

The Significance of Counter-intelligence in Counterterrorism

Shri Prem Mahadevan*

Introduction

This essay argues that counterterrorism is not an intelligence function, but a counter-intelligence one. The distinction is not merely semantic: it lies at the core of tragedies such as the Mumbai 2008 attacks. Since the tensions between these two kinds of activity – intelligence and counter-intelligence – remain unresolved, counterterrorism efforts get bogged down.

Defeating the current terrorist threat requires replacing intelligence methods with counter-intelligence ones. It involves moving away from a defensive mindset that constantly seeks to predict the enemy's next move and thus implicitly concedes the initiative to him. Instead, the government should seek to surprise the enemy, which requires first blinding him through counter-intelligence operations.

The essay explains the differences between intelligence and counter-intelligence. It goes on to argue that counter-intelligence constitutes the main strength of terrorist movements. Lastly, the essay argues that this strength needs to be overwhelmed through a proactive counterterrorist posture. To prevent more terrorist attacks, the Indian government must leverage territorial dominance to attain informational dominance.

Three Differences between Intelligence and Counter-intelligence

The terms 'intelligence' and 'counter-intelligence' carry different implications for counterterrorist practitioners. These differences need to be explicated. Intelligence is about predicting an enemy's behaviour, with the enemy typically being a foreign state.¹ Counter-intelligence is about neutralising foreign threats that are attempting to infiltrate one's own state and damage it from within. Differences between the two activities can be conceptualised as: differences of purpose, process and priorities.

A Difference of Purpose. Counter-intelligence is inherently aggressive, since it aims to disrupt threats rather than just monitor them (which is the objective of intelligence work). Intelligence officers usually draw a 'red line' between reporting facts and advocating policy.² Their job, as they see it, is merely to keep policymakers updated about threats; how to react is the policymakers' prerogative.

Such clear-cut divisions of responsibility do not exist in counter-intelligence. Instead, there is an imperative need for taking follow-up action independently of political considerations. This is because each counter-intelligence target, be it a foreign spy ring or a terrorist cell, represents a threat-in-being. Its neutralisation is mandatory. The first point of tension between intelligence and counter-intelligence is thus: intelligence is about observation, counter-intelligence is about action.

A Difference of Process. There is a procedural difference between the production of intelligence assessments and those of counter-intelligence. With the former, the over-arching objective is to speak 'truth unto power', irrespective of how well-received such truth is likely to be.³ Analytical objectivity is to be maintained at all costs. To ensure that decision-makers do not receive reports that blindly pander to their policy preferences, intelligence assessment is staggered among a range of agencies.⁴

In counter-intelligence, the aim is not to divine 'truth' by subjecting the same set of facts to a variety of agency interpretations. Rather, the aim is to bring together data from a variety of agencies onto a common analytical platform so as to detect the existence of hidden threats within one's political system. Centralised assessment and institutionalised data-sharing is what is needed, not competition.⁵

A Difference of Priorities. The third difference between intelligence and counter-intelligence is one of collection priorities. Intelligence focuses on discerning an enemy's intentions, since these can change quicker than his capabilities.⁶ Moreover, the usually static nature of the international system means that collection operations are conducted within a high-impact/low-probability paradigm. Though the consequences of being attacked by an enemy state are huge, the likelihood of such an attack actually occurring is quite low.

With counter-intelligence, this paradigm is reversed. The intention of foreign powers to conduct intelligence operations can be taken for granted. Rather, it is their capabilities for doing so which need to be monitored, since these can vary over time. Furthermore, even an extremely damaging intelligence penetration cannot do damage of the magnitude that a military assault can achieve. Unlike intelligence, therefore, counter-intelligence activity is conducted within a high-probability/low-impact paradigm.

This paradigm also applies to counterterrorism. Terrorists' intentions to kill indiscriminately are well-known. What is needed is knowledge of their attack capabilities.⁷ These capabilities are quite small, and are thus inherently difficult to track, compared to troop movements in enemy states. Further complications are caused by the strength of terrorist counter-intelligence.

Counter-intelligence: The Asymmetric Advantage of Terrorism

For terrorists to succeed, they must keep attacking the state, while escaping its retribution. Anonymity is thus crucial to the continuance of their activities. In pursuit of anonymity, terrorists rely on two advantages that are peculiar to them: tight operational security, and ruthless elimination of informers. Together, these factors give terrorist organisations a massive advantage in counter-intelligence, which the state's security apparatus finds difficult to overcome.

Good Operational Security. Unlike conventional militaries, terrorists emphasise security over co-ordination. Their logic is that while an attack can always be postponed if preparations are incomplete, detection by the authorities would permanently wreck its prospects.⁸ To increase the resistance of their organisation to intelligence penetration, terrorists compartmentalise their activities. Finances, intelligence-gathering and logistics are handled by different cells from those that actually carry out attacks.⁹ The 'need-to-know' principle is rigorously enforced.

Once recruited to a terrorist organisation, new members are expected to show blind obedience to its leaders. Such obedience is particularly forthcoming from individuals eager to climb the organisational hierarchy. Thus, as former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) analyst Michael Scheuer has noted, the higher a terrorist rises in the decision-making structure of his group, the less susceptible he becomes to inducements for betrayal. This means that those individuals who are most likely to have the information sought by intelligence agencies, are also least likely to sell that information.¹⁰

Punishment of Betrayers. Further difficulties in intelligence collection are caused by the ferocity with which terrorists punish informers. By a process of systematic intimidation, terrorists create what one writer has termed as a 'counter-intelligence state'. This is a state where social control is exercised through a system of organised terror and pervasive surveillance. Any well-organised terrorist group, such as Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), is therefore 'pathological about enemies and makes the search for them and their discovery and elimination an overriding state objective'.

Given the degree to which terrorists remain vigilant against betrayal, professional intelligence agencies have little scope to operate. Any leakage of attack plans leads to an immediate investigation aimed at unmasking government spies. In this situation, no informer can risk making regular contact with his/her handler. It was for this reason that the Intelligence Bureau's network in Jammu & Kashmir collapsed during 1990, following the assassination of five key operatives.

Counter-intelligence forms the primary strength of terrorist movements. Overcoming this strength is the equivalent of defeating the terrorist threat, while avoiding engagement with it sustains the threat. Harvard scholar Ivan Arreguin-Toft therefore suggests that a government can only win against terrorists by fighting on their terms.¹² Since terrorism is all about avoiding direct contact with the state's coercive apparatus, terrorist organisations will never provide clear-cut targets for attack. Further, their advantage in counter-intelligence means that efforts by intelligence agencies to locate such targets shall be frustrated. To win against terrorism, governments must first win the counter-intelligence battle.

Fighting Counter-intelligence with Counter-intelligence

The key to defeating terrorist counter-intelligence does not lie in a defensive counterterrorist posture that focuses on predicting terrorist attacks. Rather, it lies in mounting an even more formidable counter-intelligence effort that makes up in scale what it lacks in ferocity. Here, governments possess a key advantage over terrorists. With their large and well-indexed archives, official bureaucracies provide a wealth of background data for use in mapping out terrorist support infrastructure.¹³ This institutional memory in turn functions as a guide for countering action, focusing it unto critical nodes in the terrorists' logistical and intelligence network.

Counter-intelligence is relevant to this process because unlike intelligence activity, it is accustomed to functioning within legal constraints. Indeed, counterterrorism is itself an amalgam of three counter-intelligence functions, each with its own unique dynamics. These are: counter-sabotage, counter-espionage and counter-subversion. The relevance of each of these three functions to counterterrorism is discussed below.

Counter-sabotage is the process of hardening security around likely targets to cope with surprise attacks. It is an essential component of counterterrorism because much of a terrorist organisation's morale hinges on the ability of its cadres to conduct daring, deep-penetration strikes.¹⁴ Depriving terrorists of the ability to attack prestigious or infrastructure targets thus amounts to a psychological victory. For this, counter-sabotage experts need to take stock of terrorist attack capabilities, and develop response protocols for all scenarios where these can be used, not just the most likely ones. Failure to adopt this methodology resulted in a large number of deaths during the Mumbai 2008 attacks.

Indian intelligence agencies knew that an attack was coming and that it would be directed at hotels, but were unsure what form it would take. Upon their advice, precautions were taken against bomb attacks. This was a reasonable move from the perspective of trend analysis - a technique commonly used in forecasting. The so-called 'Indian Mujahiddin' bombing campaign of 2007-08 had indicated that explosives were the preferred method of killing for terrorist groups.

Unfortunately, what was overlooked was evidence that LeT continued to train fidayeen (suicidal) squads for attacks using hand-held weapons. Such attacks were much rarer than bombings, but still possible. Whereas an intelligence assessment would have considered them unlikely, a counter-sabotage assessment would have examined the practicality of defending against them. In the process, it would have identified the glaring

deficiencies in police training, communications and weaponry which became obvious on 26/11.

Counter-espionage is crucial to degrading the capacity of terrorist organisations to adapt to their external environment. Such adaptability is a sign of the organisations' operational sophistication and responsiveness to feedback from their supporters.¹⁵ It is a red flag that governments must take notice of. Since the aim of counterterrorism is to split terrorists from their support base, their sources of information need to be closed down. Particularly important to this process is electronic surveillance – the monitoring of e-mails, faxes, telephone and cellular calls.

Indian intelligence agencies did an excellent job of listening in, minute by minute, on the Mumbai attackers' conversations with their handlers in Pakistan. However, they were unable to use this technical sophistry prior to the attacks to identify those providing informational support to LeT. That there was some measure of local support seems obvious. The precision with which the terrorists chose their landing site, the identification of Nariman House (a completely non-descript building) as a target, and the detailed knowledge that they had of the hotels' topography, all indicate pre-operational reconnaissance.

From prior incidents of Pan-Islamist terrorism, it seems likely that Pakistani Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) agents reconnoitered for the LeT fidayeen. These individuals, and not the actual gunmen, ensured that the devastation caused on 26 November 2008 was so considerable. Identifying them would have required allowing the IB to focus on its primary task of uncovering foreign spy networks. Instead, the Bureau had been forced to assume an intelligence role, since the defensive nature of Indian counterterrorist policy made predicting the terrorists' next attack essential.

Counter-subversion aims to identify and neutralise elements within one's own society who propagate seditious ideology. These elements thrive by abusing democratic rights such as freedom of speech and freedom of assembly, turning them into vehicles for radicalisation.¹⁶ Combating such activity requires intelligence agencies to infiltrate terrorist front organisations not with a view to monitoring their activities, but to gather evidence that will support criminal prosecutions. The existence of strong anti-terrorism legislation and full co-operation of the judicial system is integral to this endeavour.

India however, has a poor record of using legal processes to combat subversion. This is because its political class has itself subverted the rule of law to serve narrow partisan interests. During 2001-2004, the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) was misused by certain state governments to harass political dissidents. Thereafter, the Act was repealed on a purely reflexive basis, to score points with minorities. In the process, the Country was left without a legal framework to allow for police action against subversive individuals.

This proved costly in the period 2004-2008, when Pakistan-based terrorists intensified their offensive against the Indian heartland. Many of their Indian accomplices were known to local police forces, but they could not be touched because of a lack of legal provisions. Meanwhile, the intelligence agencies monitored major centres of Pan-Islamist subversion, but did not have the wherewithal to track terrorist activity based out of small towns. Aware that the IB has a poor coverage of rural areas, the ISI-LeT combine created support networks in these areas. Consequently, the rate at which terrorist recruiters won converts to their cause was greater than the rate at which they could be neutralised.

Recommendations

This essay argues that counter-intelligence activity is far more relevant to counterterrorism than is intelligence. Demanding forewarning of terrorists' intentions to kill civilians is as ludicrous as demanding forewarning of foreign governments' desire to steal national secrets. Instead of merely predicting threats, intelligence agencies need to make a paradigm shift and start countering them. Obstacles to such a paradigm shift derive mainly from fundamental differences of purpose, process and priorities that exist between intelligence and counter-intelligence.

Four measures need to be taken to re-orient Indian counterterrorism from an intelligence-driven approach to a counter-intelligence-driven one. First, the IB's Multi Agency Centre, set up in 2001 to consolidate all terrorism-related information into a common database, must be strengthened. Centralised analysis is essential if alarming trends in terrorist activity are to be detected in time for police forces to mount surgical interventions. Second, the IB's technical collection assets must be enhanced, since they are vital to detecting the flow of intelligence to terrorist planners in Pakistan. Only by degrading the ISI's espionage capability in India will the security establishment succeed in depriving terrorists of the information needed for planning an attack. Third, the IB must be given funds to expand its coverage of rural areas by raising large numbers of human assets. The poor quality of telecommunications in these areas will require IB agents to physically infiltrate terrorist front organisations and gather evidence of seditious activity. Lastly, the state police forces, together with the newly-raised National Investigation Agency, must be provided with the political backing needed to arrest and prosecute individuals suspected of supporting terrorism. Failure to take these steps will reflect a continued reliance on predictive reporting to warn of terrorist attacks, and an inability to think offensively.

***Shri Prem Mahadevan** is currently researching on 'The Dynamics of Counterterrorist Intelligence' as a doctoral candidate at Kings College, London.

Intelligence Gathering in Today's World*

Lieutenant General Kamal Davar, PVSM, AVSM(Retd)**

Introduction

History is replete with examples of nations and organisations largely attributing their security failures to lack of adequate, hard and timely intelligence. Whenever strategic surprise or security related lapses occur, accusations of intelligence failures are the most convenient fall-out, at times rightly, but more often than not, wrongly as a cover-up for other failings. Both Kargil and the recent Mumbai mayhem were essentially systemic shortcomings and it is grossly unfair to brand them exclusively as intelligence failures. Conversely, only rarely is credit given to intelligence for any strategic or tactical successes. For obvious reasons, details of intelligence successes must remain shrouded in secrecy. Practitioners of the craft of intelligence must remain the silent warriors as there is no place for drum-beating in the business of Intelligence.

Intelligence is a vital tool in the overall security management of a nation and contributes substantially towards national policies and decision-making which may be critical to the very existence of the state. Political and economic intelligence have acquired similar strategic significance as intelligence related to security and military related matters. Intelligence undisputably is one of the ingredients of successful statecraft alongwith economic power, diplomacy, military capabilities, state-of-the-art technologies etc. Notwithstanding its significance, has India, since independence, given the importance it deserves or have we made efforts to inject some energy into this critical capability and skill, only when we have been totally and harshly surprised.

Defining Moments in Indian Intelligence

In the last few decades, for the Indian Intelligence, the defining moments which stand out are firstly, the raising of the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) in Sep 1968 as an aftermath of the lessons learnt in the 1962 and 65 operations against China and Pakistan respectively. In fact, after the 1962 fiasco, a review of the performance of the Intelligence Bureau led to the creation of the Directorate General of Security (DGS). Subsequently, after the 1965 War and the Mizo Revolt of 1966, the DGS was taken away from the IB and external functions were given to the R&AW which was specially thus created and the DGS placed under its control. The second most significant step in the evolution of Indian Intelligence has been, as a fall-out of the Kargil War in 1999, when the country was indeed surprised with the non-detection of major Pakistani intrusions along the Line of Control and Pak troops occupying the Kargil heights in Ladakh. The Kargil crisis led to a major and much needed review of India's higher defence management and security architecture including intelligence reforms. The Kargil Review Committee(KRC) was headed by the eminent Defence analyst K Subramanyam, and subsequently the KRC's report was vetted by the high powered Group of Ministers(GOM). The Government also appointed four task forces to go into various recommendations of the KRC. The task force on Intelligence was headed by ex R&AW Chief Mr Gary Saxena which made significant recommendations.

The KRC pointed out, "There is no institutionalised mechanism for coordination or objective-oriented interaction between intelligence agencies and consumers at different levels. Similarly, there is no mechanism for tasking the agencies, monitoring their performance - nor is there any oversight of the overall functioning of the agencies." The KRC also opined, "The resources made available to the Defence Services are not commensurate with the responsibility assigned to them. There are distinct advantages in having two lines of intelligence collection and reporting with a rational division of functions, responsibilities and areas of specialisation..... Indian threat assessment is a single-track process dominated by R&AW..... Indian intelligence structure is flawed since there is little back-up or redundancy to rectify failures and shortcomings in intelligence collection and reporting....." The Task Force on Intelligence recommended the creation of a tri service Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) as the nodal agency for the analysis of all military intelligence and to synergise the functioning of and coordinate the activities of the three Service Intelligence Directorates (SIDs). Strategic intelligence assets of the Services including those for satellite imagery and Signals Intelligence was placed under the DIA. In addition, the GOM also recommended the establishment of a National Technical Facilities Organisation (NTFO) to be the single window for all technical intelligence inputs to the government including in the growing areas of satellite imagery. The GOM's recommendations were accepted by the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) and the DIA came into existence in March 2002 with the NTFO coming into existence in late 2003 taking into it some assets of R&AW's Aviation Research Centre. The government also established the National Security Council (NSC) and the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) and various coordination groups for the macro-management of intelligence in a more cohesive manner. It established the Intelligence Coordination Group (ICG) for the tasking of various intelligence-gathering agencies at the apex level. The ICG is chaired by the NSA and has the Cabinet Secretary, the secretaries of Home, Defence, MEA and the heads of intelligence organisations as members.

Some Challenges for Indian intelligence

India's strategic space extends from the Straits of Malacca in the East to the Gulf of Aden in the West. In addition, India's land borders exceed 15000 km which it shares with seven countries including a small segment with Afghanistan (at present this falls in the Northern Areas of POK). India has a coastline that is 7683 km long and an Exclusive Economic Zone of over 2 million sq km in size. With "a ring of fire" surrounding India and all its neighbours in varying degrees of turbulence and uneasy relationships with India, coupled with the 'sieges within' make the myriad tasks for Indian Intelligence mind-boggling! Intelligence on China remains a grey area not only to us but to the world of intelligence as well, including the USA. Buoyed by its growing economic clout, China has embarked on a massive modernisation programme of its armed forces, and more importantly in cyber warfare and

space weaponry capabilities. Its massive infrastructural development in Tibet has to be carefully monitored. In the long term, Indian Intelligence will have to contend with the ever growing multi-faceted Chinese economic, military and cyber threats. Pakistan, as a failing state and at war with itself, presents for the short and mid term, many intelligence headaches for India, including in its export of terrorism to India besides its violent opposition of Indian interests in our neighbouring states, especially in Afghanistan. Of the most critical intelligence significance to our agencies remains the status and safety of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, especially as a consequence of the rapid Talibanisation inside Pakistan. Though the list of challenges for Indian Intelligence is virtually endless but the NSC and NSA have to prioritise this ever growing list of security threats and derive thrust areas for Indian intelligence. Some of these naturally will include hard actionable inputs on cross border terrorism, infiltration and exfiltration of armed militants, details of various non-state actors fomenting terrorism from Pakistan and Bangladesh, nexus between narcotics and arms smugglers, illegal migration, left wing extremism (LWE), separatist movements within India aided and abetted by external powers and the activities of indigenous communal elements within India, besides illegal money transactions and activities of suspect NGOs. Our North East must get far more attention than hitherto and we should not let it degenerate into an Indian version of NWFP!

Recommendations to Energise Indian Intelligence

To successfully confront the myriad security challenges which face the nation; the government and intelligence agencies need to periodically carry-out in-depth reviews and modify, if required, their policies, organisational structures and procedures and continually endeavour to upgrade their HUMINT and TECHINT capabilities besides monitoring those of the adversaries and potential adversaries. The KRC, GOM and the Task Forces had addressed the entire spectrum of Indian Intelligence in a very substantial manner. It is indeed gratifying to note that most of the recommendations of the Task Force on Intelligence have been implemented, notably the creation of the DIA and the NTFO (now rechristened as NTRO). To these organisations was also added, albeit under the IB, the Multi Agency Centre (MAC) in 2001, to act as a nodal point for Internal Security intelligence gathering and analysis, which reportedly has not been able to fill the void in intelligence concerning counter-terrorism with agencies pulling in different directions. The upgradation of TECHINT capabilities across the spectrum has been underway for some time now and encouraging. To these structures, post Kargil, after the recent Mumbai terrorist strike, has been added the much debated National Investigative Agency (NIA) by an Act of Parliament. The NIA, contrary to earlier expectations, as the nation's first statutory super agency to deal with terrorism cases, will deal with investigation and prosecution aspects only and not have any intelligence or operational responsibilities. Thus reliance on existing mechanisms will continue. It is, therefore, an inadequate response to fight terrorism though it may be able to prosecute those who get caught indulging in acts of terror - for it's a reactive mechanism and not a preventive one. It may be pertinent to mention here that in mid 2008, the Administrative Commission Reforms Committee had suggested that the tasks of investigation and intelligence should be incorporated in a single entity.

National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS)

There is a school of thought that the NSCS has far too much on its plate because it also serves as the secretariat for a host of structures like the NSC, NSA, NSAB, SPG, NIB, ICG et al. It has evolved to be the apex collator of all intelligence, an intelligence assessor, evaluator, coordinator, think tank, promoter of national security consciousness and an interlocutor with foreign counterparts apart from being a neutral and impartial monitoring agency of other intelligence outfits! In the words of the former Army Chief General S Roy Chowdhury, in the current set-up, "Coordination of intelligence at national level still seems to be the Achilles heel of the system and converting the old Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) into the secretariat of the NSC was a thoughtless act of organisational vandalism which set back the intelligence process." The NSA may consider having his own mini secretariat so that the intelligence analyses and policy formulations are kept independent of each other.

HUMINT Capabilities

Notwithstanding revolutionary accretions in various forms of TECHINT there is no substitute for the craft of HUMINT. This is one area in which all our intelligence agencies require substantial and qualitative improvements. Our enemies have most effectively used their human resources in covert actions and proxy war against us since years. We need to train for and acquire this vital capability to use, if required. In a democracy like ours, necessary checks and balances can obviously be built into the system. In addition, all intelligence agencies which have a strategic, operational or tactical role in intelligence need to develop, nurture and effectively employ human resources for intelligence, counter-intelligence, counter-terrorism and other preventive measures. Innovative and painstaking efforts are essential to penetrate the many layers of insurgent and terrorist outfits. Intelligence agencies are not only for intelligence collection and analyses but must have the capability for covert actions to keep the nation's enemies in check.

TECHINT Capabilities

This is an area which has stood us well over the past many years both in peace and war. However, our adversaries are more than aware of our capabilities and have been taking suitable countermeasures to thwart our advantages in this field. Terrorists are becoming hi-tech and techno-savvy by the day. Thus it will remain an ongoing challenge for the NTRO, the satellite imaging and signals intelligence units of the DIA, besides the various technical units of the R&AW and IB to remain abreast of all technological developments in this vital field, especially in the areas of satellite imagery, monitoring equipment, cyber warfare, communication security and digital communications etc. Bureaucratic sluggishness must not put back our technological preparedness. The challenges of Information Age must be squarely faced.

Multi-Dimensional Interactions and Open Sources Intelligence (OSINT)

In today's seamless and highly interactive world, much of the information which the intelligence practitioner seeks is available in the media, Internet, libraries, government records, travelling journalists and the academia. By conservative estimates OSINT caters for nearly 80 per cent of the information sought. Intelligence personnel with useful contacts must continue to be utilised even after retirement and not discarded. Selective outsourcing and keeping experts in diverse fields on call can prove to be cost-effective.

Reorientation

Intelligence organisations being, by and large, establishments following set norms tend to get predictable and lacking in innovation and fresh ideas and do not normally keep pace with emerging threats. Thus these organisations must reorient themselves, to take on today's non-state actors and not confine themselves to state actors only. The USA with all its resources continues to be on the backfoot while dealing with al-Qaeda and Taliban.

Linguistic Skills

An area in which most of our agencies are very weak is in the inadequacy of having well trained personnel in required numbers in various languages, especially of this region. The DIA had made a modest start, as the National Defence Academy was requested to shed popular European languages in favour of languages spoken in South Asia. We need to look at this shortcoming seriously otherwise no amount of sophisticated monitoring and interception systems will suffice. Expertise in certain local languages with personnel posted in border areas to monitor terrorist activities is essential as terrorists generally converse in local dialects.

Avoidance of Turf Battles

Since all intelligence agencies work for a common cause, namely national security, it is their religious duty to willingly share information with sister agencies and avoid turf battles which in the end are always self-defeating and damaging for the nation.

Retaining an Apolitical Orientation

It is but natural that intelligence bosses exhibit loyalty to the government of the day. However, it must be ensured that while keeping within constitutional norms and fidelity to the political leadership of the day, the ultimate loyalty of all intelligence agencies remains totally to the nation and no political pressures get them to sway from their professionalism and the supreme duty to the nation. Not only should the agencies be impartial, but they must take pride in being truly apolitical.

Governmental Oversight on Intelligence Agencies

In India, there is no governmental or parliamentary or political oversight in the functioning of intelligence agencies, as existing in the USA, the UK, France and other democracies. Intelligence establishments must not remain closed societies and the infusion of transparency and some accountability will surely improve their performance. It is time we deliberated over this aspect keeping the Indian milieu in mind.

Police Reforms and Strengthening the Grassroots

The Indian Police must get back to professionalism and standards of the erstwhile CID and sharpen its reach by penetrative intelligence measures. Vital cogs in the entire information gathering machinery of the police at the grassroots level need to be substantially energised. Major police reforms are called for across the board to make them come upto the desired standards and a systemic overhaul is essential. Police organisations in each of the states have to be suitably modernised, technologically upgraded and strengthened by themselves with better motivation, equipment, training and then networked to a national intelligence mosaic for speedy and effective response. Intelligence for pre-empting the ever growing Naxalite/Maoist problems will only be possible with the IB and the affected States Police organisations being substantially revamped. The IB in the areas of J&K, North East, Punjab and above all, the Naxal/Maoist affected states require far greater personnel in the field than deployed now. Rural policing must be given added importance, and information must also be developed with a 'bottom to top approach' rather than a 'top to bottom' approach in all cases of information development. Care should also be taken to recruit personnel from those very areas where hard actionable intelligence is required. local sources, proficiency in local languages and dialects should be vastly improved upon, apart from training and carefully handling this eminently useful and irreplaceable human reservoir.

Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW)

Since its creation in 1968, the R&AW has come a long way. However, we need to give it a far greater covert capability and importantly the independence and initiative that any external intelligence gathering organisation requires. As they endeavour to sharpen both their HUMINT and TECHINT capabilities, their staffing, recruitment and manpower problems persist and some are not too happy with the UPSC route or their own R&AW cadre either. It must be remembered that this organisation is not supposed to be a police organisation (though some excellent police officers have served this organisation) and thus it must attract the best at an early age from all the government services and by direct recruitment from a variety of disciplines be it scientists, economists, the academic world, linguists, bankers etc.

The Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA)

The DIA, raised in March 2002, got off to a flying start producing within one week of its raising, intelligence assessments despite meagre resources at its disposal as the three Services understandably took a lot of time to shed resources for the DIA. The charter of the DIA was issued by the Government with remarkable clarity, after much deliberations with the three Services. The DG DIA is the principal Military Intelligence adviser to the Raksha Mantri, the Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee (in the absence of the CDS) and the Defence Secretary. He is tasked to coordinate the functioning of the three Service Intelligence Directorates, produce integrated intelligence assessments for the Defence Ministry and national security planners and also to control the strategic technical assets of the Services. He also controls the functioning of our Military Attaches posted abroad and looks after the foreign Defence attaches posted in Delhi. Though the DIA is doing its task well, it must be provided adequate and suitable manpower by the three Services so that it has a credible HUMINT capability also. The KRC had also opined that more than one agency must be tasked for HUMINT abroad to achieve the requisite redundancy. The DIA will only seek military information abroad and thus our civilian intelligence brethren must not feel that their responsibility is being diluted in any manner. In addition, there are a large number of military or quasi military governments in the emerging world who will liaise better with their uniformed community from the DIA. In addition, the DG MI's nomenclature should now be changed to DG Army Intelligence as the overall inter-services coordination now rests with the DIA. In addition, to ensure a better intelligence product and camaraderie between different intelligence agencies there must be far greater mutual representation in each other's entities.

A National Intelligence Authority

On the lines of the US office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) who controls the entire US intelligence including the CIA, FBI, DIA, NSA and a dozen other intelligence agencies, there has been some talk that India too needs a central intelligence authority for collation, analysis, synthesis and dissemination for all intelligence assessments and a central coordinating body for all national intelligence. This apex body should also be responsible for long term assessments on all aspects of national security including the nuclear, space and strategic weapons programmes of potential adversaries. It should also be the repository of the entire data base on terrorist organisations and served by state-of-the-art automation for accurate and speedy assessments for top policy and decision makers of the country. It is felt that this supreme organisation will be able to synergise the entire intelligence endeavours of the nation in a more coordinated and effective manner to confront the security challenges of the future. In early 2009, the Standing Committee on Defence has advocated the need for a "Federal Central Agency" which will have under its ambit all intelligence including that of the Armed Forces. It came down heavily on all intelligence agencies including that of the Armed Forces for lack of coordination and reluctance in information sharing. This aspect needs an in-depth analysis by the new government and the security community keeping in mind the Indian security environment specifically and our existing capabilities.

Conclusion

By any standards, the security environment engulfing India and the region remains volatile which calls for security and intelligence organs of the state to remain on 'high alert'. The recent events in Pakistan, which is in full danger of imploding, adds another alarming dimension to our security problems and consequently a major challenge for our intelligence community. After the Kargil War and now, there have been some accretions to our intelligence set-ups. Like the battle against terrorism we have to gear up on our own as no other country is ever going to give us any credible intelligence inputs. It will also be prudent to let our relatively new organisations mature in their mandated roles besides giving them the wherewithal to fulfill their missions as required. On vital national security issues, major political parties need to come together and be united against terror and not demean the nation by a propensity in scoring brownie points against each other. Intelligence is the first line of defence to ensure security. It is a veritable force multiplier and as such, it is sine-qua-non for all the intelligence organs of India to shed their old baggage of carving out intelligence empires; and by synergetic endeavour accord to the country, they are sworn to protect, the collective community skills instead, which will make India ever ready to confront all challenges it faces in its march forward.

Reference

Kargil Review Committee Report (15 Dec 1999), Govt of India, "From Surprise to Reckoning".

*The article is an abridged version of the talk delivered at USI on 13 May 2009.

****Lieutenant General Kamal Davar, PVSM, AVSM (Retd)** was commissioned into 7th Light Cavalry on 30 Jun 1963. He commanded a Corps in Punjab and retired as the first DG Defence Intelligence Agency, and Deputy Chief of the Integrated Defence Staff (Intelligence) on 31 Jan 2004.

Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CXXXIX, No. 576, April-June 2009..

The Greater Central Asia Concept and Implications for India

Brigadier Vinod Anand (Retd)*

Greater Central Asia: Definition and Saliency

The broader geo-strategic construct of Central Asia can be best understood by its definitional perspective. Definition that best encapsulates the region which in many ways can be described as the heartland of Eurasia is 'Greater Central Asia' (GCA), a term that includes five Central Asian States, Afghanistan and Turkic Xinjiang Region of China. This can be further extended to include northern parts of Pakistan, Khorasan province of Iran, Russian areas of Tatarstan and even Northern India to provide it definite South Asian contours¹.

Seen in above perspective, developments in Central Asia over the last two years, indicate a degree of strategic flux characterised by growing balance of power relationships and jockeying for influence amongst the three main actors i.e. the USA, Russia and China. Within these complex strategic equations and developments at regional and global level, five Central Asian Republics (CAR) are attempting to pursue their national interests through multi vector policies in a bid to balance their relationships with main actors to leverage political and economic advantages.

The current context of geo-strategic saliency of Central Asia is underscored by two factors. First, Central Asia has become important because of the discovery of hydrocarbon reserves and second, it has become a major hub for gas and oil pipelines and multi-modal communication corridors emanating from it in all directions connecting China, Russia, Europe, the Caucasus region and the Trans-Caspian region. Central Asian regimes, being land locked, have always had a strategic ambition to open routes towards the warm waters of the Indian Ocean. It is in this context Afghanistan becomes a key strategic player. Central Asia and South Asia are intimately connected not only geographically but also strategically. The CAR of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan have borders with Afghanistan, Iran lies to its west and Pakistan on the east and south, further enhancing the geo-strategic significance of Afghanistan.

The American Policy

The Americans have traditionally considered distribution of power in the Eurasian heartland to be of decisive importance to its global primacy and its historical legacy. Consequently, the USA continues to remain engaged as a major player in the region, though its strategic influence in Central Asia is somewhat on the wane - exemplified by loss of air bases in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan together with forced negotiations with Russia for an alternative supply route from the north via the Caspian Sea and Turkmenistan or through Uzbekistan. Of late, the USA seems to have learnt the virtues of being pragmatic and not being extremely assertive and aggressively nationalistic in its dealings with the CARs. The focus of its engagement revolves around promoting political dialogue, trade and economic relations and cooperation in many sectors including promoting good governance and democratic norms.

It is also attempting to leverage its relationship towards building energy and transport corridors, that avoid Russia, and go either South or West.

An important construct flowing out of the above US regional policies is 'GCA Concept' that aims at linking South and Central Asia through economic and energy corridors. Edifice of this strategy is stability in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Afghanistan is in fact the strategic fulcrum on which revolves the entire edifice of 'GCA' concept. By extension of plans for grand reconciliation between India and Pakistan, it provides economic rationale to 'go South policy' of CAR's. However developments in Af-Pak and standoff between the USA and Russia remains the major stumbling block.

Deterioration in the US-Russian relations, despite attempts by Obama administration to mend fences, is likely to have far reaching consequences for the Eurasian Heartland including CAR's. The most critical issue is the Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) and Iranian nuclear ambitions. In a major policy initiative on the day North Korea tested its missile (05 Apr 2009), President Obama unveiled his new foreign policy initiative - remarkably similar to exhortations by President Bush. He outlined his plans to continue with deployment of BMD in Central Europe till such time Iran brought its nuclear weapons programme within the ambit of NPT and abided by Security Council and other resolutions. This was in the shadow of basic agreement between the Russian and American Presidents on qualified disarmament, ensuring retention of robust nuclear weapon arsenal as a reassurance to NATO's Central European members, who fear that a diminished US military capacity would leave them vulnerable to Russian pressure.

The Russian Perspective

To counter the US challenge, Russia can be said to be following a policy of incremental strategic assertion to keep the region within its ambit of influence and to capitalise on its natural resources through greater military cooperation using the instrumentality of Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) which encompass vast regions of the NATO in the west, to China in the east.

Security dynamics are being supported by enhancing trade and investments and inducing integration of linkages of Caspian and other hydrocarbon resources through new deals and pipeline linkages, providing access to the European suppliers. Turkmen gas remains central to Moscow's energy strategy in Central Asia. It enables Russia

to control gas supplies to energy-deficient Western Europe through Russian pipeline grids. However the continuing stand-off between the USA and Russia over Georgian issue is likely to get exacerbated by the mix of disarmament and BMD, perceived as an American attempt to degrade Russian position in regional security discourse. Given the prevailing economic, technological and geographical factors it will be difficult for the Russians to effectively deal with American BMD umbrella, thereby inducing it into a new arms race.

Notwithstanding the above, Russia is collaborating with the USA and NATO in providing an alternate supply route for International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the US forces. The logic and rationale of this was spelt out at the SCO conference on Afghanistan in Moscow in April, attended interestingly by both the USA and Iran – to prevent the northward march of Taliban and other pan – Islamic fundamentalist forces, as also to contain the rapid spread of narcotics and drugs through regional cooperation framework. The conference underscored the dangers being felt by the CARs towards which both the NATO and the SCO have common perceptions.

China's Footprints in Central Asia

China too has improved its footprint in Central Asia largely through trade, energy deals, building infrastructure in western China and linking it up with Central Asia, and through the gradual enlargement of the scope and purpose of the SCO – both in the security arena and economic sphere. It has a long-term perspective and is willing to cooperate with Russia in order to make gains in Central Asia. However, many in China view the Eurasian Economic Community and CSTO as direct competitors of SCO. The main stimulus of Sino-Russian cooperation continues to be the shared objective of offsetting the US influence in CAR, which they may not be able to achieve in a stand-alone mode. While China needs Russia for arms imports, advanced technologies and its natural resources; for building its comprehensive national power, Russia needs China for balancing the West. In effect, the US and the West's approach to Russia shapes its level of cooperation with China. Another facet of Chinese policies flows out of its attempts to manage Chinese periphery which is seen by prescient Chinese leadership as its Achilles' heel. For example, Xinjiang has great political and strategic significance for China, an issue that got underscored during the run up to 2008 Olympics and thereafter. Stability in the region is thus an essential imperative for the Chinese, in particular control of trans-national fundamental impulses.

The European Union's Approach

In so far as EU is concerned, while it remains engaged in projecting soft power, through programmes such as friendship for peace, its influence has been on the decline. Nonetheless, CARs continue to be attracted to them because engagement with NATO remains an important feature of their sovereignty, independence and balancing strategies. Central Asian nations also viewed NATO's greater engagement in the region as an opportunity to modernise their armed forces and upgrade their capacity to respond to the regional challenges of drug trafficking, religious extremism, terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The development of relations with NATO also constituted a counterweight, or at least a useful alternative, to their relations with Russia.

India and Central Asia

India has been endeavouring to improve its profile in the region in order to exploit its energy reserves and to establish a mutually beneficial security and economic relationship. Central Asian nations, while exploiting the competition between different players for their own perceived national interests, have many conflicts among themselves and are still in the process of moving towards regional harmony. Political processes are yet to mature and the threat of terrorism remains real, especially because of the unstable situation in Afghanistan with the resurgence of the Taliban. It is in this backdrop that India with its civilizational and cultural linkages combined with its soft power approach is seen by most Central Asians as best suited to play the role of a balancer. In addition, flowing out from multi-vector policies of CARs is their desire to engage India in a mutually beneficial and comprehensive relationship. This inclination is strengthened by their experience of the negative effects of the intense power play that is taking place in Central Asia. India can play a positive role in the Central Asian environment where CARs are hard put to maintain balance between number of major players.

In the last one decade or so India's stature in international world order has been gaining salience because of its economic growth and its movement towards the world of real politics. India has also been pursuing policies of restoring its traditional linkages with the region and re-integrating itself with the immediate and extended neighbourhood. Further, integrating South and Central Asia would result in vast economic benefits to all the stakeholders involved leading to a positive outcome for stability and security in the region. But looking at the scenario in Afghanistan and Pakistan such integration is unlikely to take place in near to midterm.

Dynamics of the Greater Central Asian Concept

In strategic and contextual terms both India and the US subscribe to this concept. From both countries' perspective the success of this concept is centred on stability in Af-Pak, a fact that has been recognised by the Obama Administration which has given primacy to resolution of Afghan conflict with Taliban as the most serious foreign policy agenda of his administration. The essence of Obama's strategy in Pakistan and Afghanistan can be summed up as under:-

We will fight in Afghanistan till we are able to develop the capability in Afghan security forces to effectively tackle the al Qaeda-bad Taliban threat. We will do all we can [more carrots than sticks] so that Pakistan fights the al Qaeda-bad Taliban inside their nation for us'.

Balance is only an elaboration of this central theme. The central pillar of this policy is outlined in surge to beef up counter-terrorism capability, strengthening Afghan security forces, reconstruction and assistance in socio

economic development through strengthening democratic and public institutions, building up public advocacy programmes, strengthening provincial reconstruction efforts etc.. Craig Mullaney, Under Secretary for Defence (Central Asia) commenting on Obama's statement that the largesse to Pakistan is not a blank cheque and in fact a down payment for the future and added that, this is also a kind of stimulus package for Central Asia. How true is that? Only time will tell as the details of implementation of this strategy are yet to unfold. Apparently from India's point of view as also of other regional stakeholders too much trust and reliance is being placed on Pakistan Army and ISI combine. Moreover, large sections of the US administration remain skeptical about Pakistan security establishment being part of the solution.

In Pakistan, the objective of Pakistani military and political establishment is to clearly shift the focus in time to defeat the fast expanding Islamic insurgency that is devouring the nation. Within above broad parameters the focus is on strengthening Pakistan's weak political institutions, making political parties rooted in feudal loyalties more accountable and last but most importantly recasting Pakistani military, stuck in the groove of traditional conventional warfare against India, to undertake pro-active counter-terrorist operations. These are at best generational challenges, but as being predicted by number of local and international analysts Pakistan does not have the luxury of time.

Thus, the so called Af-Pak strategy just lays down broad contours of the US Administration's thought process and defined objectives that it seeks. The fact that it is seeking to create a contact group encompassing eleven regional players indicates to the fact that America would like to broad base the solution and invoke regional players as concerned stake holders. Af-Pak strategy has many positive elements in it and its results are likely to appear within a year's time. Depending upon its success or otherwise, it may have to undergo changes because geo-strategic compulsions of the US would prevent the US leaving the region in a hurry.

Grand Bargain to Realise Greater Central Asia Strategy: Both Non-Starters

The "Grand Bargain" is meant to rescue the situation in Afghanistan, by re-establishing relations between key South Asian stakeholders on the basis of cooperation and enlightened self-interest. The USA is keen to broker a genuine rapprochement between India and Pakistan – with hopes of sealing a deal over Kashmir. The aim being to strengthen Pakistan's civilian democracy vis-à-vis the military and conservatives, and, to induce them to make sincere efforts to crush al-Qaeda and Taliban in Eastern and South Eastern Afghanistan and Western Pakistan. Within the above construct, a supporting theme is to induct moderate Taliban into the Afghan government in a spirit of reconciliation and accommodation. The hope being that Afghan government, assisted by the democracies of India and possibly Pakistan, would become a bulwark of stability in the region providing substance to greater Central Asian framework.

However, the aftermath of the Mumbai attack reveals that the ambitious goals for this vigorous exercise in multilateralism remain unachievable at least from the Indian perspective. The problems are too complex and the abilities of the US and its coalition partners to project credible power into the region too small – to prevent violence from driving the outcome.

The Mumbai attacks have revealed fissures and conflicting alliances across Asia, that bode ill for the "Grand Bargain". Experts had hoped that it would replace the American faltering military strategy for Afghanistan, and that would also give further impetus for realisation of the Greater Central Asia strategy as espoused by the US. The result, however, is skewed narratives, distorted policies, an unavoidable but counter-productive American reliance on arm-twisting instead of persuasion, and a visceral Pakistani opposition to the US policies.

Fighting Islamic militancy was wrongly conceived, in terms of denying terrorists sanctuary in a single state, in what was and indeed is an overarching security structure in the South-Central Asian region as a whole that requires dealing with the root cause of the phenomenon. That root cause is the nature, ideology, and historical behaviour of the military-security services complex that has ruled Pakistan since the 1950's, and has traditionally manipulated the USA to serve its own ends.

The US approach also ignores the deep ideological basis of ties between Rawalpindi and its jihadi assets and overlooks the *raison d'être* of military power in Pakistan i.e. to substantiate the notion of hostility with India. Enormous financial benefits flow to the army as a result of its holding real power in the country. The degree to which it sees continued conflict with India as essential to that power, providing legitimacy to its leitmotif of "Islam in danger."

The need of the time is a comprehensive policy framework that would include getting India fully on board. It should aim at containing fundamentalist geopolitical dynamics as also pressurising the Pakistani Army to become pro-active in dealing with Taliban and other extremist forces fast moving into the Pakistani core – east of Sindh river. Such a policy will allow creation of an overarching security structure to deal with the problem. Placatory policies are unlikely to succeed. Greater Central Asia Strategy and Grand Bargain are both non-starters, unless the fundamentals of the issues located in the inflexible thought processes of Pakistani security establishment are addressed.

Implications for India

The concept of GCA revolves around connecting South Asia with Central Asia through multi-modal corridors particularly in transport and trade sectors; Afghanistan would be the fulcrum around which such activities are to be carried out in various directions. According to some estimates, India's trade with Europe, CIS, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan, by 2015, could be to the tune of US \$ 500 to 600 billion annually provided GCA concept is realised. Even if twenty per cent of this trade were to pass by overland route through Afghanistan it would still

be US \$ 100-120 billion, a phenomenal amount. Pakistan’s exports to Central Asia are only \$ 10-15 million every year, and by denying India overland route in the process, it has lost billions of transit revenues³. At the moment both India and Pakistan are marginal economic players in Central Asia. In cooperation with each other, they can become significant players. The GCA strategy also finds resonance with India because of the potential of realising Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India gas pipelines, if and when stability returns to Af-Pak region. Integrating Central and South Asia are part and parcel of India’s long term strategic perspective. Fructifying of GCA would result in vast economic benefits to all the stakeholders leading to a positive outcome for stability and security in the region.

***Brigadier Anand (Retd)** is a Senior Fellow, Centre for Strategic Studies and Simulation at USI of India.

Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CXXXIX, No. 576, April-June 2009.

Naval Academy and the HRD Challenges Ahead

Rear Admiral AP Revi (Retd)*

Introduction

The Prime Minister inaugurated the Naval Academy (NAVAC) on 8 January 2009 at Ezhimala, in Kannur District of North Malabar - land of the Zamorins. From June this year, a four year B Tech programme is also to be launched from here. Henceforth, for all officers entering service, NAVAC will be their alma mater. The programme has been finalised under the auspices of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

Establishment of the NAVAC, ushers in a new era for the Indian Navy. This is just the right time to retrospect the Human Resource Development (HRD) vision for the Navy, to meet its commitments in the 21st Century. It calls for a holistic approach, and demands a much deeper consideration whilst formulating the plan and even greater will and perseverance during the implementation stages.

Demands of Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA)

The Indian Navy's hardware acquisition plans, to cope with the demands of RMA, seem to be well in hand. Both the Government and the Navy apparently are fully engaged on the subject. However, there is a perception that greater emphasis is called for in areas of software development. Bold and determined effort should be the order of the day. Awarding executive officers B.Tech degree, per se, without also holding them responsible for the maintenance of their equipment on board, is not likely to be the solution. An attempt will be made here to indicate some of the pitfalls and show the possible way forward.

Major Challenge Facing the Navy Today

The major challenge facing the Navy today is to work out the most optimum solution to cope with increased induction of high technology on board ships. One of the solutions offered is the adoption of 'user-maintainer' concept. The issue arises as a result of some very conflicting requirements having to be accommodated on board ships. On the one hand the quantum and quality of weapons and sensors required on board to meet the threat perceptions is rising exponentially. Also, cutting edge technology is the order of the day. Speed, stealth, manoeuvrability and ability to withstand damage in action are fundamental requirements. To extract maximum benefit from these - the crew needs to be equally competent. Space on board is at a great premium. To cut down on personnel on board - considerable effort has been made towards automation and remote control etc. In the earlier days, one could afford to have a separate operator and maintainers. That luxury is no more affordable - especially in the case of a blue-water Navy, where the ship has to be self sustained at sea, especially during action conditions. Hence the operator must also take on the dual responsibility of being able to undertake onboard first-line maintenance and defect rectification. The emphasis here is on technological skills and not on academic qualifications. The requirements of Base Support / Refit / R&D etc have to be met separately.

Restructuring of Cadre

Several attempts were made to restructure and rationalise the cadre to cope with the developing scenario. Two golden opportunities that fell in the lap, need a special mention here.

The first came, with the induction of the Petya class of Anti-submarine Frigates (Project 159AE) - acquired from USSR in 1968. This almost coincided with the induction of the famous K 25 'Killer Squadron' - Missile Boats of Project 205 ER, also from the USSR. During the 1971 war, these versatile ships were used ingeniously by the Navy to cause havoc in Karachi harbour. Induction of such large number of ships from a new source other than the traditional British one, opened a unique opportunity for the Navy. Complete crews of all ships had to be trained in the USSR - each for durations up to and sometimes greater than 12 months. This opportunity gave the Navy considerable exposure to the Russian concept of 'user-maintainer'.

User-Maintainer Concept and Training

At the end of intensive user-maintainer training and work-up with the Soviet Red Banner Fleet at Vladivostok - the Indian crews became extensively proficient in exploiting Russian technology. This was adequately demonstrated during the 1971 war.

In pursuance of a user-maintainer concept - the Engine Room Department (ER) crew was trained in the USSR to operate and maintain the entire propulsion and power generation systems on board, alongwith its integral controls / instrumentation etc. The Gas Turbine (GT) controls on board were mainly electronic. The ER personnel attained sufficient competence on the control systems to be able to independently diagnose faults on the circuit diagrams and identify the electronic components in the system responsible for any malfunction.

The Petya Type Training School (PTS) was initially established in 1969, at Vishakapatnam, for training the replacement crews in India. Later this responsibility shifted to INS Sathavahana, also at Vizag. To start with, the charter of PTS provided for execution of user-maintainer concept in its entirety - at least in the Engine Room department. Accordingly, a formal Navy Order (NO) was promulgated - transferring the complete responsibility of power generation - distribution and engineering machinery instrumentation / controls to the Engine Room

Department of the Petya class of ships. The NO was kept alive till late 1980s. At the time, a story doing the rounds was that to ensure that such a venture would not succeed – a section of the instructional staff, deliberately disqualified all the competent sailors and pushed through the incompetent ones. The outcome was that the Navy could not convert this advantage - as was envisaged and the attempt remained still-born. Hence, it was unable to consolidate on those gains and allowed subsequent crews to slip back into the old British mold – which the RN had discarded long ago.

The second opportunity for the introduction of user- maintainer concept again arose, in the mid 1970s. The most sophisticated Guided Missile Destroyer (DDG) of Project 61 ME (Rajput class) was to be inducted into the Navy. This time, the issue was debated widely at considerable depth, within the Navy, and details worked out on how to implement it. Detailed syllabus for training in the USSR was accordingly finalised. Huge investments were made to set-up training infrastructure in India – to take the project forward. The decision was widely publicised within the service through a special letter to all the naval commands under CNS's signature.

At the end of the extensive training at Poti and work up with Soviet Black Sea Fleet – the crews were all set to take the user-maintainer concept forward. Same as for the Petyas - the ER artificers acquired adequate expertise to diagnose and rectify GT faults on the circuit diagrams from symptoms observed during operations. Their main limitation was that though proficient at welding, casting and bench / machine workshop skills etc - they had not been given adequate practice on circuit board repairs. In any case this was not considered necessary - since normally, repairs on board were to be effected by circuit board replacement. The status of the seaman departments was also similar. The cross training experience converted many of the electrical artificers into excellent operators also.

At the time, it was envisaged that eventually to implement the user-maintainer concept, the electrical officer's role on board was expected to be partly merged with the executive departments. Transfer of power generation and distribution responsibility to the ER department was also on the cards. To enable a smooth transition, the respective executive departments on board were suitably augmented with additional electrical personnel. The expectation was that eventually – the young electrical officers would be given the option to choose between the executive and the engineering branch. And will be given the opportunity to earn their watch keeping tickets in the respective departments of their choice.

Following the changes in the Royal Naval (RN) officer's cadre structure - the idea of E & L merger was mooted in India, as far back, as the 1960s. One of the main reasons given, at that time, for the proposal not being acceptable to the Engineering branch was the disparity in inter-departmental promotion prospects. A Third course Joint Services Wing (JSW) Engineer officer would have become a Commander – at the same time as a Sixth course Electrical officer. Amalgamation at that stage would have meant a Third course Engineer (E) officer, having to serve under a Sixth course Electrical (L) officer, for no fault of his. To eliminate such an anomaly, the Navy made efforts to provide a level playing field. By late 1980s, the Navy brought about a marked change. The Chief of Naval Staff (CNS) and the Commander-in-Chiefs of Naval Commands (C-in-Cs) from the Executive branch and Chief of Material (COM) / Controller of Warship Production & Acquisition (CWP&A) from the technical branches and Chief of Logistic Services (CLS) from the Logistic branch, were all from the First course JSW. This should have pulled the rug from underneath the feet of those who were opposing such an amalgamation on grounds of disparity in promotion prospects.

What needs to be remembered further is that by then, at least five complete crews for Petyas, ten for the Missile Boats and four for the DDGs were trained in the USSR – under the user-maintainer concept. The training period for each crew, including the work-up with the soviet fleet, stretched out, some times, to almost 18 months. Thereafter, for subsequent training of replacement crews – extensive type training infrastructure was also set-up in India, at considerable expense.

Taking stock of the situation three decades later – one finds that the objective of user- maintainer status was hardly achieved. The cause of the failure on all counts could be attributed to turf war syndrome and inadequate determination and will to push it through, at the corporate level.² A cost-benefit analysis of the over all training effort on this score would be greatly enlightening.

Present Naval HRD Policy

At present, the C-in-C Southern Naval Command (SNC) has been charged with the responsibility of managing all the naval training establishments in India. The Chief of Personnel, at Naval Head Quarters (NHQ) is over all, responsible for formulating the Naval HRD policy at the Corporate level.

Presumably, the shortcomings observed, in implementation of both the user-maintainer programmes and the B.Sc degree course for Executive officers, are proposed to be overcome at the new NAVAC. The up-gradation and reorientation to B.Tech course for all Executive officers is supposedly meant to achieve that end. Hopefully, substantial changes have been incorporated in the original B.Sc curriculum - to enable practical technology orientation necessary to achieve the B.Tech goals. And modern well equipped professional laboratories and work shops have been suitably catered for at NAVAC. Also, suitable counter measures are contemplated to cope with the mind set blockage problem, faced earlier.

The Way Forward

During the process of evolution of the corporate decision – the following issues would need to be addressed seriously:

(a) Is the primary purpose of the exercise:-

- (i) To optimally manage the onboard technology as a user-maintainer - with minimum personnel on board?
- (ii) Is that best achieved by adopting the US line officer concept route? If so - the man power cadre structure would need a total overhaul.
- (iii) Or is an innovative concept to be evolved - taking forward the earlier attempts at achieving user-maintainer concept?
 - (aa) In which case, one option would be to follow through with the user-maintainer concept - aborted earlier due to lack of will.
 - (ab) This would call for part amalgamation of L Branch into E Branch - transferring power generation and distribution responsibilities to Engine Room (ER) department on board.
 - (ac) The rest of the younger L Branch officers would progressively be absorbed into the Executive (X) Branch. All junior L officers would be given the opportunity to volunteer and make their own choice. And will be required to earn their watch keeping (WK) tickets in the ER / bridge, as applicable.
- (iv) Merely a recruitment ploy - a welfare measure, providing the executive officers a better re-employment potential at the time of retirement?
 - (aa) The argument that today, many of the sailors at entry are already 10+2 - would not hold water.
 - (ab) Cost benefit analysis would also not justify such a measure.
- (b) All those E officers who are opposed to the progressive changes proposed need to be reminded of the writing on the wall. Even the RN is now planning to change over to integrated electrical propulsion system and electro-magnetic aircraft catapult for their future aircraft carriers i.e. CVF. The United States Navy has already slotted in the Electro-magnetic Aircraft Launching System (EMALS) for their CVN 78 programme from 2015 onwards.
- (c) Finally, the B.Tech proposal for the executive officers would only be justifiable - if at the end of it - the Executive officer is expected to independently carry through the user-maintainer concept in his department. Otherwise, it will surely not pass the cost benefit analysis criteria also.
- (d) The entire gamut of cadre review must be carried out in totality and not merely in isolation. Also, take into account the future requirements of Revolution in Military Logistics.
- (e) The emphasis on upgrading of skills should also be taken to the seaman. Linked incentive of higher remuneration should be offered to the dual role sailor. The seaman operator must take on the dual responsibility of a semi-skilled maintainer as well. the electrician / radio / radar mechanic must additionally take-on the operator's role on board. Only then would it be possible to cut down on personnel, on board.
- (f) Once a corporate decision is taken - that must be seen through, to the end, with full determination and perseverance. Checks and balances must be instituted to ensure that parochial interests are not allowed to derail the reformation / restructuring process - as happened during earlier attempts.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it may be emphasised that to ensure success this time the issue needs to be looked at holistically and formulated transparently. The legitimate issues need to be seriously addressed and apprehensions of the concerned parties put to rest. All branches need to be taken on board, giving the widest coverage. Keeping the long-term perspective in view, the need for integrated logistics (as propagated by the author earlier) would also need to be given due consideration.

***Rear Admiral AP Revi (Retd)** joined Joint Services Wing, National Defence Academy in Dec 1949 and retired from the Navy as the Assistant Chief of Material at NHQ in 1989. He is a graduate of Mechanical/Marine Engineering and National Defence College. He writes on subjects dealing with Higher Defence Management, HRD and Revolution in Military Logistics.

Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CXXXIX, No. 576, April-June 2009.

Defence Education Consortium : Requirement of a Paradigm Shift

Commander Pradeep Kumar Padhy*

Introduction

One of the most contemporary requirements of our system of higher education is to increase access and to ensure equity so that our young minds are ignited and motivated extensively to accept emerging challenges for the development and welfare of our country.”¹ This in nutshell redefines the nature of the systemic frame desired to deliver higher education, to make it more relevant for a developed society. Today’s distance education movement has grown by leaps and bounds and has created a mammoth educational structure to provide off-campus learning opportunities for millions of adults.

Much of the modern distance education experience over the years has originated from early experiences of the American Wisconsin University and ideas from Oxford and Cambridge Universities’ concept of extension classes, and later the British Open University experiments. Till recent times the concept and delivery services of distance education remained more or less the same world over. The advent of advanced technologies in the fields of IT and Communications in the last few decades and their penetration to every field of human existence has of late, revolutionised much of the modalities of distance education. The Distance Education Council and Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) has contributed immensely towards the growth of distance education in India. Further, if the National Knowledge Commission recommendations are accepted by the Government, it would revolutionise the concept of distance learning and will bring education within reach of every citizen as never thought of before. This off campus education concept has helped many social groups to access higher education, which was not possible a few years ago. These benefits have helped organisations to reschedule their training mechanisms and cut down on expenditures. This has also helped the employees acquire professional/higher education to enhance career opportunities in the same system. Moreover it has given hope to those working classes who has to look for a second career after a limited period of enlistment like the military services. The privatisation of education has also resulted in creation of world class educational facilities everywhere, offering contemporary subjects and bringing such facilities closer home.

The Armed Forces have not remained immune to this revolution and have tried to use many of its facets for enhancement of education of its men. For a mobile working force like ours distance learning has opened up many possibilities. Synergy between the education bodies and the Armed Forces can create perfect conditions where service personnel can fulfill their aspirations of attaining academic growth while serving at distant places. To start with, the Services Headquarters have got into agreements with various Universities/autonomous institutions to take the benefit of Distance Education programmes. This has been helping some officers and men to acquire higher education. There is an unmistakable link between social attitude and military discipline and motivation. In a larger sense the soldier’s attitude reflects the social paradigm.² A larger number of officers and men in Services would try to integrate with the society in a much more honourable way, through higher education and using the skills acquired during their service. However, there are basic underlying difficulties which are causing a bottleneck in the flow towards higher education. These are:

- (a) Lack of sensitivity in academic community / educational institutions towards cohesive, cost effective and quality academic platform for the Services people.
- (b) Non availability of national institutions to provision degree/courses in the language of choice of the student.
- (c) Lack of cohesion in assessing the high quality service training / qualification and experience of personnel and equating it with suitable credit wavers for a desired degree.
- (d) Lack of focus by UGC/Universities in the basic educational modalities required for personnel in Defence & Paramilitary Forces.

Defence Education Consortium (DEC)

India has a 1.5 : 1000, soldier : citizen ratio which makes a significant presence of military trained manpower in an educationally impoverished nation.³ It is in this context that we take recourse to look at the impact of education boom in this country vis a vis the desire of personnel of Defence and Para Military Forces. Despite changes in social values and numerous occupational alternatives available, a certain type of youth will continue to be attracted to military life. This type is the mainstay of this voluntary force. The Armed Forces should be so managed externally and internally that he is not deterred from joining; and having joined, he should find the ethos, values, culture, challenges and rewards that he sought in the military life.⁴ It is therefore inherent that this volunteer force is protected and groomed to find a footing post military engagement. This will not only motivate the personnel and also create a disciplined educated work force (post retirement) for the Nation. The human resources planning of Indian Armed forces over the years has catered for systemic guidelines on the human resource issues and integration of civil and military organisation to address it so as to enable attracting best people towards service career.⁵ The National defence policy does maintain the kind of significant role that civil organisations can play in the strategic human resources planning.

The United States of America has through various legislations (GI Act etc..) created a conducive educational environment for its enlisted men and women. A large number of personnel have benefited from various such measures. One of the most popular projects run by the defence authorities is the United States Armed Forces

Service Members Opportunity Colleges. It is in this context one can probably think of such a provision in our country too. Looking at the future engagement scenario of our Armed Forces, it would be a useful and meaningful step. A DEC model for the Services would bring in all educational bodies to one platform and find a long term solution to the educational need of the Services personnel. The model proposed here envisages an educational grid, where all willing Universities/Deemed Universities can be brought together to make it possible for the Armed Forces and Para Military personnel and to begin a degree with one of them and complete it as they get transferred to different places during their service careers. This provides flexibility in the following:

- (a)** Selection of mode / language of study.
- (b)** Choose place of university (home state), which can help him getting the final result and follow up with higher academic pursuits post retirement in his native place. A home station university is preferred because of language (medium) preference and opportunities available in the particular state.
- (c)** Select a programme/course of his choice.
- (d)** Use credit for the training and experience he has acquired in service.
- (e)** Resources of local universities in terms of counsellors & educational facilities such as study centres, libraries and laboratories etc can be easily shared.
- (f)** Easier monitoring of student records, and personnel can easily approach the functionaries whenever on leave.
- (g)** Easier administration of academics and direct advice / assistance.

Under the DEC concept an inter university organisation supervised by a body like UGC/ with the participation of representatives from Ministry of Defence (MOD) and member universities will have to be formed where willing Universities/Deemed Universities will join to facilitate education to Defence and Para Military personnel. This body can create an equitable plan of credits for variety of courses taking into consideration their military service and training and offer courses at lower fees to the personnel recommended by MOD. All Universities who join DEC will have the freedom to examine each other's courses and provisions to accept them. The DEC handbook should list all the courses for which transfer is guaranteed through study centres run by members. Syllabi/credit of popular courses are required to be redrawn to enable different programmes to have part credit acquisition through trade/specialisation qualification acquired in service. A 'Credit Evaluation Body'(CEB) would function under DEC and will evaluate military experiences and training and will draw a 'Course Card' amplifying the nature of credits required for the course offered and the credits waived for the Course on account of military service and courses undergone. In addition, one gets DEC credit by taking various tests designed for this purpose. Validation of Service Credit can be done through one of the following methods:

- (a)** Successful completion of a comprehensive examination or a nationally standardised examination that is approved by the DEC.
- (b)** Successful completion of a higher-level course in the same subject in the respective service schools in the areas as approved by the DEC.
- (c)** Students who have completed certain years of field service in the armed forces may also be given academic credit of certain semester hours of Science/Arts.

A "My Home University" opted by a person would provide him admission to a particular course and language (medium) of his choice, and the student would get the final degree certificate from this University only (Refer to Figure). All universities will strive to design courses so as to meet one 'Degree' requirement. A guaranteed transfer of credits from one to another will ensure that personnel can move within the Study Centres of affiliated Universities (DEC) during the course of their service career. All credits earned by the student will be transferred back to 'My University', which will grant him degree on successful completion of the programme. The affiliated University Study Centres will help the student in his academic activities in liaison with local defence/paramilitary units. This will include provision of counsellors, evaluation of assignments, provision of library, provision of practical/laboratory session etc. This should be worked out in consultation with local defence authorities to provide local University (if DEC member) centres closest to the unit for easy access. All courses, which do not have residency, can be easily offered through correspondence/ online. Similarly, courses where practical attendance is required for fulfillment of the degree, provision be created to acquire it in the DEC Study Centres.

The combination of credits earned in service alongwith the actual courses one takes at DEC, eventually will provide the student the stock of credits as defined under the charter for a University degree.



Figure

The MOD is required to create provisions under the Services' Headquarters to ensure that a part of the entire exercise is coordinated by the users. This would require provisioning of space for Liaison Office to be manned by service personnel (from the education cadre) to guide students to nearest DEC centres and courses offered. Study Centres at far flung units to be manned and run by the DEC/Local University in the manner Kendriya Vidyalayas are managed in defence sector, otherwise all study centres to be run at University affiliated colleges closest to the service units. The University enrolled in the DEC grid will be required to administer the entire programme/course with the help of the University staff at the Services designated location. The administration of the entire project will have to be undertaken by the DEC's / Universities under the guidance of the administrator appointed by the University. This DEC administrator will advise the University to create DEC centres in the University locations to handle issues related to service personnel. All financial transactions, related to admission/re-registration payment to counselling, assignment evaluation and counselling programme co-ordination in the area, are to be handled by the DEC centres regulated by the Universities.

All personnel volunteering for the courses will commence their educational journey at the Service (Army/Navy/Air Force/Paramilitary) Liaison Centres (LC) where they would be advised to select an appropriate programme and will be allotted the DEC Centre. As the personnel keep moving to new duty stations, they will be allotted their new DEC centres under same/new university by the new unit Liaison Office. The 'Student's Course Card', containing details of credits waived and credits required to be studied, will be presented to the new DEC Centre who will help the student select the credits/courses he needs to follow for completion of his Programme in the New University. Each personnel under the scheme has to ensure the following:-

- (a) Take admission at a DEC University of their choice ('My University'). They will be required to submit all the necessary documents on service qualifications, military experience and any other educational qualification to the DEC centre for waiver of credits etc.
- (b) On transfer to a new duty station the liaison office would allot him a local university study centre. The credits gained at the new place have to be sent back to "My University" for updation of his dossier.
- (c) Ensure that from time to time additional military training and occupational experience are sent to DEC for waiver of credits.
- (d) After completion of the credits and clearing the relevant examinations as required under the programme the student would request "My University" for the final Degree Certificate.

Modalities of Distance Education

A majority of the youth joining the Services are keen to undertake higher studies. However, the basic structure of distance education pattern has kept many of them away from these courses. Many who do join a course, get disillusioned because of the inadequate support they get from their service institutions. In addition to these problems following realities would always stay with the man in uniform:-

- (a) Military training and deployment of trained personnel for the defence of the country is the primary role of the soldiers in uniform. All are required to meet that responsibility first. Rest all follows, only as a welfare measure.
- (b) Difficulty in Services HQS to create and administer parallel college/educational structure for officers and men for the sole purpose of higher education, is likely to effect the overall efficacy of the armed forces.
- (c) Non availability of quality time, to indulge in prolonged educational studies while in uniform.
- (d) Non availability of University pattern educational facility, counselling ambience and resources close to their service units.
- (e) Difficulty in attending classes and examinations as prescribed by the Universities.

Advances in technology have thrown open many possibilities to fight multifarious issues related to educational benefits to the society. Many institutions and universities are employing these techniques. The modalities discussed here are not new, however through this paper, an effort has been made to draw specific attention to methods which could be more appropriate to meet the requirement of students in service. One such endeavour would be creation of an online DEC learning platform. This can also be used to provision link to the DEC university web resources for e-learning modules. The eligibility condition for enrollment to such institutions can be determined by the DEC and listed in the web site. Students will have options to choose course and university for their degrees. The service institutions shall facilitate Internet facility for such exercises in cohesion with the DEC. Personnel will be able to earn bachelors, and master's degrees, as well as professional certificates, from the member Universities. This complete model with internet platform and a multi-university educational grid would be able address a few issues hitherto ignored or not available in conventional scenario, some of them are discussed in succeeding paragraphs.

It is a lot easier for non uniformed men to programme their study as per the university schedules. However for the service personnel to stick to a fixed schedule of class and examination is a difficult proposition because of the service compulsions. Units, which have access to DEC online, can facilitate 'anytime examination' by downloading the exam papers in advance through post. These exams can be conducted at any day/time within a particular 'exam window' provisioned every quarter. Mobile Examination Team appointed by DEC may conduct the examinations at centres which do not have online access at a Centre chosen by the nearest service formation on stipulated dates and collect the papers and send them for evaluation. This will solve the problem of the student travelling to distant places for the examination. Each candidate may be allowed the time frame for programme and attempt terms for examinations as per DEC stipulations.

Central counselling and direct role by Universities/DEC. The failing standard of educational institutions is a matter of concern for all. Action research approach towards quality education is a very innovative idea and needs to be worked upon to fine-tune the system. Lack of availability of quality counsellors to conduct counselling and attend to assignments at remote areas would be one of the difficult areas. The local Universities are to create a mobile panel of counsellors who as per a programme would visit places and deal with the subjects. Universities themselves have to exercise their quality assessment powers to scrutinise them personally. Lack of good counsellors lead to a disinterested student. Same would apply to the practical assessment also. The mobile panel would be responsible for all academic activities including assignment evaluation etc. The student should have access to these counsellors through telephone/mobile/radio.

Most of the central Universities/institutions have fixed medium of study thus forcing students to learn in a language other than their preferred Indian languages. Through the DEC concept these issues can be addressed by taking support of My-University for study material and question papers in the preferred language and provisioning academic support through resources in the local affiliated DEC University/institutions.

The corporate sector could be involved in this exercise so as to generate second career opportunities under the DEC platform through sponsoring of certain programmes. As courses imparted will be monitored by Universities they will have credible bearing. Courses can be structured in such a manner that residency can be conducted towards the retirement part of the career. Personnel qualifying in such sponsored courses can be suitably placed for post retirement employment with proper university degrees.

Conclusion

Ex-Servicemen (ESM) need to be rehabilitated in civil life after their release, on account of their truncated career in the Armed Forces. About 55,000 service personnel either retire or released each year and a majority of them prefer to settle down near their hometown. Accordingly, resettlement and welfare of ESM has been accepted as a joint responsibility of the Centre and State governments. Both have introduced a number of schemes for welfare of ESM, and to provide them rehabilitation through provision of re-employment in the organised sector or through self-employment schemes. The benefits and concessions provided by the State governments to ESM and their dependants vary from state to state.

The prime time of life spent by our soldiers, on duty in service of the Nation, is a sacrifice for the real cause of providing security of the society. This high stressed group should be rehabilitated in most befitting manner. The universities can play a key role in rendering educational assistance and preparing them for their second career in civil society in a better way. A suitable education scheme can bridge the gap. Analyses reveals that an ESM has very few things going for him, though he is probably the only true Indian⁸. All leading educational bodies in the Country need to accept the fact that the men in uniform are required to be given a helping hand and to see that the service personnel enrolled for a course and degree are not seen as a commercial entity. They are trained, disciplined and law abiding citizens and have spent the best years of their lives at the frontline. They can be better used to further the cause of the society by educating them honourably and allowing them a positive role - of their choice. In this way, they will help in creating a large pool of contented and useful citizens who will add to the strength of the Nation.

***Commander Pradeep Kumar Padhy** was commissioned in the Indian Navy on 06 Aug 1990 as an Education Officer. He was involved in the commissioning of a Study Centre and a Satellite based Interactive classroom at Eastern Naval Command under the aegis of IGNOU Naval Education Project. Presently, he is Joint Director Naval Education, IHQ MoD (Navy).

United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea in Hindsight

Colonel Sudhir Chauhan, SM*

Introduction

Demands of modern geo-politics have revealed serious flaws in implementation of the UN mandates, examples of which can be seen in the way the situation was handled in Somalia, Balkans and Rwanda. A recent entry into the list of debacles could be the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), which was established in the year 2000 its mandate expired on 30 Jul 08.1 Events that shaped UNMEE's termination provide a number of lessons in the conduct of peacekeeping operations.

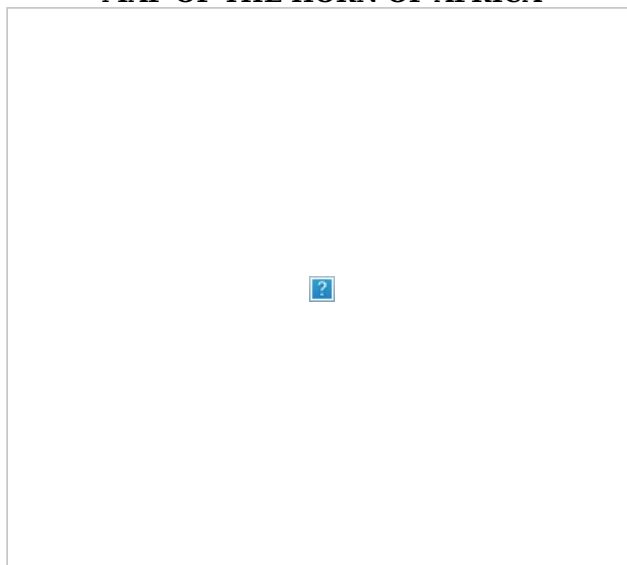
Regional Review: Horn of Africa

Before looking at scenario between the two warring nations of Ethiopia and Eritrea, it would be important to know the relevance of the region called the Horn of Africa. (Refer to Map). The region is marred by messed up boundaries. To its least enviable credit, the region boasts of presence of at least five UN missions. It dominates major Sea Lanes of Communication passing through the narrow corridor of the Red Sea. A ransom amount of \$100 million² has been paid for 60 piracies off the coast of Somalia in 2008. Other countries of the region are Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya and Uganda.

Briefly, the situation in the region is as under:-

- (a) Border war between Ethiopia and Eritrea had cost nearly 1,00,000 lives from 1998 to 2000. The issue remains unresolved till date amidst fears that any local conflict may flare up again into a full scale conventional war.
- (b) Eritrea had a showdown with Djibouti over the border region of Ras Dumeira despite the presence of the French and the USA forces located there. The UN's fact finding mission released its report on 12 Sep 2008³ and blamed Eritrea for violations.

MAP OF THE HORN OF AFRICA



- (c) Within Ethiopia, the Human Rights situation in the regions of Oromo and Ogaden provide a window of opportunity for its neighbours to exploit.
- (d) Presence of fundamentalist Islamists in Somalia provides a battleground for the USA to fight its war on terror by proxy through the surrogate troops of Ethiopia.
- (e) South Sudan remains volatile over the oil rich border township of Abyei, a bone of contention between the North and the South.
- (f) Deployment of United Nation's Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) is jeopardised over a number of factors. The recent indictment of President Omar Hassan al-Beshir on the issue of alleged genocide by the International Court of Justice might result in closure of the Mission. General Martin Luther King Abwai, the Force Commander of UNAMID has stated that for UNAMID to succeed, we should first have peace in the region, and it would be wrong to have great expectations for an early resolution of the problem⁴.
- (g) Kenya witnessed a spate of violence after recent domestic elections.

Historical Perspective

Background of the Conflict. Mr Meles Zanawi and Mr Issais Ifwerki, the leaders of Ethiopia and Eritrea respectively, were born in the ethnic region of Tigray less than 90 miles apart and both had studied in Addis Ababa University. Formation of Eritrea in 1991 was the result of a long drawn guerrilla war that both the leaders had fought as partners against the Derg Regime of Lieutenant Colonel Mengistu. Within five years of Eritrea's formation, the leaders drifted apart over issues such as, valuation of currency; un-demarcated borders and use of

Assab port of Eritrea that had traditionally served the trade interests of Ethiopia. In addition, Afwerki who viewed himself as mentor of Zanawi suddenly realised that the latter had become more important when he took over the reigns of the bigger country⁵. Fighting between Eritrea and Ethiopia started due to a border dispute over a small, non-descript village of Badme having a meagre population of 1500. Deployment of UNMEE in the year 2000 was considered by many as a ray of fresh hope but the initial euphoria died soon after.

Peace Process

- (a) The Organisation of African Unity (now renamed as the African Union) and the USA, took active interest in trying to bring the warring nations to the negotiating table.
- (b) On 18 June 2000, the former belligerents signed a UN sponsored Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities (ACH), paving way for deployment of a 4,200 strong UNMEE contingent. On 20 December 2000, Ethiopia and Eritrea signed the Algiers Peace Agreement, which provided following important clauses:-
 - (i) An independent and impartial body, Ethiopia-Eritrea Claims Commission (EECC) to determine the origins of the conflict⁶.
 - (ii) Establishment of Ethiopia-Eritrea Boundary Commission (EEBC)⁷, a neutral body with a mandate to delimit and demarcate the border, based on relevant colonial treaties and applicable international law.
 - (iii) Establishment of a Temporary Security Zone (TSZ)⁸, an area all along the length of the border, i.e. 1000 kms in length and 25 kms in width inside the Eritrean boundary, accounting for more than one-fifth of the country's territory.

Non-implementation of the EEBC's decision resulted in a stalemate and both countries re-deployed their forces close to the border in 2004-05. Mr Meles Zenawi tabled a five-point proposal⁹ for peaceful resolution of the conflict, in which Ethiopia accepted the EEBC decision in principle and wanted negotiations for implementation of the verdict. Eritrea, with an aim to break the impasse put pressure on the UN to act in its interests with actions such as; ban of all helicopter flights; restrictions on the erstwhile free movement of the UN; and on 06 December 2005 ordered UN troops and civilians from the Western countries to leave within 10 days. The UN had to pull down some of its posts that had become vulnerable as a result of the ban on helicopter flights.

The UN Security Council threatened the two nations with economic sanctions unless restrictions are removed and their military forces move back to previously known areas and levels. Whereas the Ethiopian Armed Forces (EAF) fell back to its previous deployment areas, the Eritreans did not revert any of its restrictions.

In October 2006, in an open violation of the Algiers Agreement, the Eritreans inducted a large number of Eritrean Defence Forces (EDF) troops and heavy arms and equipment inside the TSZ. Consequent to all these developments, the Eritrean Army, Police, Militia and Administration adopted a more hostile attitude towards UNMEE personnel in the field. Eritrea also restricted supply of fuel to UNMEE partially. A large number of UN patrols were detained. It also prevented UNMEE from manning the entry points, meant for monitoring induction of regular troops inside the TSZ. As a result, twice in 2006, the mandate did not get extended automatically. Probably, the UN wished to keep its footprint in the area even under adverse circumstances.

The EEBC, having exhausted all its possible options, decided to wind up on 30 Nov 2007¹⁰, leaving the border undemarcated on ground but having declared that the map coordinates were final. Eritrea stopped fuel supply knowing fully well that the UN kept a reserve for three months only. Meanwhile, the Security Council on 31 Jan 2008 extended the existing mandate by a period of six months lasting till 31 Jul 2008¹¹, probably hoping that the working environment might improve in the coming days. Alternatives such as, maintaining oil supplies through Ethiopia or importing its own requirement through sea were rejected¹². By Feb 2008, the UN had to take a decision to relocate the troops and the observer team sites out of Eritrea into Ethiopia. This was objected to by Eritrea who stopped movement across land borders forcing the UN to relocate the contingents back to their home countries. Having exhausted all its options, a divided Security Council finally terminated the Mission on 31 Jul 2008.

The status quo achieved has resulted in an advantageous position for Ethiopia as it gets to keep Badme (the casus belli) and they have neutralised the value of Eritrean ports by developing its alternative in Djibouti. Incidentally, trade with Ethiopia now accounts for 70 per cent revenue of Djibouti, a clear loss to Eritrea. On the other hand, Eritrea, already placed by the USA on the list of 'Countries of Particular Concern' might graduate to a 'Terror Sponsoring State'. The USA has banned arms sale to Eritrea over concerns that it is aiding terrorists in the Horn of Africa¹³, and the way it has supported insurgency in the neighbouring Somalia, Chad and Sudan

Afwerki has also been accused of having links and providing arms to the LTTE leader Prabhakaran¹⁵. Also, Afwerki's undemocratic ways are reflected in an interview with Al Jazeera (English) where he stated that elections might not take place for "three to four" decades.

Lessons Derived

Zenawi chose to opt for an external arbiter to solve the boundary issue. The only success story for the UN is prevention of an all out conflict. Pulling out the UN troops from the border areas resulted in apprehension that removal of this buffer could result in a Badme-like incident of 1998. But nothing of this sort happened in the ensuing months. Ethiopia, does not wish to derail its economy. On the other hand, Eritrea impoverished as a result of its chosen path of shunning all foreign aid, can simply not afford a war. Both nations are hoping for a regime change in the adversary's camp to be the only remedy to the border problem and openly support asylum seekers.

Important lessons learnt could be summarised as under :-

- (a) Petty issues such as trade tariff, currency denomination and a couple of square kms of area brought a huge amount of animosity between the two erstwhile allies. In this conflict, give and take policy was not attempted by the big brother Ethiopia.
- (b) Tactical battles should not be allowed to hijack the overall foreign policy of a nation. A small skirmish at the border town of Badme escalated into a full scale conventional conflict from which both the nations found it difficult to backtrack.
- (c) History tells us that losing side should not be humiliated. Insult was imposed on Eritrea by converting its own territory into TSZ, which was subjected to monitoring by outside agencies.
- (d) The UN's deployment pattern in both the countries was not balanced. There were only two contingent posts on the Ethiopian side as compared to nearly three battalions deployed on the Eritrean side. The lopsided deployment could have been more balanced to give a feeling that only Eritrea was not being subjected to inspections
- (e) While incorporating legal provisions of EEBC's framework, pertinent clauses such as arbitration in case of disputes should have been added. By deciding that the ruling arrived at by the Commission would be final and binding on both the sides, the two nations did not leave any elbow space for diplomacy to succeed. In addition, rather than stating that the colonial boundaries would dictate the outcome: specifics such as, members to visit the area; known history of local administration; geographic alignment; provisions to ensure that the adopted boundary lines did not divide the villages; referendum of the people to decide on the nationality they wished to adopt, ought have been given their due weight. Such provisions would have provided a more holistic solution that could have been acceptable to the leadership as well as the population.
- (f) Adequate pressure should have been brought down on both sides for violation of terms and conditions agreed to earlier.
- (g) The UN did not have a clear exit strategy in mind. Having reached an impasse on non resolution of the demarcation process and before getting subjected to humiliating restrictions, it should have pulled out with its dignity intact.
- (h) Importance of diplomacy was evident in the way Ethiopia led its calculated diplomatic assault, which proved to be too good for its novice adversary. Eritrea, a young nation, did not have the political acumen to match the seasoned Ethiopians. Ethiopia adopted delay tactics, whereas Eritrea chose to pressurise the UN and the West; thereby alienating all its sympathisers and allies who, until then, had felt that legally the Eritrean point of view on the border demarcation was more logical. Ethiopia slowly and steadily gained sympathy of the international diplomatic community.
- (j) The UN could have chosen a difficult but possible option of converting the status of peace enforcement (under Chapter VII) to include demarcation of the boundary. Economic, travel or diplomatic sanctions, a normal whip under the circumstances, could not have been used as Eritrea shunned aid in all forms, thereby going further into a state of solitude
- (k) Eritrea lost a golden opportunity to turn its economy on its head at the end of the war. Since the entire length of its boundary had a presence of the UN, it should have brought down the strength of its military and concentrated on developing its economy. But Afwerki chose to maintain his policy of forced conscription¹⁹ by misguiding the nation of a non-existent threat leading to large scale defections

The Way Forward

At heart, people of the Tigray region of Ethiopia and the highlands of Eritrea are inseparable. They share a common language, follow the ancient orthodox Christianity and even share the same dietary habits. ²¹ Ideally, a new arrangement should be looked at wherein relevance of borders is diminished and a free movement of goods and people is permissible.

Primarily, the USA, China and the EU should try and make Zenawi and Afwerki come to the negotiating table to resolve their differences. The USA, which already has a military base in Djibouti, has failed in its effort to shift HQs of the newly formed United States Africa Command (USAFRICOM)²² from Stuttgart due to strong resistance from the regional leaders, who have instead pushed for an African standby Force

The oil prospects in Sudan and Ethiopia remain lucrative to the USA and China.

A possible future driver of conflict i.e. sharing the Nile's water should be prevented by signing an accord. Economic stability and interdependency could prove to be a boon for stability. Assab port of Eritrea, which acted as a hub for Ethiopia's exports, now stands deserted. Eritrea could benefit from the thriving economy of Ethiopia due to its geographic advantages.

The international community should provide carrot and stick policy of undertaking development projects with a rider to de-escalate military presence on the border.

Conclusion

The present impasse has resulted in war by proxy as Eritrea is backing insurgents to fight the Ethiopian army²⁴ in Somalia. Ethiopia clearly does not intend getting sandwiched between two hostile nations, namely Eritrea to its North and Somalia to its South. Its apprehension that Ethiopian Muslims should not get swayed by the radical Islamists of Somalia is genuine. There is a likelihood of deployment of a UN peacekeeping mission again in Somalia but Eritrea based faction continues to oppose the move stating that the Ethiopian army must pull out first. Therefore, in order to achieve peace in the region, a face saving exit formula for the Ethiopian army is mandatory.

With Southern Sudan about to achieve separation from Sudan, history seems to be getting repeated as all the possible future drivers of conflict i.e. border demarcation and rights over oil/trade have similar underpinnings as the premature carving of Eritrea out of Ethiopia. Similarly, the Darfur Peace Agreement signed in May 2006²⁵ also did not address core issues. The UN's next big challenge is the continuity of United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) as the rift between Criminal Court of Justice and the Government of Sudan intensifies. The ill treatment of UNMEE by President Awerki might encourage other leaders to prove a point against the West.

Possibility of another UN mission in the region is very remote. But for that to happen, Eritrea has to first accept the need for a dialogue and Ethiopia should accept the border without any riders. In order to reinitiate bilateral diplomacy, it should consider appointing an envoy that is acceptable to both the countries.

***Colonel Sudhir Chauhan, SM** was commissioned into the Dogra Regiment on 13 June 1992. He was part of 2 DOGRA Group, which was deployed in Ethiopia-Eritrea at the time of termination of the UN Mission (UNMEE).

Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CXXXIX, No. 576, April-June 2009.

An Overview of Ecological Task Forces (ETF) and Ecological Institutions of the Indian Army

Colonel PK Gautam (Retd)*

Introduction

The Indian Army is probably the only army in the world which has implemented the concept of ecological units of the Territorial Army since the 1980s. These units, called Ecological Task Forces (ETF), are officered by a mix of regular and Territorial Army officers and based on manpower comprising of young ex-servicemen. ETFs are funded by state governments and the Ministry of Environment and Forests. The ETFs, through tree plantation, have performed admirably in recovering from the damage of manmade ecological disasters – such as ‘mining’ areas in the Mussoorie hills or sand dune stabilisation in the Thar desert of Rajasthan and other places in the Himalayas and the foothills. Over the last decade, the ETFs have planted approximately two crore plants and have reclaimed twenty-five mines.

The credit for the ETF concept goes to Dr Norman Borlaugh, father of the Green Revolution, who in early 1980s suggested the need for a disciplined force to undertake such tasks. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, on observing ecological degradation in the Himalayas, displayed a rare ecological insight and operationalised the idea by an executive decision to form ETF of the Territorial Army. New-age soldier scholars, including Brigadier Michael Harbottle of the United Kingdom (UK), were inspired by the ETF. Brigadier Harbottle recorded the unique work of the ETF in his path-breaking work, *What is Proper Soldiering?*² – which seems to have set-off the trend of employing the armed forces all over the world. They are just not fighting each other, but are being used in disaster relief, ecological restoration and UN peacekeeping missions, which demand deep understanding of ecological links to intra-state wars and ultimate peace. The link of ecological restoration and peace got better recognition when in 2004 Wangari Maathai, Kenya’s Assistant Minister of Environment, Natural Resources and Wildlife was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for planting trees.

ETF in Brief

There are currently eight ETFs (Refer to Table). An ETF has the headquarter-cum-administrative element and a company under an officer, three Junior Commissioned Officers (JCOs) and about 99 men. The strength of an ETF, consisting of HQ and one company, may be three officers, five JCOs and 139 other ranks, making a total of 147 all ranks – a two-company ETF would be nearly 250 all ranks. Local assistance from the Forest Department is taken in imparting training. One advantage with the massive rural base of our soldiers is that they have a very good working knowledge of agriculture, forestry and tasks close to Mother Nature. But soon this inherent advantage will reduce due to urbanisation.

The initiative to raise an ETF is taken by the state which needs to solve an ecological problem in a timeframe of say three to five years. Generally, the budget is shared by the state government and the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF). The ETFs of the Union Territory of Delhi and Himachal Pradesh are fully financed by the state government, whereas the two new raisings in Assam are financed fully by the MoEF. This joint venture of the MoEF, Ministry of Defence and state government concerned undertakes activities such as afforestation, soil and water conservation, pasture development and other restorative works. As a thumb rule, the capability of an ETF is to plant 1.5 lakh saplings a year in 200 acres of land in the hills and 400 acres in the plains. Empirical data show a very high survival rate of the plants (varying from 70 to 87 per cent).³ The rough cost of an ETF embodied for eight months in a year is Rs 1.83 crore for five years.

The ETF is raised and embodied for the task. On completion of the task in three to five years the unit hands over the eco-regenerated area to the state government, after which it may be disbanded. Till date, all the four ETFs raised in the 1980s and 1990s have been redeployed. Uttarakhand has two ETFs of four companies each.



The following requirements have to be met to form an ETF :-

- (a) A problem of environmental degradation demanding military type discipline and dedication. This should be known to the leaders at both the centre and in the state.
- (b) Political will, including allocation of budget.
- (c) Sizeable ex-servicemen population needs to be residing in the region.
- (d) There needs to be a well-oiled civil-military interface for smooth implementation of the scheme.
- (e) Regular officers should be available to be posted by the Military Secretary's Branch of Army Headquarters, failing which TA offices intake can be beefed up as a long-term strategy.

The Armed Forces

Though non-mandated, all the three Services reflect an ethos of environmental awareness. This at first blush appears strange. The military, after all, is the main instrument of destroying the environment with its military might and firepower. But as the saying goes, soldiers who have seen war are the best ambassadors of peace. Similarly, military life and routine in both field and peace areas stresses the need for environmental awareness and preservation. The high order of natural capital in the military garrisons is witness to this phenomenon. Each unit and station has an arboriculture plan.

The Indian Army has an ecological cell at the Army HQ. It is routine for a formation such as a division to organise events related to ecology and environment.

Because of the nature of military deployment military personnel are posted and deployed in ecologically sensitive and rugged terrain such as deserts, jungles, mountains and island territories. With frequent postings and transfers in their military career, the personnel get to know the biodiversity of the Nation. They also carry with them traditional ecological knowledge and wherever posted apply the best practices like tree plantation and nurturing. This love for nature is also a function of the need for soldiers to have an eye for the ground. They also train for war in jungles, mountains, riverine and desert terrain. Military life thus is a free on-the-job package on ecology.

Great care is exercised in avoiding damage to land during training and manoeuvres. Compensation is paid to locals for any damage done. Most field firing ranges are acquired. Due to urbanisation and the need for land, there has been a steady decrease in notified areas. The military has adjusted to this new challenge by switching over to simulators. However, there is a limit to simulation and imagination when it comes to training in soldierly skills and large-scale exercises. A standing military needs to train. There is thus at places a clash of interest of the damage done due to exercises versus not carrying out any training. It is unlikely that this will ever get resolved.

One also has to be careful in expecting the military to ignore its core competency of soldiering, combat and war fighting. Long periods of peace may induce a misguided opinion to use the military for tasks other than their primary mission. A military is worth having only if it is prepared for war. Any digression will pose serious challenges to national security. What, in fact, the military leadership needs to know is the ecological roots of

conflict and environmental factors as a cause of war. In the nuclear context, Bernard Brodie noted, “Thus far the chief purpose of our military establishment has been to win wars. From now on its chief purpose must be to avert them. It can have almost no other useful purpose.” In similar manner, the military needs to be aware of the causes of war and help the Nation take all measures to avoid war due to ecological degradation.

Military and Protection of Ozone Layer

Climate change and ozone depletion are complex challenges which need to be addressed. Montreal Protocol deals with protection of ozone layer. Kyoto Protocol deals with global warming and climate change

Inter-Relationship: Montreal Protocol and Kyoto Protocol

What is important to keep in mind is that halocarbons contribute to ozone depletion and climate change, while HFCs and PFCs contribute only to climate change and are among possible non-ozone depleting alternatives for ozone depleting substances (ODSs). Gases under Montreal Protocol including its amendments and adjustments are ODSs like HCFCs, CFCs and Halons. Man made chemicals which are also green house gases under UN Framework Convention of Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol are PFCs and HFCs. Concentration of important halogen containing gases, including CFCs, are now stabilised or decreasing at the Earth’s surface as a result of the Montreal Protocol on ‘Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and Its Amendments’. Concentration of HCFC, production of which is to be phased out by 2030, and of the Kyoto Protocol gases HFC and PFC, are currently increasing.

The advantage with ODS is that it was easy to identify the point sources – in this case the chemical industry. All ODSs like CFCs and halons are man made and their source is easy to monitor.

In true letter and spirit of Montreal Protocol, which deals with protection of ozone layer by eliminating ODS, India has entrusted the banking of Halon (A critical fire fighting gas used in aircraft, ships and tanks) to the military and The Centre for Fire, Explosives and Environment Safety (CFEES) of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). A joint service committee has been set-up to reduce and finally eliminate use of ODS’s in defence applications. For coordinating the effort, Headquarters (HQ) Technical Group, Electronics and Mechanical Engineers (TG EME), New Delhi have been made the nodal agency by Perspective Planning Directorate. A seminar to come to grips with the problem and evolve an action plan was held at TG EME on 29 April 2009. The Vice Chief of the Army Staff was the Chief Guest - which indicates the concern the military has on environmental matters.

Ecological Traditions of the Indian Army

The military has been performing green tasks as a way of military life. This is not surprising, as we have soldiers mostly with rural /agricultural background with Indian culture of least materialism. Soldiers in any case are frugal, being in harmony with nature, and known to survive in desert at scales just over 5 litres per man per day. They still use animals or man pack in operational areas and thus indirectly save on fossil fuel and carbon emissions. The cantonments, barracks, picquets and posts are having green cover. There are ecological task forces of the Indian Army, probably the only army in the world having troops for ecology, which have greened arid deserts and barren mountains. Non-ETF establishments are also pursuing water harvesting/reuse, green awareness including non use of poly bags (much before it was legislated by some states). Solar energy and other renewable practices have been spread to remote border regions. Visionary leadership raised an Ecological Cell under Quartermaster General Branch in the early 1990s. In 2009, ODSs phase out is now high on the military’s agenda. Military minds such as the Engineers are attempting to design energy efficient equipment and getting geared up to face the day when fossil fuels may get exhausted.

Conclusion

Starting with simple tasks such as tree plantation and ecological restoration of degraded land, the Indian military has been upfront, with its ecological units. The military has immense potential to rise up to the National mission for a Green India. It is also in the lead in protection of ozone layer. The future of ecological restoration by the military is very vast. As an institution, much more needs to be done to further improve on the past achievements and to enhance ecological consciousness. This is one field where Indian military can be a global role model. What is required – is to consolidate and document the good work being done by the Indian Army.

***Colonel P K Gautam (Retd)** is a Research Fellow at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses and a member of USI.

Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CXXXIX, No. 576, April-June 2009.

For the Honour of India: A History of Indian Peacekeeping

Squadron Leader Rana TS Chhina (Retd)*

In December 2002 the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 57/129, declaring 29th May to be observed annually as the International Day for United Nations Peacekeepers, to pay tribute to “all men and women who have served and continue to serve in United Nations peacekeeping operations for their high level of professionalism, dedication and courage, and to honour the memory of those who have lost their lives in the cause of peace”. 29th May assumes importance, as on this day in 1948 the United Nations established its first peacekeeping mission (UNTSO: United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation) in the Middle East during the Arab-Israel War. Since then 2588 peacekeepers have laid down their lives in the line of duty, including 130 Indian peacekeepers. In the year 2008 and 2009 alone, 163 peacekeepers made supreme sacrifice while serving under the UN Banner in various Peacekeeping Missions.

In New Delhi, a function to mark the International United Nations Peacekeepers’ Day was organised by the Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping at the United Service Institution of India (USI) on 29 May 2009. As part of the commemoration ceremonies, a book by Lieutenant General Satish Nambiar, PVSM, AVSM, VrC (Retd), ‘For the Honour of India : A History of Indian Peacekeeping’ was released by Shri Hamid Ansari the Honourable Vice President of India. General Deepak Kapoor, PVSM, AVSM, SM, VSM, ADC, Chief of Army Staff, was also present on the occasion.

Ever since gaining Independence in 1947, India’s unreserved participation in UN and regional peacekeeping operations has been both spontaneous and enthusiastic. To date, about 100,000 Indian personnel have served in 43 such operations including all operations undertaken in Africa. The fact that, as of 31 March 2009, 130 Indian peacekeepers have given their lives in UN peacekeeping operations alone, underlines more than anything else the Indian commitment to the objectives set out in the UN Charter. This contribution has been widely acknowledged by the international community and the UN.

Indian peacekeeping participation has evolved from its idealistic origins during the Nehruvian era to the present where it is inextricably linked to the furtherance of India’s national security interests. This book provides a comprehensive insight into the history of India’s involvement with peacekeeping operations from its tentative beginnings in Korea in 1950, through the non-aligned phase of Indian foreign policy in Indo-China and Gaza, to the heavy employment of the post-Cold War period. Apart from regular UN peacekeeping operations, the book also covers the Indian involvement in regional peacekeeping missions in Sri Lanka and the Maldives alongwith a host of other related issues.

In his welcome address Lieutenant General PK Singh, PVSM, AVSM (Retd), Director USI, noted that the occasion had a special significance for USI fraternity, as all three distinguished guests present on the podium, the Hon’ble Vice President, the Army Chief and Lieutenant General Nambiar were members of the USI. The Chief was also the seniormost serving former “Blue Beret” while General Nambiar too had donned the Blue Beret as a UN Force Commander.

All present then rose to observe a two-minute silence in memory of those Peacekeepers who had made the supreme sacrifice in the cause of peace. This was followed by reading out the message of the United Nations Secretary-General Mr Ban Ki-moon, by Ms Shalini Dewan, UN Representative for India and Bhutan. Thereafter, General Satish Nambiar presented a brief glimpse of the book.

General Nambiar recounted his involvement with UN peacekeeping and gave an engaging account of how the present book came into being at the behest of the ex-President of India Dr APJ Abdul Kalam who desired that India’s Peacekeeping contributions should be recorded in the form of a book. The venture has been funded by the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of Home Affairs - the three ministries which are directly involved in contribution to the UN Peacekeeping Missions.

The history was formalised as a project under the USI Centre for Armed Forces Historical Research (CAFHR), with the signing of an Agreement between the USI and Army Headquarters on 09 Dec 2005. Work on the project commenced in March 2006 after the allocation of funds. A research team under Colonel KK Sharma (Retd), assisted by Mr Manzaruzzama and Ms Suchismita Mishra, began working on collection and collation of data from a wide range of individuals and agencies. General Nambiar commented upon the unsatisfactory nature of official record-keeping procedures that made the task of the research team a fairly daunting one. Nevertheless, the research team did a fair job of cobbling together a rough draft based on the information that was available.

This rough first draft was further worked upon, under the author’s directions, by an editorial team consisting of Squadron Leader Rana TS Chhina, Secretary of the USI CAFHR and Dr Chandar S Sundaram, assisted by Ms Kanika Sharma and Ms Ambreen Agha. The thoroughness with which this team addressed the task was largely responsible for plugging some of the more glaring gaps in information and General Nambiar expressed his gratitude for their assistance in giving the publication its final shape. In particular, he thanked Dr Chandar S Sundaram and Squadron Leader Rana Chhina whose invaluable contribution merited special mention not only for their editorial efforts, but also for the quality of advice and guidance provided to him as military historians. Ms Kanika Sharma was specially mentioned for revising the book’s chapter structure.

General Nambiar said that the book aimed to encapsulate six decades of peacekeeping experiences of our valiant and dedicated soldiers, sailors, airmen, civilian police, and members of other agencies like electoral officers.

Every effort had been made to get the factual details right and put them together to present a coherent narrative of the various missions to serve as a historical record of the outstanding work done by our peacekeepers. In the last chapter, he said he had gone beyond ‘history’ and tried to look ahead into remaining decades of the 21st Century, in order to analyse future trends in international peace operations and speculate on the role India would be called upon to play insofar as the maintenance of international peace and security are concerned, including a more dynamic role in the region. He had done so in the hope that the observations he made would provoke a detailed discussion and enable future generations of Indian peacekeepers to carry forward with greater pride, élan and vigour, the traditions set in the past six decades.

General Nambiar humbly dedicated the publication to the 130 Indian peacekeepers who had made the supreme sacrifice at the altar of UN peacekeeping “for the honour of India”; the motto set for the first such venture, the Indian Custodian Force in Korea, by its commander, then Major General SPP Thorat, DSO, in 1953.

The Honourable Vice President of India, Shri M Hamid Ansari, then released the book and addressed the gathering. In his remarks, the Vice President called the book an “authoritative account” and an “impressive and commendable” effort. He rounded off his incisive and insightful remarks on Peacekeeping with the hope that besides enlightening the general public, the book would facilitate a more focussed policy debate on the principles and mechanics of peacekeeping.¹

The ceremonies concluded with a vote of thanks by Lieutenant General PK Singh, Director USI. This was followed by tea in the USI lawns, where the Vice President and the COAS mingled with the guests, who included many senior and distinguished former ‘Blue Berets’, before departing.

***Squadron Leader Rana TS Chhina (Retd)** is currently Secretary of the USI Centre for Armed Forces Historical Research and Vice President of the Indian Military Historical Research Society, UK.

Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CXXXIX, No. 576, April-June 2009.

USI Gold Medal Essay Competition 2008 - Group B

Stress Management in the Armed Forces*

Major Shailender Singh Arya**

Introduction

India as a Nation, has defied stereotyped definitions due to its inherent diversity and complexities. Colourful experiences and paradoxes have filled the gaps to present a whole picture. Another such paradox is inescapable today. Conventional world history always correlates economic and intellectual progress with increased military prowess and pride. But today, while the description of the Nation varies between an 'Emerging India' to a 'Surging India', its Armed Forces do not seem to share these optimistic evaluations. Au contraire, they are depicted as having numerous man-management problems, ranging from suicide cases to shortage of officers. Among these problems, the most alarming is the manifestation of stress in the form of suicides, fratricide and other such aberrations. It is true that these issues are over hyped but it would be incorrect to blame the media. Changed socio-economic conditions and an indifferent politico-bureaucratic establishment have accentuated the problem but they have not created it. Finally, akin to other forms of stress, the real solution lies within.

Over the years, we have taken battlefields to the barracks, exacting operational standards to normal administrative requirements, and ironically, bureaucracy to the battlefields, while constantly ignoring a rapidly changing world around us. The procedure has to be reversed, for the resilience of the organisation is strained from stress.

THE CHANGING TIMES

Historical Perspective

Traditionally, the Indian soldier came from a very hardy stock. Even great hardships and natural calamities did not make much of a difference on his professionalism. In yesteryears, stress was unheard of. Edmund Candler notes a telling incident in his book 'The Sepoy' wherein during the devastating Dharamsala earthquake of 1905, when half the regiment had been killed, maimed or buried alive, the quarter guard of a battalion turned out and saluted with the same clockwork precision¹. The Indian military history is replete with such incidents and descriptions of steadfastness in the face of seemingly insurmountable adversity. In the British era, the Army was the most respected and coveted organisation. To join its ranks was not only a source of financial security but a matter of distinct pride. In fact, there were certain communities who knew no other profession other than farming and soldiering. In reciprocation of unquestioning loyalty, due importance was given to the soldier by the Government machinery. Records at the National Archives show that in the period before 1857, more than half of the correspondence, between the Governor General's office in Calcutta and the Court of Directors in London, consisted of letters referring to action taken on petitions by common soldiers which were sent to respective commissioners and collectors for action. Progress reports were sent to London till the issue was resolved. Thus, the Indian soldier was convinced that as long as he did his best on the battlefield, the rest would be taken care of.

After the 1857 revolt, the British went out of their way to create an impression of justice and fair play particularly in meeting the administrative needs of the Indian soldiers. Consequently, this concern for the well being of soldiers enabled them to govern India with a handful of British military and Indian Civil Service (ICS) officers. Philip Mason in 'The Men Who Ruled India' chronicles many professional and administrative efforts of these ICS officers being directed towards the welfare of the Indian soldier, especially during their tours of the countryside. Where this administrative support to the soldier was lacking, the British found it difficult to recruit soldiers, as in case of Pathans (or Pashtuns) from the tribal areas across the Durand Line in present day Afghanistan. Edmund Candler, notes the hesitation of Pathans to enlist; 'The interests of the Indian sepoy are protected by the magistrate and the police, but across the border the property of a man who goes away and fights may become the property of the man who stays at home.'

Later, as the National freedom movement grew, this carefully cultivated image of British fair play and reciprocal generosity faded away, it even scorched the military. Over 40,000 Indian soldiers joined the Indian National Army (INA) to fight against their former comrades while Bombay erupted in flames in the form of the Royal Indian Navy Mutiny in 1946. Thereafter, it did not take long for the sun to set on the British Empire.

Turbulent Decades

The nineties are often marked as a watershed decade when consumerism began to rapidly creep into India. On the other hand, the eighties and the nineties were turbulent decades for the Indian Armed Forces, engaging them in prolonged low intensity conflicts (LIC) and spiralling events which demanded damage control. These sequences of events were not co-related ab initio. But together, they had a profound impact on the Armed Forces and have been collectively responsible for the current cauldron. The Punjab militancy in the mid-eighties was the first of these conflicts. Soon an uninterrupted cycle began in 1987 with the innocuous induction of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) into Sri Lanka. Before long, it was drawn into a war; which it neither intended nor was structured to fight. As the IPKF returned home in 1989, on the other end of a restive Indian subcontinent, a young medical intern named Rubaiya Sayeed was making headlines. Soon the vale of Kashmir erupted in flames. The

militancy then spread to other parts of the state and so did the commitment of the Army in counter-terrorism (CT) operations. As of now, there are about 250,000 troops in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) 3, most of them engaged in CT operations in remote and difficult areas. In the North East, Assam saw intermittent peaks of insurgency in the nineties, which the Army fought hard to contain with varying success. The commitments in Nagaland, Tripura and Manipur also increased, and till date the soldiers in the North-East continue to fight bitter but forgotten wars in obscure places. In 1999, there was a brief focus on a conventional conflict in Kargil. It was India's first televised war, briefly transforming the soldier into a saviour and a hero. But the euphoria of victory was soon over. This bloody interlude did not alter the reality of continued commitment in CT operations across the country. In these endless operations, soldiers are seldom considered saviours, and face occupational hazards ranging from uncertainty to monotony and from bullets to bad press.

Advent of Consumerism

The Nation was meanwhile weaving a different destiny. Around the time, when the IPKF was packing its bags to go to Sri Lanka, a flamboyant technocrat called Sam Pitroda, alongwith his mentor Rajiv Gandhi, were simultaneously inaugurating a TV station a day and setting up a network of ubiquitous, yellow-signed Public Call Offices (PCOs). Unknowingly, they were paving way for a booming electronic media and a telecommunications revolution a decade later. Simultaneously, Dr Manmohan Singh began the process of liberalising the economy in 1991. It began to pay rich dividends by early years of the new millennium, changing Indian landscapes and priorities in an unprecedented manner. A booming economy created many and varied jobs, increasing disposable incomes and easier ways to climb the social ladder. The media played its part. It beamed the world with all its gloss to the Indian homes, raising expectations and aspirations. In the Indian movies, which are a reflection of changing times, the angry young man went out of fashion and was replaced by a swank hero, with either inherited or earned riches, who pursued his Indian love interests in Europe. Those unfortunate to be left behind, plotted their escape from sleepy towns of the interior to Bombay and beyond. As a Nation we created new heroes. These new heroes were middle class boys who played exciting cricket, Indian writers who wrote fabulous books in English, fetching millions, and humble engineers who went on to create trail-blazing Information Technology (IT) companies.

The society placed money as the dominant, if not the sole criteria of success in life. These socio-economic changes were profound and affected the men in uniform in ways more than one. Soldier was no longer the hero, with his stories of courage and untold risks, when he returned to his village during leave. The place was taken up by neighbour's son who had made a fast buck in the town. To add to his worries, the joint family system virtually broke down in practice. This traditional support system of extended family had degenerated into a source of family feuds and constant bickering. Therefore, the little piece of agricultural land he inherited required his frequent presence to make it economically viable. Concurrently, genuine demands of his nuclear family also required him to often visit home and resolve their problems. Being sole bread winner of his family, he was also burdened with responsibilities of securing good education and housing facilities for his children within his limited resources.

To compound these problems, he became increasingly insignificant for the police and the district administration – that now could only be influenced by money or political power. The soldier had none of these. To this picture, was added fatigue from unending insurgencies, in alternate tenures. He, alongwith his family, also discerned a visible contrast in values and priorities of a consumerist society. Stress was thus waiting to happen. The soldier felt truly cornered because his well being was of no concern to anybody, either in the Government or in the society.

LOOKING WITHIN

Symptoms and Causes

In Dec 2006 the BBC News highlighted that the Indian Army is losing more soldiers to suicide than to enemy action. The news was ominous, but not wrong. On an average, the Army is losing about 100 soldiers per year to suicides. There were 96 suicide cases in 2003, 100 in 2004, 77 in 2005, 120 in 2006 and over 100 in 2007. In addition, there are a significant number of fratricide cases, particularly in the last two years with 32 cases in 2006 and 23 cases in 2007 4. As of August this year, counting since 2001, there have been 70 incidences of fratricidal killings. Statistics covering the period from 2004 to mid last year reveal that while 282 soldiers have been killed in militant attacks, a greater number i.e. 408 soldiers have taken their own lives, killed colleagues or died after colleagues ran amok. Among them, 333 were suicides. Clearly we have an enemy within.

Most 'experts' attribute the growing stress to low morale, bad service conditions, lack of adequate home leave, unattractive pay and a communication gap with superiors. The media also acknowledges that though the Army has not fought a full-blown war for decades, the force is bogged down in fighting domestic insurgencies, guarding restive borders and sometimes quelling civilian rioting .

In 2006, an extensive medical research on psychological effects of low intensity conflict operations (LICO) was jointly carried out by many agencies 6. The study characterised LIC by limitations of armaments, tactics and levels of force and acknowledged that the troops trained in conventional warfare experience significant stress in LICO. In these operations, the security forces end up fighting an elusive enemy (in the absence of any reliable intelligence) and have to face active resentment of the local population. Ambiguity of aim, lack of visible success and high casualty rates tend to erode morale among security forces.

Several unpredictable factors such as battle fatigue, unseen threats, extended field tenures, absence of recreational avenues, domestic feuds, irregular mail, problems related to leave and railway travel increase the level of frustration, leading to stress. These prolonged spells of stress punctuated by quantitatively and qualitatively inadequate opportunities for rest and relaxation impose immense and often unbearable demands on

even otherwise robust human beings. This results in anxiety, psychological distress, combat stress disorder or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The overstaying of leave, desertion, abuse of alcohol or drugs, suicide, and cases of soldiers running 'amok', shooting at their superiors and colleagues are the symptoms of these stress related disorders.

Challenges and Changes

At a macro level, the challenge the country faces is that the society has changed very quickly for the military. The imprint that gave rise to the armies of the 20th Century, and the imprint around which they have become institutionalised, is no longer as connected as it once was to contemporary challenges. There is a need to have a good assessment of these new challenges and changes, and to ultimately align these internal structures with this environment; and at the same time overlay it with the notion that in this country, there is a pressing need for an effective military⁷. Our dreams of becoming a major global power can never be achieved without the corresponding development of a strong military muscle. Towards this aim, we as a Nation must overcome the existing hurdles which the Armed Forces are currently facing. On this very premise, we need to reiterate that the problems facing the Armed Forces are indeed the problems facing the country. Therefore, the Government machinery has to get involved to address them conscientiously.

Concurrently, it must be remembered that the changes in a society are a continuing phenomenon. The negative spin-offs of the recent socio-economic changes would have been quite manageable in the initial years, if corresponding changes were made within the organisation alongwith efforts to disengage the Armed Forces from less critical non-conventional operations. However, the gravity of the problem was not realised and incidences clearly attributable to stress were classified as minor deviations or isolated incidents.

The Armed Forces, with their time-tested man management mechanisms should have certainly checked this malaise themselves, but they did not. For once, there was similarity between the bureaucrats and the military leaders. Environs of Lutyens' Delhi were unaware that a top-down approach whose benefits scarcely reached the intended end-beneficiary was faltering. This yawning gap between the idea and the implementation must now be bridged by suitable requisite measures. Truly, the issue of mitigating stress fulcrums rests on one single factor - the realisation of the need to change the mindset of those at the helm and below.

MANAGING CHANGE

Institutional Reforms

It is well known that bottlenecks are always at the top. Thus, the process of change must be initiated by the Government and senior hierarchy of the Armed Forces. There is also a wide scope for changes at every level, and unless there is a common meeting ground between the perceptions of the top echelons of the Armed Forces and the lower levels of command, (actually engaged in operations), the efforts to reduce stress will remain academic and unresolved. A shared vision is the hallmark of reforms. For institutional reforms to be successful, the senior hierarchy must share the enthusiasm of the middle and junior leadership to affect changes. Once lower level leadership is convinced that senior leadership is aware of the ground realities, they will implement the changes in letter and spirit - as they have to directly bear the brunt of the stress related problems. The foremost among these realities is the realisation that there is a grave problem, which needs to be addressed at many levels simultaneously.

Once the problem is institutionally identified, there is a need to accept a few more ground realities. Unlike conventional operations, LICO involve planning and execution at a unit or sub-unit level. Therefore, a top-down conventional operations template must not be applied to these operations. It's a 'junior officers' and NCOs' war' and the junior leaders must be allowed to fight as per local conditions and requirements. There is a need for fewer HQs with less staff officers and reduced procedural work. This will correspondingly bring more officers on ground, who will take on the problems head-on rather than on paper only. Grant of leave should be decentralised and should not be an issue at all.

The role of higher HQs or senior officers should be to guide the fighting troops, particularly in relation to politically sensitive and human-rights related issues; and to look after their logistical requirements. They should engage themselves in improving communication and transit facilities for the troops, handling media and pressing the respective state governments to look into the problems of the soldiers from their areas. This relative freedom of action will give a sense of purpose and achievement to the fighting troops, who feel that they are fighting with one hand tied behind their back.

Creating Peace in Field Environment

It is an accepted fact that no soldier can be continuously kept engaged in battlefield environment. Even during World War II, the American GI's in Europe were sent to Paris to unwind. In this war, when the Allied Forces stormed their way up from Normandy, another 'army' followed the US Army Groups. This 'army' consisted of chaplains, bakers, cinema personnel, touring circuses, postal services and printing presses, wherein every combat unit was encouraged to take out their 'regimental Journal' even on the move. The contribution of this 'army' remained much understated in military history books but was very close to the hearts of millions of soldiers who were touched by their kind gestures and homely comfort. It can be said with certainty that it shall not be difficult to replicate some elements of this 'army' in our own difficult stations where the soldiers engaged in prolonged operations can take a well-deserved break.

Recently, the Army has come up with Rest and Recuperation Centres which have been set-up in J&K. Soldiers from different units undergo stress-busting therapies of one week. Some people sit back and watch films,

while others settle for meditation. We need not necessarily follow Western models of combating stress. Traditional Indian techniques like 'Yoga' and 'Meditation' are equally effective, if not more so. Here, the Armed Forces need to work on the pressure cooker concept – letting off steam through a valve, once it reaches a certain pressure. Another proved stress release is ensuring periodic and assured leave from difficult areas. We may also consider permitting families in certain operational areas, taking a cue from the Assam Rifles which has successfully managed this aspect without diluting operational efficiency.

Correcting Concept of Welfare

Welfare is a misunderstood term in the Armed Forces which needs clarification and enforcement at an institutional level. Welfare of troops and their families does not comprise organising barakhana for the troops and herding the families together for so-called family welfare meets. Welfare today means good medical, educational and housing facilities for the troops and ensuring that they get adequate time to spend with their families – either in the form of timely leave from field areas or by reducing commitments in peace stations.

Peace stations today are hard-won interludes between intense CT operations and border guarding tenures. They must not become 'battlefields' in other forms. The Armed Forces, particularly the Army, must pass strict instructions on 'activities' which may be permitted in peace stations to enable the troops to rejuvenate and not remain in a state of constant alert.

It is surprising that on one hand, the Army's doctrinal approach is shifting towards preparation for short, quick and decisive wars which will 'cold start' (on minimum notice); on the other hand, the units from defensive as well as strike formations spend many months every year in exercises, field firings, battle inoculations and similar activities. An equal time is spent in preparation and moving for these activities and other professional competitions, claiming the major part of the year. Training must not be allowed to become a 'holy cow', in garb of which the field-peace rotation of combat units itself becomes meaningless with dangerous long-term consequences. Training must be realistic, crisp and mission-oriented which will instil self-confidence in combatants. Once, this aspect is objectively monitored, non-training activities, must be drastically curtailed. The yardstick is to minimise the non core-competence activities of the Armed Forces. Stability of tenure, quality time with wife and children and resemblance of a regular family life are simple yet great healers which no mental health professionals or psychologists can substitute.

Enabling the Soldier

Similarly, the CT environment too needs some institutional introspection. It must be realised that in the light of overall politico-military developments at the international level and continued trouble in our neighbourhood, CT commitments for the Armed Forces are here to stay. Therefore, each engagement should not become a matter of life or death, as these are prolonged operations with psychological and political dimensions. Stephen R Covey, in his international bestseller 'The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People', underlines that effectiveness of people lies in maintaining balance – the P/PC balance, where P stands for 'production' of desired results and PC stands for 'production capability'⁸. Our quest for short-term returns or instant results should not ruin the PC which is much more important in the long-term. As an organisation, we must invest in PC. This involves due focus on the human resource development of a soldier with adequate promotional avenues and organisational support for his housing, health and educational needs.

It also includes equipping a soldier with the latest weapons and equipment, ensuring hardware superiority over an adversary. A good P/PC balance will also involve moderating the demands on the troops in CT operations. This in turn requires in-house curbs on the personal aspirations which fuel the pressures. The emphasis must shift from counting kills or surrenders to environment management and own man-management. In the long run, our 'persistence and resilience', with the Nation's proven multi-ethnicity and respect for human-rights will frustrate and wear out most of the insurgencies. The Nation must not degrade its conventional military capabilities for non-conventional tasks, particularly when it is the intended 'strategy' of our adversaries.

Reducing Military Bureaucracy

In recent years, we have created bureaucracy within (military), which has severely impeded the smooth and seamless functioning of the organisation. This military bureaucracy is fairly well entrenched and has bred its own set of mandarins. Some of them masquerade as soldiers and present glossy Microsoft power-point presentations of which not even 15 per cent translate into ground realities, not unlike the famous comment by Late Rajiv Gandhi who lamented that not even 15 paise out of a Rupee spent by the Government reaches the people. These mandarins also dispense entitlements like housing and leave as if it was a personal favour and ensure that all practical suggestions are bogged down by endless paperwork. All this seems very baffling to a simple soldier and often disheartens him. There is an urgent need to cut down all but very essential paperwork and simplify the regulations. The office procedures must be demystified and made-time bound. There must be transparency in our actions and quick response to all the suggestions.

We must consider evolving a single-window clearance for all the needs of soldiers viz; leave certificates, withdrawals from provident fund, loans, transfer applications and publication of part two orders. Other simplified procedures like quick admission of children in central schools and smart cards enabling travel, hospital and canteen facilities without any unnecessary formalities will also contribute in reducing stress, besides enabling a soldier to focus on his assigned duties. This will also enable the officers and the junior leaders to spend more time in interacting with the men, rather than devoting their energies in unproductive paperwork.

Lastly, we must create an in-house and impartial system of addressing grievances / complaints of the soldiers which cuts down delays, frustration and stress. Armed Forces have long ceased to be the military arm of a colonial power. Thus, old procedures of military justice must be replaced with contemporary laws and simplified procedures.

Role of Senior Leadership

Stress is better prevented than cured. While treatment of stress may be assisted by medical professionals, prevention is a leadership responsibility at all levels of command. Effective leadership is the key to the present disconnect between the challenge and the response. At the outset, military leaders should comprehend that stress induced reactions are a normal response to abnormal circumstances. These circumstances are multiplying today. Stress is not a sign of weakness or a cause for shame. The senior leadership must manage unit assignments in a way that there is no prolonged exposure to battle-like situations. They need to be frank about operational commitments and likely hardships, and keep the troops informed. Our troops do not mind facing hardships, as long as they are not the only ones bearing the brunt of constraints. The openness, accessibility and awareness of the ground realities by senior leaders are sufficient to inspire them. At the lower combat level, it is critical for officers to understand the behaviour of personnel and select the right person for the right job, while helping others to adjust in the group. They must also train junior leaders who can effectively lead and boost up the morale of their fellowmen, and help in handling the difficult anxiety and panic related situations.

At the recent Passing-Out-Parade of the Indian Military Academy (IMA), Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh urged that the soldiers and the officers must be able to relate to each other as trained professionals⁹. This professional equation should be complemented by personal involvement of officers. The concept of individual difference needs to be respected while understanding the needs as well as fears of the soldiers. Every soldier is a unique human-being, each with his individuality and perceptions. The younger leaders also need to stand up and project the realities to the senior hierarchy courageously. They also need to ensure that the law prevails rather than any personality-oriented directions. It has been proved that negative factors contributing towards stress can be counter-balanced by positive factors such as regimental spirit and group cohesiveness. The feeling of organisational support contributes to high morale, despite the dangers and hardships endured in LICO. An effective leader needs to focus his energies on building these strengths of the organisation.

Junior Leadership

The pivotal role of junior leadership in minimising stress, remains much understated. In recent wars such as in Afghanistan, the crucial and in a way 'strategic' role of corporals and sergeants has already been recognised in the Special Forces. The Indian Army is no different. Here too, the mantle of execution falls on the junior leadership.

We have recently celebrated 150 years of the First War of Independence. There were no Indian officers then, but only JCO equivalent ranks. The British Indian Army was led by Subedars and Jemedars at junior levels. The lesson is that our Junior Commissioned Offices (JCOs) and Non Commissioned Officers (NCOs) are capable of performing, if given a chance. We need to bring about institutional changes in delegation of combat and administrative tasks to JCOs/NCOs¹⁰. They are the first ones to know the 'pulse of the men'. These junior leaders, if encouraged, will point out the deficiencies in the system and will suggest practical ways to overcome shortcomings. They must be given responsibilities and the organisation must make a public display of its faith in junior leaders by allowing them to independently handle responsibilities.

Government Support

As enunciated earlier, the government or the 'sarkar' support to the 'sepoy' was the backbone of the British Indian Army. In the eyes of a soldier, the Government is still an omnipresent and ever-powerful entity. Measures for the welfare of the soldiers by the Government have a tremendous effect on the morale of the Armed Forces. Officially, the 'welfare and resettlement of ex-servicemen' is the joint responsibility of the Central government as well as the State governments. Similarly, grievances of serving soldiers need to be resolved by both the tiers of the government. Actually, they are being solved by none. Presently, there is an urgent need to make this a key result area of the Ministry of Defence as well of the newly created Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare. The government must implement a time-bound system of addressing the civil grievances of the serving soldiers. This system should have legal sanctity and should be enforceable in a court of law, something on the lines of the Right to Information Act (RTI). Simultaneously, the government must sensitise the key functionaries in the district administration, officials dealing with land-records and police to be more sympathetic to the problems of the soldiers. A twin approach comprising a legal framework and environmental awareness would prove to be a prudent strategy.

The government needs to go beyond mere redressal of grievances. It requires minimising the stress causing conditions, due to societal factors. This involves strengthening of land-records and land-revenue documentation and administration down to village level to ensure that a soldier's rural and urban land and property are not encroached upon, while they are far away from their hearth and home. The police must respond positively to the letters sent by the soldiers or their superior officers. The soldiers should get priority in official and legal procedures due to limited duration of their leave. The Government may also consider granting such priority in seats for their wards in educational institutions, including vocational training and professional institutions.

Their voting rights should also be secured by making suitable changes in the postal ballot system. Government help is also needed for infrastructural development to create adequate facilities for soldiers in military stations and cantonments. This includes increasing the authorisation of married accommodation and its construction,

creation of schools, colleges, hostels, hospitals and other basic infrastructure. An effective support service providing timely repairs, good rations and other entitlements should be created or outsourced. The Government also needs to arrange for administrative staff and teachers for schools, and scholarships for deserving students. Similarly, the Government should be approached for construction of good transit facilities and provision of additional trains, special aircraft and comfortable buses for the troops as movement is a regular feature of the life in uniform. Many of these facilities can be easily outsourced.

The Government should also implement lateral movement of defence personnel in the Para-Military Forces (PMF), Central Police Organisations (CPO) and the Public Sector Undertakings (PSU) to ensure smooth transition in a second career.

The last issue is of compensation. For many, it is the first issue. Either way, the soldiers must get what they deserve, or in any case a pay package which reasonably satisfies the aspirations as well the domestic commitments of the troops. A neglect of this issue will negate many other strengths of the organisation.

Conclusion

Not much is lost. Our organisational ethos and mid-course corrections have ensured that Kashmir has not become India's Vietnam. Statistics also show that the Indian Army has a suicide rate much lower than India's national average - 10.8 per lakh population compared to the national average of 14 per lakh 11. Compared to many Western armies, the Indian Army too fares well. In 2007, it was reported that 108 troops committed suicide in the US Army while the Russian Army lost more than 300 servicemen 12. But there is no room for complacency. Today, the younger generation of soldiers and officers of the Indian Armed Forces are not much different from their counterparts in other professions. One shared commonality is the intense desire to have some control of their immediate surroundings and to shape their destinies. They are willing to make positive contributions to improve the system, but in the absence of the organisational willingness to change, they are confronted with a status quo quagmire. Meanwhile, the world is moving on, resulting in societal pressures but there is no reduction in their operational commitments. The end product is stress.

To mitigate the resultant stress at this belated stage, we may have to resort to reverse-engineering of these circumstances. We need to change faster than the world, capitalise on our inherent strengths and reduce the operational commitments to a manageable level. It's a mental and attitudinal battle whose result is not hostage to Government largesse but hinges on our own ability to swiftly reform the organisation. The events have overtaken us, but the race has only started. When our resilience will marry reform, and ethos join hands with efficiency, circumstances shall cease to matter.

*This is an edited version of the essay which won First Prize in Group B.

****Major Shailender Singh Arya** is from the Regiment of Artillery and is presently serving as Staff Officer in United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS). He also won the First Prize in USI Gold Medal Essay Competition 2006-Group B and Second Prize in 2007-Group 'B'.

Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CXXXIX, No. 576, April-June 2009.

The Gathering Storm

Lieutenant General HC Dutta, PVSM (Retd)*

Introduction

The threats to Indian security have intensified with the rise of Taliban. We have faced attacks for decades from Jaish-e-Muhamad or Lashkar-e-Toiba and other Pak inspired jihadists. Now the new threat lends another dimension and urgency. The number of Jihadi groups has proliferated but when Kashmir and India are the target, all converge with alacrity. As early as February 1999 when Pakistan was planning the Kargil incursion, President Rabbani of Taliban-ruled Afghanistan (with Mullah Omar supporting), was asked to provide 20-30,000 volunteers for Kashmiri jihad. He startled the Pakistanis by offering 500,000. This may be classic Afghan hyperbole or Pakistani boastfulness but the anti-India bias and the magnitude of the threat are revealing.

The Taliban Phenomenon

The commando type raid at Mumbai on 26 Nov 2008 shook the entire Indian Nation. Then, ISI brought Guwahati to a halt in the North East and a handful of terrorists forced deployment of 1500 army personnel for an eight day gun battle in the dense forests in Poonch, Kashmir. This goes back a long time. The Pak army has used the Jihadists as an ingenious and cost-effective means of bogging down the Indian army in Kashmir since 1990. As Steve Coll put it in Ghost Wars, “Every Pakistani General, believed in the jihadists by 1999, not necessarily from Islamic conviction, but because the Jihadists had proved themselves over many years as the one force able to frighten, flummox, and bog down the Hindu-dominated Indian army. About a dozen Indian divisions had been tied up in Kashmir since the late 1990s to suppress a few thousand well-trained, paradise-seeking guerrillas”². Since then, the Jihadists and their present incarnation, Taliban have exhibited awesome capability against NATO forces in Afghanistan and attacks on American supply convoys, and in recent times, a daring assault on Pakistan police academy in Lahore. Recently, they established control over a large chunk of Pak territory in Swat which necessitated major operations by Pak army causing heavy civilian casualties and a flood of refugees.

What is this Taliban phenomenon and how have they become such a scourge? The answer lies in their battle-hardiness, well armed state and above all, religious fanaticism. They have also been nurtured by Pak ISI most of the time. Almost exclusively made up of Sunni Pashtuns, their leaders are the last word in bigotry and a convoluted world view. According to Lieutenant General Ziauddin of ISI, “They live in the Fourteenth Century”³. The rank and file is made up of orphans from madrassas who have no roots, families or memories. All they know is fighting for the cause of Islam and they have been fighting continuously for a decade. They are not afraid to die, indeed martyrdom is sought as a mark of merit. They are the latter day Christian crusading knights or the janissaries of the Ottoman Empire. They have perfected the tactics of raid and pillage, and fighting in small groups with little or no system of logistics or cumbersome supply lines and they have learnt to avoid pitched battles of the conventional type.

As a movement, the Taliban represent a new model for a purist Islamic revolution and extremism. As a fighting machine they are a refinement on guerrilla warfare. They are fired by Islamic zeal and are highly motivated to establish “True Muslim” rule over the entire Muslim world and to subjugate infidel states. Also, given the state of their weaponry, they must be about the best armed terrorists in history. And, they have tasted victory. Their earlier incarnation, Mujahideen, successfully ousted the mighty Soviet Union from Afghanistan. Later, as Taliban they ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001. In recent times, they forced a truce in Swat on Pak government in exchange for establishment of Islamic Sharia. Their ultimate aim is to Talibanise the whole of Pakistan and Afghanistan, possibly also India.

The Threats to India

If Taliban prevail over entire Pakistan, which cannot be entirely discounted, it would bring them practically at our door-step and breathing down the LOC in Kashmir. Alternately, reeling under their pressure in Pakistan, the ISI may well try to divert Taliban hordes to invade Kashmir like Pashtun Lashkars’ raiding Kashmir in 1947. Again, they will be a handy weapon for another and more serious Kargil or an upgraded “Gibraltar”. In the event of a major war, they will constitute formidable accretion to Pak military. During tensions post Mumbai attack on 26/11 (Nov 26, 2008), Baitullah Mehsud, of Pak Taliban, thundered “if Pakistan is attacked, we will send 1000 suicide bombers to India”. In any case, there is bound to be a surge in infiltrations and terrorist attacks in Kashmir and India.

In addition, ISI working with CIA, created, trained, and equipped thousands of radical Muslims from around the world to come to Pakistan and fight alongside Afghan Mujahideen. Further, ISI helped launch guerrilla attacks by CIA and Britain’s M16 into Soviet Socialist Republics of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to prey on Russian lines. Since then, between 1982 and 1992, some 35,000 radicals from 43 Islamic countries in the Middle East, North and East Africa, Central Asia and the Far East have been trained. Further, tens of thousands more foreign Muslim adventurers came to study in the hundreds of new madrassas that Zia established along the Afghan border. Eventually, more than 100,000 Muslim radicals have imbibed the Jihadist philosophy. This policy was continued by Director ISI, Lieutenant General Hamid Gul, the most fervent Islamic ideologue after the death of President Zia. A typical group of trainees would comprise Philipino Moros, Uzbeks from Soviet Central Asia, Arabs from Algeria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and Uighurs from Xinjiang in China.⁴ This is a vast army of Jihadists keen to do Pakistan’s bidding, which gives an idea of the far-flung tentacles of ISI and trouble-making potential of

Pakistan, and hence dimensions to the threats to India.

The threat of Jihadists apart, India also faces problems due to vast accretions to conventional armed forces of Pakistan, going on for decades. After 9/11, Pakistan received billions of dollars worth of armaments and financial aid from USA. Currently, Pakistan, is mounting a diplomatic push in USA through Ambassador Haqqani⁵, to emphasise Pak Army needs of advanced weapon systems like Reaper/ Predator drones, helicopter gun-ships and advanced radars to fight the Taliban. The reality is that Taliban alike most other Jihadist groups, until recently, have been under control of ISI.⁶ In any case, it is widely believed that “Pakistan Army, 620,000 strong and superbly armed, could easily crush the Taliban” if it decides to act. Indeed many pundits reckon that an Islamist take over in Pakistan would be possible only with the Army’s support⁷. This is borne out again by the recent successful operations in Swat by Pak army, though it is still doubtful, if it is finally the turning point in Army’s resolve to fight Taliban. It may be yet another temporary setback for the Islamists to be followed by new advances elsewhere.

Importantly, there are reports, confirmed by the US Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen in a senate hearing, that Pakistan is actively increasing its nuclear arsenal, also dubbed as “the fastest growing arsenal in the world” by Bruce Riedel who chaired Obama’s strategic Review for Af-Pak region.⁸

Counter Measures

India must take defensive and offensive measures on the highest priority. We must secure the integrity of our borders: restricting cross-border movement to the minimum; a continuous grid of physical or electronic fencing; heightened ground and cyber vigilance, effective radar coverage of land and maritime borders and a revamped intelligence structure as well as battle readiness of a high order. The state of vigilance and readiness on the LOC in Kashmir and to a lesser extent borders in Rajasthan and Punjab is adequate but the vigilance and defensibility of the extensive borders with Bangladesh and China needs to be strengthened. The open border with Nepal is likely to be exploited for infiltration.

When a bigger danger is looming “without”, current problems “within” should be solved on priority. So, the internal security threats such as the Maoists, Naxals, Ulfas, Bodos and the like must be neutralised with determined effort.

The Taliban way of fighting represents a new face of war. Hence, the armed forces must adapt and restructure in order to fight with small, integrated, army-air, “Hunter Teams”. There will be need to induct, on priority, advanced weaponry including precision guided missiles, pilotless drones, advanced radars and airborne early warning systems. Our hunter teams or commando squads should have cross-country mobility in addition to helicopter transportation and gun-ship support.

The Taliban danger is as much a war of weapons as of ideology. So, India must gear to fight a war of “bullet-for-bullet” and “ideology-for-ideology”. India must strengthen forces of national integration by creative campaigns of public relations and psychological initiatives, and all efforts must be made to engender unity, communal harmony and “Indianhood”.

For years, Pak media has been actively brain-washing its populace, glorifying Pakistan and stressing the righteousness of their cause regarding Kashmir. In comparison, large sections of Indians remain ignorant of our achievements and tend to be apologetic about our right to consider Kashmir as an integral part of India. In a vast country like India, an informed public is an asset, and timely information is the best antidote to disinformation and negative propaganda by the enemy.

The same holds good for projecting our image abroad. Pakistan has shown remarkable ability in playing the media to promote their point of view. On any day, the American news media is full of laudatory articles about Pakistan. Important events in Pakistan and visits by their dignitaries are highlighted, preparing the ground and creating favourable image. During President Zardari’s recent visit to USA, there was a half page advertisement in the prestigious Wall Street Journal under banner headlines - “America and Pakistan”, “Victims of Terror - Partners in Peace”. In comparison, there is scant mention of India in the US media except in a negative way. For example, the remarkable story of Indian elections with 718 million people exercising adult franchise got but a brief mention.

In order to ensure proper inter-face between India’s defence policy and foreign policy, two sides of the same coin, there should be larger representation of IFS officers in the Ministry of Defence and a system of cross-deputation between the Defence Services and the IFS. India should also pursue a more muscular and robust foreign policy. We are a nuclear nation of one billion innovative and enterprising people (including 150 million Muslims) with third largest military in the world, second fastest growing economy and one of the largest middle class in the world. Our defence and civil procurement from the USA and Western countries, including potential equipments for nuclear power generation, runs into billions of dollars. In short, India is a “giver” rather than a “seeker” country. So, our concerns and voice should carry weight and we have a right to demand our rightful share of influence in our region and the world.

Obama Strategy for “Af-Pak Region” and Implications for India

This area has been christened as “Af-Pak Region” possibly endorsing Pak quest for “strategic depth”. The Strategy is largely Pak centrist, with overarching preoccupation with security and survival of Pakistan, and emphasis on Pakistan’s vital role as an ally for operations in Afghanistan as also for promoting American interests with Iran and the Central Asian Republics. Admittedly, there is some logic to notions of Pak centrality in the region. Geographically, Pakistan is the key to operations in land-locked Afghanistan. It has contiguous borders

containing important land routes and port facility of Karachi. Pakistan is the birth place of Radical Islam and a country where hordes of Jihadists have been incubated, trained, equipped and exported worldwide. The process is still continuing – it being the epicentre of terrorism. Above all, it is a nuclear armed country. Thus, Pakistan is both the “problem” and the “solution”.

Pak aims and objectives for this region are not hard to discern. They would want a subservient or pliant regime in Afghanistan to ensure strategic depth for Pakistan, to achieve which their chosen weapon would in all probability still be the “good Taliban”. Reasons are not far to seek. Ethnically, Taliban are Pashtuns of FATA, and Pashtuns of Afghanistan, the latter constituting the majority in Afghanistan where they have ruled for 250 years. Besides, through its long standing links with Taliban, Pakistan can claim extensive experience of manipulating or controlling them. Pakistan will ensure total support to the US/NATO objectives of destruction of Al-Qaida and restoring normalcy in Afghanistan in exchange for continuing western arms and financial aid, of \$1.5 billion per year for five years or more, as proposed by the Kerry-Lugar aid bill, significantly titled, PEACE (Pakistan Enduring Assistance and Cooperation Enhancement Act 2009) but it must be without any conditionalities or “benchmarks”. As for India, they are totally opposed to its presence in Afghanistan and they do not want to be pressed about Jihadi incursions into Kashmir or India (though the USA/Europe may publically decry such acts).

In spite of its successes in Swat, Pakistani army is loath to carry out operations against the doughty Taliban for it is their own creation and would amount to waging war on its own people, besides there would be the fall-out of humanitarian problems and dangers of civil war. Recent flood of refugees (possibly exaggerated) after operations in Swat, as also the spate of suicide bombings in Lahore and NWFP may be cited by Pakistan and its friends in proof. Pressure by the USA may force Pakistan to act forcefully against Taliban. Even so, despite the recent contretemps with Baitullah Mehsud and Mullah Fazlullah, the ISI, owing to decades of its close links with Taliban, and out of past experience and genuine conviction may well still consider Taliban high command, Mullah Omar and Jalaluddin Haqqani as long-term ISI “strategic assets”. Hence, Pakistan may continue to persevere with the “Good Taliban” theory.

At the same time, the USA has been trying to promote Pakistan as the ideal ally for Afghanistan to its NATO allies. Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff told a Senate panel, “I see NATO going increasingly towards a broader and more in-depth relationship with Pakistan”. There was also mention of the possibility of Pakistan joining the OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe). Clearly Pakistan is aspiring for the big league and its old politics of cronyism and bonds with the CIA and Pentagon, is back on track.

A sole domination of Afghanistan by Pakistan to the exclusion of India, strengthening of Taliban and further augmentation of Pak military machine, would be unfavourable developments for India. However, the USA seems to have decided to largely go along with Pak views: not out of any ill will towards India but out of determination to resolve the Afghanistan imbroglio and more importantly, to ensure security of Pak nuclear arsenal.

India has historic interests in Afghanistan, Middle East and in Central Asia. We have executed a number of very good infra-structure projects in Afghanistan. We are intensely concerned with developments in trans-border regions of Af-Pak where the breeding grounds of Taliban lie. India is closest and in the front line of Taliban threat. Equally, India has legitimate interests in Central Asian republics. So, it should be natural for it to be a full member of the SCO9 (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) and have the freedom to build up on its (reported) nascent presence in Tajikistan.

Conclusion

India is heading towards troubled times and times of grave danger. Taliban hordes may well be upon us before long, with a substantially enhanced Pakistan military. In any case, Kashmir is likely to come under heightened threat of terrorism, along with a spike in infiltrations across Nepal and Bangladesh borders. China remains as unfriendly as ever, whereas the USA is pre-occupied with its own agenda for AF-Pak region with pronounced leanings towards Pakistan.

There is a shift of balance of power under way in the Indian Sub-continent and West Asia, a subtle yet perceptible tilt, marginalising India and enhancing the position of our adversaries. India will need to reach deep within itself to marshal all its energies to fight for its rightful place in the region and the world. It may well prove to be a defining moment in our history. Either we rise and meet the challenges with courage and wisdom or accept the beginning of a long slide down.

***Lieutenant General HC Dutta, PVSM (Retd)** was commissioned into 5/8 GR in December 1947 and commanded it during 1965 Indo-Pak War. He retired as GOC-in-C Central Command on 30 November 1983.

Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CXXXIX, No. 576, April-June 2009.