up. China seeks to bolster its claim to entire South China Sea by undertaking hectic military infrastructure developmental activities. However, the USA refuses to recognise the reclaimed features and insists on the right of all nations to freely sail and fly through the disputed area. The emerging security situation bears high risk of confrontation, which is not in the larger interest of the region. There is an urgent need for effective mechanism to be put in place to obviate a conflict situation.

The other important players in the region are Japan, South Korea, Australia and ASEAN; allies and partners of the US. Many of them doubt Washington’s commitment to allocate required resources to effectively defend their national interests. They are addressing their security concerns, primarily to counter China through multiple means; encompassing new alliances and enhancing respective military capabilities. The possibility of Russia seeking even closer partnership with China remains a possibility, which could further complicate regional ‘balance of power’ matrix. The diversified security dynamics has narrowed the strategic space of ASEAN; besides curtailing its role. As per Richard Heydrain, Professor De la Salle University, the Philippines; “while American military posturing could help ASEAN to push back China, diplomacy and international law represent best hope to peacefully manage, if not resolve the dispute.”¹⁷

Being a vital link between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, Delhi cannot afford to under play the strategic importance of South China Sea. Evident from the “US-India Joint Vision for Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region”; India is being perceived by America as a key player. Recent offer of joint patrolling by the two navies from Admiral Harry B Harris, Commander of the US Pacific Command and American Ambassador to India Mr Richard Verma has been prudently rejected as India seeks to maintain strategic autonomy. While scaling up military cooperation with the US, Japan, Australia and ASEAN; India would not want to be seen, even inadvertently, a counter to China. Amongst ASEAN, India enjoys high credibility which can be effectively leveraged by integrating Northeast and Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the framework of ‘Act East Policy’.

Security scenario in the Asia-Pacific Region is playing out on the expected lines. Beijing’s assurances of peaceful rise are not in sync with its actions, making the neighbourhood highly suspicious of Communist leadership intent, further widening the trust deficit. Given the divergent and clashing interests of the numerous key players, the area is emerging as a potential flash point. High stakes in protecting prosperity and economic interdependency may stand out as region’s most effective safeguard towards conflict prevention. Multilateralism, transparency, adherence to international law and restraining adventurism could go a long way in de-escalating and discouraging militarisation of Asia-Pacific.

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@Major General GG Dwivedi, SM, VSM and Bar, PhD retired as Assistant Chief Integrated Defence Staff in 2009. Commissioned into 14 JAT in November 1971, he commanded 16 JAT in Siachen, Brigade in J&K and Division in the North East. He served as Military Attaché in China, with concurrent accreditation to Mongolia and North Korea from 19 Jan 1997 to 19 Aug 1999. Currently he is Professor and Chairperson, Faculty of International Studies, Aligarh Muslim University.

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Introduction

The United States Secretary of Defence, Ashton Carter arrived in Delhi for consultations in April 2016. As is the case when itineraries of foreign dignitaries are announced, this visit also generated its share of speculation and crystal gazing. Despite steady progress over the years, for certain sections of Indians, the prospects of balanced and positive Indo-US relations remain illusory – thanks to a history of continued American insensitivity to Indian strategic interests and stated policy in various fields, as also to the disparate and disjointed voices of India’s fractured polity.

During the visit, India has committed to signing a Logistic Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), tailored specifically to Indian interests, in a matter of a few weeks or months.¹ The jury is still out on this, with many in the Indian strategic community arguing for and against such an arrangement. With degrees of merit on both sides, a closer scrutiny of the issues involved is warranted before reaching any conclusion on this specific aspect as also the entire canvas of Indo-US strategic cooperation with its attendant ramifications.

India in the US Strategic Calculus

Indo-US ties which flowered with India’s liberalisation programme of the 1990s were further stimulated by a reassessment of US policy following the September 2001 attacks. Immediately after that, India’s role in the American scheme of things was clearly enunciated through the US National Security Strategy paper of September 2002 which notes that “the Administration sees India’s potential to become one of the great democratic powers of the twenty-first century and has worked hard to transform our relationship accordingly”.² It further adds that “The United States has undertaken a transformation in its bilateral relationship with India based on a conviction that the US interests require a strong relationship with India..... we have a common interest in the free flow of commerce, including through the vital sea lanes of the Indian Ocean.... we share an interest in fighting terrorism and in creating a strategically stable Asia. Differences remain, including over the development of India’s nuclear and missile programmes, and the pace of India’s economic reforms. But while in the past these concerns may have dominated our thinking about India, today we start with a view of India as a growing world power with which we have common strategic interests”. Further, on India and Pakistan, it says, “Our involvement in this regional dispute, building on earlier investments in bilateral relations, looks first to concrete steps by India and Pakistan that can help defuse military confrontation.”

Compare the above with the National Security Strategy paper of 2015 which states “In South Asia, we continue to strengthen our strategic and economic partnership with India.³ As the world’s largest democracies, we share inherent values and mutual interests..... We support India’s role as a regional provider of security and its expanded participation in critical regional institutions. We see a strategic convergence with India’s Act East policy and our continued implementation of the rebalance to Asia and the Pacific. At the same time, we will continue to work with both India and Pakistan to promote strategic stability, combat terrorism, and advance regional economic integration in South and Central Asia.” While it can be argued that the content is essentially the same (down to the hyphenation with Pakistan), clearly the enthusiasm of the early 2000s is muted. The realities of geopolitics over the preceding 15 years or so, domestic pressures in both countries as also the personal predilections of President Obama (as compared to George Bush, who was instrumental in pushing forward the Indo-US Nuclear Deal) seem to have left an imprint, with the potential of the relationship unrealised. This is borne out from the current state of defence cooperation between both nations which, at the end of the day has been restricted mainly to military to military exercises and a few equipment purchases without transfer of technology.

The US Rebalancing to Asia-Pacific

Over the last two years, the United States’s strategic rebalancing in the Asia-Pacific has acquired renewed impetus. Certain policy benchmarks, such as a corresponding reduction in the importance assigned to West Asia (specifically Saudi Arabia), a rapprochement with Iran, the search for reliable allies who will assist in maintaining the balance in the South China Sea in the face of growing Chinese assertiveness and President Obama’s inclination towards ‘surrogate warfare’ both human and technological⁴ to conserve American lives, constitute key aspects of the ‘Obama Doctrine’.⁵ Central to this is the call for all stakeholders to provide their share materially in full, towards ensuring security of common interests. The Asia-Pacific, where the US is preparing for full spectrum operations after a long spell of counter-insurgency, is the testing ground. And it is in this context that the visit of Ashton Carter needs to be viewed.

Further, indications of the current American mindset can be gleaned from remarks of the Secretary of Defence himself in April 2016 at an interaction at the Council on Foreign Relations which have since been widely publicised.⁶ Mr Carter admits that China’s actions are ‘raising tensions in the region, leading to militarisation by its neighbours...’. He states that the US is making enormous investments in capability building, especially with deployment of the latest weapon platforms in the region and that ‘...we will continue to fly and sail and operate wherever international law allows because we must continue the progress that has helped so many in the region to rise and prosper’. This clear and unequivocal stand is in stark contradiction to the Chinese viewpoint articulated recently in the People’s Daily that ‘... as long as China strengthens its presence in the South China Sea and the West Pacific, the US will respond with new military deployments....an ultimate solution will not come until the balance of power between China and the US witnesses a fundamental change in the West Pacific, which will take a long time to realise.....’.⁷

Implications of the American Outreach

The American outreach towards India has thus acquired a sense of urgency, which is manifesting now through the LEMOA, a carry forward of a Logistics Support Agreement mooted earlier. The LEMOA once finalised will doubtless be subjected to scrutiny: from all indications it does not afford the Americans any sort of ‘carte blanche’ on Indian soil, but would be tailored to suit specific complementary Indian interests in the Indian Ocean and for other humanitarian reasons as articulated by the Government. Notwithstanding the above, the likelihood of India’s neighbours in the immediate and extended vicinity perceiving this as the start of India getting drawn into a military alliance with the US is a real possibility, which could impact their subsequent interactions with India.

Chinese reaction to the proposed LEMOA has been subdued, both at their foreign office⁸ as also by their outgoing ambassador to India.⁹ Considering that India has publicly refused to carry out joint patrolling with the American Navy, the Chinese for the time being seem to be only watching an evolving situation. It will be another matter, however, if the LEMOA is used to extend the stay of American warships into the Indian Ocean on India’s western and eastern seaboard, where they could be perceived as a threat to Chinese activity at Gwadar, or interference with its proposed maritime silk route. At the same time, a robust allied naval presence in the Indian Ocean through which a large percentage of world shipping still plies, would provide major leverages to India and security alternatives to smaller island nations.¹⁰ Chinese reaction to such developments would be interesting to see, given their stand on freedom of navigation in the Indian Ocean (epitomised famously by the saying that the Indian Ocean is not India’s ocean). Of course, the irony in the totally opposite position taken by China on this very aspect in the South China Sea is not to be missed and could be another lever for future bargaining.

Another related issue pertains to the treatment received by Pakistan, China’s enduring friend and all-weather ally. Pakistan continues to maintain close relations with the US and obtains various forms of aid from it (including F 16 fighters and helicopters), without raising Chinese hackles. It can, therefore, be argued that China should have no difficulty with India making its own arrangements with the Americans. Overall, such long term leverages would be far more effective for India as compared to pinpricks such as granting (and then revoking) visas to dissident Uighurs and others.¹¹ And for a balanced relationship between the two countries, leverages of various kinds are essential, so that both India and China can cooperate and progress on equal terms.

The Russian Factor

In recent years, Russia has increasingly driven home its relevance in world affairs, be it in Europe (Georgia and Ukraine) or West Asia (Syria). Consequently there is now talk of a new ‘Cold War’ with visible attempts by the US to isolate Russia both politically and economically. The latest example is the American effort to extend sanctions against Russia, preventing it from exporting cheap gas to much of Europe.¹² Both Russia and the US are warming towards Iran as they compete for space in a geopolitically refigured West Asia. The equation is further complicated by their respective stances over Afghanistan, though there is congruence in attempting to rid the region of the ISIS. Russia has been making inroads into Pakistan as well for the last few years, again for different reasons with some success.¹³ Thus, with US-Russia relations going through a grim phase, it is extremely important for India to nurture and sustain a strictly bilateral Indo-Russian relationship. While various aspects of the same (especially trade) need a fillip, that country still remains the major source for India to obtain its military weapon systems, be it Sukhoi fighter jets or Smerch rockets. Also, it is only the erstwhile Soviet Union and later Russia that have shared high level defence technology with India. It is, therefore, imperative for India to ensure that there are no negatives for the Indo-Russian relationship when sealing any agreement with the Americans. Thanks to its sheer size, mineral wealth, residual technological might and defence manufacturing capability, Russia will remain a great power and always extremely important to India.

The Regional Impact

It is unlikely that any Indo-US strategic convergence will be viewed negatively by India’s neighbours in the Asia-Pacific. ASEAN, Australia, Japan, Vietnam and Korea are all broadly of one mind on the long term effects of China’s rise. As for Pakistan, it is sure to up the ante with the US, by demanding some sort of equivalence with India or such like assurances, while fanning Chinese apprehensions on the issue. India’s neighbours, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have mutually beneficial relations with both the USA and China, and would continue to do so. To unbiased observers it is, therefore, clear that in the security sphere at least, the convergence of Indo-American interests in the Asia-Pacific if formalised, would be mutually beneficial for both countries. India of course would have to insert the fine print as per its own requirements to retain some strategic autonomy.

Managing Consensus at Home

India has a long history of non-alignment with a tradition of spurning overtures from various blocs right from the commencement of the Cold War. Given such a historical mindset and the wildly divergent views of the Indian polity both mainstream, left and right of centre, managing a consensus on the prospect of aligning with the US on any issue has never been an easy task. While a precedent of signing a far more defence oriented pact, the Indo Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation of August 1971 under the stewardship of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi does exist, it was done under the looming shadow of an inevitable war with Pakistan, and signed with a friendly communist regime which had stood guarantor for India on many occasions. At that time, there were no two questions on where exactly India’s national interests lay, and the effect of the treaty on both American and Soviet actions during the liberation of Bangladesh is now history (however, this treaty too fuelled anti Americanism, thanks to then President Nixon’s policies, and can be taken as a masterstroke of Soviet foreign policy). If such a consensus is to be arrived at today, the Government’s long term regional policies would have to be further amplified. As a first step, the draft LEMOA could be shared with all parties and the content debated, so that concerns about possible loss of strategic autonomy are balanced against tangible gains, both immediate and long term.

Conclusion

India is not an expansionist power and neither does it have the urge to dominate the world. We, therefore, come to the final question - at the end of the day, who needs the other more in the Asia-Pacific : India or the US? The answer to this will decide whether any other tangible benefits could accrue to India by playing this card. If the American need is more pressing, then there is scope for India to be more assertive on the issue. As noted earlier in this paper, the US’s stated intent is to work with both India and Pakistan to create a stable and prosperous South Asia. If so, then this might be just the moment for informing the Americans that notwithstanding their constraints for sustaining the Pakistani state due to geopolitical realities, that country cannot be permitted to blatantly foster terror in India and elsewhere any longer. For a change, the time has come for India to demand a clear quid pro quo, wherein instead of American reprimands cloaked in diplomatese, visible pressure, if not sanctions be put on Pakistan should it continue with its policy of facilitating the entire gamut of terrorist activity on Indian soil in any manner. LEMOA and other agreements could then be projected as truly in India’s national interest by fulfilling multiple objectives, thereby becoming important milestones in India’s march towards its rightful place in Asia.

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Pakistan officially confirmed that it possesses tactical nuclear weapons in October 2015, on the eve of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's official visit to the United States.¹ The news was not a surprise: discussions about Pakistan's interest in battlefield nuclear weapons have surfaced periodically over the past half-decade.² Yet, despite a small but steady stream of calls for India to broaden its nuclear options for greater flexibility, the Government has largely resisted moves to overtly acquire tactical nuclear weapons (TNWs). That said, India's short-range Prahaar missile, which could hypothetically carry a small nuclear payload, might appear to leave the door ajar for such a development.³ However, as this paper will argue, a study of TNWs on the subcontinent underscores the difficulties of inducing, storing, authorising use of and actually using such weapons. India, therefore, is correct in rejecting this category of weapons; indeed, New Delhi should go further and remove any possible ambiguity regarding its position with respect to non-strategic nuclear weapons.

TNWs have proved notoriously slippery to define.⁴ Most definitions have pivoted on range or target to distinguish a tactical or theatre nuclear weapon, but in understanding that, given the flexibility exhibited by modern delivery systems and devices, such a distinction is often subjective. In view of the shared borders and short distances on the Indian subcontinent, this study relies on an understanding of TNWs as relatively small weapons systems whose use is expected to affect the outcome of a battlefield engagement. The term 'relative' is of course left open to interpretation, which poses its own problems, as does defining a battlefield operation. Nonetheless, this narrow definition allows this paper to address the concerns raised by Pakistani Foreign Secretary Aizaz Ahmed Chaudhry's October 2015 announcement on Pakistan's acquisition of 'low-yield nuclear weapons to counter Indian aggression'.⁵

Before going into the implications of this official confirmation, it might be useful to reflect on Chaudhry's choice of timing and place for his announcement. The Pakistani Foreign Secretary was briefing the press in Washington DC prior to Prime Minister Sharif's arrival in the United States. The White House had already made it clear that the meeting with President Obama would not yield a nuclear deal for Pakistan along the lines of the 2008 US-India deal, as had earlier been rumoured.⁶ There was, therefore, an audience and expectations to be managed at home in Pakistan. There was also the need to maintain gentle nuclear pressure on Washington to keep it engaged with Islamabad. If, in the process, a strong message was sent to India at a time when relations between the two countries could be improved but were not in any danger of being thrown into a massive downward spiral, then that was a bonus. Indians would do well to remember that they are not always the primary targets of all of Pakistan's nuclear messaging.⁷

The message, however, has been noted in India and outside. New Delhi's official silence on this topic has probably not gone unnoticed either. In any case, India's position on battlefield nuclear weapons was articulated in April 2013, when rumours about Pakistan's interest in these weapons started gaining traction. Shyam Saran, then the Convenor of the National Security Advisory Board, had stated that India will respond to a nuclear first strike with 'nuclear retaliation which will be massive and designed to inflict unacceptable damage on its adversary. The label on a nuclear weapon used for attacking India, strategic or tactical, is irrelevant from the Indian perspective'.⁸ Saran's argument rested on the understanding of nuclear weapons that holds any use as ultimately strategic, privileging the political understanding of the destructive atom. It was also responding to calls for India to adopt a posture of flexible response, for, as Saran reminded his audience, once you step on the ladder of escalation, there is only one direction of movement.

From India's point of view, Pakistan's apparent induction of TNWs into its military doctrine with plans for early use lowers the nuclear threshold dangerously. There are also the associated dangers of theft, nuclear terrorism, unauthorised use and miscalculation at times of crises. Any one of these scenarios coming to pass could lead to terrible consequences, no matter how much damage-control is attempted after the event.⁹

However, looking at the region from the outside – and this is a view that Pakistan has assiduously promoted with some success – the threshold was already lowered once rumours of the Indian Army's Cold Start doctrine began to circulate.¹⁰ Pakistanis have long justified their need for supposedly more 'usable' nuclear weapons by citing Cold Start. The implication is that TNWs would be used on Indian forces that have crossed over into Pakistani territory in some kind of limited operation, as is said to be envisaged under Cold Start, or more recently, the Pro-active Strategy.¹¹ As Pakistanis have argued, since they cannot match India conventionally they need a cost-effective option to put an end to ideas of Indian troops breaching the International Border, however limited or otherwise that operation might be.¹²

The irony here is that although Cold Start may not even exist, the fears of a nuclear flashpoint have been successfully raised within and outside the region.¹³ While the Indian Army is absolutely correct in planning for future conflicts – that is, doing its job – the rumours about Cold Start have allowed Pakistan to claim a valid reason for lowering the nuclear threshold. And whether or not India does anything to trigger a nuclear response across the border, Pakistan has already notched up a minor victory for itself in making bilateral relations between Islamabad and New Delhi a matter of concern for capitals across the globe. The threat of radioactive fallout, however small, is not just directed at New Delhi. As the retired head of Pakistan's Strategic Plans Division said in a speech in Washington last year, '[w]ell-meaning nudges from well-meaning friends will be most helpful in the larger interest of international peace, and security in a region dubbed as a nuclear flashpoint' [sic].¹⁴

Pakistan's position on battlefield nuclear weapons is not without problems, of course. The decision to adopt TNWs as part of its posture of full-spectrum deterrence raises fears about command and control, unauthorised use and nuclear security. The numbers game when choosing to rely on tactical nuclear weapons, where the weapons have to be calibrated against different hypothetical targets to theoretically achieve the desired result, exercises a logic of its own. At the height of the Cold War, the US and the Soviet Union possessed several thousand non-strategic nuclear warheads; even today, the US has approximately

760 TNWs while Russia is believed to have between 1000 and 6000 non-strategic warheads.¹⁵ The problems of securing scores of small warheads cannot be overstated; indeed, the security of Pakistan's warheads is a topic that recurs whenever senior Pakistani military and political figures interact with their counterparts outside the country.¹⁶

Then there are the myriad problems arising from incorporating TNWs into doctrine and actually using them. Jeffrey McCausland has an excellent comparison of what is known of Pakistan's doctrine with NATO and Soviet deployment of tactical nuclear weapons during the Cold War, which highlights the operational difficulties of planning for nuclear war-fighting.¹⁷ Questions of when, where and how to use tactical nuclear weapons bedevilled NATO planners and there is no reason to believe that the answers to these questions should get any easier when contemplating using them on one's own soil.

NATO strategists struggled with 'weapons employment', which covered choosing the correct weapon for a particular target, while containing collateral damage so that theoretically, the war-fighting could be kept limited, all the while keeping these plans updated in a fluid situation where the ground realities are changing during an engagement. Thereafter, the yield of the weapon needs to be weighed up. Considering that these nuclear devices are to be exploded on Pakistani soil to halt an Indian offensive, how much would achieve the desired result while curtailing the radiation on home soil? Very low-yield nuclear weapons might prove ineffective in halting an armoured offensive. And yet, how much radiation would the planners in Rawalpindi wish to contemplate in Punjab, the most likely theatre of engagement, which is also the heartland of their support? What about the contamination of agricultural lands and water, which moreover, given the geography of the rivers, would flow down to most of the rest of the country?

Then, as McCausland enumerates, there are the operational difficulties that arise from use. Any nuclear device, however small, will also affect the troops of the country firing the weapon – apart from radiation, the dazzle effects of the explosion will incapacitate one's own forces as well. The fireball that results from the explosion may well cause more damage than had been anticipated. There will also be the need to counter the effects of the electromagnetic pulse, which will in all probability disable communication links with the field commanders. So, choosing when to use the nuclear device is complicated by a whole sequence of events that will affect that unit's ability to conduct further conventional operations. The next rung on the ladder of escalation may well have moved a lot closer.

And finally, there is the political fallout. Would the international outrage that would result from Pakistan breaking the nuclear taboo be worth the halting of a limited Indian offensive?¹⁸ So far, Pakistan has relied on its tactical nuclear weapons to get other countries to nudge India towards a less belligerent stand. But the effectiveness of this bargaining chip lies in not using it.

The point of enumerating these doctrinal and operational problems is not to engender complacency in India. Quite the opposite. New Delhi has its work cut out in responding to these nuclear developments across the border. The first point appears to be addressed: India should not consider TNWs for itself. The doctrine of flexible response did not work for the Cold Warriors and there is little to indicate that South Asia, with the complications of proximity, population and politics will find it any easier. It would therefore be prudent for New Delhi to manage very carefully the messages sent out with regard to Prahaar, often touted as India's response to Pakistan's short-range Nasr missile.¹⁹ Though India has been cautious not to explicitly posit a nuclear payload for Prahaar, it has tested sub-kiloton nuclear devices, which could presumably be employed for TNWs.²⁰ It would be tempting, therefore, for those frustrated by Pakistan's ability to apparently play the nuclear card at a lower level to present Prahaar as India's answer to Pakistan's TNWs. Apart from posturing, however, there would be very little to gain from such a move and much to lose. It would also be prudent for New Delhi to ensure that scientific endeavour does not push India down the tactical nuclear route, as arguably occurred with India's drift towards the ballistic missile shield, which has caused its own doctrinal headaches.²¹

There are other diplomatic considerations that make TNWs an unviable proposition for India. New Delhi is currently engaged in making the case for India's entry into the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime, based on India's history of responsible nuclear stewardship, non-proliferation advocacy and its record on nuclear safety and security. New Delhi will most certainly not want to be lectured on the dangers of 'loose nukes' that might arise from delegating control of small battlefield nuclear weapons down the chain of command, as frequently occurs when senior Pakistani civilian and military leaders interact with their foreign counterparts. Further, any move to acquire 'more usable' nuclear weapons that, moreover, appear to undermine India's No First Use pledge will only lead to India being more tightly bound to Pakistan in the eyes of its international interlocutors when New Delhi is doing all it can to break that link.

In the end, doctrinally, diplomatically and economically, New Delhi would be putting itself at a disadvantage in allowing nuclear weapons developments in Pakistan to dictate the nuclear agenda in India. India has of course to take cognisance of advertised changes in Pakistan – but not necessarily react to them. And the response does not necessarily have to be nuclear. There are other avenues that can be mined much more productively.

To begin with, New Delhi should consider reviewing the communications on Cold Start or the Pro-active Strategy. The official silence on the matter has allowed Pakistan to gain diplomatic advantage from an exercise in contemplating options to secure India. However difficult this might be to accept, there is a view outside the region that India is partly to blame for Pakistan lowering the nuclear threshold. There is a distinction to be made between reducing mobilisation timings to the border and actually planning to send military formations across the international border. If, as indications are, that Cold Start is not a serious part of joint military planning, then perhaps it is time to consider some way of disassociating India from Cold Start.

New Delhi will also need to keep open the channels of communication with Islamabad. Whether India likes it or not, one of the aims of Pakistan's TNWs is to force New Delhi to resume dialogue with Islamabad. As former Pakistani High Commissioner to the UK and Ambassador to the US, Maleeha Lodhi has argued – and her thesis is fairly representative of this strand of thinking across the border – Pakistan needs to counter Cold Start with Full Spectrum Deterrence; however, given 'the subcontinent's volatile environment where a crisis can emerge quite quickly from a terrorist attack or another Kashmiri "spark" there is urgent need for a new understanding between Pakistan and India', which, she goes on to argue, can only be addressed by 'dialogue and mutual understanding'.²² She ends her opinion piece, for good measure, by wondering why the international community has 'done little, if anything, to insist on and promote such an understanding'.²³

This argument is not subtle but it is effective. Whatever current domestic opinion on engaging Pakistan, constant communication is the only way forward. In the end, it will also reduce Pakistan's room for manoeuvre, for discussion will leave little space for claims of misinterpreting India's intentions. In any case, as India's responses to Mumbai in 2008 and events in Gurdaspur and Pathankot in 2015 and 2016 have shown, New Delhi is choosing to focus attention away from a military response to a terrorist provocation. This is not because India is deterred by Pakistan's TNWs so much as because New Delhi is all too aware of its own strategic arsenal.

As Lawrence Freedman has argued, when nuclear weapons are involved the distinction between a 'tactical war' and 'strategic war' becomes specious.²⁴ Any use of nuclear weapons, whatever their size, is, in the end, strategic. To allow nuclear weapons to assume any other capabilities is to play into the hands of those who would use nuclear weapons to alter the status quo. Internally and abroad, India needs to steer the conversation away from TNWs. Now is the opportunity for New Delhi to take a proactive stance in proving that South Asia need not be the nuclear flashpoint that others fear.

Endnotes

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2 See, for example, Manoj Joshi, 'Ballistic Missile Nasr: A bigger threat from Pakistan', India Today, 2 June 2011, <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/pakistans-short-range-ballistic-missile-nasr-is-a-matter-of-concern-for-india-/1/140087.html>; Bharat Karnad, 'India's nuclear amateurism', The New Indian Express, 28 June 2013

3 Y Mallikarjun, 'India all set to test new short-range tactical missile', Hindu, 3 July 2011. DRDO appears to be focused on trying to export conventional versions of the missile; the 'Pragati' variant was exhibited in South Korea in October 2013. 'Hemant Kumar Rout, 'Tactical Missile Pragati Readied for Export', New Indian Express, 5 November 2014

4 See William C Potter, Nikolai Sokov, Harald Muller and Annette Schaper, Tactical Nuclear Weapons: Options for Control, Geneva: 'United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, UNIDIR/2000/20

5 'Pakistan has built low-yield nuclear weapons...'

6 David Ignatius, 'The U.S. cannot afford to forget Afghanistan and Pakistan' The Washington Post, 6 October 2015

7 For an interesting take on this see Vipin Narang, 'Posturing for Peace? Pakistan's Nuclear Postures and South Asian Stability', International Security, Vol 34, no 3, pp 38 – 78

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9 This is not a purely South Asian problem. The BBC recently televised a simulated session of a Britain and NATO war-gaming exercise which took as its starting-point rising tensions in Eastern Europe. Despite the experience and efforts of those in the room, the simulation ended with Russia arming its ICBMs. See, BBC, 'Inside the War Room', BBC Two, first aired on 3 February 2016, 9.00 PM. A report of this programme is available at 'Could you stop World War III?', BBC Magazine, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/zpm8xsg#z3hbk7>. Incidentally, this programme seriously upset Russian sensitivities; nobody appreciates being seen as the initiator of a nuclear war, even if one's nuclear doctrine threatens just that in extremis.

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12 Jayant Sriram, 'The threat of 'tactical nuclear weapons', conversation with Professor Pervez Hoodbhoy, Hindu, 14 January 2016

13 Rajat Pandit, 'Cold Start in focus, but does it exist?', Times of India, 2 December 2010; Jaganath Sakaran, 'The Enduring Power of Bad Ideas: "Cold Start" and Battlefield Nuclear Weapons in South Asia', Arms Control Today, 4 November 2014

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15 Amy E Woolf, 'Nonstrategic Nuclear Weapons', Congressional Research Service, 23 February 2015, RL 32572, p2

16 David E Sanger, 'US Exploring Deal to Limit Pakistan's Nuclear Arsenal', New York Times, 15 October 2015, <http://nyti.ms/1jCdPT3>

17 Jeffrey D McCausland, 'Pakistan's Tactical Nuclear Weapons: Operational Myths and Realities', Deterrence Instability (2015): 149. The following paragraphs draw heavily from this essay.

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19 Mallikarjun, 'India all set to test new short-range tactical missile'. Though beyond the scope of this paper, a similar argument can be made about India's cruise missiles. The room for miscalculation with regard to dual-capable missiles could make them a liability at times of crisis as once fired, there is no way of knowing the nature of the payload on these missiles until they reach their target.

20 India tested a 0.2 kiloton device in the first series of nuclear tests conducted on 11 May 1998 and two further sub-kiloton devices on 13 May 1998.

21 For India's drift into BMD, see Mahesh Shankar and T V Paul, 'Nuclear doctrines and stable strategic relationships: the case of south Asia', International Affairs, 92:1, (2016), p 10ff; Vipin Narang, 'Five Myths about India's Nuclear Posture', The Washington Quarterly, Summer 2013, 143 – 157

22 Maleeha Lodhi, 'India-Pak relations are at an all-time low', The Sunday Guardian, 3 January 2015

23 Ibid.

24 Lawrence Freedman, The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy, 3rd edition, (London: Palgrave 2003), 64 ff

@Dr Priyanjali Malik is an independent researcher based in London who focuses on politics and nuclear security in South Asia. Her book 'India's Nuclear Debate: Exceptionalism and the Bomb' is based on her thesis, which was awarded the BISA Michael Nicholson thesis prize for 2008.

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Introduction

The subject of the talk for the 13th Samir Sinha Memorial lecture is timely, contextual and extremely relevant. It is a coincidence that it follows the recently concluded fourth “Nuclear Security Summit of Heads of States”, held at Washington on 29 Mar and 01 April 2016. Of relevance to us is a statement by the US President during the summit, indicating the underlying belief in the US that Pakistan is endeavouring to acquire ‘Tactical Nuclear Weapons (TNWs).

In consonance with the mandate given to me by this esteemed Institution, it shall be my endeavour to address three primary issues. Initially, examine the veracity of the statement that “Tactical Nuclear Weapons in South Asia Lowers the Nuclear Threshold” followed by seeing “Its impact on the Deterrence dynamics in South Asia” and “Is there a need to revisit India’s nuclear doctrine?” Also, ascertain if Pakistan has the capability and technological expertise to manufacture weaponised short range ballistic missile (SRBM) (Nasr). Premising that Pakistan does have or decides to pursue this path of fielding battlefield nuclear systems, one shall see the challenges that go with it for their command and control, survivability cum protection, delegation of authority for use in the tactical battlefield and related psychological pressure on commanders to utilise these nuclear assets earliest.

As a statement of fact, I think it is indisputable that there will be a lowering of the nuclear threshold on induction of TNWs in the Indian subcontinent. But is it a possibility/reality, are the issues that will be examined. Or is it a bogey created by the western strategist’s reading more into the recent test firing of ‘Nasr’? Or is it a conspiracy / design of China to use Pakistan as a proxy to create pressure on India? Or is it a method adopted by Pakistan to ascribe greater ambiguity to its nuclear strategy? Or finally, is it a combination of some or all these issues?

There is no ambiguity in the subcontinent that nuclear weapons between India and Pakistan are political instruments. It is also accepted by both nations that ‘Strategic Nuclear Weapons’ are only ‘instruments for deterrence’ and not for nuclear war fighting. Hence, Pakistan’s volte-face to develop TNWs/non-strategic weapons, acknowledged to be instruments for nuclear war fighting, raises several questions, namely :-

- What prompted Pakistan to develop the SRBMs?
- Is there any similarity of conditions for the induction of TNWs in South Asia, to what existed during the Cold War in Europe, being alluded to as the rationale by Pakistan?
- How would the SRBMs affect deterrence and strategic stability in South Asia?

Nasr

Let us see this monster that has started the debate on TNWs in the subcontinent. There is irrefutable evidence of this missile system being based on Chinese design cum technology. As per assessment, the system is a four tube adaptation of a Chinese multiple launch rocket system (MLRS), possibly the A-100 type, mounted on an eight-wheeler truck, capable of carrying four ‘ready-to-fire’, 20 ft ballistic missiles of about 300 mm (11.8 inch) diameter. The truck launcher itself may be a Chinese copy of the Russian 300 mm Smerch (MLRS) missile system. The weapon yield is stated to be 0.5 to 5 kiloton, with a Plutonium warhead. The shoot and scoot attributes of the Nasr means that the launchers can quickly fire and change location to avoid counter-targeting.

Pakistan officially maintained after the test of the SRBM, Nasr, that it was a strategic asset which was supported by various indicators. Firstly, the Inter-Services Public Relation’s prompt but ambiguous press release after the test firing stated that this SRBM is an addition to its ‘Deterrence Capability’. Another indicator to reinforce that it is an instrument of deterrence was the presence of only the senior members of the “strategic forces at the flight test. Subsequent statements of senior officials at different forums also implied that Nasr would most likely be an asset of Pakistan Army’s Strategic Force Command (ASFC).”

But the official statements in 2015 by Pakistan’s Foreign Secretary, Mr Aizaz Chaudhry, in Oct 2015, preceding the US visit of Pakistan’s Prime Minister and remarks made by Mr Kidwai, ex-Director General Special Plans Department (DG SPD) and adviser to Pakistan National Command Authority (NCA), at a press conference at the Carnegie International Peace Conference in 2015, clarified unequivocally Pakistan’s intention with respect to the growth vector of nuclear weapons. The latter stated that the development of TNWs was to deter India from using its ‘conventional superiority’ and to nullify India’s Cold Start Strategy.

Defining TNWs

The definition of TNWs is important and not a question of mere semantics, because the associated nuances of what is a tactical weapon, will assist in examining the response or future course of action that needs to be taken by India. The USA and erstwhile USSR agreed on range based definition for strategic nuclear delivery vehicles in the First (1972) and Second (1979) Strategic Arms Limitation Accords and in the START I Treaty of 1991. However, in the case of tactical or battlefield nuclear weapons they were either not willing or were unable to come to a common definition. In hindsight, it was due to their diverse employment doctrines.

This stands corroborated by the accepted definitions given in the ‘NATO and Russian Glossary of Nuclear terms and definitions’.¹ In case of the Russians they are classified as non-strategic for engagement ranges less than 5000 kms, operational for engagement upto 500 kms and tactical for ranges upto 300 kms. Whereas, for the US it is non-strategic for employment in a theatre of operations and Theatre Nuclear Forces for localised military missions.

Thus, as per western perspective, the difference between strategic and TNWs was either a function of range, yield, or the methodology of employment. The TNWs can, therefore, be defined as short-range (from as less as 2-4 kms to a maximum up to 500 kms) and low-yield weapons (0.4-40 kilotons to a maximum of 150 kilotons), meant for counter-force targeting in the battlefield. These could be surface (ballistic and cruise) and air-launched weapons.

In context of the realities of the Cold War era, the differentiation was also rooted in capability of nuclear weapon systems to attack American or Soviet/Russian mainland and the extended deterrence commitment of the USA towards its NATO allies. Range, and not the yield, was thus the primary factor in deciding what constitutes a tactical or strategic nuclear weapon (emphasis added).

However, in the subcontinent, Pakistan and India have contiguous borders unlike the East-West proxy battlegrounds of Europe. Also, devastation caused by employment of TNWs in case of South Asia will be on its own territories due to proximity of densely populated areas next to the borders and not on a spatially segregated battlefield, as in Europe. Thus the impact will have strategic effect in terms of damage, number of casualties, radiation fallout, as well as the administrative and logistical challenges. Therefore, it would be fair to consider all nuclear weapons in South Asia to be strategic.

Appropos, if one endeavours to define these short range weapons in our context, then we could classify these as “battlefield nuclear weapons”. They could be SRBMs with ranges within 50-150 kms range, with a maximum yield of 5 to 10 kilotons. The targeting and employment of TNWs by Pakistan would primarily be counter-force, in consonance with the rationale being propounded to acquire them to counter Indian army’s mechanised spearheads. Therefore, in the subcontinent, employment considerations would far outweigh the criteria of range and tonnage of the warheads while developing the weapon systems.

Reasons for Pakistan to Develop TNWs

It would be fair to state that the landmark events of Operation Vijay 1999 and Operation Parakram 2001 led to doctrinal shift for both India and Pakistan. India, realising the shortcomings, enunciated its ‘Cold Start Strategy’, that later matured to the current ‘Pro-active Strategy’. It also resulted in operational modulation that to reduce mobilisation time and hone the combat edge. This strategy was also tailored to exploit the intrinsic weakness created in the defensive deployment of Pakistan, due to its commitment along the Af-Pak Border.

As a consequence of India’s doctrinal shift, Pakistan carried out a series of analytical studies culminating in the Azm-e-Nau series of discussions/ exercises. This may have been the trigger for Pakistan to develop TNWs to further curtail the space for conventional conflict. The major reasons that can be attributed for the testing of Nasr could be :-

- India’s military doctrine of Cold Start / Pro-active Strategy.
- Asymmetry in the combat force ratios in the conventional spectrum, which is likely to only increase.
- Development of Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) capability by India and perceived impact on the existing deterrence dynamics.
- Increasing capability of the Indian Armed Forces to strike and interdict deep inside Pak territory in case of a conventional conflict.

Pakistan and western political/military analysts justify Pakistan’s effort for acquiring TNWs to the Cold War analogy.² The reasons attributed at that time by the US for development and deployment of the TNWs was to counter the overwhelming superiority of the Soviet mechanised forces and their application on multiple thrust lines. This led to subsequent proliferation amongst the Cold War adversaries.

The Cold War – Parallel

TNWs were developed during the Cold War in the 1950s by the USA, NATO and the Soviet Union. It was the US that first deployed these in Europe (NATO countries) to counter the conventional military superiority of the Soviet Union. Another rationale attributed was to save money, as the US forces were downsizing during the Eisenhower era. This resulted in formulation of associated doctrines and operational planning, including integrated fire planning of atomic and conventional weapons. Also, as the Soviet Union achieved sophistication in their strategic nuclear delivery vehicles, it became difficult for the US to strengthen nuclear deterrence only through strategic nuclear weapons.

For NATO, a combination of conventional and nuclear weapons including TNWs was crucial for its strategy of ‘flexible response’ and remained so through the 1970s.³ The Soviet Union also viewed their TNWs and conventional capabilities as integrated components of their offensive doctrine.

The major area of concern for employment of nuclear weapons on the battlefield, is the Command and Control⁴ during hot war. ‘Command’ of nuclear weapons is concerned with the conduct of military operations to achieve political objectives and ‘control’ is a function of technology and the processes of checks and balances for the delegation cum devolution of authority for employment of nuclear assets on the battlefield. The primary pre-requisite for ‘effective control’ is the prevention of accidental or inadvertent launch. However, the balance has to be maintained, for too much of control can lead to delay in employment. Also, effective command and control demands a robust, secure and foolproof communication linkage between the decision makers and the delivery system. This becomes more critical in the case of TNWs for the decision maker, due to shorter time of flight of these missiles’ munitions.

The complexity of this function of command, in case of the TNWs, can be summed up by the three intricate dilemmas which are quite self-explanatory. Firstly, the short ranges of these weapon systems require their deployment closer to the battlefield and commanders have to contend with the dilemma of ‘use them or lose them’. Correspondingly, there is greater pressure on escalation. Also, there is the dilemma of ‘always - never’ as the system is required to do two very contradictory functions. It must always deliver when it is so required, and must never fail in peace time by permitting unauthorised use. Lastly, is the ‘request – release’ challenge for the commanders. This existed for the commanders during the Cold War and shall exist for Pakistan, if it goes all the way to give shape to its desire for inducting battlefield nuclear weapons into South Asia.

The challenge of ‘request - release’ needs elaboration as it was unique to the European battle space, due to specific political compulsions of NATO members towards development and manufacture of TNWs. The nuclear warheads/ munitions were stored by the USA with its ‘Custodial Detachments’ across the European battle space. These warheads were issued on approval of a formal request, vetted up the channel, to the nearest NATO fire unit that could engage the enemy. The issue (of warheads) by the custodial detachment was on receipt of authenticated nuclear command orders. The commanders made alternate conventional plans as a backup, in case the request was turned down. These alternate plans also contributed to the ambiguity involved in meshing conventional and nuclear fire planning.

Another very important facet of employment of TNWs is the issue of “positive and negative control measures”. Positive control concerns the authorisation of nuclear operations, which can only be given by authorised decision makers. On the other hand, negative control seeks to prevent accidental or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons including possible theft by non-state actors.⁵ The “positive control” is exercised through mechanical electronic devices referred to as “Permissive Action Link (PAL).”⁶ The “negative control” to obviate unauthorised use, prior to the release from NCA is maintained by the ‘two man’/‘three man’ rule or through PALs.

The other critical issue is the security and protection of these assets from both, adversary and non-state actors. The situation is exacerbated when there is domestic instability in the country, as in Pakistan.

Deterrence Dynamics - South Asia

India’s complexity with respect to nuclear deterrence is unprecedented, as it has two nuclear armed contiguous neighbours, with very different compulsions for being nuclear armed countries. Also, they have absolutely diametrically different policies. China considers its primary threat from the US and has a declared ‘No First Use’ (NFU) policy; whereas Pakistan’s threat is India centric, with a declared ‘First Use’ policy. In spite of the challenges, since the Indo-Pak nuclear tests of 1998, a semblance of strategic stability exist; thus, confirming the success of “Nuclear Deterrence” in South Asia.

Presently in international relations, ‘deterrence’ or ‘compellence’ are the options available to achieve stability amongst nation states with irrevocable divergent viewpoints on contentious issues. Compellant action requires that the target state alter its behaviour in a manner quite visible to all in response to an equally visible initiative taken by the coercer state. In contrast deterrent threats are easier for the target state to ignore or to acquiesce without loss of face. Deterrence, a legacy of the Cold War seemed to be out-dated in view of the events in Afghanistan and the Middle East. But the stand-off in Ukraine, between Russia and the USA has highlighted its continued relevance. In the context of South Asia with the existing force structures and prevailing politico-economic-social compulsions, deterrence is the preferred means to achieve strategic stability.

Understanding Deterrence

Deterrence as a strategy intended to dissuade an adversary from taking an action not yet started, or to prevent them from doing something that another State desires. Deterrence can be achieved by evoking ‘Fear of Punishment’ or ‘Denial of Objectives’ or ‘Risk of Conflict’. The “Deterrence Detachments” across the European battle space. These warheads were issued on approval of a formal request, vetted up the channel, to the nearest NATO fire unit that could engage the enemy. The issue (of warheads) by the custodial detachment was on receipt of authenticated nuclear command orders. The commanders made alternate conventional plans as a backup, in case the request was turned down. These alternate plans also contributed to the ambiguity involved in meshing conventional and nuclear fire planning.

The policy of deterrence as outlined by the military analyst PK Huth, can be categorised as “direct deterrence”, where the target is the defender and requires to prevent an armed attack against its own territory and “extended deterrence”. The latter is the case of the USA where it extends its nuclear umbrella to its allies. Building on these two broad categories, Huth goes on to outline that deterrence policy may be implemented in response to a pressing short-term threat, known as “immediate deterrence”. Or it is “general deterrence”, a long term strategy to prevent military conflict.

Appropos, the stated nuclear doctrines of India and Pakistan can be categorised as Direct Deterrence, as both the countries are directly involved and it is General Deterrence for it aims to deter war. Thus, these doctrines resonate the essentials of the universally accepted dictums.

Factors Influencing Deterrence

Popularly, the ‘theory of rational deterrence’ is used to analyse the conditions under which conventional deterrence is likely to succeed or fail. Alternative theories are there that focus on “organisational theory” and “cognitive psychology”. But the theory of rational deterrence is most appropriate in context of South Asia. Deterrence is more likely to succeed if a defending State’s deterrent threat is credible to an attacking state. PK Huth outlines that a threat is considered credible if the defending state possesses both the military capabilities to inflict substantial costs on an attacking state in an armed conflict, and if the attacking state believes that the defending state is resolved to use its available military forces.

Bruce Jentleson⁷ argues that two key sets of factors are important for successful deterrence. They are the defending state’s strategy that balances credible coercion and deft diplomacy, consistent with the three criteria of proportionality, reciprocity, and coercive credibility, and the extent of an attacking state’s vulnerability as shaped by its domestic political and economic conditions. A successful deterrence policy must be considered in not only military terms, but also in political terms. If armed conflict is avoided or unpalatable concessions made at the price of diplomatic loss then it cannot be claimed that deterrence has succeeded.

Deterrence Paradox

Analysts of South/Asian security have drawn attention to at least three paradoxes of deterrence in the case of India-Pakistan. They are the stability-instability paradox, the vulnerability/invulnerability paradox and the independence/dependence paradox.

The stability/instability paradox implies that the probability of a direct /general war between two nuclear-armed states greatly decreases due to these weapons, but the probability of minor/indirect/limited conflicts between them increases. Its impact is seen in the India-Pakistan context, with the ongoing proxy war being waged by Pakistan in the state of J&K and the Kargil war of 1999, which remained localised in spite of the provocation, primarily due to the restraint exercised by India.

The vulnerability/invulnerability paradox refers to the increased risks of unauthorised use, accidents and theft of nuclear assets that arise from attempts to secure them against pre-emptive strikes. Scott Sagan, a professor of political science at Stanford University, states that the vulnerability/invulnerability paradox refers, that a tactical nuclear weapon will have to be in a constant state of readiness, with corresponding problems of devolution of control. This in turn leads to questions about Pakistan’s ability to control escalation dominance, given the suspected Islamist infiltration of the Pakistani military and alleged split between the higher command and lower cadre. In addition, the workings of the Pakistan’s SPD are little known, generating further doubt about the safety of the country’s nuclear arsenal.

The dependence/independence paradox refers to the inability of the feuding nuclear rivals to effectively manage situations of crisis without the involvement of the third parties. The Kargil war is an example wherein behind the scenes coercion was exercised by the US on Pakistan. According to Sagan, some States that have nuclear weapons don’t see them as a deterrent but as a shield behind which they can take more aggressive action. “If some militaries think war is inevitable in the long term they believe they can engage in preventive war. And if they think nuclear weapons are a good deterrent, it also gives them the incentive to use force at lower levels.” Sagan also remarks that such posturing was not witnessed even during the Cold War. But, we see this often between India and Pakistan, most notably during the Kargil conflict and even later.

Therefore, the threat of introduction of battlefield weapons by Pakistan in South Asia, with the testing of Nasr and introduction of 350 kms, Ra’ad cruise missile which are difficult to intercept and destroy, will add to strategic instability in South Asia.

Analysis and Recommendations

Impact of Pakistan’s TNWs. The undermentioned pointers would summarise the contextual issues :-

- The induction of SRBMs by Pakistan is based on their conviction that the same would strengthen their ‘minimum credible nuclear deterrence’. The Pakistan hierarchy is convinced that this would reduce space for a full-fledged conventional conflict from taking place in the region.
- The short range weapon system could facilitate in addressing the existing void of a weapon to demonstrate its resolve to use nuclear weapons, once India crosses its ‘Red Lines’.
- It is questionable if TNWs will increase deterrence and obviate chances of limited conflict, but yes the availability of TNWs will give Pakistan the means to indulge in brinkmanship and exploit the card of irrationality to strengthen and reduce the threshold of nuclear deterrence.
- In the operationalisation stage, storage of these TNWs once manufactured, will create corresponding security concerns, in the unstable internal security environment within the country.
- As highlighted earlier the TNWs once released for deployment during conflict will create the dilemma of ‘use them or lose them’ for the commander and increase the probability of premature release.
- There will be negative ramifications/complexities in the bilateral relations of Pakistan with Iran and Saudi Arabia.
- India needs a correlation of deterrence and strategic stability with political, economic and military factors unique to South Asia. A weak/failing state with fragile internal security environment shall weaken the impact on deterrence; and this is applicable to Pakistan.

Does India need TNWs?

Development of TNWs would violate India’s principle of ‘credible minimum deterrence posture’, which does not concentrate on the numbers game, but on developing minimum survivable nuclear weapons. In addition, the induction of TNWs will demand a relook at the present policy of NFU. Presently NFU and explicit mention of ‘massive retaliation’ in its nuclear doctrine is a stabilising element and places lesser burden on the minimalist command and control systems in place in the country. A decision to develop the TNWs will also lend credibility to Pakistani thinking of graduated response in nuclear war fighting.

Also, as stated earlier, the existing deterrence and strategic stability amongst the two nations is being exploited by Pakistan to continue its proxy war against India. Intensity and enlarging TNWs by India in response, with corresponding lowering of nuclear threshold, will further embolden Pakistan to increase the ongoing proxy war in the Indian subcontinent and stangle its footprint from the Indian subcontinent.

India’s Options

Irrespective of what is considered a TNW, or whether Pak has the capability today or can develop it in a realistic time frame, to whether TNWs will curtail space for conventional conflict or not, or is it to impact the perception/psyche of the Indian leadership or it is to give teeth to its existing nuclear policy of a weapon for signalling, the reality is irrefutable evidence of Pakistan’s resolve to develop nuclear war fighting capability.

India, therefore, cannot be a silent spectator to the unfolding events and reconnaissance, but needs to study the impact of introduction of battlefield nuclear weapons and the command and control elements. It would require making the existing system of handling cum operationalisation of the strategic nuclear weapons more robust and enhancing existing voids/shortfalls in the intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) capability/early warning systems and the command and control elements.

India should not accept a differentiation in the ‘genre’ of nuclear weapons and continue insisting that a “nuke is a nuke” and deal with it in consonance with the present doctrine. This is based on the premise that explosion of a nuclear device/ weapon has strategic ramifications as it results in horrendous collateral damage, especially in our context.

Prior to any review of the existing nuclear doctrine and formulation of future strategy to meet this new challenge, India will have to keep the undermentioned aspects in mind:-

- The primary focus of review of the policy has to be China and thereafter, it be vectored for the western front. It is not feasible to have separate policies for our neighbours.
- There is a need for synergising the application of our conventional combat resources. Presently, there are operating in independent silos, be it the three Services and the Strategic Forces or the Armed Forces and the Strategic Forces. The strategic assets and the ‘turf protection’ by each service have negative ramifications. There is, therefore, an essential requirement to create the long awaited post of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)/ Permanent Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee to be the single-point authority for synergising the armed forces and the strategic assets.
- The structures of the National Command Authority need to be stitched and the doctrine harmonised. The NFU demands foolproof measures for protection and survivability of our strategic nuclear assets.
- The signalling and command, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR) are not as robust as they should be. Thus, the ‘credibility’ of our response is questionable more so, in case of induction of TNWs in South Asia.
- There is a need for in-house changes within the armed forces for empowering the senior leadership with the requisite skills to handle these responsibilities without diluting the required secrecy.
- Improve the intelligence and surveillance architecture to have a 24 x 7 capability to monitor the Pakistani airspace, catering for short range nuclear weapons, with very short time of flight.
- There is a need to add ambiguity to our Nuclear Doctrine. This can be done in a variety of ways, be it by qualifying the policy of NFU or building up perceptions through our writings/appropriate signalling.
- There is a need for India to develop ‘Launch on Warning (LOW)’ and ‘Launch under Attack (LUA)’ capabilities, backed by an effective BMD system. This will enhance/add a required dimension to its existing capabilities.

Signalling is also required at the working level while it is done at the politico-diplomatic level. Therefore, at the operational level there is a need to convey India’s intent to wage conventional conflict, irrespective of the threat of TNWs. This is possible by subtle publicity of on-going modulation/honing of the existing nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) countermeasures and organisations within the armed forces, including acquisition of personal protective clothing and collective decontamination kits. Also, the present training measures that are in vogue within the armed forces, with respect to continuing operations through TNW attacks need to be publicised. This would be the best measure to tackle Pakistan’s brinkmanship. Simultaneously, national institutions, like the National Disaster Management and civil defence organisations in various states should carry out periodic practice drills, to meet the challenge of dealing with such attacks in inhabited areas. There are other operational considerations which if adopted would deter Pakistan from crossing the Rubicon but these lie in the military field and need not be discussed here.

The two other aspects of our nuclear doctrine that always come under debate are the policy of ‘massive retaliation’ and NFU. There is no doubt that one of the key factors for ‘strategic stability’ in the subcontinent is India’s stated policy of NFU. There are no reasons, at least for the time being, to affect a change in this policy.

However, there are cynics who question India’s policy of ‘massive retaliation’. There is no doubt that the signalling of this critical aspect has been in case of a nuclear attack is considered weak/unrealistic. This inadequacy will have to be rectified through sustained and appropriate actions at all levels.

Conclusion

I will conclude by stating that the testing of ‘Nasr’ and the contextual rhetoric does not presently warrant a review of India’s Nuclear Doctrine and India should not even consider acquisition of TNWs. However, there is a need to put in place a real time and effective mechanisms to monitor Pakistan’s activities in the techno - politico -military realm with respect to TNWs. Simultaneously, India needs to make its nuclear systems more robust, reliable and fail-safe, with the ISR systems modulated to pick up short range nuclear tipped missiles.

Endnotes

- NATO/Russian Glossary of Nuclear Terms and Definitions, <http://www.nato.int/docu/glossary/eng-nuclear/index.htm>
- Feroz Khan, “Challenges to Nuclear Stability in South Asia,” *The Non Proliferation Review* 10, No1, Spring 2003, p 65
- Flexible response was a defense strategy implemented by John F Kennedy in 1961 and called for mutual deterrence at strategic, tactical, and conventional levels, giving the United States the capability to respond to aggression across the spectrum of warfare, not limited only to nuclear arms.
- Shaun R Gregory, Nuclear Command and Control in NATO, London Macmillan Press 1985, pp 3-4
- Gurmeet Kanwal, Command and Control in the context of TNWs, Ch 6,pp 119, Pakistan’s Tactical Nuclear Weapons. Quote Stephen Twigg and Len Scott, “Learning to Love the bomb: The Command and control of the British Nuclear Forces, 1953 - 1964”, *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol 22, No 1, March 1999,Unquote
- Pakistan seems to have improved the safety and security of their nuclear weapons, by implementing the ‘two-man rule’ while installing Permissive Action Links (PALs), and ensuring that warheads are de-mated from their delivery systems during peace time.
- Professor of public policy and foreign affairs, at Duke University.

*This is an abridged version of the 14th Major General Samir Sinha Memorial Lecture 2016 delivered by Lieutenant General Arun Kumar Sahni, PVSM, UYSM, SM, VSM (Retd) at the USI on 06 April 2016 with General Deepak Kapoor, PVSM, AVSM, SM, VSM (Retd), former Chief of Army Staff in Chair.

@ **Lieutenant General Arun Kumar Sahni, PVSM, UYSM, SM, VSM (Retd)** was commissioned into the Regiment of Artillery on 13 Jun 1976 and retired as General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, South Western Command on 31 Jan 2016. He was a recipient of the prestigious ‘Sword of Honour’ and the President’s Gold Medal on commission from the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun. During his service career, he has been intimately involved with strategic issues and is known for his understanding of national security matrix and the emerging international dynamics.

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