

Impact of INA on India's Struggle for Independence

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Introduction

The scene, a cramped, spartan room 60 feet by 25 feet on the third floor of the historical Red Fort in Delhi. A Court Martial is in progress. There is a low platform at one end, covered by coir matting. On this are placed a row of tables for members of the court, who sit solemnly. Prosecution and Defence face each other. There is a special enclosure for the Press and about 150 seats for relatives and others. The trial of the three brave Indian National Army (INA) officers had opened on 5 Nov 1945. They were Colonel Shah Nawaz, Colonel Prem Sahgal and Colonel Gurbaksh Dhillon. On 29 Dec 1945 the Judge Advocate summed up. On 31 Dec 1945, the court met briefly to record particulars of character and service; and on 3 Jan 1946, the three heroes were brought before an officer in the Red Fort for passing of the sentence. The whole country waited with bated breath. Would there be riots or rejoicing. The three INA officers held their breath. The sentence was pronounced. It was the same for all three. It was:-

- (a) Cashiering (dismissal from service with disgrace)
- (b) Forfeiture of pay and allowances
- (c) Transportation for life

The last of the above punishments having been remitted by the Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C), the three officers were free to go.¹ It took a few seconds for the words to sink in. The three of them filed out and went to Asaf Ali's house. The correspondent of The Hindu had already reached there. The news spread like wildfire in Delhi and thence to the rest of the country. There was widespread jubilation. Netaji's dream had been realised. The INA had taken Delhi and the country by storm, though not quite in the way he had visualised. The next day a rally was organized, which was presided over by Asaf Ali. More than a hundred thousand people came. They shouted Azad Hind Fauj (Netaji's name for the INA) *zindabad*.

The story of the INA began some four years earlier. It is a matter of shame that the post-Independence generation knows so little about the INA. Lieutenant General Sinha has made a timely statement about the need for research into the impact of the Indian Army on India's Freedom Struggle.² And no account of the Indian Army's role would be complete without the story of the INA's role. Due to censorship, very few people knew about the INA and its stirring deeds. The Red Fort trials changed all that. Because of this, these trials will be dealt with in some detail later on. This was indeed an epoch making event, which marked a turning point.

Birth of INA

The Indian Army found itself in a peculiar situation at the outbreak of World War II. The composition of the rank and file was fully Indian, but that of the officers was totally different. There were some Indian officers at the junior level, a few at the middle level and none at the senior level, all of whom were British. Yet the Indian Army acquitted itself gloriously. So what were they fighting for with such valour? Not to uphold the interests of the British Empire or India. The soldiers fought and died for the honour and glory of their regiments. Upholding the proud regimental tradition, of bravery and courage in battle, became the paramount issue. When the same army became India's army after Independence, its earlier oath of allegiance to the King was not held against it and rightly so.

The INA, on the other hand, was different from its very inception. Its composition, both rank and file and officers, was totally Indian and its purpose was to make India independent. Yet the Indian Army prisoners of war, who renounced their allegiance to the King upon joining the INA, were declared renegades even by the Indian Prime Minister after Independence. We shall come to that issue later. First things first. By the end of 1941, India had started featuring prominently in the Japanese policies. An organisation was set up by the Japanese Government, headed by Major Fujiwara Iwaichi. His initial contact was with Giani Pritam Singh, and after the Malayan invasion, with Captain Mohan Singh. Between the three of them, they started recruiting from amongst those captured by the Japanese in Malaya prior to the fall of Singapore. Thus was born the nucleus of what later came to be known as the INA.

Mohan Singh reasoned that, if the Japanese could be persuaded to make the INA a part of their invading force, the INA would overcome the British and topple the Raj. To accomplish this, men were needed desperately. They had to be induced to join and fast. Mohan Singh was not particular about how this was done. Consequently many events took place, which would threaten the INA's good name. The British exaggerated instances of ill treatment into gross atrocities, but could not substantiate them at the Red Fort trials. The INA under Mohan Singh never really got going. He had neither the stature nor the qualities of leadership necessary. By late 1942 disillusionment set in and Indian volunteers felt like pawns in the hands of the Japanese. In December 1942 Captain Mohan Singh ordered the INA to disband. He was arrested and exiled to Pulan Ubin. Rash Behari Bose tried to keep the India Independence League (IIL) and the INA going but with little success. Netaji's appearance changed all that. He took everyone by storm. No cases of ill treatment were reported thereafter. Even at the Red Fort trials none was even alleged. In fact there was no lack of volunteers.³

Netaji's stirring speech on 5 July 1943 at Singapore on assuming charge of IIL from Rash Behari Bose, reignited the flame of liberation of the motherland from the British. Netaji told the INA men that Gandhiji had paved the way by making Indians conscious of their bondage. Armed struggle was the next necessary stage and it was upto them to take it.⁴

His impact was significant and immediate. A new life had been infused in the INA. Besides the prisoners of war, local civilians with no military experience, from barristers to plantation workers, joined the INA and doubled its troop

strength. An Officers Training School for INA officers and the Azad School for civilian volunteers was set up. A group of 45 young Indians, personally chosen by Netaji (known as Tokyo Boys) was sent to Japan's Imperial Military Academy to train as fighter pilots and army officers. For the first time, outside the USSR, a women's regiment, the Rani of Jhansi Regiment under Captain Lakshmi Swaminathan was raised as a combat force. Dr Lakshmi Swaminathan (as she was then) gave up a prosperous practice as a gynaecologist in Singapore, to join the INA. The clarion call of INA was '*Jai Hind*' and '*Chalo Delhi*'.

What sort of a man was this, who could overnight transform a listless band of soldiers into a feared fighting force?

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose as a Man

If one looks at the history of the Indian Freedom Movement, after Mahatma Gandhi, the name that stands out is of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. His contribution is no less than that of Mahatma Gandhi and much more than Jawaharlal Nehru, who have been given much of the credit for the successful culmination of India's freedom struggle.

The British rulers acknowledged, with serious concern, Netaji as the most dynamic and influential political leader in all sections and religious groups of the country. They saw how Netaji's ideas always inspired young idealists to fight more strongly for freedom and saw in this firebrand charismatic leader a fearsome adversary. Netaji's popularity cut across religious lines. Muslims acknowledged and appreciated the leading role played by Netaji. Even Mohamed Ali Jinnah, who is acknowledged by all as the Father of Pakistan, had so much trust and regard for Netaji that he was willing to give up his idea of a religiously divided India, if Netaji led the nation. Muslim leaders of India's eastern states echoed the same sentiment during the thirties.⁵

Subhas Chandra Bose was born on 23 January 1897 to Srimati Prabhavati Devi and Janakinath Bose, a prominent advocate of Cuttack, who later became a member of the Bengal Legislative Council. He was later awarded the title of Rai Bahadur by the British. but on account of the anti-Indian policies of the British rulers, Janakinath returned the title and also resigned from the post of Public Prosecutor.

Subhas was the ninth among fourteen siblings and was a brilliant scholar. In 1920 he passed the Indian Civil Service (ICS) examination and joined the Cambridge University, obtaining his Tripos in 1921. He joined the ICS but resigned and returned to India, being deeply disturbed by Jallianwala Bagh massacre. He met Mahatma Gandhi and on his advice, met Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, who remained his political Guru till he passed away in 1925.⁶ When CR Das was Mayor of Calcutta, Netaji was his CEO. His nationalist fervour drew the wrath of the British and he was arrested and deported to Mandalay, Burma. He was released in 1927 and in 1929 he was elected as President of All India Trade Union Congress. In 1930 he was elected Mayor of Calcutta. He greatly admired Gandhiji and took part in Salt Satyagraha and was arrested. After his release, he publicly denounced the Gandhi-Irwin pact and was arrested again. He was released on health grounds and went to Europe for treatment. He established contacts with various European nations to elicit their sympathy and support for India's freedom struggle. He met Mussolini in Italy, Felder in Germany, De Valera in Ireland and Romain Rolland in France. Netaji returned to India defying Government orders prohibiting his entry and was arrested. He was released on account of the overwhelming victory of the Congress in the 1937 elections. In 1938, at Haripura Congress Session, he was elected as President of the Indian National Congress and re-elected in 1939. He brought a resolution to give six months time to the British to hand over India to the Indians, or face a revolt. This was strongly opposed by Gandhiji.⁷

The result was that Netaji resigned within a few months and formed a progressive group known as the Forward Bloc within Congress. The peaceful passive non-cooperation movement of Gandhiji and of Congress was not for him. At this point of time the British perceived Netaji as a bigger threat than Gandhiji.

The Initial Years

In September 1939 World War II broke out and, as apprehended by Netaji, India was declared as a warring state by the Viceroy, without consulting the Indian leaders. Congress government in seven major states resigned in protest. Netaji now started a mass movement against using India's resources and men. To him it made no sense to make Indians shed their blood for the sake of colonial nations. There was a tremendous response to his call and the British promptly imprisoned him. He went on hunger strike and on the 11th day, after his health deteriorated, he was released from prison and put under house arrest. The British were afraid that there would be violent reactions all over the country should something happen to Netaji in prison. Because of his outspoken anti-British stance, he was jailed 11 times between 1920 and 1941 for periods varying between six months and three years. By this time it had become increasingly clear to him that he could not achieve anything worthwhile by remaining in India. That would bring him in direct confrontation with Gandhiji whom he loved and greatly admired. It would suit the British and harm India's cause for freedom. On 17 Jan 1941, he disappeared from house arrest. His nephew, Sisir Bose, drove him out of Calcutta in great secrecy. His last message from the soil of India said, "To my countrymen, I say. Forget not, the greatest curse for a man is to remain a slave. Forget not that the grossest crime is to compromise with injustice and wrong. Remember that the highest tribute is to battle against inequity, no matter what the cost may be."⁸

Thus began a hazardous and arduous journey by foot, train and car to Kabul, with the support of Kirti Party affiliated to the Communist Party of India. His plan was to travel to Russia and enlist Stalin's help to drive out the British from India, but unknown to Netaji, the British had secretly entered into a strategic non-aggression pact with Russia. As a result the Russian Embassy at Kabul gave a cold shoulder to Netaji but he still decided to try to enlist Russian help. Netaji's journey from Peshawar to Kabul was an epic in itself. Only his iron will and the burning desire to free India from foreign rule, enabled him to endure the rugged mountainous route, great risks of capture and freezing weather. Disappointed with lack of response from Stalin, Netaji decided to leave for Berlin. Although, he despised Nazism, he was prepared to make friends with the devil if that would help his cause. In the end Netaji obtained the release of all Indian prisoners from prisoners of war camps and started the Free India Centre, Azad Hind Radio Centre in Oct 1941 and finally the Indian Legion (Azad Hind Fauj), comprising enthusiastic Indian students, political activists and Indian prisoners captured by Rommel from various battles in Africa.⁹

Netaji met Hitler on 26 May 1942 to plead the urgency of his case. The latter, preoccupied by the German offensive towards Leningrad, was a little hesitant. In the meanwhile, Japanese forces had gained control over the entire area from the Sea of Japan to Bay of Bengal. By May 1942, Hongkong, Singapore, Manila, Penang and Rangoon had fallen to the Japanese. Another Indian revolutionary, Rash Behari Bose persuaded and obtained from the Japanese government, wholehearted support for the fight against the British Raj. Netaji, who was still trying to persuade Hitler to support an Indian government in exile, was greatly encouraged by the latest development in Japan. German motives and intentions with relation to India were complex. While the German foreign office wanted to support the Indian revolutionary, Hitler's personal belief was that the Aryan British had the right to rule over the unfit Indian masses.

Contacts with the Japanese

The developments in Japan convinced Netaji that he could play a much more active role from the soil of Asia rather than spending agonizingly prolonged periods staying in Berlin. Time was running out. He had to be where the action was. He was able to convince Germany and Italy to help him reach Japan. After long and complicated discussions with Italian and the Japanese Embassies in Berlin and Rome, and German authorities on the night of

7 February 1943, Netaji, accompanied by Abid Hassan, was taken by a German submarine by way of the English Channel, Bay of Biscay, West Africa, around South Africa to the South of Madagascar, where he was transferred to a Japanese submarine on 28 April 43, which took him to Saban after another epic journey. On 6 May 1943 they landed at Saban, and were welcomed by Yamamoto, the Japanese Military Attache at Berlin Embassy, who had reached earlier. Finally on 16 May 1943 Netaji reached Tokyo. Thus the stage was set for Netaji to emerge as the leader of the Independence movement in East Asia. He met Prime Minister Tojo on 10 June 1943. In *The Springing Tiger* (p177-178), Hugh Toye observed "For most the personality of the man was overwhelming, there was great genius of enthusiasm, of inspiration. Men found that when they were with him only the cause mattered, they saw only through his eyes, through the thoughts he gave them, could deny him nothing". Tojo was no exception. He was charmed as Netaji stood before him and spoke of his iron will and determination to secure India's Independence from the British. He saw fire in the man's belly, hunger for freedom in his eye and nothing in his words but great devotion to his Motherland.¹⁰

Domestic Scene of 1942

Meanwhile in India, following the failure of the Cripps mission, Congress became increasingly impatient and was not prepared to wait till the end of the war for Independence. Jayprakash Narain openly supported Netaji's armed revolution. Gandhiji's views were unconsciously affected by the resourcefulness displayed by Netaji. Netaji's cry, "Quit India" became his slogan. On 7 August 1942, AICC met in Bombay (now Mumbai). Most uncharacteristically, Gandhiji told the members, "We shall get our freedom by fighting. It cannot fall from the skies". On 8 August 1942, the resolution was passed by an overwhelming majority. The next day, the British government struck. The Congress High Command was arrested and sent off to jails in different parts of India. There were mass arrests all over the country. Gandhiji declared that Indians must do what they must do. He would not stand in their way. With the leaders behind bars, the Freedom Movement passed into the hands of ordinary people all over India. Gandhiji's non-violent tactics lasted barely two months before being swept away by the tide of violence of individuals and mobs. This was the last show of Gandhiji's non-violent mass *satyagraha* movement. Government had expected a non-violent response but scale and intensity of the violent response took it by surprise.¹¹ Whole lengths of railway lines were torn up. Telegraph wires were cut and poles pulled up and the Government stores and post offices were damaged. The Government used all its might, including the Armed Forces and strafing from the air to put down the rebellion of 1942. Stray cases continued right through 1943. Daily night broadcasts by Netaji helped to stoke the fire. He asked people to listen to the BBC broadcasts about Colonel Britton, beamed to occupied Europe, and use the same tactics for sabotage. Two organisations did not take part in the uprising. They were the Communist Party of India (out of sympathy for the Soviet Union who had joined the Allies) and the Muslim League.

Netaji Assumes Command of INA

To come back to Netaji. In Tokyo Netaji met Prime Minister General Tojo again on 14 June 1943, who agreed to extend every possible support for the cause of Indian Independence. He then left for Singapore. When he arrived on 2 July, he received a tumultuous welcome there from soldiers and civilians alike. On 4 July 1943, a reception was held in his honour, during which Rash Behari Bose transferred the mantle of the Indian Independence League to Netaji. On 25 August 1943, he was formally appointed the Commander-in- Chief of the INA. On 23 October 1943, Japan announced its official recognition of the Provisional Government of India under Subhas Chandra Bose. Recognition from Germany followed on 29 October 1943 and from Italy on 9 November 1943.

INA in Operations

The preparation for assault moved at a fast pace and the INA HQ was moved from Singapore to Rangoon on 7 January 1944. It was decided *inter alia* that the only flag to fly over the Indian soil would be the National Tricolour. The first success of INA came in Arakan's Maya Valley by Major LS Misra's unit against the 7 Indian Division. Success stories continued and caused Mountbatten grave concern. Under his directions the 3rd Indian Division facing the INA at Imphal remained Indian in name only. Twenty four of its battalions had English, Nigerian and Burmese soldiers, because he feared that Indian soldiers would join the INA. I do not intend to go into the details of the military operations of the INA, only some salient points are mentioned to analyse its impact.

The combat achievements of the INA were less than anticipated, dependent as they were on Japanese support of arms, ammunition, equipment and logistics and the failure of the Japanese Army to take Imphal. But, what they had achieved within these limitations, in Arakan and Manipur Basin, fired the imagination of Indians. More importantly, the INA shook the faith of the British Raj in the Indian Army's loyalty to the British Crown.

The INA had been raised and trained as a guerrilla force. The whole point was to travel light, avoid positional warfare and frontal assaults, go deep behind the British lines and persuade men in the British Army to come over. INA's strategy was to start a revolution in India. Then the INA and revolutionaries would eject the British from India. Thus,

even if the Japanese lost and the British won the war, they would not be able to come back. Shorn of their sword arm – the Indian Army, the British would be incapable of reconquering India.

The plan was that the Japanese, possessing heavier weapons, should break the outer defences of India at the Imphal Basin and then allow the INA 1st Division to pass through and spread out for guerilla operations. It was up to the Japanese to take Imphal. INA was not meant to be used as a fighting force prior to the capture of Imphal. Sustained fighting even on the battlefield's margin, was not what they had been trained for and they hadn't the necessary means. As the British Intelligence observed "It is the Japanese Army, which failed the INA". By failing to reach its objectives, the Japanese prevented the INA from being used in the role for which it was designed. Whenever combat opportunities presented themselves, the INA acquitted itself creditably. In the battle for Imphal, Colonel Shaukat Malik's force captured Moiriang in the Manipur Basin and for some time a few square miles of Indian territory came under the provisional Azad Hind Government. They certainly did not deserve derogatory comments one reads in popular accounts of the Burma Campaign and in the memoirs of senior serving British officers like Field Marshall Sir William Slim and Lieutenant General Sir Francis Tuker, the latter's account is not even firsthand (he was then serving in North Africa).

The spirit of the INA is typified by the following account. When Colonel Sahgal and his men were captured, the then Major General Douglas Gracey, GOC 20 Division, asked him, "What did you people mean, by going on fighting? We had artillery, armour. You chaps had nothing. But instead of surrendering, you fought on. It was madness. Why did you do it? Why didn't you come over?" Colonel Sahgal replied that of course it was madness. A revolutionary army lives on the spirit of madness. How else could they have carried on against the numbers and weapons of the British Indian Army. (After Independence General Douglas Gracey became the Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Army).¹²

The Closing Stages

The siege of Imphal was to be the turning point in the saga of the INA. It was not the British army, but monsoon, which became the biggest adversary. Logistics became the major problem as American B 29 bombers disrupted the lines of supply. Outbreak of malaria and dysentery in the face of lack of medical facilities and supplies took a heavy toll. Netaji was forced by circumstances to issue instructions to INA to withdraw. The losses during the long withdrawal were significant and had a serious impact on the INA. Netaji did not give up and the task of rebuilding the INA continued in Burma. They continued to provide stiff resistance to the Allied advance, but the tide turned inexorably. On the Western front on 6 June 1944, Allied forces landed on the beaches of Normandy and the thrust towards Berlin began, just as the thrust towards Rangoon had already started on the Eastern front. On 7 May 1945, Germany formally surrendered following the death of Hitler. Japan continued, but it was a losing battle. On 7 August 1945, the first atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima followed by the second bomb on 9 August 1945 on Nagasaki. Inevitably Japan surrendered. Netaji announced in his calm voice, "Japan's surrender is not India's surrender..... The INA would not admit defeat". Netaji wanted to stay on in Singapore but under extreme pressure from his cabinet colleagues, decided to leave. He travelled to Saigon and from there to Taiwan and then he disappeared. Nobody believed the story that he died in an air crash. The remnants of the INA were to surrender when the Allied forces captured Burma. A battle had been fought and lost in the jungles of Burma. But the campaign was not over. It went on in the hearts and minds of the people.

Netaji as a Military Leader

Netaji had no military training but could grasp the essentials of strategy and man management with ease. Wisely, he left operational matters to his senior officers. He wore military uniform, but never did he give himself any military rank. The amity between Hindus and Muslims in the INA was exemplary. He believed in action and not in speeches, as most other leaders.¹³ He was endowed with great physical, mental and spiritual powers. But he never revealed his spiritual powers to anyone.

INA Trials Begin

As the veil of censorship lifted because of the dispatches by war correspondents accompanying the 14th Army during re-conquest of Burma in 1943, INA's deeds became known to more and more people. Since the existence of the INA and its exploits could no longer be hidden, British Intelligence set out to blacken the image of the INA. Viceroy Wavell always referred to the INA as a bunch of cowards and weaklings, and brutality was the stock in the trade of the committed INA man or JIFF (Japanese-Indian Fifth Column) as they were named by the British. Both Wavell and Field Marshall Auchinleck, now C-in-C of the Army in India, were disappointed men: professional soldiers, who had been removed from command due to whims and fancies of Churchill. It was worse for Wavell, for he had been kicked upstairs and made Viceroy, a post so far held by civilians. Auchinleck firmly believed that a soldier must remain true to his oath, even if the oath of allegiance was to the King of another country and there had been no choice, in any case. Therefore, there had to be trials. This was notified by a press communiqué on 27 August 1945. The leading figures in the INA would be brought before Court Martial for all Indians to see that they were "Part traitor, part coward, part bully and a lackey in the service of Nippon." This was a grave miscalculation, which had far-reaching ramifications. Auchinleck kept assuring Wavell that there were some very ugly cases of torture of loyal soldiers by the "renegades" as he termed the INA. Wavell also felt that the Court Martials of the INA officers would shock the people. Even more than Wavell, Auchinleck was confident that when the evidence of brutality was made public, the sympathy for the INA would evaporate. The trials were going to be open to public for this reason. People would find it difficult to support murderers and torturers of their own race simply because they remained loyal to their country. Grim and lurid stories of injury and death were constructed from interrogation of defectors and escapees to the Indian Headquarters and broadcast over All India Radio.

When the Congress leaders were released on 15 June 1945, the political scenario had undergone a sea change. They knew nothing about the INA and its daring deeds under the dynamic leadership of Netaji. In reply to a question after his release, Nehru said that he would fight Netaji if he tried leading Indians against India, side by side with the Japanese. On 26 July 1945, Churchill lost the general elections and Clement Attlee became the prime minister. By this time the Congress leaders had come to know about Netaji and his INA. Both Congress leadership and the British were faced with a dilemma. What should be done with Netaji, should he be captured and brought to India? He had organised

India's first National Army and so conducted himself that the Japanese had been forced to treat Indians as allies. In the eyes of the masses he stood at par with Gandhiji. If he came back, the Netaji wave would sweep away the Congress leadership. Then came the sudden end to World War II. Japan capitulated on 15 August 1946 after two atom bombs had been dropped and on 23 August 1945 came the announcement that Netaji had died in an air crash. Netaji's "death" solved the dilemma for both the British and the Congress leadership. He was no longer a "loose cannon". He was a martyr, who had led an army of freedom fighters. The Congress leadership were quick to realise the political mileage they would achieve by lionising the INA, at least for the time being.

British Dilemma for Trials

The British were faced with another kind of problem. They realised the influence of the returning INA men from PW camps. In taking the decision to hold courts martials, they forgot that there was a wide gulf in the perceptions between the British and the Indian public. In addition to the INA men, known officially as '*Jiffs*', there were also the '*Hifs*', the Indian prisoners of war, who had fought alongside the Germans and Italians. They would be collectively classified as White, Grey and Black. Those considered "untainted" were classified as White and were to be treated as ordinary PWs. Those, against whom there were doubts regarding their loyalty and morale, were classified as Grey. They were to be watched. If upgraded to White, they would be retained in Service. Dark Greys would be put under surveillance. Those not upgraded would be discharged. Those who were to be tried were classified as Blacks. They were those who were supposed to have committed military offences. Although Auchinleck was firm on proceeding against the Blacks, the growing public opinion forced him to make a number of mid-course corrections. On 22 June 1945, C-in-C decided to proceed against triable Blacks. The number was estimated to be 350. Besides these, there were 2200 Blacks and 4800 Dark Greys to be held in detention. A fortnight later the number of triable Blacks was raised to 1000 and further raised to 2000 when the whole INA surrendered. On 11 August 1945, the Secretary of State was informed that approximately 600 would face trials and the rest of the Blacks and Dark Greys would be dismissed. The estimate of probable death sentences was 50. By this time the INA had caught the imagination of the Indian public and the immense publicity was having repercussions on the political climate in India. Keeping this situation in mind the C-in-C decided on 20 September 1945 that death penalty would be imposed only on those Blacks, who were proved guilty of putting countrymen to death or torturing them. On 20 October 1945, he further reduced the trial categories. The trials would not be on the basis of waging war against the King, but on charges of brutalities.¹⁴

The Trials

The first to be tried were Colonel (Captain) Shah Nawaz, Colonel (Captain) PK Sahgal and Colonel (Lieutenant) GS Dhillon. The ranks within brackets are their ranks at the time of capture by the Japanese. This trial was indeed the turning point. The single most important event, which would prove to be a triumph for the INA and disaster for the British. It is from here that the tide turned inexorably against the latter.

The Congress took upon themselves the entire responsibility of arranging the defence of the accused persons. To do this they assembled the greatest ever galaxy of legal luminaries. The INA Defence Committee comprised of Kailash Nath Katju, Asaf Ali, Rai Bahadur Badri Das, Raghunandan Saran, Tej Bhadur Sapru, Jawaharlal Nehru and Bhulabhai Desai.¹⁵ The actual task of assembling them and assigning duties was done quietly, behind the scene, by Justice Achhru Ram, the father of Colonel PK Sahgal. It is he who decided that Bhulabhai Desai would defend the three officers in the Court. Tej Bahadur Sapru, the senior defence counsel would make a token appearance and withdraw. Bhulabhai would then take over for no one could match him in court room advocacy.

The first trial opened on 5 November 1945. After a few adjournments the trial resumed on 7 December 1945. Meanwhile on 30 November 1945 the Governor General decided to release as quickly as possible the Blacks, who were not to be brought to trial, sensing the growing popular excitement and tumult. When the trial reopened on 7 December 1945, things went wrong for the Prosecution from the start. What defeated the Government of India's attempt to disparage the reputation of the INA, was the direction the proceedings actually took. Nowhere in the opening address of Sir Naushirwan P Engineer, Advocate General of India and chief counsel for the prosecution or throughout his closing address, was there any convincing substantiation of the charge of torture forthcoming. Bhulabhai Desai asked for evidence. When two officers, Dhargalkar and Badhwar, both of 3 Cavalry were produced as witnesses, it came out that the mistreatment was at the hands of the Japanese and not fellow Indians. Similarly, much was made of the mistreatment of Durrani of the Bahawalpur Infantry, but it turned out that his case had nothing to do with how men entered the INA, but for suborning the men who had.

The tone was set by the first prosecution witness, who did the maximum damage. He was a certain DC Nag, an ex-magistrate, who had joined the Adjutant General's Branch of the Indian Army and had been taken a prisoner at Singapore. He was well conversant with all parts of Netaji's enterprise. Under cross examination, he identified some 70 documents and suddenly the INA began to be credible. It came out as a well-organised, efficiently administered and ably led Army. Now for the first time the INA's performance in field became known. All this was lapped up by the National Dailies. The stories of the deeds of the INA that came out during the trial were perceived as so inflammatory that the British Government forbade the BBC from broadcasting their story. For the first time light was shed on the reality of the INA. They were not dupes, weaklings, cowards and bullies that the Government had portrayed them to be. They were just plain fighting soldiers. A string of witnesses narrated their tales of ill treatment, but the curious thing was that they had nothing to do with the three accused officers on trial. Bhulabhai Desai charged that this was done to create a prejudice against honourable men. He decided against calling more than 11 witnesses, because the 28 prosecution witnesses had made statements, which supported his case equally well. Again and again, the court and the audience heard them say things that helped rather than damage the defendant's case, like Dilasa Khan. He remembered Shah Nawaz telling his men that if they saw a Japanese soldier mistreating Indian women, he would be told to stop. If he did not, they were at liberty to use force to stop him and even shoot him, if necessary. This is not what prosecution wanted him to say, but once on the stand, he could not be silenced. And the public grew more and more excited. India was aflame. Never had a matter so stirred the public. This is not what Auchinleck had bargained for. It was indeed a triumph for the INA. We have already seen what the verdict was.

Two more trials had opened, but these were shifted to Delhi cantonment. All subsequent trials opened there. Seeing that the charge of treason was inflaming public opinion, Auchinleck had already instructed the Adjutant General to bring in charges of brutalities only.

The Aftermath of Trials

Early in May 1946 a terse press communiqué announced that there would be no more trials. At about the same time the last of the detained INA men were released. One thing that stands out, from the point of view of the then Government of India, is that the trial was a first class blunder. Nobody is quite sure as to how many trials actually took place. "History of the INA" states that by the end of March 1946, only 27 trials had been instituted or were under consideration. Fay says his private count is only ten actual trials held.

The INA and the trials gave a powerful and decisive message to the British that it was time for them to leave. The Viceroy warned the British Government that for the first time there were signs of a demoralising effect not only among the civil services, but also in the Indian Army. On 4 December 1946, a delegation of British MPs was dispatched to India to tell the people that India would be given Independence "speedily". Signs of unrest were there for all to see. Before the Red Fort trials began, Auchinleck had informed the Government that his Indian Battalions would be able to contain the uprising. By the end of the trials, his confidence was seriously shaken. Shah Nawaz, Prem Sahgal and Gurbaksh Dhillon were heroes in the eyes of the masses. Calling them traitors simply increased their popularity. Another miscalculation was the feeling that one million Indian Army jawans, scheduled for demobilisation, would drown the twenty thousand INA men, who were to be released, so there was nothing for British to worry about. The opposite happened. The growth of nationalist feeling generated by the trials affected the Armed Forces as well.¹⁶ Auchinleck now set-up a special team in the Army HQ with the sole purpose of finding out the real feelings of the Indian soldier. There was a grave doubt whether the Indian Army could be used to suppress a rebellion. Auchinleck noted for the first time that the use of Indian divisions to help the Dutch to recover Java was widely unpopular.

Regarding the remission of sentence of Shah Nawaz, Sahgal and Dhillon, Auchinleck explained in a letter to all senior British officers that any attempt to enforce the sentence would have led to chaos in the country at large and probably to mutiny and dissension in the Army, culminating in its dissolution. The Indian Army, for long the sword arm of the Raj, had now become a double edged weapon ready to decimate the wielder. The study that Auchinleck had ordered made it clear that the Indian Army could not be used against Indians. This was perhaps the report that Lieutenant General Sinha mentions in his article. In the autumn and winter of 1945-46, a conflagration of excitement and indignation, lit by Netaji and his INA swept through the Country. The Indian officers and the Jawan were also equally affected. It was the INA that forced Britain's hand. Sufficient number of British battalions were not available and the battle-weary British troops wanted to go home. And as Colonel Sahgal said, without Netaji INA would have been nothing. Bereft of its main weapon, Britain realised that its position in India had become untenable, that it would be better to withdraw or it would be run over. The shift of allegiance of the Indian Army was bound to happen. All it needed was a shot in the arm and that came in the form of the INA.

Concluding Remarks

There are two misconceptions still prevalent: one that Gandhiji was solely responsible for India achieving Independence and the other that it was achieved by peaceful means. Gandhiji's peaceful means in its effective form, lasted barely two months and we had to wait for another five years to attain freedom.¹⁷ The stirring deeds of the INA caught the imagination of all Indians and the fire of patriotism burned brighter than ever before and found expression in the mutiny in the Indian Navy in Bombay in 1946. Professor Hazara Singh has stated, "Even in its defeat, the INA had been successful in ringing the death knell of Colonialism".¹⁸

The Naval mutiny in Bombay in 1946 was followed by another among the ground crew in the Royal Indian Air Force. An Army mutiny broke out at Jabalpur during the last week of February 1946, which had to be put down with difficulty. The weekly intelligence summary of 25 March 1946 admitted that the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force units could not be relied upon to put down mass revolt. Thus, what Netaji and the INA failed to achieve directly, they succeeded in achieving posthumously. The trials were carried out in the Red Fort, New Delhi, thus ironically enabling the INA remnants to achieve Netaji's War Cry, "*Chalo Delhi*." The British saw the writing on the wall. When historian Dr Mazumdar spoke to the prime minister of Britain, Lord Clement Attlee on his decision to grant Independence to India; the latter cited among several reasons, the principle reason was erosion of loyalty to the British Crown among the Indian Army as a result of the military activities of Netaji.¹⁹ Make no mistake, India's achieving Independence was no benign 'transfer of power'. Power was wrested from the British, as is clear from Clement Attlee's statement. And it was the Indian National Army that forced Britain's hand.

Congress leaders, particularly Nehru, soon changed their stance in relation to the INA. Their purpose of squeezing the maximum political advantage from championing the INA had been achieved. Congress leaders were now kind but patronising. Soon they would be indifferent. The INA officers would not be asked to re-enter the Indian Army. It was no longer necessary to hail the defendants of the Red Fort trials and make much of the INA. They had served their purpose.

On 22 May 1946, Gandhiji addressed the INA officers.²⁰ He said, "Your object, as I have been told, was only to free India, never to help the Japanese. You failed in your direct objective, i.e. to defeat the British. But you have the satisfaction that the whole Country has been roused and even regular forces have been stirred into a new political consciousness and have begun to think in terms of Independence. You have achieved a complete unity among the Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Christians, Anglo-Indians and Sikhs in your ranks. That is no mean achievement." So far so good. He then went on to say, "Above all, you must never beg or throw yourselves on anybody's charity. Because you have risked your lives for India's sake and fought for her on the Imphal plains, you must not expect to be pampered in return."

And why not, one may be tempted to ask. Any other country would have "pampered" them. In any case, the INA

never wanted anything in return except recognition. Even that was not forthcoming. Nehru, the first Prime Minister of Independent India firmly believed that the INA had laboured, mistakenly, for India's freedom. Their purpose having been served, Nehru simply archived them and there they remain, like faded photographs in an old family album.

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An Elegy for India's Military History

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India's military history is presently comatose. Like a terminally ill patient, who can do little more than wait for a miracle, it is slowly sinking. It is only a matter of time before it passes into oblivion, followed by certain death. Unless it receives urgent attention and aid, the end is inevitable. Can nothing be done to reverse the course, and revive it?

The last major war fought by the Indian Army was in 1971, exactly 40 years ago. In the first 25 years after Independence, there were no less than four major wars – the Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) operations in 1947-48; the Sino-Indian conflict in 1962; the Indo-Pak war in 1965 and the Indo-Pak war in 1971 which resulted in the liberation of Bangladesh. In addition there were several smaller conflicts such as the police action in Hyderabad in 1948; the liberation of Goa in 1961; the clashes at Nathu La in 1967 and Kargil in 1999. Some books describing the four major wars were written by officers who took part in the operations. There are also some regimental histories, which describe the role of certain units which participated in various conflicts. Expectedly, these are confined to local actions at battalion or regimental level. A comprehensive historical account is available only in respect of the J&K operations in 1947-48, in the form of an official history published by the History Division of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) in 1987, almost 40 years after the operations were conducted. Strange as it may seem, there are no official accounts or histories of the major wars fought by the Indian Army in 1962, 1965 and 1971.

What is the reason for this drought in recording the post Independence military history of India? Surely, it is not lack of information or data. During operations, all units maintain war diaries, which form an authentic record of actions and activities during battle. These are the primary documents for military historians and research scholars, which are relied upon in case of discrepancies in accounts of the participants and between different levels of command. They also form the basis for gallantry awards as well as disciplinary action, if necessary. Along with after-action reports, war diaries are the source documents for official histories of military operations. Supplemented by personal accounts of the participants, they are also used for compilation of regimental histories. After compilation, units and formation headquarters forward copies of war diaries to Army Headquarters (AHQ), regimental centres and the archives maintained in the History Division of the MoD, which is also responsible for production of the official history of the Armed Forces. After a certain period of time, these are transferred to the National Archives of India.

If the data is readily available, why has the History Division not brought out the official histories of the 1962, 1965 and 1971 wars? Actually, the accounts have been written, but not made public. This conundrum needs to be explained. The History Division submitted the official history of the 1971 war to the Government in 1988, followed by those of the 1962 and 1965 wars in 1990 and 1992 respectively. However, their publication was stopped by the MoD, reportedly at the instance of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). In September 2000, *The Times of India* put the 1965 and 1971 histories on its website after a terse comment: “Official military histories of the 1962, 1965 and 1971 wars exist, but successive governments, obsessed with secrecy, have refused to make them public”.¹ Subsequently, the official histories of 1962, 1965 and 1971 wars were also put on the website of Bharat Rakshak. The title given on the first page clearly shows that it is the ‘Official History’ with the copyright held by the History Division, MoD, Government of India (GoI). The histories of the 1962 and 1965 wars are graded ‘Restricted’ while that of 1971 does not bear any security classification.²

It would be interesting to dwell on the reasons for the reluctance of the GoI to clear the publication of the official war histories in book form, even after they have already been ‘published’ on the Internet and are thus available to the public. As is well known, a committee comprising Lieutenant General Henderson-Brooks and Brigadier PS Bhagat, VC was constituted by the Chief of Army Staff to enquire into various aspects of the 1962 war with China. The Enquiry Report was submitted to the Army Chief who in turn forwarded it to the Defence Minister in July 1963. The MoD decided that its contents should not be made public, and it was graded as Top Secret. This was probably because it showed certain failings on the part of political leadership and the higher echelons of the military. However, the Defence Minister, YB Chavan, made a statement in Parliament on 2 September 1963, in which he referred to certain portions of the Report, and its recommendations. Though the Report was never made public, Neville Maxwell was somehow able to read it, and he has written about it in his book ‘*India's China War*’. Some idea of the contents of the report can be gleaned from General Bhagat's book, ‘*Forging the Shield: A Study of the Defence of India and South East Asia*.’ Though he did not refer to the findings of the NEFA Enquiry, his views on the subject of civilian control over the military, and the division of responsibility between the political and the military leadership are said to be based on the report, which he had drafted in 1963.³

Returning to the war histories of 1962, 1965 and 1971, the MoD, after giving the go ahead for their publication in 1991, back tracked after objections from the MEA, which felt that making the 1962 war history public would “damage relations with China”, with which the GoI was negotiating a border tranquility agreement. The Home Ministry added their bit by opining that publication of the war histories would have security implications. Of course, the military which should have been the one to worry the most about security did not raise any objection. So a total of 75 copies of the history were typed out and distributed to senior government departmental heads, such as the home secretary, the foreign secretary, and a few instructional establishments in India. It did not take long for complaints to start coming in; the Air Force felt that it had not received its due and the MEA made its displeasure known again. So the 75 copies were treated as highly classified documents and clapped into cupboards and forgotten.⁴

Based on the Kargil Review Committee report, the Government constituted a Group of Minister (GoM) on National Security in April 2000. Among the various issues considered by the GoM in the Chapter dealing with Management of Defence was the publication of war histories. The GoM Report stated:

The Ministries of Defence and External Affairs may review the issue of publication of the official histories of the 1962 Sino-Indian war, the 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pak wars and a history of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) operations and finalise the decision within a period of three months. While preparing the historical account of the 1965 Indo-Pak

war, the events relating to Kutch should be included.⁵

In accordance with the recommendations of the GoM, the MoD constituted a committee to formulate recommendations on publishing the history of the 1962, 1965 and 1971 wars. The committee was headed by ex defence secretary NN Vohra, the other two members being Lieutenant General Satish Nambiar and historian SN Prasad. The committee recommended that the three war histories should be published. However, the MEA again threw a spanner in the works, raising fears about China's sensibilities.

On 26 November 2007, replying a question on the publication of the war histories, Defence Minister, AK Antony told the Parliament, *"A committee to review the publication of war histories, constituted by the Government, has given its recommendations. The recommendations of the committee are being considered for arriving at a final decision on the issue."* This was five years after the committee had submitted its recommendations. Another four years have elapsed, but the GoI is still 'considering' the recommendations.

It is interesting to reflect on the situation that prevails in other democracies, and the manner in which they have dealt with the problem. In keeping with its liberal attitude that places public interest uppermost, the USA has been the leader in enacting laws that give unrestricted access to the citizen about public affairs. The Freedom of Information Act was signed into law by the President, Lyndon Johnson in 1966. Britain enacted a similar law with the same name in 2000, while the Right to Information Act (RTI) in India was enacted only recently in 2005. However, in some respects, the British have overtaken their American cousins in matter of public disclosure. In 2009, historian Christopher Andrew's *The Defence of the Realm: The Authorised History of MI5* was published in Britain. This was followed a year later by the official history of MI 6, which is the official title of Britain's Secret Intelligence Service. Titled *MI6: The History of the Secret Intelligence Service 1909-1949*, the book was authored by Keith Jeffery, Professor of History at Belfast University, who was given access to the top secret archives at MI 6 to enable him to write the history. Though India was only five years behind the UK in enacting the RTI Act, it is difficult to imagine an official history of the Intelligence Bureau (IB) or the Research & Analysis Wing (R&AW) coming out during the next 10 to 20 years.

India has enacted laws to regulate the classification and disclosure of public records, but these are vague and full of contradictions. Section 12 (1) of the Public Records Act 1993 mandates that: *All unclassified public records as are more than **thirty** years old and are transferred to the National Archives of India or the Archives of the Union Territory may be, subject to such exceptions and restrictions as may be prescribed, made available to any bona fide research scholar.*⁶

According to the Rule 5 of the Public Records Rules (1997), *The Director General or Head of the Archives, as the case may be shall accept for deposit and preservation public records of permanent nature which have been retained after recording by the records creating agency in its records room for the last **twenty five** years or more.*⁷ So, what is the time limit for transfer of public records to the Archives, 25 or 30 years?

The RTI Act in 2005 was an empowering piece of legislation that has rattled the Indian bureaucracy, which considers it an encroachment in their domain. Information about the manner in which the government functions has always been a source of power, and making it accessible to the public has begun to reveal not only the deficiencies in the system but also the dismal performance of the people who run it. Not surprisingly, measures have been instituted to reverse the trend, and move back a few paces. One such step is the ban that the GoI has placed on publication of books and articles by officers who have served in intelligence and security agencies, even after they retire from service. Before they retire, the affected officers have to give an undertaking that they will not write anything based on their experiences while in service, and those who violate the law will forfeit their pensions. The order was published in the Gazette of India on 31 March 2008.

The legality of the order will no doubt be challenged in the courts, which in all likelihood will strike it down. However, until it remains, it will have far reaching implications. As it stands, officers from organisations such as R&AW, IB, CBI, and the Para Military Forces are covered by the ban, but not bureaucrats. Surely, officers who have held the appointments of Cabinet Secretary, Defence Secretary and Home Secretary are privy to much more than most officers in these organisations. After publication of the Gazette, it was realised that it does not cover the Armed Forces, whose gazettes are published by the MoD. It is learnt that the Home Ministry has now asked the MoD to publish a similar gazette in respect of the Armed Forces.

An important aspect that seems to have been missed is the far reaching effects this will have on our military history. As is well known, military history forms an important ingredient of military training of officers. It is from past campaigns that present day military leaders draw important lessons in tactics and strategy. There is a paper on the subject in promotion examinations and entrance examinations for prestigious institutions like the Defence Services Staff College. A ban on retired officers from writing about past campaigns will virtually throttle discussion of military affairs in all forms. Books written by Clausewitz, Mahan, Liddel Hart, Eisenhower and Slim are like Bibles for officers of all the armies and navies. In India, books written by DK Palit, Harbaksh Singh, RD Palsokar, KC Praval, SK Sinha, PS Bhagat, SL Menezes and Satyindra Singh form essential reading for all military officers. If they had not written these books, would India have a military history?

The latest twist in the tale is the recent publication of the book titled *'The India Pakistan War of 1965 - A History'*. The book is in fact a verbatim reproduction of the official 1965 history produced by the History Division in 1992, which is available on the website of Bharat Rakshak. There are some cosmetic changes - the 'Foreword' written by NN Vohra and the 'Preface' written by SN Prasad has been omitted, as also the name of the author, Dr BC Chakravorty - instead, SN Prasad is shown as the 'Chief Editor' and UP Thapliyal as the 'General Editor'. The text and appendices are exactly the same as in the original book. The copyright is still in the name of the Ministry of Defence.⁸

Strangely enough, the new book contains references to classified material which were not cited even in the original book. The 'Notes' and 'References' at the end of each chapter list a large number of official documents, including Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) papers and war diaries of formations and units, which were earlier not

cited; or mentioned only as 'official records'. How did this come about? Apparently, fed up with the delay in publication of the 'official history' on which they had worked so hard, the concerned officials in the History Division prevailed on the MoD to declassify certain documents. This was done by a board of officers, which comprised one representative each from the History Division, and the directorates of Military Operations and Military Intelligence. The board was asked to examine only the documents that were intended to be cited for production of the 1965 war history in printed form. This was promptly done in 2005. As result, the book was published in 2011, without any hitch. A similar board has been conducted for documents pertaining to the 1971 war, so one can hope that another book will soon see the light of day.

A pertinent sidelight is the compilation of regimental histories. These are published by respective regimental officers associations or regimental centres, which provide the funds. In most cases, the author is a retired officer from the regiment, who is given access to regimental records, secretarial assistance and a suitable honorarium. According to the present guidelines, the draft regimental history is submitted to the intelligence directorate of the service headquarters for clearance. In keeping with the decision of the MoD not to declassify war records of 1962, 1965 and 1971, the regimental history is cleared for publication with the security classification 'Restricted' or 'Confidential'. As a result, veterans who have taken part in these wars cannot purchase copies. In fact, even the author cannot keep a copy! (The author of this article is one of those affected). Isn't it time, someone woke up to the Alice in Wonderland situation? If military history is to remain classified, what is the point in writing it? As it stands, India has no post Independence military history worth the name, in printed form. Everyone agrees that something needs to be done and quickly. Here are some suggestions.

The GoI should permit the publication of the war histories of 1962, 1965 and 1971 wars in printed form. This should be done after a deliberate decision to declassify all the war records pertaining to these operations and not selectively as has been done for the 1965 war. According to the Public Records Act and the Public Records Rules, every 'records' creating agency is required to evaluate and downgrade the classified records held by it after every five years. It is also required to submit a bi-annual report to the Director General of the National Archives on the action taken for evaluation and downgrading the classified records. This procedure, mandated by law, is not being followed, a lapse for which the service headquarters, MoD as well as the Director General of the National Archives cannot escape responsibility. The three Services headquarters must fulfill their part of the bargain, by regularly de-classifying records and transferring them to the History Division and the National Archives.

There is also a need to review the rules for publication of regimental histories. Books written by retired officers or civilians do not require clearance by military intelligence. Of course, if any classified information is disclosed, the authors face prosecution under the Official Secrets Act. Regimental histories should also be treated in the same manner, since they are authored by retired officers and published by regimental officers associations. There are cases when regimental histories have been published either without obtaining clearance or ignoring the instructions of military intelligence to grade them as 'restricted'. Interestingly, the Indian Navy follows a system different from the Indian Army. Instead of the history being screened by Naval Intelligence, it is cleared by a board of admirals, constituted by the Vice Chief of Naval Staff. As a result, several volumes of the history of the Indian Navy authored by a retired officer have been published, including one that covers the 1965 and 1971 wars, not to speak of several sensitive warship development projects.⁹ Surely, the operations of land forces cannot be considered classified, when those of naval forces are not, during the same period or in the same war or conflict. Perhaps the Army can take a cue from the Navy, to get around the problem until the MoD gets its head out of the sand.

An important point that is missed out is the long term impact of military history on national security. There can be no dispute about the fact that the most important ingredient of national security is the defence of territory against external aggression, which is the primary task of the defence forces. To carry out this task effectively and efficiently, viz. with minimum loss of life and in the shortest possible time frame, military leaders need to be highly trained. An important ingredient of training is the study of past campaigns, which brings out the reasons for victory and defeat. Without the benefit of access to accounts of campaigns in similar terrain and against known or expected adversaries, it is unfair to expect today's leaders to deliver. Military history is thus a vital contributor to national security, a fact that needs to be brought home to the political leadership and the bureaucracy.

As the mandated system does not seem to be working, perhaps it is for the top brass of the three services to take a call, since the matter directly affects training and morale. The bureaucracy, which does not have any recorded 'history', cannot comprehend the importance of the subject for the military. In fact, nobody else has any stake or interest in the preservation of military history. If security is a concern, surely those in uniform are better placed to keep this in mind, by virtue of their training and experience.

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Introduction

International Humanitarian Law (IHL) or laws of war is a branch of international law which limits the use of violence in armed conflicts. It protects persons who are no longer taking part in hostilities, and also defines the rights and obligations of the parties to a conflict in the conduct of hostilities. It lays down clear rules for: (i) sparing those who do not or no longer directly participate in hostilities (for example, injured, sick or wounded soldiers; those who have surrendered or been taken prisoners of war; and civilians) and (ii) limiting the violence only to the extent required to weaken the military potential of the adversary—the amount necessary to achieve the aim of the conflict. IHL is applicable in international armed conflicts as well as non-international (or internal) armed conflicts. An international armed conflict means fighting between the armed forces of at least two States. A non-international armed conflict means fighting on the territory of a State between the regular armed forces and identifiable armed groups, or between armed groups. To be considered a non-international armed conflict, fighting must reach a certain level of intensity and extend over a certain period of time. Internal disturbances in a country like riots and struggles between factions are not considered non-international armed conflict and these situations are covered by the civil law of the country.

Sources of IHL

The important sources of IHL are customary rules, international treaties, judicial decisions, teachings of legal philosophers and military manuals. Each source of law plays its own crucial role in advancing the objectives of IHL. The principal IHL treaties are the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their three Additional Protocols (APs) adopted in 1977 and 2005. The first Geneva Convention relates to the protection of the wounded and the sick in the field; the second to the wounded and the sick at sea; the third to prisoners of war (POW); and the fourth to civilians. With the exception of one article, viz Article 3 common to all four Conventions, the Geneva Conventions apply to international armed conflicts. The core principles of distinction, proportionality and unnecessary suffering, formerly found only in customary law, have been codified and described in AP 1. In addition, IHL also restricts the means and methods of warfare. In this context, ‘means’ of warfare refer to the weapons of war, while ‘methods’ refer to the tactics and strategy applied in military operations to weaken the adversary. The treaties placing limits on means and methods of war are the Hague Convention of 1907, the 1977 AP 1 and a number of international agreements relating to specific weapons, such as treaties banning poisoned weapons, biological weapons, chemical weapons, certain conventional weapons, anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions.

The increased civilian deaths in recent international as well as non-international conflicts demonstrate that violations of IHL continue to occur with impunity. Air and missile attacks during the recent conflicts in Israel, Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya have resulted in a large number of civilian casualties and damage to civilian property. The evolving means and methods of warfare which could lead to violations of IHL are discussed in succeeding paragraphs.

Cyber Weapons

Cyber warfare deals with the management and use of information in all its forms and at all levels to achieve a decisive military advantage. It has been defined as “an electronic conflict in which information is a strategic asset worthy of conquest or destruction”, where computers and other communication and information systems become attractive first-strike targets. Some of the activities of cyber warfare could be : stealing sensitive information from computers, cyber espionage, incapacitate a computer or computer network, physical destruction, corruption of hardware or software, and flooding it with information to cause its collapse.

Cyber warfare has become a major security challenge as individuals, terrorists, or foreign countries capable of penetrating information systems could wreak havoc with a country’s defence or civilian infrastructures. Cyber weapons are very different from conventional weapons as they are very easy to replicate without spending much money. The attack (whether in offence or defence) can be directed against an individual computer, specific computers within a network, or an entire computer network. Through the application of these weapons, one can adversely affect individuals, organisations and countries—both singly and combined. A cyber attack could disable power plants, cut-off military command and control network, make warplanes to crash, nuclear reactors to meltdown and weapons to malfunction. The cyber warfare systems are currently being developed and used by at least 120 countries. Peacetime cyber attacks have hit the USA, the UK, India, Taiwan, South Korea, Lithuania, Kyrgyzstan, Switzerland and Montenegro. India has been the target of several attacks, allegedly originating from Pakistan and China.¹

Cyber warfare challenges IHL in several ways. First, communication signals from one country can easily transit international borders and thus affect telecommunication systems in distant countries. Such an intrusion could be regarded as violation of territorial sovereignty, a universally accepted international legal principle. Second, the damage that an information operation attack may cause is essentially different from the physical damage using conventional weapons. The devastation caused by conventional weapons is easier to comprehend; in contrast, the destruction of an information network could produce intangible damage to a civilian or government agency. Third, it is difficult to pinpoint whether an information operations attack is “an act of war”, as it would be difficult to define the targets as legitimate military targets, or prohibited civilian targets. Currently, there is no provision in IHL or customary international law that explicitly outlaws cyber warfare carried out independently or during war.

Drones

Drone or Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) is a powered aircraft that does not carry a human operator, uses aerodynamic forces to provide vehicle lift, can fly automatically or be piloted remotely, is expendable or recoverable and carries a lethal or nonlethal payload. The drones play an important role in the battlefield and are also used extensively for surveillance purposes. They save the lives of pilots, since the UAV’s are controlled from a site far away from the attack

zone. Drones can fly low and strike targets more precisely. If a drone is shot down, there is no loss of human life. A significant number of States like Belarus, Canada, China, India, Israel, Pakistan, Russia, the UK and the USA have incorporated drones in their military systems.

The use of drones presents a number of concerns relating to compliance with IHL. Although there is nothing inherently illegal about the use of drones in armed conflicts, it is unclear whether all the persons targeted by drones are combatants or directly participating in hostilities, thus raising questions about compliance with the principle of distinction. Drone attacks causing hundreds of civilian casualties have raised questions about compliance with the principle of proportionality. Moreover, accountability for failure to comply with IHL is difficult to ensure when drone attacks are conducted outside the military chain of command and beyond transparent mechanisms of civilian or military control.²

Depleted Uranium (DU) Weapons

It has been alleged that since 1991, the US has staged four wars using DU weaponry, illegal under all international treaties, conventions and agreements. DU weapons have certain advantages: (i) Because of its very heavy density (1.7 times of lead, 2.5 times of iron) and hardness, when used to tip bullets, DU increases the penetration power of the warheads, and displays tremendous capacity to open holes in thick iron plates and concrete; (ii) Even when there are no explosives inside the bombshell, DU weapon explodes upon impact, and the capacity to kill and injure the enemy is high because of the tremendous rise in temperature while burning; and (iii) It is very cheap because its raw materials are radioactive wastes.

When the penetrator hits a hard object, e.g., an armoured vehicle, the penetrator pierces the metal sheet, generally leaving the jacket behind. The DU dust which may be formed during impact can disperse and contaminate the environment. The exposure to DU is critically dependent on whether it is external or internal. External exposure to DU mainly occurs during combat activities when DU aerosols are generated, or when DU fragments are picked up. The affected organ is the skin. Internal exposure to DU can occur through three pathways: ingestion (food and water), inhalation (aerosol) and embedded fragments or contaminated wounds. Direct ingestion of uranium in particular for children, through hand contamination is possible. Direct ingestion of contaminated soil by cattle and sheep as a pathway to humans has also to be considered. DU can also enter the body in the form of uranium metal from fragments and as uranium oxides from oxidized DU formed after impact on hard targets. Uranium is absorbed into the blood, carried and retained in body tissues and organs. Once inside the body system uranium can cause various disorders like abnormal births and birth defects, acute auto-immune symptoms, acute respiratory failure, bone tumours and cancer, chronic kidney and liver disorder, genetic alterations, etc. Several birth defects have been reported in babies born to contaminated civilians in Iraq, Yugoslavia and Afghanistan.³ DU weapons are presently regarded as conventional weapons, though, its military use violates IHL.

White Phosphorous Weapons

The US armed forces have used white phosphorous (WP) based weapons to flush out suspected insurgents in Fallujah in 2005. The Israeli government has admitted that it used controversial WP weapons in its attacks against targets in open ground during its month-long war in Lebanon in 2006. There have been numerous reports that Israeli phosphorus munitions have injured and killed many civilians in Lebanon. White phosphorus is a flare/smoke producing incendiary weapon, or smoke-screening agent, made from a common allotrope of the element. It is used in bombs, artillery shells, mortar shells and hand grenades which burst into burning flakes of phosphorus upon impact.⁴ The armed forces have legitimate requirement of substance that can illuminate the battlefield or to provide cover during day light to mask a target or to set fire to objective such as ammunition or fuel dumps. WP weapon is suitable for many of these tasks because it ignites easily when exposed to oxygen and produces dense white smoke. It is ideal for laying quick smoke screen or as a component of incendiary weapons. WP bombs and shells are essentially incendiary devices, but can also be used as an offensive anti-personnel flame compound capable of causing serious burns or death.

WP weapons are controversial today because of its potential use against humans, for whom one-tenth of a gram is a deadly dose. WP is toxic and can cause blistering of the skin and mucous membranes. Burning WP is difficult to extinguish and tends to reignite unless fully smothered. WP can cause injuries and death in three ways: by burning deep into soft tissue, by being inhaled as a smoke and by being ingested. Extensive exposure in any way can be fatal. It also releases phosphorous pentoxide, which can cause chemical burns, and on contact with water, phosphoric acid, which is corrosive. Smoke inhalation can cause temporary discomfort, however effect could be serious in case of length and severity of exposure. The use of incendiary weapon against combatants is not prohibited under IHL treaties.

Incapacitating Chemical Agents

Since the last decade there has been a keen interest in chemicals that act on the central nervous system to 'incapacitate' a person or to alter a person's mood, emotion, cognition or perception. The NATO defines incapacitating chemical agents (ICA) as: "Chemicals which produce temporary disabling conditions which (unlike those caused by riot control agents) can be physical or mental and persist for hours or days after exposure to the agent has ceased. Medical treatment, while not usually required, facilitates a more rapid recovery". There are views that ICA's can be used as a 'non-lethal' class of weapons by the armed forces.⁵ At the same time there are arguments that such "agents", even if described as "non-lethal", are in fact lethal. The rapid advances in science have made it possible to develop ICA's that can be used in a consistently non-lethal manner. Their fatality or lethality will be a function of the physiology of the victim, the actual dose of the drug, the proximity of appropriate medical care and the availability of the necessary antidote. In armed conflicts, the potential use of ICA's poses challenge from the perspective of the principle of distinction between combatants and civilians, particularly in situations where combatants intermingle with civilians or are in close proximity to civilians.

Targeted Killings

In recent years, a few States have adopted policies that permit the use of targeted killings, including in the territories of other States. The States have tried to justify such policies as a necessary and legitimate response to “terrorism” and “asymmetric warfare”. A targeted killing is the intentional, premeditated and deliberate use of lethal force, by States, their agents, or by an organised armed group in armed conflict, against a specific individual who is not in the physical custody of the perpetrator. In a targeted killing, the aim is to use lethal force. Israel has used the targeted killing against Palestinians since 2000. The US has used drones and airstrikes for targeted killings in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Under IHL, targeted killing is only lawful when the target is a combatant. In the case of a civilian, he can be attacked only for such time when the person “directly participates in hostilities (DPH).” Reprisal or punitive attacks on civilians are prohibited. The legality of a killing outside the context of IHL is governed by human rights standards. Under human rights law, a targeted killing in the sense of an intentional, premeditated and deliberate killing by law enforcement officials can never be legal. In case a targeted killing violates IHL, then regardless of who conducts it – intelligence personnel or State armed forces – the author, as well as those who authorised it, can be prosecuted for war crimes.

Human Shields

Human shielding involves the use of persons protected by IHL, such as PoW or civilians to deter attacks on combatants and military objectives. Human shielding has become endemic in contemporary international and non-international conflicts taking place across the legal spectrum of conflict. Iraq used human shields in its 1990-91 war with Iran; in 1990-1991 Operation Desert Storm; and in 2003 Operation Iraqi Freedom. Iraqi soldiers were instructed to ‘use any means necessary’ in resisting the US Marines, including ‘putting women and children in the street’. In the 2002 Israeli operations in the West Bank, resistance groups in occupied territories have also employed human shields. Peacekeepers have even fallen victim to such tactics, in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995 and Lebanon in 2006. In Sri Lanka, LTTE used women and children as human shields during the last phase of operation in 2009. The use of human shields violates IHL.

Enforced Disappearance

“Enforced disappearance of persons” means the arrest, detention or abduction of persons by a State followed by refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of their freedom or to give information on the fate or whereabouts of those persons, with the intention of removing them from the protection of the law for a prolonged period of time. Enforced disappearance is irreconcilable with IHL and international human rights law. It violates the right to liberty and security of the person and the prohibition of arbitrary arrest or detention.

Principles of IHL

Today, in spite of near universal ratification of the four Geneva Conventions and increased adoption of weapon regulation/ban treaties, the respect for the rules of IHL during armed conflicts remains a perpetual problem. While the IHL treaty documents contain hundreds of articles, the basic principles of IHL which must be followed by parties to an armed conflict can be expressed in just a few paragraphs.

(a) **Distinction.** The parties to a conflict must at all times distinguish between the civilian population and combatants in order to spare the civilian population and civilian property. Attacks may be made solely against military objectives, subject to military necessity.

(b) **Unnecessary Suffering.** Neither the parties to the conflict nor members of their armed forces have an unlimited right to choose the means and methods of warfare. It is prohibited to cause unnecessary suffering to combatants; accordingly it is prohibited to use weapons causing them such harm or uselessly aggravating their suffering.

(c) **Proportionality.** An obligation to ensure that actions against legitimate targets do not affect protected persons and targets in a manner disproportionate to the military advantage expected from the attack.

(d) **Military Necessity.** The obligations to use force only in a way that yields a direct military advantage. The principle of military necessity is related to two other principles: unnecessary suffering and proportionality.

(e) **Humanity.** Captured combatants and civilians who find themselves under the authority of the adverse party are entitled to respect for their lives, their dignity and their personal rights. They must be protected against all acts of violence or reprisal. They must enjoy basic judicial guarantees and are entitled to exchange news with their families.

The IHL principles should be used to analyse the legality of means and methods of warfare. IHL prohibits the use of an indiscriminate weapon that cannot be directed at a military target. The principle of military necessity entails the cumulative impact of attacks against particular targets. The principle poses no problem to cyber warfare as long as the systems under attack are purely military targets. A cyber attack against systems that have a dual-use capability among a state’s military forces and its civilian population could be problematic. The conventional military targets like electrical power grids and other telecommunications networks would be unlawful targets because of their interconnection and interdependence with systems serving the civilian population. In addition, the principle of humanity prohibits the employment of any kind or degree of force not necessary for the purposes of war that is for the partial or complete submission of the enemy with the least possible expenditure of life, time and physical resources.

The distinction between civilians and combatants in drones strikes is an undisputed requirement of IHL. The States having drone in their military arsenal must respect the principles of necessity, proportionality and humanity in carrying out drone attacks. As regard the use of DU and WP weapons, if we consider principles of distinction, unnecessary suffering, incendiary, poisonous and chemical effects of these weapons, they need to be banned under IHL. The principle of ‘unnecessary suffering’ prohibits the use of DU and WP weapon as means or method of warfare. The principle of distinction requires that attacks be directed against military objectives without disproportionate incidental

damage to civilian and civilian property. Similarly, the use of ICA for hostile purposes would be a breach of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Any toxic chemical that has an incapacitating effect is subject to the provisions of the CWC and should, therefore, be banned in war.

Respect for IHL

The obligation to respect and ensure respect for IHL applies in both international and non-international conflicts. Under Article 1 common to the four Geneva Conventions, states undertake to “respect and ensure respect” for these conventions in all circumstances. The meaning of this is twofold: States must do their utmost to ensure that IHL is respected by their own agents (in particular the military) and by all others under their jurisdiction. They must furthermore take all possible steps to ensure that IHL is respected by other States that have ratified the Conventions in particular by the parties to an armed conflict, and to react against violations.

Conclusion

There are currently a number of challenges to IHL that need to be addressed by the international community in areas such as internment, selection of the means and methods of warfare, and the conduct of hostilities. In contemporary armed conflicts, the challenge of upholding humanitarian values is not the result of a lack of rules but a lack of respect for them. IHL essentially distinguishes between two categories of people in an armed conflict; however, in contemporary armed conflicts there is a blurring of civilian and military functions. All States and other parties to an armed conflict have an obligation to respect and ensure respect for IHL in all circumstances. They must use their influence to prevent and end violations of IHL as also refrain from encouraging violations by other parties.

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Introduction

Terrorist campaigns have shifted from military campaigns supported by information operations, to strategic communications campaigns supported by guerrilla and terrorist operations. Managing perceptions is seen by these groups as a vital effort. The great virtues of the Internet like ease of access, lack of regulation, vast potential audiences, and fast flow of information, have been turned to the advantage of groups committed to terrorising societies to achieve their goals. Terrorist groups like Al Qaeda, Hezbollah and Hamas use a vast and anonymous terrorist web network as another front in their war against their enemies.

Virtually every terrorist group in the world today has its own Internet website and, in many instances, multiple sites in different languages with different messages tailored to specific audiences². Web sites are only one of the Internet's services used by modern terrorism. There are other facilities on the Internet; e-mail, chat rooms, e-groups, forums, virtual message boards, social media networks and blogs that are increasingly used by terrorists as virtual training camps, providing an online forum for indoctrination as well as the distribution of terrorist manuals, instructions, and data.

While terrorist organisations still invest in the weapons of kinetic warfare, they are also investing heavily in laptops, generators, and video editing software, and making effective use of high-speed Internet connections available at Internet cafés in towns and cities throughout the world. The emergence of new means of communication and new styles of virtual social interaction has transformed the context for mass persuasion and has expanded opportunities for extremists to disseminate their message.³

Terrorism and the Internet

Terrorist websites target three different audiences; current and potential supporters, international public opinion, and enemy publics (i.e. citizens of the states against which the terrorists are fighting). Contemporary terrorists can use the Internet in eight different ways.⁴

(a) Psychological Warfare. Terrorists can use the Internet to spread disinformation, to deliver threats intended to distil fear and helplessness, and to disseminate horrific images of recent actions, such as the videotape of the brutal murder of the American journalist Daniel Pearl by his captors.

(b) Publicity and Propaganda. The Internet has significantly expanded the opportunities for terrorists to secure publicity. They can shape how they are perceived by different target audiences and to manipulate their own image and the image of their enemies.

(c) Data Mining. Terrorists can learn from the Internet a wide variety of details about targets such as transportation facilities, nuclear power plants, public buildings, airports and ports; and even about counterterrorism measures.

(d) Fund raising. Like many other political organisations, terrorist groups use the Internet to raise funds. Al Qaeda, for instance, has always depended heavily on donations, and its global fund raising network is built upon a foundation of charities, NGOs, and other financial institutions that use websites and Internet-based chat rooms and forums.

(e) Recruitment and Training. In addition to seeking active recruits, terrorist organisations capture information about the users who browse their websites. Users who seem most interested in the organisation's cause or well suited to carrying out its work are then contacted. The Internet also serves as a 'virtual sanctuary' and training ground where training manuals and videos can be posted.⁵

(f) Networking. Most terrorist groups have undergone a transformation from strictly hierarchical organisations with designated leaders to affiliations of semi-independent cells that have no single commanding hierarchy. Through the use of the Internet, these loosely interconnected groups are able to maintain contact with one another; and with members of other terrorist groups.

(g) Sharing Information. The World Wide Web is home to dozens of sites that provide information on how to build chemical and explosive weapons. Many of these sites post well-known manuals like *The Terrorist's Handbook*, *The Anarchist Cookbook*, *The Mujahadeen Poisons Handbook*, *The Encyclopedia of Jihad* (prepared by Al Qaeda) and *How to Make Bombs* that offer detailed instructions on how to unleash terror attacks.

(h) Planning and Coordination. Terrorists use the Internet to plan and coordinate specific attacks, like Al Qaeda operatives did for the September 11 attacks. Hamas activists in the Middle East use chat rooms to plan operations and operatives exchange e-mail to coordinate actions across Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Israel; like the Lashkar-e-Taiba did in the case of the 26/11 Mumbai attack. Instructions in the form of maps, photographs, directions, and technical details of how to use explosives are often disguised by means of *steganography*, which involves hiding messages inside graphic files. They can use publicly accessible tools like Google Earth, Google Latitude and encrypted messaging to plan and execute their attacks.⁶

The Technology Advantage

The ease with which individuals can create and disseminate content has been radically enhanced through a variety of technological developments. Some of the technological developments that have given rise to present day application

include increased bandwidth, speed of Internet connections, improved tools for posting content, digitalisation of technology using high-quality, user-friendly cameras and video editing tools, Internet penetration, advances in social networking, and capitalisation of the Internet (people are making money by posting content and generating traffic).⁷

A key defining characteristic of what is called 'Web 2.0' is actually the separation of form and content.⁸ Users are now able to "mash" content (through what are known as "mash-ups") with little effort. The new language XML enables automated data exchange, free of formatting constraints. This allows users to both upload and export data with ease, facilitating collaboration, information sharing, and network formation.

At the core of new Internet is a significant shift in the way messages and images are shared and, as a result, the way perceptions are formed. One of the central concepts is that of 'user-generated content.' User-generated content refers to the material created and posted by the end user, whether it is newlyweds posting their wedding photos on Flickr, or an aspiring terrorist posting his ruminations on his personal blog or uploading a graphic video to YouTube.⁹ The phenomenon represents a broad change in the way in which the Internet is being used by individuals, a change that cuts across diverse societal groups and demographics.

Viral marketing include effortless transfers between individuals, exploiting common behaviours, and utilising existing communication networks. Many of the aspects of this strategy have significant parallels with the ways in which militants have sought to disseminate their messages and use this new environment to their strategic advantage.

The fastest growing websites today are sites that are built around social interaction. Video and photo sharing, as well as networking sites like MySpace and Facebook, derive their purpose from a social basis; from people uploading information about themselves and their beliefs, tastes and activities, with the goal of broadcasting this content to a wide audience and creating a social connection. Much of this technology has been fused and integrated. For instance, once you upload videos to YouTube, the comment forums on YouTube function just like the feedback available on blogs.

Another important function included in many web applications is language translation. With the integration of this capability, the audiences for particular messages are dramatically expanded instantly, through the click of a mouse.

Cyberterrorism and Cyber attacks

Cyber-crime has now surpassed international drug trafficking as a terrorist financing enterprise¹⁰. Terrorist organisations seek the ability to use the Internet itself as a weapon in an attack against critical infrastructures. The effects of a widespread computer network attack would be unpredictable and might cause massive economic disruption, fear, and civilian deaths. Thus, cyber-terrorism in the form of unlawful, politically motivated computer attacks can intimidate or coerce a government or population to further a political objective, or to cause grave harm or severe economic damage.

Cyber-attacks attributed to terrorists have largely been limited to unsophisticated efforts such as e-mail bombing of ideological foes, denial of service attacks, or defacing of websites. However, their increasing technical competency is resulting in an emerging capability for network-based attacks.¹² The objectives of a cyber-attack may include loss of integrity (information could be tampered with), loss of availability (information systems are rendered unavailable to users), loss of confidentiality (critical information is disclosed to unauthorised users), and physical destruction (where information systems create actual physical harm through commands that cause deliberate malfunctions). Publicity would potentially be one of the primary objectives for a terrorist cyber-attack. Communication networks are likely to become the target of terrorist cyber attacks seeking to paralyse our societies and economies.

User Generated Content:The Power of Video and Blogs

The use of videos by radical groups for the purpose of incitement and radicalisation is not a new tactic in itself. But the recent emergence of various video-swapping websites, which facilitate easy upload, enjoy a vast viewership and provide an accompanying forum for commentary have enhanced the strategic value of such images and helped guarantee their ubiquity.

The most popular of such sites, YouTube, has proven to be an extremely useful tool for posting videos depicting insurgent attacks on American soldiers in Iraq or Afghanistan; or even of Western strikes killing innocent civilians.¹³ Improvements in digital video technology have allowed these productions to be easily paired with music and captions, with the end products attaining a high level of slick professionalism. Taliban fighters equipped with video cameras send visual images which are broadcast often only hours later. In Chechnya, mujahideen created videos and posted them on the Internet to disseminate their messages, to raise much needed funds and to demoralise Russian citizens.

Another realm of user generated content that has been harnessed effectively to propagate radical ideologies is the world of blogs. Blogs (or web logs, as they were originally named) tend to be written in the format of personal journals or diaries that use web publishing technology which facilitate quick and easy updates and displays postings in reverse chronological order. Blogs usually have lots of links to other related web based content like articles, web-sites, videos, or anything of interest to the blog writer.

One of the key distinguishing features of a blog is the forum it provides for reader's comments. The power (and potential danger) of the blog is that it offers users an opportunity to bypass traditional media outlets to publish their views and frame current affairs according to their own particular ideologies. This offers the opportunity for average people, or even terrorists, to emerge as key influencers or ideologues on a given issue, despite having no real credentials or authority.

Social Networking

Militants and terrorists have become extremely web-savvy and have recognised the value of social network sites like

Friendster, Facebook, Orkut and MySpace in reaching out to prospective followers. Of late, Al Qaeda and Taliban have started using Twitter to spread their propaganda.¹⁴ The Islamist extremists sent out their first tweet in English on May 12, 2011 claiming ‘enemy attacked in Khak-e-Safid’, with a link to their website for more details.

Britain’s MI5 warned troops returning from service in Iraq and Afghanistan not to publicly post their personal information and details about their military tours due to the risk of possible terrorist activities being carried out against them.¹⁵ The soldier’s identities were uncovered by militants after they posted information about their tours on Facebook.

It is easy to create extremist communities within an existing social network because the nature of these sites is highly decentralised and the massive membership makes surveillance nearly impossible. Young people tend to be idealistic, are often drawn to charismatic leaders, and many are seeking a cause to believe in, even if that cause promotes violence, hatred, and destruction.¹⁶ Online social network communities are a great way for militants to garner support and create a community of believers, where aberrant attitudes and beliefs may be exchanged, reinforced, hardened and validated.

Virtual Worlds and Video Games

Video games are valuable tools for shaping perceptions and for portraying a particular world view. They are a powerful media, because while they typically cast the user in the role of the hero, the opponent is often effectively demonised through its visual depiction and through other elements of the game’s context. Embedded messages and images can have an insidious impact on the user, as the exposure to these subtle elements may ultimately shape ideas, values and attitudes. Video games are played primarily by children and teens, thus they present a valuable medium for the transmission of messages to an impressionable audience.

The Lebanese Hezbollah has been using video games as a central aspect of their information campaign for many years, in an effort to influence youth perceptions.¹⁷ At the beginning of the second Palestinian *Intifada*, the Hezbollah Internet Bureau created a video game called *Special Force*, in which the user tries to kill former Prime Minister of Israel Ariel Sharon and other Israeli dignitaries. The success of the first version of *Special Force* prompted Hezbollah to create *Special Force 2* in the aftermath of the Israeli-Hezbollah war, to give Lebanese children a chance to virtually experience attacking Israeli soldiers, launching Katyusha rockets at Israeli towns and ultimately claiming victory against Israel.

The Web 2.0 offers a new and different generation of online games which are more technologically sophisticated, and incorporate a dimension of social interactivity that blurs the line between virtual and real. These massive multiplayer online role playing games (MMORPGs) are fundamentally different from conventional video games as they dynamically connect real users (in their online avatars), from geographically disparate physical locations in real time through the virtual game environment. The vast social network of games like *Second Life* and its many counterpart games clearly offer unique opportunities for like-minded players from all over the world to connect, interact and communicate.

Meeting the Challenge

How should we respond to this challenge? Given the inter-connectedness of national networks into a single worldwide web, international cooperation is an imperative to counter the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes.¹⁸ First, we must become better informed about the uses to which terrorists put the Internet and be able to monitor their activities. Second, while we must better defend our society against terrorism, we must not provide governments (especially authoritarian governments and agencies with little public accountability), tools with which to violate civil liberties. India needs to have adequate preparations in terms of appropriate backup strategies; and plans on how to deal with the consequences of terrorist exploitation of the Internet. An effective strategy should limit and discredit the terrorist message, deny safe haven to terrorists on the internet, thwart their ability to obtain support from a vulnerable online population, and continue to monitor their communications on web forums. The private sector and the government also have a role in information campaigns aimed at discrediting terrorists by widely publicising their atrocities on the internet. Media entrepreneurs can follow the lead of Google, which has removed numerous violent Al Qaeda videos from YouTube. Internet providers that repeatedly aid terrorist entities by hosting their websites should be fined to the full extent of the law. The various aspects involved in combating terrorist activity promoted by the Internet are a vast and discursive subject, which needs to be explored in greater detail separately.

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The United States of America's Africa Command and the Dilemma of Security and Stability in Africa

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Recently, significant amount of research has been devoted to establishing that Africa is becoming a new area for power rivalry. It is not surprising that Africa is playing a critical role in emerging global realignments in politics, trade and international cooperation. Like China, the USA also considers Africa an area of strategic significance. The America's strategic interests in Africa extend beyond oil and other resources. To that end, the US has established AFRICOM to advance its strategic position on the Continent. However, it is clear that the US and African nations have differing priorities regarding the main elements of the relationship. The key question is whether these differing priorities and strategic interests will outweigh the existing US-Africa relations. The main purpose of this article is to analyse AFRICOM's origin, its role, US strategic interests in Africa and the African response thereof. Besides, the article attempts to assess – to what extent the US has succeeded in this endeavour?

The creation of the United States Africa Command (USAFRICOM or AFRICOM), new Unified Combatant Command for the African continent is reflecting Africa's increasing strategic importance to the US. The US has argued that the AFRICOM is to support the African nations to build greater capacity to ensure their own security. Yet many argue that this military centred strategy narrowly filters the realities of security challenges across the continent.¹ Many analysts think that the AFRICOM has been established mainly in the context of the war against terrorism, to counterbalance China and to maintain a strategic edge in Africa.² This is perhaps illustrated by the increased level of the US military sales, financing and training expenditure in African countries, which are now regarded strategic to the US interests.

US Command Areas and AFRICOM

Unified commands were instituted during the Cold War to better manage military forces for possible armed confrontation with the Soviet Union and its proxies.³ In post-Cold War era, these commands have been managed either on the basis of geographic or functional area of responsibility for the smooth functioning of military operations and maintaining military relations with other countries. Advent of 21st century has proved to be a turning point in USA's Africa policy, resulting in the formation of a separate command area for Africa. Today, these commands are prisms through which the Pentagon views the world.⁴ After the creation of AFRICOM, there are now six regional command areas across the globe. These are European Command (EUCOM) for European region, Central Command (CENTCOM) for Central Asia region, Pacific Command (PACOM) for Asia-Pacific region, Northern Command (NORTHCOM) for North America, Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) for South America and finally, Africa Command (AFRICOM) for African region.

Initially, the US military activities in Africa were divided among three geographic commands; EUCOM, CENTCOM and PACOM. In fact, this arrangement to divide a continent which was facing common problems and challenges was believed as unscientific. Therefore, a new command for Africa as a separate command was launched with initial operating capability as a sub-unified command under EUCOM in 2007, and reached full operating capability in October, 2008. It was the result of an internal reorganisation of the US military command structure, creating one administrative headquarters that is responsible to the Secretary of Defence for the US military relations with all African countries,⁵ except Egypt, which remains under CENTCOM. AFRICOM is unique in comparison to other commands as the Department of Defence (DoD) officials articulated-combatant command 'plus'. This implies that the commands have to pursue all the roles and responsibilities of a traditional geographic combatant command, including the ability to facilitate or lead military operations, as also include broader 'soft power' issues such as health, infrastructure rehabilitation, environment, economic development, security issues, conflict attention and other human security aspects. These, altogether, aimed at building a stable security environment and to incorporate a large civilian component from the other US governmental agencies to address these challenges. However, the headquarter of AFRICOM is to continue to remain at Kelley Barracks (Stuttgart), Germany until 2012 in order to allow the command to gain greater understanding of its long-term operational requirements.⁶

Why a Separate Command Area is Needed for Africa?

Although, the US forces have conventionally focused on fighting and winning wars, the security policy of the US is now trying to develop conflict prevention and management strategy in order to address threats through increased emphasis on threat security cooperation and capacity building with allies.

Africa has been plagued by political conflicts and instability over the last fifty years, retarding political, economic and social development in the African countries. It led many states to be turned into fragile states e.g. Somalia, Sierra-Leone etc. The inability or unwillingness of such fragile states to govern territory within their borders can lead to the creation of safe-havens for terrorist organisations.⁷ The US National Defence Strategy testified in 2008, that "the inability of many states to police themselves effectively or to work with their neighbours, to ensure regional security represents a challenge to the international system,... if left unchecked, such instability can spread and threaten regions of interest to the US, our allies, and friends".

However, there are enough evidences to suggest that terrorist groups might have profited from the collapse of the state administration and security institutions for instance, the situation during 1990s following civil wars in Sierra-Leone and Liberia.⁸ It is quite easy to convince individuals to support terrorism against the West if they face a bleak future in these kinds of environments, when it is contrasted with the situations prevailing in the Western countries.⁹ The Department of Defence (DoD) has also identified 'instability in foreign countries as a threat to the US interests', therefore, stability operation has been given priority over combatant operations.

Furthermore, some of the US officials believed that EUCOM and CENTCOM have become overstretched particularly given the demands created by the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. General James L Jones, the former Commander of EUCOM, pointed out in 2006 that "EUCOM's staff was spending more than half their time on Africa

issues”.¹⁰ His successor, General Bantz J Craddock testified that “Africa in recent years had posed the greatest security stability challenge” to EUCOM, and “a separate command for Africa would provide better focus and increased synergy in support of the US policy and engagement”.¹¹

The 2010 Quadrennial Defence Review (QDR) reiterates, “Preventing conflict, stabilizing crises, and building security sector capacity are essential elements of America’s national security approach”. Given Africa’s strategic significance to the US, the Bush Administration has established AFRICOM in order to:

... strengthen our security cooperation with Africa and help to create new opportunities to bolster the capabilities of our partners in Africa. Africa Command will enhance our efforts to help bring peace and security to the people of Africa and promote our common goals of development, health, education, democracy and economic growth in Africa. US government has formed a new command with additional roles and responsibilities (in addition traditional role of combatant) aimed at building a stable security environment and incorporate a larger civilian component from other US government agencies to address these challenges.

The above statement shows the increasing importance of Africa for the US and deepens the realisation that any instability in African countries has the potential to threaten the US interests on the continent.

AFRICOM and Its Objectives

The AFRICOM is responsible for organising the US military operations and maintaining military relations with all African countries. In addition, it is concerned with other US government agencies and international partners; conducts sustained security engagement through military-to-military programmes, military-sponsored activities and other military operations as directed to promote a stable and secure African environment.

The US officials have broadly underlined that the command’s mission is to promote the US strategic objectives of strengthening stability and security in the region by conducting wide ranging programmes and activities. Eventually, this will help African states to meet their goals of building capable and professional militaries that are subordinate to civilian authority, respect human rights, and adhere to the rule of law. Therefore, building partnership capacity through the security assistance appears to be the main objective of the US military strategy in Africa.

A key aspect of the command’s mission is its supporting role to other US agencies and departments’ efforts on the continent. AFRICOM is a non-kinetic force and is expected to supervise an array of non-combat related operations that relate to US’s strategic interests. But like other combatant commands, AFRICOM is expected to oversee military operations, when directed, to deter aggression and respond to crises.

The US Strategic Interests in Africa

Historically, the African continent had not been identified as a strategic priority for the US military. During the Cold War, Africa was nothing more than a chess board for superpower manoeuvring and the US foreign policy toward Sub-Saharan Africa had little to do with Africa. After the fall of the Soviet Union, many American policymakers considered the US military’s role and responsibilities on the continent to be minimal. The DoD in National Security Strategy for sub-Saharan Africa of 1995 outlined – “ultimately we see very little traditional strategic interest in Africa”. Therefore, the decade of 1990s witnessed a changed pattern of selective and limited engagement by the US as they apparently found no strategic interest in Africa.¹³

Following terrorist attacks on the US embassies in Nairobi (Kenya) and Dar-e-Salaam (Tanzania) in 1998, the US conducted a retaliatory attack against a pharmaceutical factory in Khartoum (Sudan), that the US government officials initially contended was producing precursors to chemical weapons for Al Qaeda. The embassy bombings and the retaliatory strike against Sudan are considered to be a turning point in the US strategic policy toward the region.¹⁴ Moreover, the terrorist attack on World Trade Centre (2001), launch of the US ‘War on Terror’, targeted the US embassy in Kenya (again in 2002), Algeria (2007) and Morocco (2007) and more importantly the terrorist prominent foothold in North Africa pressurised the US to take African issue seriously. Thus, organisation of the US military engagement in the region and improving the regions capacity to respond to a crisis has got a higher place on the US strategic agenda for the continent since 2001.

The US experts on Africa underlined five factors that have shaped increased US interest in Africa i.e. global trade, oil, armed conflicts, terror and HIV/AIDS. However, the US has sought to increase its economic relations with Africa. According to IMF, its total export has tripled from \$ 7.6 billion in 2000 to \$ 21 billion in 2010.¹⁵ Natural resources, particularly energy resources, dominate the products imported from Africa. It is important to note that African oil is of higher quality, lower sulphur content, easily refinable and, therefore, more profitable in comparison to oil from Gulf countries. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) estimates suggest Africa may supply as much as 25 per cent of imports to US by 2015 (African oil constituted approximately 18 per cent of all US imports in 2006).¹⁶ But the instability in Niger delta, Nigeria and other oil producing areas threaten the US interests. These factors had led to a conceptual shift to a strategic view of Africa.

President Obama has affirmed Africa’s strategic importance to the US on several occasions. In a speech in Ghana in July 2009, he said:

“When there is genocide in Darfur or terrorism in Somalia, these are not simply African problems, they are global security challenges, and they demand a global response.... And let me be clear: our Africa Command is focused not on establishing a foothold on the continent, but on confronting these common challenges to advance the security of America, Africa, and the world”.¹⁷

The 2010 National Security Strategy has also pointed out a number of priorities for African continent, including access to open markets, conflict prevention, global peacekeeping, counterterrorism, and the protection of vital carbon sinks. However, the growing Chinese engagement in the Africa has ushered the region into a competitive battlefield.

The view is widespread in Africa that AFRICOM is a tool to erode China's growing influence on the continent.¹⁸ It is in this context that some of the US defence scholars have also described the prevailing ambience in the African region as a proxy economic Cold War, especially in the quest for resources between China and the US.¹⁹

The US Military Assistance and Security Cooperation in Africa

In general, sub-Saharan countries lack the capabilities to sustain successful peace-keeping operations over the long term. This kind of situation often prompts and rationalises the US interventions in Africa. The US DoD is conducting a variety of activities in Africa. In addition to traditional contingency operations, the US military takes number of efforts aimed at increasing the capabilities of African militaries to provide security and stability for their own countries and the region as a whole. Their operational activities include humanitarian relief, peacekeeping, counter-narcotics, sanctions' enforcement, check proliferation of small arms and Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), non-combatant evacuation, maritime interdiction operations etc. For all these activities, the State Department provides funds and overall guidance and directions for the programmes under the foreign military assistance program.

A key objective of the US military strategy in Africa is to develop partnership capacity. The US government provides security assistance to African militaries through both bilateral and multilateral initiatives such as the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI), the Enhanced International Peacekeeping Capabilities (EIPC) programme, the African Regional Peacekeeping Programme (ARP), International Military Education and Training (IMET) etc. Besides, AFRICOM conducts an annual training exercise 'Africa Endeavor'20 with African nations. The first Africa Endeavor was held in South Africa in 2006. Subsequent exercises took place in Nigeria in 2008 and in Gabon in 2009. Recently, 'Africa Endeavor-2010' was concluded from August 9-19, 2010 in Accra, Ghana, which was attended by 36 African nations.

In October 2007, the US Naval Force in Europe launched a new initiative, the African Partnership Station (APS) under which a naval ship, the *USS Fort McHenry*, was deployed to the Gulf of Guinea to provide assistance and training to the Gulf nations. The US military assistance also includes efforts to improve information sharing networks between African countries through programmes such as the Multinational Information Sharing Initiative. AFRICOM also supports the US security sector reform initiatives in post-conflict countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Liberia, and Sudan.

The US military also occasionally provides advisers to peacekeeping missions such as those deployed in Sudan and Somalia. The US forces routinely conduct a variety of bilateral and multilateral joint exercises with African militaries through programmes such as Joint Combined Exchange Training and Disaster Assistance and Maritime Security Training.

In 1999, the Africa Centre for Strategic Studies (ACSS) was created to conduct a variety of academic activities, especially for African military and civilian officials aimed at promoting good governance and democratic values, countering ideological support for terrorism, and fostering regional collaboration and cooperation in the African defence and security sectors. Indeed, one of the main objectives of creating this centre was to support the development of the US strategic policy towards Africa.

In addition, the US government provides military equipment under the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) programme and loans to purchase such equipment under the Foreign Military Financing (FMF) programme. The US waves off repayment of these loans for African countries time to time.

The US adopted number of initiatives to address the root cause of terrorism and conduct military operations to destroy terrorist targets through military operations. The Department of State launched the Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI) programme to increase border security and counterterrorism capacities. US and African forces have conducted joint exercises such as Exercise Flintlock to improve security partnerships initiated under PSI programme and Trans Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP).²¹

African Perception and Response

The reactions to the creation of a new command for Africa are severely different in both the US and Africa. In the US the response has been largely positive, although a deep concern has been raised over the implications of placing missions and functions that are inherently civilian under the lead of the US military. The fear is that this may lead to a militarisation of the US funded programmes in Africa and hinder democratic development. On the other hand, in Africa the perceptions are more mixed. There has been considerable apprehension over the US motivations for creating AFRICOM. Some Africans worry that the move represents a neo-colonial effort to dominate the region militarily. Reports of the US air strikes in Somalia, the US support for Ethiopia's military intervention in Somalia and more recently the US support to protest movement in North African countries have added to those concerns.

Historically, the US programmes to train and equip African countries had resulted in devastation and violence as a result of the infusion of weapons and training into unstable areas of Africa. Many Africans view the US counter-terrorism efforts in Africa as nothing but continuation of the same programme under which military aid has been provided to countries such as Chad and Equatorial Guinea. Besides, the US foreign policy analysts have focused attention on China's engagement in Africa in recent years, which has led some to question whether an AFRICOM might be part of a new contest for influence on the continent.

However, all African perceptions on AFRICOM are not negative. Many feel that increased American attention to the continent's problems would potentially bring increased resources, training and assistance. Nigerian President Umaru Yar'Adua, during his December 2007 visit to Washington, DC, commented, "We shall partner with AFRICOM to assist not only Nigeria, but also the African continent to actualise its peace and security initiative, which is an initiative to help standby forces of brigade-size in each of the regional economic groupings within the African continent."²²

President Adua's statement on AFRICOM is consistent with Nigeria's well-known position on the necessity for Africa to avail itself of opportunities for enhanced capacity for the promotion of peace and security in Africa.

During President Bush's second official visit to Africa in February 2008, Ghana's President John Kufour also welcomed the US Africa Command initiative, which in his view, would strengthen the relationship and mutual respect between the two countries. In October 2008 the South African government, initially one of the most vocal on the continent in expressing concerns about the new command, welcomed the USS Theodore Roosevelt, the first US carrier to visit the country since the end of apartheid.

The US expects all African leaders to be optimistic but convincing them all would not be easy. It could not be denied that, in terms of its structure and declared intent, AFRICOM embodies a fresh attempt to create an inter-agency strategy that weaves diplomacy, defence and development into a coherent mechanism.

Conclusion

Historically, state security and human security in Africa had been undermined by superpowers especially during the Cold War period. Post-Cold War, however, Africa (freed from being the victim of superpower rivalries) subsequently opened the gates of new opportunities for African countries. This period marked a remarkable shift in the foreign policies of major economies such as the UK, France, China, India etc toward Africa which brought it to the centre stage in international politics. As a result, political, economic and military assistance to African countries have increased during last two decade. Likewise, a new phase in relations between Africa and the US arrived, in which the US military assistance and military training programmes have risen steadily.

AFRICOM, however, seems as a strategic move post-9/11 on the part of US, which is sensitive to local needs and regional differences. Undoubtedly, it is about projection of the US interests, but this doesn't mean that Africa is not benefited at all. In fact, this new scramble for African markets and natural resources, particularly energy resources, have put Africa as the next destination of strategic rivalry. Consequently, this has created a more competitive environment and strengthened the bargaining capacity of the African countries.

The key threats to the African security come from the intra-state conflicts and violent rivalries rather than inter-state. The major African challenges are to ensure security, stability and well governed environment in which political, economic and social development could be possible. Only by addressing the challenges which are due to the developmental deficit, security and stability can be achieved and maintained in the African region. This is because the lack of security prevents development from taking roots and thus perpetuating conflict and compromising development. In fact, in doing so, an impetus is needed which must come from within Africa itself and only then any external assistance would prove to be beneficial.

However, it seems that AFRICOM has changed the traditional approaches of security. Hopefully, its strategic missions would narrow the gap between security and development. AFRICOM could be more effective if there is a commonality of purpose and a coincidence of interests between the two. To develop this sense of shared purpose and mutual interest requires constant high-level dialogue, joint analysis efforts, and frequent re-calibration of priorities and programmes. Subsequently, AFRICOM could render a platform, where greater African and US engagement can decisively shape the continent's future. Certainly, many obstacles are there, which should be removed by collective efforts and by understanding how AFRICOM would add real value to African security and stability. It is crucial for the US-Africa relationship to have a durable foundation that could stand the test of time.

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Visit to the People's Republic of China (PRC) by a USI Delegation : A Report

Major General YK Gera (Retd)*

Background

A four member USI delegation visited China from 26 June 2011 to 02 July 2011 in pursuance of ongoing annual bilateral dialogue with China Institute for International Strategic Studies (CIISS) Beijing. This year, in addition, the delegation interacted with the PLA National Defense University (NDU) on 28 June 2011 and Shanghai Institute for International Studies (SIIS), Shanghai on 30 June 2011. The aim of bilateral dialogue is to exchange views and understand as to how each country looks at the contemporary issues driving the international agenda and the long term perspective of the global, regional and sub-regional developments.

Indian Participants

The Indian delegation comprised:-

- (a) Major General YK Gera (Retired), a former Chief Signal Officer, Central Command and Consultant (Research), USI of India - Delegation Leader.
- (b) Lieutenant General PC Katoch, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SC (Retired), a former Director General Information Systems, and a Member of USI Council.
- (c) Major General SV Thapliyal, SM (Retired), a former GOC of an infantry division, and a Member of USI Council.
- (d) Dr Srikanth Kondapalli, Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, and a Member of USI Board of Management, Centre for Strategic Studies and Simulation (CS3).

Interaction at PLA Defence Headquarters

On 28 June 2011, the Delegation called on General Ma Xiaotian, Deputy Chief of the PLA General Staff and Chairman of the CIISS and Member of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. Interaction lasted for an hour or so. General Ma Xiaotian welcomed the Delegation and traced the history of interaction between the two Institutions since 1992. The meeting was held in a cordial atmosphere and issues of mutual concern were discussed. General Ma mentioned that the CIISS had received the invitation to participate in the USI National Security Seminar on "Peace and Stability in the Asia-Pacific Region : An Assessment of the Security Architecture" scheduled for 17-18 Nov 2011. The CIISS would participate and should he be in Delhi at that time he too, would participate.

Interaction at PLA National Defense University (NDU)

The Chinese NDU is administered by the PLA. It is the highest educational institution for military education in China. It was set-up in 1985 with the merger of parts of the PLA Military Academy, PLA Political Academy and PLA Logistics Academy. It is claimed to be China's equivalent of "West Point".

For interaction, NDU team comprised four officers from the Strategic Affairs Department - Maj Gen Xue Guo'an, Col Han Xudong, Col Yang Yacai and Lt Col Zhao Jingfang. A presentation on the role, organisation and types of courses run at the NDU was made to the Delegation by Maj Gen Xue Guo'an. Separate Courses are conducted for the Armed Forces officers of the level of corps commanders and civilian government officials of the level of deputy governors and governors connected with national defence. For officers from foreign countries separate courses are conducted on as required basis. Duration of courses is generally one to two months. Strategic studies, operational art, information technology, armament technology and logistics are covered during the course. As far as political aspect is concerned stress is laid on Marxism and other political work.

The University is headed by a PLA officer on active service generally from the PLA Army. The political advice is currently rendered by an officer of the Air Force of the rank of Air Marshal. The teaching faculty comprises guest speakers who are experts in the field. In addition, basic Directing Staff is also posted to the NDU.

Seminar at the CIISS

Chinese Participation

A seminar was held at the CIISS commencing at 0900 hrs on 29 June 2011. The Chinese participants included Maj Gen Liu Pei (Retd), Vice Chairman CIISS, Rear Admiral Yin Zhuo, Maj Gen Sun Peide (Retd), Maj Gen Cai Jihua (Retd), Maj Gen Li Mengyan (Retd), Mr Jin Youguo, Mr Wang Chaunjing, Mr Jiang Zhenxi, Mr Hu Yumin and Mr Zhu Jie amongst others.

Opening Remarks

In his opening remarks, Maj Gen YK Gera (Retd) highlighted that the aim of bilateral interaction at the CIISS was to discuss contemporary issues and to promote mutual understanding and co-operation. To acquaint the audience, a short presentation of the role, charter, organisation and main activities of the USI was made. This was followed by deliberations on the necessity for Regional Co-operation. Problems affecting most nations today are: multifaceted terrorism, sea piracy, money laundering, drug trafficking, natural disasters, climate change, environmental degradation, health pandemics and so on. These problems are generally beyond the capability of a single nation to resolve and call for genuine cooperation between nations. Certain problems are best resolved regionally by pooling in expertise, resources, information and intelligence. With problems now taking on a formidable and in certain cases a sinister dimension, like piracy in Somalian waters, sky rocketing oil prices, WMD proliferation, nuclear terrorism,

Fukushima nuclear power plant meltdown and so on, a re-look has become imperative. Their adverse fall out will affect more than one nation and perhaps the entire region. Thus, it is incumbent upon all those who are part of a regional entity to resolve all such issues in a spirit of sincere cooperation beyond narrow partisan interests.

Developments in Afghanistan have brought NATO to our door step and Pakistan has become a major non-NATO ally of the United States of America. The US - India relations, though not very close, have acquired a certain degree of salience because of some shared values. It is also very evident that India will not allow itself to be used in any strategy of containment. In any case, the USA and China remain deeply engaged economically despite occasional political rhetoric.

What is of particular interest and concern to India is China's strategic involvement with Pakistan for the last five decades or so, especially in the areas of non-peaceful uses of nuclear technology and support in their military infrastructure development. China has shown anxiety over rising incidence of terrorism in Pakistan, especially in connection with Chinese workers. In the contemporary world, terrorism is one factor which unites us all. The experience in Afghanistan teaches us that encouragement of *jihād* in a neighbouring country would eventually boomerang. The proposed US pullout beginning July 2011 may pose new challenges of regional cooperation.

The Chinese response was cautious and left out issues of discord. It was suggested by the Chinese speakers that India and China ought to reduce trade dependence on the USA and strive for global stability amongst crucial stakeholders - the USA, Russia, China, India and Japan. Deng Xiaoping's 1980 statement on Indian and Chinese development pattern crucial for Asian Century was quoted, "India as the office and China as the factory in the IT sector". Yet, some speakers insisted on cooperation between China and India at the South Asian / Indian Ocean Rim (IOR) levels, instead of Asian, regional or global levels. Regarding withdrawal of the US and NATO forces from Afghanistan, Chinese scholars stated that it would adversely affect regional security situation, although the US would not leave Afghanistan without creating a viable security mechanism.

Security Architecture in Asia

The Seminar had two sessions in all. Session I was chaired by Maj Gen Liu Pei and Session II by Maj Gen YK Gera. The proceedings started with opening remarks by Maj Gen Liu Pei. The first paper on "*The Newly Developed Situation and Security Architecture in Asia*" was presented by Dr Shrikant Kondapalli. It was followed by a paper on the same subject by Mr Jin Youguo of the CISS. The standard of papers was very good and discussion that followed was brief due to paucity of time. Important points covered are contained in the subsequent paragraphs.

A majority of the 43 Asian countries are today faced with a number of new security challenges, in addition to the lingering presence of historical problems. As relatively new modern nation states, these countries were pre-occupied for some time with the protection of their respective sovereignty and territorial integrity as they embarked on enhancing their peoples' prosperity and well being. They are now faced with several new security challenges - mainly in the non-traditional security aspects such as terrorism in different forms, rising food and energy prices, water scarcity, environmental issues, disruption to the international commerce and energy imports through increased piracy. A second bout of debilitating international financial crisis has enhanced advanced western countries' efforts at trade protectionism and resource competition among developing countries. Fukushima nuclear power plant meltdown has confounded the issue at a time when several countries were expanding their plans for the construction of more nuclear power plants.

Despite a spate of new challenges to the security of Asia, traditional threats continued. This is reflected in the higher defence outlays and fresh acquisitions by a number of countries in the region, development of ballistic missile shields and territorial conflicts. WMD proliferation, Cheonan sinking and Yongpyeong firings further added tension in the region. These reflect growing security dilemmas in the region and call for comprehensive, inclusive and effective security mechanisms in Asia which lacks such a mechanism so far.

Efforts for evolving Security Mechanisms in Asia without tangible results include - Asian Relations Conference organised by India in 1946; 27 member Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung in 1954; transformation of ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in the 1990s with addition of China, Japan, South Korea, India and others; Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and initiation of Six Party talks on denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula. Economic and trade issues are being addressed by organisations such as G-20, Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation, Asia-Europe Meeting, Russia-China-India trilateral dialogues; Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa; Tuman River Delta grouping with Korea, Mongolia and Japan; Bo Ao Forum, the Mekong River projects and so on. The Jakarta International Defense Dialogue includes participation by military experts, academics and policy makers from 34 countries including China, the USA and Russia. In March 2011 session, issues discussed included Korean Peninsula, Libya, Somalia, disasters in Japan, oil prices and refugees. The Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) succeeded in creating "Nuclear Weapons Free Zone" in Central Asia. No single security architecture exists in Asia that could effectively address diverse challenges. As rising countries in Asia; China, Japan and India have a responsibility to provide initiatives in this regard.

Challenges in Maritime Security

Rear Admiral Yin Zhuo presented a paper on "Challenges in Maritime Security". This was followed by a presentation by Lieutenant General PC Katoch (Retd) on the same subject. Important points covered were as under:-

(a) A holistic view of the maritime security challenges is not being taken. The US aims to maximise sea control and the US dominance has weakened the region, even as the US is manipulating strategic alliances against China. China and India both want a multi-polar world as multi-polarity will improve the situation in the region. Protection of Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOCs) is not within the defence capability of a single country. The authority to deal with maritime security should be the UN and not the USA. Cooperation between China and India will deter western countries from resorting to the use of force in this region.

(b) The USA wants to change political systems and values by force. China has no intent to impose its own political system on others. China is concerned about her national integrity and sovereignty in the context of Taiwan. The sea is very important as 90 per cent volume of China's trade is by sea. 60 per cent of China's population is along the eastern coast, which will go up to 70 per cent by the year 2030. By 2030, the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is likely to touch \$ 13 trillion. China is sensitive to her national interests in the 1500 kms Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). China is looking to resolve the disputes with neighbouring countries, as proclaimed by President Hu. Some treat maritime security as diplomatic jargon but it is actually a core concept. China is opposed to hegemony of the US / western powers and use of force since everyone has a right to develop its fair share of sea resources. The UN needs to have an international legislative system to streamline the use of seas. There have been talks of China's increased defence budget but China has no offensive plans. For maritime cooperation, cooperative mechanisms should be established in North East Asia and South East Asia on the lines of ASEAN. The region requires multilateral cooperation, like active cooperation in the Gulf Region, under the UN.

The following points emerged from the discussion on 'Challenges in Maritime Security':-

(a) Both India and China face maritime security challenges - India more with increasing China-Pakistan nexus including continuing Chinese support to Pakistan's *jihad* against India, enhanced Chinese influence on account of impending US withdrawal from Afghanistan and Chinese ambitions in the IOR.

(b) Increased Chinese presence in IOR is inevitable. Though Chinese stance is that they do not believe in force, they have done quite the opposite on numerous occasions in South China Sea against her neighbours especially, arbitrarily extending her EEZ. China can be expected to use force in areas other than the South China Sea as well, if she perceives it in her national interest.

Challenges of Global Counter Terrorism

Major General SV Thapliyal (Retd) presented a paper on "The Present Situation and Challenges of Global Counter Terrorism". This was followed by a presentation by Mr Wang Chuanjing of CISS on the same subject. Important aspects covered were as under:-

(a) Terrorism is a global problem and epicentre of all terrorism is Pakistan. Tackling terrorism needs a global effort. There is need for regional intelligence centres in all affected countries connected to each other for intelligence sharing. The most worrisome today are cyber terrorism and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) terrorism.

(b) With respect to WMD terrorism, need is to concentrate on biological, chemical and radiological terrorism. Nuclear terrorism is a remote possibility. Terrorism has prompted countries to take unilateral actions thereby rendering the UN to a status of helpless bystander. Terrorism has caused a slump in economic activity. Military budgets are increasing year after year. There is a need to combat terrorism in all its manifestations.

(c) To counter WMD terrorism, access must be denied to the terrorists to material, expertise and other enabling capabilities.

Salient features of the response by the Chinese scholars were as under:-

(a) Terrorism is certainly a global menace. The Chinese scholars maintained an ambivalent stance and were not willing to accept that Pakistan is the epicentre of all terrorism. In fact some scholars endorsed the view that Pakistan was doing a good job of tackling terrorism. Islamic terrorism has spread because of poverty. The Arab nations are against the US because no US President gets elected without support of the Jewish Community.

(b) The US withdrawal from Afghanistan can lead to return of terrorism, and both China and India face the threat of increase in terrorism, energy shortages and religious fundamentalism. As an emerging world power, the Chinese appeared unwilling to join global war on terrorism. The Chinese were unwilling to concede that they were a big influence on Pakistan and, therefore, could restrain it. They were not forthcoming regarding their views on what needed to be done once the US and NATO forces pulled out from Afghanistan.

Interaction at SIIS

The Delegation had interaction at SIIS from 0900 to 1100 hrs on 30 June 2011. The SIIS also fielded four participants for discussion. They were - Dr Shao Yuqun, Deputy Director, Centre for South Asia Studies; Dr Wang Weihua, Mr Zhao Gancheng and Mr Liu Zongyi. Mr Yang Jiemin brother of Chinese Minister of External Affairs is the Chairman of the SIIS. Since he was out of station, the Session was conducted by Dr Shao Yuqun the Deputy Director. Maj Gen Liu Pei and Col Jiang Weiqing of the CISS who had accompanied the Delegation from Beijing were also present during the deliberations but they did not participate in discussions.

Contemporary issues such as likely withdrawal of the US and NATO forces from Afghanistan and its effect on regional security; need for Sino-Indian co-operation in Afghanistan for economic and infrastructure development; likely future scenarios in Pakistan and Afghanistan and need for instituting appropriate measures to counter international terrorism were discussed. Discussion was frank, free and lively. The Chinese side was quite open and forthcoming during the discussion.

General Impressions

The visit was well conducted, with red carpet laid out. Maj Gen Liu Pei (Retd), Vice Chairman CISS and Col Jiang Weiqing, Senior Research Fellow, CISS accompanied the delegation throughout. The attitude was positive and contentious issues were discussed by both sides calmly. Both sides put across their views with logic and conviction.

The emergence of India's economy is being recognised by China albeit grudgingly, both countries maintaining an annual growth of around 9-10 per cent. At the same time, we should not get carried away by the \$ 60 billion Sino-Indian annual trade, which is heavily skewed in favour of China and small compared to her annual trade of \$150 billion with a country like Germany. Besides, Taiwan is one of the largest trading partners of China and yet China is focused on annexing Taiwan.

The Chinese side was acutely protective of Pakistan / ISI. However, our bringing out the safety of Chinese workers in Pakistan / POK, was well appreciated by them. Simultaneous narrative of double standards of the US against terrorism and the Chinese dealing with Islamic insurgency in Xinjiang only through development, indicated Chinese resolve to continue with the art of ambiguity.

Increased Chinese presence in the IOR appears inevitable, even though their stance is that they do not believe in use of force. They were still referring to Arunachal Pradesh as Southern Tibet and were critical of Dalai Lama's continued stay in India. They were highly critical of Indian media, which they felt was anti China.

The Chinese gave a clear impression that China had already become a global player, and a strong power, and would like to adopt appropriate measures for mapping out China's big power strategy.

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The Straits of Malacca and China's Strategic Vulnerability

Shri RS Kalha, IFS (Retd)*

Chinese national security planners sitting in Beijing looking for weak links in the overall strategic profile of their country would spot one immediately. It would be the Malacca Straits. By any objective indications available, it would seem that the Chinese have recognised this fact and are in the process of taking adequate corrective measures.

The Malacca Straits are a shallow and a narrow waterway linking the Indian Ocean with the South China Sea. At some points it is only 23 metres deep. At its narrowest point the navigable channel is about 1.5 to 2 kilometres wide and yet it is one of the busiest waterways in the world.¹ Nearly 60,000 ships, including huge oil tankers carrying oil from West Asia to the major oil consuming nations of China, Japan and South Korea, navigate through the Straits on an annual basis. Nearly 80 per cent of China's oil imports pass through this route. China relies heavily on imported oil, gas and other natural resources to feed its growing economy and these are mainly transported by sea. It is expected that China's imports of crude oil may exceed 300m tons by 2012 and by 2030 nearly 75 per cent of its oil consumption would be based on imported oil. Today China is the world's second largest importer of oil after the USA and it has even overtaken Japan. Nearly 10 per cent of China's total energy consumption is based on imported oil.²

A Chinese newspaper in 2004 stated, "it is no exaggeration to say that whosoever controls the Straits of Malacca will have a stranglehold on the energy route to China". In case the Straits of Malacca were ever to be blockaded, it would mean a detour of at least three to four days extra navigation by ships and that also not through very safe waters. Hard headed realists that the Chinese are, they are sceptical of the attitude of the US and India, the two countries with sufficient naval power to cause acute embarrassment to China bound shipping, in case it ever became necessary. It is for this reason that China watches each joint exercise between the US and Indian Navies with such great care and if the Japanese or the Vietnamese Navies were to join in, Chinese paranoia would become even that much more acute. This was recently demonstrated when a Chinese naval ship buzzed an Indian naval ship INS Airavat on a goodwill visit to a Vietnamese port.

Deeply aware of their vulnerability the Chinese have already started to take effective counter-measures to obviate such a necessity. Firstly, the Chinese have already enhanced the capacity of their strategic oil reserves, with the location and exact quantities stored in the strategic reserves considered to be a state secret. Secondly, the Chinese have moved smartly to tie up additional quantities of crude from countries such as Venezuela, so that oil tankers carrying crude oil for China would not have to cross the Malacca Straits. In addition, China has recently advanced as loan a sum of US \$ 20 billion enhancing the existing line of credit to Venezuela to finance new power plants and infrastructure construction projects in return for long term oil supply commitments. Thirdly, and most important of all are the new oil and gas pipe-lines that China is building right across the Central Euro-Asian heartland as well as from Myanmar to Southern China. The importance of these oil and gas pipelines across the Euro-Asian heartland and Myanmar lies in the fact that most, if not all, would be immune from hostile military action.

Realising the importance of obtaining access to Central Asian oil and gas resources the Chinese moved smartly as a first step to conclude boundary disputes lingering from the Soviet era with the former Soviet Republics of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan. With boundary settlements also successfully negotiated with Russia and Mongolia, China's entire border line with the former Soviet Union and Mongolia stands settled and free from incidents and consequent tension in relations. The political and boundary settlements thus arrived at made it possible for China to negotiate far reaching economic and commercial deals with these newly independent, but resource rich nations of Central Asia.

Having settled the debilitating and vexed boundary disputes, it was but natural that China would sooner rather than later negotiate crude oil and gas supply arrangements with the countries of Central Asia. Negotiations began first with Kazakhstan and by 2004 construction of a 1035 Km long oil pipe line costing about US \$700 m commenced which would join Atasu in Kazakhstan with Alashankou in Xinjiang [Sinkiang]. Construction was completed by December 2005. This pipeline can carry 200,000 b/d of crude oil and it is expected that its capacity would be further enhanced to nearly double its present capacity by 2012.

Similarly, China moved to tap the vast natural gas resources located in Turkmenistan. It is estimated that Turkmenistan holds the 5th largest reserves of gas in the world. By 2009, negotiations were complete for an 1140 kilometre long gas pipeline that would carry 30bcm of gas from Turkmenistan through Uzbekistan and southern Kazakhstan to the Chinese town of Horgos. From here it would link up with the existing Chinese pipeline system. Thus both crude and gas from Central Asia would soon be fuelling the engines of the Chinese economy and its growth centres situated along its Pacific coastline.

But by far the most important development has been the construction of the Russian Eastern Siberian-Pacific [ESPO] pipeline which commenced on 27th April 2009. This became possible as a result of an agreement between Russia and China under which China would offer Russian firms long term credit amounting to US \$ 25 billion in return for which Russia would supply 300mt of oil through this pipeline for the period 2011 to 2030. This pipeline which begins its journey from the Russian city of Taishet reaches the Russian Pacific coastline some 4200 Km away and is capable of supplying crude both to China and the other Pacific Ocean countries such as Japan and South Korea. The Russians have built a new oil terminal port at Kozmino on the Pacific coastline. At a point near Skovorodino, inside the Russian Far East, this pipeline is barely 50 Km away from the Chinese border and a branch is being built to supply crude oil to China directly. The capacity of the pipeline is estimated at 600,000b/d and latest indications are that this section of the pipeline is ready for commissioning. Thus Russia can supply Siberian crude independently to China as well as to Japan and South Korea without any political implications. In addition, Russia and China are presently negotiating for the construction of two gas pipelines that would carry, when completed, 69 bcm of gas from Russia to China. These developments are symptomatic of the growing political, military and economic synergy between Russia and China. China today is one of the most significant and largest purchasers of Russian military hardware and these purchases include state of the art systems.

With Myanmar too the Chinese have been quick off their feet. The South-East Asia Pipeline Company, an affiliate of the China National Petroleum Company [CNPC], signed a deal with the Myanmar National Oil and Gas Company to build two pipelines [Oil and Gas] from the Myanmarese port of Kyaukpyu situated on the west coast of Myanmar to Ruili in Yunnan Province of China. From there the pipelines can be extended to feed besides Yunnan, the other southern Chinese provinces of Guangdong, Guangxi and Hunan. The two pipelines are 1100 Km in length and are expected to carry 22 m/t per year of crude oil and 12 bcm of gas on an annual basis and are expected to be completed by 2013. Along with the oil and gas pipelines, China has also undertaken to build a rail link from the west coast of Myanmar to the Yunnan province of China. It is said that the alignment of this railway line will be the same as of the oil pipeline. With such measures China hopes to minimise the economic impact of disruptions that can occur to its sea-borne energy flows.

Apart from taking measures to free themselves to some extent from the vulnerabilities that face them at present times, the Chinese have also undertaken a programme to strengthen their naval capabilities. The Chinese Navy is fast developing a blue water capability so as to be able to project its power in the South China Sea, as also at the eastern mouth of the Malacca Straits. With the acquisition of an aircraft carrier [Soviet origin Varyag] the Chinese Navy is no longer merely a coastal force capable of defending the Chinese coastline only. China's naval modernisation effort encompasses a broad array of weapon acquisitions, including anti-ship ballistic missiles (ASBMs), anti-ship cruise missiles (ASCMs), land-attack cruise missiles (LACMs), surface-to-air missiles, aircraft, submarines, destroyers, frigates, patrol craft and amphibious ships. In addition, observers believe that China may soon begin (or already has begun) construction of indigenous aircraft carriers. China's naval modernisation effort also includes reforms and improvements in maintenance and logistics.

Reports indicate that the PLA Navy possesses some 75 principal surface combat vessels, more than 60 submarines, 55 medium and large amphibious ships, and roughly 85 missile-equipped small vessels. The Navy has now completed construction of a major naval base at Yulin, on the southern tip of Hainan Island. The base is large enough to accommodate a mix of attack and ballistic missile submarines. China continues to produce a new class of nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN). JIN-class (Type 094) SSBNs will eventually carry the JL-2 submarine-launched ballistic missile with an estimated range of some 7,400 km. The JIN and the JL-2 will give the PLA Navy its first credible sea-based nuclear capability.³

A recent study⁴ concluded that a 25 per cent contraction in oil supplies would mean that China would suffer an annual reduction of 1.2 per cent to 1.4 per cent of its economic growth rate. Thus the energy contraction would be a most severe economic setback for China and likely to cause maximum damage. Hence, Indian strategic planners should take a hard second look at what the answer should be in case China continues to threaten and intrude across the fragile Sino-Indian border. Should it be that more Infantry battalions be added to beef up Indian border defences or should the Indian Navy be strengthened? This need not be an either or option given that India too is progressing well economically, but if a choice has to be made due leverage must be given to the Indian Navy.

Thus given the circumstances indicated above, serious thought should be made to strengthening not only the Eastern and Southern Naval Commands, but to carve out a new South-Eastern Naval Command based on the strategically located Andaman and Nicobar islands. This new Naval Command should be of sufficient strength and tasked to carry out multiple force projections close to the Malacca Straits. It should also be able to interdict Chinese bound cargo through Myanmarese ports and dominate the Myanmar coastline. If necessary, it can be complimented with adequate air power. Any provocation by the Chinese PLA along the Sino-Indian border should be met by making a force demonstration close to Chinese shipping in the Malacca Straits, as also close to the Myanmarese port of Kyaukpyu from where the oil pipeline for China originates. Given China's present vulnerability, the message will reach home sooner than can be expected.

Endnotes

1. IHT 28th December 2000.
2. Military and Security Developments Involving PRC 2011 – Annual Report to Congress by Department of Defence, USA.
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4. Rand Study [2003]: Fault lines in China's Economic Terrain/Santa Monica/pp105-116.

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Introduction

Grand Periphery Military Strategy' (*da zhoubian guojia junshi zhanlue*) is the new cliché in vogue in the lexicon of Chinese think tanks. It appeared first, in a story in a Hong Kong based Chinese vernacular daily *Ta Kung Pao* on September 24, 2009 that doubted the capabilities of the People's Liberation Army to defend its 'far flung borders'.¹ The views were subsequently echoed elsewhere including another prominent Hong Kong based vernacular daily *Jing Bao* in its despatch on January 29, 2010. As it could impinge on geopolitics of a number of countries in China's periphery including India, it calls for due academic understanding.

The concept strikingly received doctrinaire fillip three months later in April 2010 in a paper of Chen Xiangyang, an associate researcher at the Chinese Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR). He spelled out the dynamics and espoused the imperatives of the strategy for China in the face of fast changing geopolitics in Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Northeast Asia. He has thereafter found ready audience in a section of both serving and retired People's Liberation Army (PLA) brass, including the deputies to the just concluded annual conclave of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) National Committee; notably Rear Admiral Yin Zhou and Major General Luo Yuan, with a difference.

Some of the China watchers, including Christina Lin look at the Chinese move to expand the high speed rail networks and equipping over 1000 railway stations with military transportation facilities as a step forward in the direction.³ The analysts tend to link-up the involvement of PLA General Logistics Department (GLD) in the design, planning and operations in strategically located railway projects as a testimony. Nonetheless, the PLA decision to take to Shanghai-Nanjing Express train to transport back military contingents to barracks in November 2010 has been hailed as a pilot run towards the military goal of rapid deployment in hours of need.

Adherence to 'grand peripheral strategy' in China's case, *ipso facto*, would mean proactive military actions along several theatres, including maritime neighbours. However, fast and secure rail communications, already built in Tibet and put on the drawing board to connect to Nepal, and for that matter, the future plans to expand the networks to other countries on its periphery will have squarely limited end operational bearings for a variety of reasons.⁴ Notwithstanding, it would call for doctrinal reforms in its approach, which can come only at a substantially high costs in the multipolar world of tomorrow. As China presently stands on the right side of the changing international power balance, the freaks of unilateral military option can not be completely ruled out.

The paper explores the dynamics of China's craving for 'Grand Periphery' Strategy' and delves into all plausible contours of its strategic bearings. As an heir of a distinct strategic culture, built assiduously on the conceptual edifice of *Shi* (strategic advantage), putatively an approach to turn the strategic configuration of power to one's side, the Chinese elite are least likely to speak out of turn. It is thus postulated that media articulation on the issue as such constituted China's 'strategic deception' (*Zhanlue Zhali*) to hoodwink the world at large, much in tandem with Sun Zi's strategic edict *bing yi zha li* (war is based on deception), and something that the folk tales of Zhuge Liang goes to speak about China's strategic culture.⁵

Official silence, including conspicuous absence of the concept in the just published White Paper, "China's National Defence in 2010", cannot brook any different either. Every time China has acquired a measure of economic and military muscle, it has revised its doctrine. The media adulations of the concept, as such, could be assumed, much less explained, as a concomitant but planned, outcome of China's surge on international scene, both as a reckonable economic and military power.

Schematically, the Paper focuses on : Doctrinaire Roots and Elbow of the Approach; Fault Lines in the Evolving Strategic Disposition; and, the Vulnerability and Survival Fits against the Chinese Adventure. The assumptions of the study include: the new phenomenon in China's strategic disposition from defensive to offensive is a product of China's growing stature in economic and military might; the Chinese decision makers are cognizant of the fault lines and hence, the media articulations underway largely lack teeth in the final go; and, the peripheral countries cannot afford to ignore.

Doctrinaire Roots and Elbow of the Approach

Successive generations of Chinese leaders including Hu Jintao are credited for upholding in age old *parabellum* strategic culture with a difference, where the concept of *Quan Bian* (absolute flexibility) constitutes a key decision axiom.⁶ It is meticulously grooved in the fundamentals of the concept of *Shi*, which gives Chinese leadership a measure of leeway in strategic positioning with regard to time, place, and correlation of forces and deception to magnify limited resources and deter enemies from being adventurous, either by way of military attacks or ideological subversion.⁷ It draws on Sun Zi's maxim of 'war as vital function of state'.

As the study of Michael D Swaine and Ashley J Tellis bears out, China has gone for use of aggressive coercive and/or pacifist non-coercive measures, either to secure Chinese heartland against foreign invasion or annex peripheral territories all through its imperial and modern epoch in full calculation of its comparative advantages.⁸ Expansion and contraction of control and influence over its extended boundary and periphery has constantly been a function of rise and fall in China's comprehensive national power (CNP). It has historically used military force while in strong position to establish relations of deference towards China, to absorb nearby areas and to deter or repel attacks from the near and/or distant periphery.⁹

Strategic culture produces tendencies or creates predispositions. It has thus discernible role in developing attitudes and shaping behaviour. This is why China under Nationalist (*Kuomintang*) or communist (*Gongchangdang*)

rule has been no different on the issue. Though with limited success, during 1911-35 epoch China under the Nationalist rule launched military campaigns in Tibet, Xinjiang and Mongolia to create strong buffers against the British and Russian powers on the periphery. As against all social, cultural, linguistic and historical factors in vogue, the Nationalists blatantly took pretext of suzerainty and/or limited control of the last Qing emperor to justify the adventure. In 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, under the Communist reign again, China has gone to undertake similar campaigns on its periphery with a variety of military and political objectives, ranging from formal incorporation of peripheral region that had taken place during the Qing and early Republican periods to invade other sovereign powers such as India and Vietnam. Differences, whatsoever, can be seen in the case of policy which is a function of an array of factors including technology. China's successive quest for doctrinal reform in military strategy (*Junshi Zhanlüe*) in the past six odd decades testifies the hypothesis.¹⁰

While integral to China's strategic thinking, the doctrinal sheath of China's 'peripheral strategy' has been shedding opaqueness at a gradual but slow pace. This can be again a studied move in the context of Chinese leadership, embedded to their strategic past, expressed in two metaphors, the Great Wall (*chang cheng*) and the Empty Fortress (*kong yanwuting*), the symbols of an intermix of weaknesses and strength. There have been discernible shifts and swings in the connotations of key concepts in doctrinaire writings of Chinese think tanks at all the four levels: strategic contemplations- the military thought (*junshi sixiang*), military strategy (*junshi zhanlue*), military campaign (*junshi Zhanyi*) and military tactics (*junshi zhanshu*).

For long until 1985, Central Military Commission (CMC) resolutions that endorsed Deng Xiaoping's strand of the 'local wars' (*jubu zhanzheng*) as against total war (*quanbu zhanzheng*), the Chinese think tanks did not speculate beyond the precepts of People's War (*renmin zhanzheng*) and Active Defence (*jiji fangyu*). There was perhaps no alternative either. China's subsistence economy must not have afforded in equipping 2.8 million strong People's Liberation Army (PLA) properly.¹¹ People's War strategy just called for broad based people's support and three stage strategy of protracted warfare (*chijiuzhan*) with guerilla warfare (*youji zhanzheng*) as the mainstay.¹²

Mao Zedong defined Active Defence in contrast to passive defence. In operational setting, it stood for seizing initiative of first strike. While intrinsically 'offensive in substance', the Chinese approach to war thus, measured 'defensive in form'. Drawing on Sun Zi's strategic palliative of 'strong-weak' state calculation, the strategy enabled China to make virtue of its necessity. All Chinese military campaigns in the past, including Sino-Indian War of 1962 theoretically stand grounded to this set of periphery strategy.

The change phenomenon, carrying seeds and sprouts of relative transparency in words and deeds, is a product of hard debate in face of an array of developments, though within the four walls of set national military objectives.¹³ The *Science of Military Strategy* (*zhanlue*), brought out by the Academy of Military Science (AMS) in 1987, offered a limited approach to strategy of 'local wars' with offensive intent and purpose, based on People's War Under Modern Conditions, using positional and mobile warfare along with combined arms operations to counter plausible Soviet invasion. The 1999 volume of the *Science of Military Strategy*, by contrast, outlined a broader approach to strategy based on preparing to fight a range of 'local wars under modern high-tech conditions' (*gaojishu tiaojian xia jubu zhanzheng*) that vary in objectives, intensity and lethality. Two other works of the year, one by General Zhang Wannian and the other by General Ma Baoan under the captions *Contemporary World Military Affairs and China's National Defence* (*Dangdai Shijie Junshi Yu Zhongguo Guofang*) and *Strategic Theory Study Guide* (*Zhanlüe lilun xuexi zhinan*) respectively added technological dimension to the thesis. The critique of the 1991 Gulf and 1999 Kosovo Wars rather served as the living justifications. The rhetoric of the US promoting 'python strategy' and reaping the best of two worlds in selective use of "Monroe Doctrine," the "Open Door" policy, and the "Truman Doctrine" served as a teacher by negative example in goal setting for the strategy. *Study Guide for Strategic Theory* (*Zhanlüe Lilun Xuexi Zhinan*), brought out by the Chinese National Defence University in 2002, contains firmed up stance of the Chinese think-tanks on the nature and character of the concept of 'local wars under modern high-tech conditions'.

Fault Lines in Offensive Strategic Disposition

Paradigm shifts in China's doctrinaire approach to war runs along the startling changes in the institutional capacity and operational capabilities of the Chinese war machine. All this has come about with a change in China's threat perception. Break up of Soviet Union reduced the *casus belli* of a total war to a point of nullity. There were yet scores of flash points. It forced Chinese leaders and military planners to think of inevitability of 'local wars'. Nonetheless, the speed and lethality of the Gulf war got Chinese strategists to think of 'local wars under modern conditions'.

Track change in China's strategic disposition while a reality, the decision matrix of 'offensive-defensive' military option in respect of either of the periphery countries including India cannot be straight and simple for the Chinese decision makers. Proponents of politico-military 'Offence-Defence Theory' (ODT), in particular Stephen Van Evera, Geroge H Quester, Thomas J Christensen, Keir A Lieber and Jack Snyder, offer invaluable insights, though with varying thrust on technology and strategy respectively independent and dependent variables.¹⁴

They talk of 'Offensive-Defensive Balance' (ODB) as the prime determinant of decisions. Among the contemporary Chinese military writers, Xu Jin and Tang Shiping tend to uphold the preeminence of ODB factor in strategic field decisions of either offensive or defensive disposition.¹⁵ The predictive strength of the theory while not absolute, the changes in China's ODB in comparative perspective of one or the other periphery country including India can stand stead as a veritable indicator of China's defensive and/ or offensive strategic disposition.

Drawing on the constructs of 'defensive realism', it is hard to imagine that the Chinese leadership and military planners would ever hold offensive strategic disposition while the ODB was tipped in favour of defence of the national interests.¹⁶ Preemptive strikes as part of offensive strategic disposition have the potential of draining out China's military, economic and diplomatic resources without tangible gains. It can better live with politico-military smoke screen of mighty military power until comparative technological advancement come to give a fillip to its offensive advantages. This is with a caveat that the adherents of John J Mearsheimer's theory of 'offensive realism' among the Chinese academics do not get an upper hand.

Military technology and military strategy respectively constitute the independent and dependent variable of ODB in the ODT.¹⁷ In the decision matrix, the tactical and strategic advantages over the individual and/or group of target countries would be the main determinants of the strategy to be adopted, lest the adventure should turn counter productive. Again, the advantage of the kind can not be absolute for all time and against all target countries. The military technology is again both defensive and offensive in nature. The chasm whatsoever would stand for the fault line against adventure.

For long, the second-strike capable nuclear arsenal was often understood to indicate the supremacy of the defence in the offence-defence balance, essentially guaranteeing security for the state which possessed it. China has been assiduously working for it with a measure of reckonable success.¹⁸

However, it has yet to cross quite a few milestones of aggressive strategic disposition. The era of information based warfare has come to put all pervasive premium on China running berserk. Sun Zi's heritage stands for 'victory without war'. Chinese leadership and military planners could then pull all stops for aggressive disposition only when 'strategic advantage and strategic positioning' against the adversary could look plausible.

Plausible Chinese Adventure and the Survival Fits

China's ODB stands positive against most peripheral countries. Save neutralizing effects of extra-ODB factors at work, the probabilities of China wantonly flexing military muscle to settle scores much less secure core interests look immensely high. With the projected exponential growth in some of the components of China's *zonghe guoli* (comprehensive national power), while the archaic institutional structure of the state responded sub-optimally in addressing the ever growing contradictions in what the Chinese call *shehui guanli* (social management), the fears of China using military means to safeguard core interests and/or settle scores with peripheral countries with relatively low ODB would theoretically remain real. The refrain of Chen Xiangyang and his ilk in the Chinese media articulation in favour of China better holding aggressive disposition in face of instable neighbourhood could turn prophetic for all practical purposes in times to come.

Perceived diaspora effects of the April 2010 Kyrgyzstan crisis on the political movements in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR) perhaps lay at the back of China's concern. Urumuqi is just an hour long flight away from riot-stricken Osh in south Kyrgyzstan. As an editorial in the Global Times suggested, China feared a Balkan-type crisis to the detriment of its strategic interests.¹⁹ A wide range of Chinese think-tanks including Xu Xiaotian, an expert on Central Asian studies at the high-profile China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) and Dong Manyuan, an anti-terror expert at the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS) looked rather askance with a difference on the viability of regional security arrangements to stop the untoward developments.²⁰ Russian factor obliquely stood in the way of the Chinese leadership and military planners to think of military measures while the future hangs in balance. Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, the homes to over 60 million Kazakh, Tajik, Uzbek, and Turkmen populace, sympathetic to the political aspirations of their brethren could await little different fate.

In the world view of Chen Xiangyang and his ilk, the other peripheral countries encountering political instability as well fall in the line of fire of China's aggressive strategic disposition. In South Asia, it included the so called all weather friend Pakistan besides, Afghanistan and India. In Southeast Asia, Thailand and Myanmar, and in Northeast Asia, Mongolia, the Korean Peninsula stand to bear the brunt. While far fetched, the Chinese strategists have the prescription for Japan. Chen Xiangyang and his ilk are painfully aware of China's Achilles heel, too. While warning against "spillover effects" of unstable neighbourhood, and suggesting the imperatives of aggressive strategic disposition, they have called for caution against blind plunge and differentiate between the periodic flip-flops of political unrest in matured democracies from near anarchic scenario in countries with transplanted democracies. India and South Korea figured in the former category and Afghanistan, Pakistan, Myanmar, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in the latter.

The studied responses of the development have set-off a clarion call against the Chinese moves to bolster the war machine in particular its logistics capabilities. Christina Lin talks of 'China threat' zone, where the existing and/ or up coming Chinese rail-road networks promise fast mobilization of troops.²¹ Her concern has come to be shared by a large number of analysts, notably Konstantin Syroyezhkin of Kazakhstan's Institute of Strategic Studies.²² Some of the PLA troop mobilizations in the recent past through the Chinese rail networks are looked at as being innocuous trial test. In early September 2010, China largely moved its PLA contingent, consisting of over 1000 ground force officers and men, a logistics group and an air force combat group to Kazakhstan by rail.²³ Two months later in November 2010, the PLA again moved its huge contingent from the site of Shanghai World Expo to its barracks in Nanjing.

The events go to testify China's increased force projection potential. China has since built rail lines to Tibet and it would link Nepal before long.²⁴ China is planning high-speed rails to Laos, Singapore, Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand and Myanmar. Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan have agreed to cooperate with China to build a China-Iran rail link from Xinjiang, passing through Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and finally arriving in Iran. As part of the UN sponsored Trans-Asia Railway, it would extend westward to Iraq, Syria, Turkey, and connect Europe. Subject to a large number of dependent and intervening variables, China's aggressive strategic disposition could hypothetically thus, affect all these countries.

Survival fits against China's aggressive strategic disposition has to be multi-dimensional. There can be little in the name of a thumb rule. Within the four walls of ODT, the peripheral countries shall have to create a hedge of collective bargains while reinforcing the soft and hard sides of ODB to stay safe against providence of China's aggressive strategic disposition. A win-win situation would call for rising China to come forward with acceptable agreements on critical issues including border disputes to set the ball rolling.

Endnotes

1. Founded in 1902, Ta Kung Pao is the oldest Chinese language newspaper in China. For long, it sported no political

affiliation. However, it is now mouth piece of the Communist Party of China (CPC), and normally goes to pilot otherwise contentious issues to test the waters in public domain.

2. Rear Admiral Yin Zhou, a senior officer at the PLA Navy Equipment Research Centre and Chairman of the Navy Experts Advisory Committee and Major General Luo Yuan, a researcher with the PLA Academy of Military Sciences hold voice by virtue of their long standing as strategic thinkers.

3. Christina Lin, "The PLA's "Orient Express": Militarization of the Iron Silk Road", *Institut für Strategie- Politik-Sicherheits- und Wirtschaftsberatung (ISPSW)*, Berlin, Germany, March 28, 2011.

4. As one of the signatories of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) sponsored 80,900 km long Trans-Asian Railway, China has already come out with plan to build high-speed rails to Laos, Singapore, Cambodia (Kampuchea), Vietnam, Thailand and Myanmar along its Southeast Asian periphery. It has got nod of Iran to construct China-Iran rail that will pass through the Central Asian countries of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan. China's long term plan includes connecting China's rail networks with Europe through Middle East countries, including Iraq and Syria.

5. *Zhuge Liang's* legend goes back to China's Three Kingdom (220-280 AD) epoch. He is credited for harnessing deception to get over the stronger enemy. While the strong enemy contingent had encircled the Kingdom of *Shu*, he is said to have sunbathed on the rampart. The invader thought that the Kingdom of *Shu* was per se well defended and hence, retreated without engaging in the battle.

6. Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. x. Also see Alastair Iain Johnston, 'Cultural Realism and Strategy in Maoist China' in Peter J Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 216-68; Alastair Iain Johnston, 'International Structures and Chinese Foreign Policy' in Samuel S Kim, ed., *China and the World: Chinese Foreign Policy Faces the New Millennium* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), pp. 55-90; Alastair Iain Johnston, 'Realism(s) and Chinese Security Policy in the Post-Cold War Period' in EB Kapstein and M Mastanduno, eds, *Unipolar Politics: Realism and State Strategies After the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 261-318.

7. The concept of *Shi* is the cornerstone of Sun Zi's 'Art of War'. There is perhaps no equivalent of it in the western lexicon. In warfare, when *Shi* is translated as strategic advantage, on both sides of the conflict, including numbers, terrain, logistics, morale, weaponry, as they converge on the battle field to give one side the advantage over the contestant. In over all perspective, it can be explained as being "the alignment of forces," the "propensity of things," or the "potential born of disposition." Sun Zi has discussed four key aspects of *shi*: First, it is the idea of *qi* and *zheng*. *Zheng* is the regular way of doing things, or in military terms, the regular order of battle. A commander deploys troops in regular (*zheng*) ways. However, the commander must mobilize his troops to engage the enemy in extraordinary (*qi*) ways. *Zheng* is, in essence, a given. It is open knowledge to friends and foes. Yet *qi* is a variable and its variation inexhaustible. The second aspect of *shi* is about creating an overwhelming force with irresistible unleashing power (a grindstone against eggs, and the strike of a hawk at its prey). The third aspect of *shi* is about developing a favourable situation with great potential to achieve the political objectives. Finally, *shi* is about taking and maintaining the initiative. As Sun Tzu puts it, "those skilled at making the enemy move do so by creating a situation to which he must conform."

8. Michael D Swaine and Ashley J Tellis, *Interpreting China's Grand Strategy Past, Present, and Future* (Santa Monica: Rand, 2000).

9. Ibid

10. In Chinese doctrinal writings, strategy ('*beu*) and military strategy are used interchangeably.

11. Founded on Aug 1, 1927 after Nanchang Uprising, the force level of the PLA ran to 5 million. After a wave of demobilization of what has come to be known as ill-trained and / or politically incorrect personnel, the strength of the PLA dropped to 2.8 million in 1953. It included 10,000 troops in PLA Air force and 60, 000 in PLA Navy, raised respectively in November, 1949 and September, 1950.

12. In advocating the viability of protracted war, Mao Ze dong drew on classic Chinese military writings as well as Western military theorists such as Clausewitz, where the principle of 'Unity of Opposites', enshrined in the Chinese concept of 'Yin' and 'Yang' hold the key. Guerrilla tactical doctrine can be summarized in four character Chinese compound '*shengdong qixi*' which means 'uproar in the east and attack in the west'. It measures well with Chinese classic strategic culture of deception to pursue the core interests.

13. China's national military objectives have been quite often aired by the top PLA brass. It is thus, evolutionary in nature. In 1996, for example, *Qiushi* (No.8, April 16, 1996, pp. 8-14) quoted the then Chinese Defence Minister Chi Haotian say that the basic objectives of China's national defence constituted of solidifying the defensive capacity, resist foreign invasion, and safeguard the unification and security of the country. In 1998, the Deputy Chief of General Staff Lt Gen Xiong Guangkai said, "the basic objectives of China's armed forces are to consolidate national defense, resist aggression, defend the nation's sovereignty over its territorial land, sea, airspace as well as its maritime interests, and safeguard national unity and security". Subsequently, the then Chief of the General Staff Department (GSD) General Fu Quanyou provided this iteration: "the PLA's mission is to strengthen the national defense, fend off aggression, safeguard territorial sovereignty and the rights and interests of territorial waters, and maintain national integrity and safety."

14. Stephen Van Evera, *Causes of War: Power and The Roots of Conflict* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999); Geroge H Quester, *Offense and Defense in the International System* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1977); Thomas J. Christensen and Jack Snyder, 'Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity,'

15. Xu Jin, The Strategic Implications of Changes in Military Technology, *Chinese Journal of International Politics* (2006) 1 (2): 163-193. doi: 10.1093/cjip/pol014; Tang Shiping, Offence-defence Theory: Towards a Definitive Understanding, *Chinese Journal of International Politics* (2010) 3 (2): 213-260. Doi: 10.1093/cjip/poq004.

16. Defensive realism looks at states as rational player, and differs with its counterpart, the offensive realism on points whether or not states must always be maximizing relative power ahead of all other objectives. Tang Shiping holds that the Chinese state under Mao Zedong spell subscribed offensive realism and the Deng Xiaoping epoch lives of defensive realism.

17. Lieber, Keir A, *The New History of World War 1 and What it Means for International Relations Theory*, *International Security*, Volume 32, Number 2, Fall 2007, pp 155-191

18. China is totally secretive about its nuclear arsenal. According to the estimates of Stockholm International Peace Institute, China has since acquired limited deterrence capability with the deployment of 186 strategic nuclear warheads. The prospect of China augmenting its submarine fleet to 75 by 2020 with 12-16 JL-2 or DF-31 ballistic missiles has triggered speculation about China's capability to survive first attack on its military assets. The deployment of Chengdu J-20 stealth aircraft has added to the sensibility still further.

19. China and Kyrgyzstan share a 1,100-km porous land border, with two main border crossings at the Irkestan and Torugart passes through the XUAR. It has around 250000 Uyghur population who are sympathetic to the East Turkestan Movement in the region.

20. Kyrgyzstan happened to be a member of three high-profile regional security outfits including Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). While a forerunner of the group, the Chinese leadership preferred stoic silence as the regime crumbled to their utter displeasure for a variety of reasons. Kyrgyzstan was besides a member of Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

21. Christina Lin, "The PLA'S Orient Express: Militarization of the Iron Silk Road", James Town Foundation, *China Brief*, Volume: 11, Issue 5, MARCH 25, 2011.

22. Syroyezhkin, Konstantin, China's Expansionist Policy Toward Kazakhstan Takes a New Turn, *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, November 17, 2010; *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, November 9, 2010.

23. Xinhua News Agency, Sep. 7, 2010.

24. The 253 km long Nepal link of the Qingzang rail will pass through strategically located Xigaze in the foothills of Mt Everest. The total length of Qingzang railway is 1,956 km (1215 miles). Construction of the 815 km (506 mile) section between Xining and Golmud was completed by 1984. The 1,142 km (709 mile) section between Golmud and Lhasa was inaugurated on 1 July 2006. The Nepal link of the rail was initially expected to take four years.

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China - The Western Shift

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Introduction

Historically China has been always focused on its eastern seaboard. The Opium Wars, commencing in 1839, forced the Chinese to open up to outside influences, besides ceding Hong Kong to Britain. The Japanese belligerence in the yesteryears, a breakaway Taiwan, the Korean War and the subsequent US military presence in South Korea had kept the Chinese preoccupied with the east. The vast swathes of the sparsely populated and non-Han west were a peripheral issue, whose fortunes were yet to be intertwined with Beijing. However, in the last two decades of the post Cold War era, China has carefully analyzed the geo-political shifts and has thereafter embarked on an ambitious programme of an accelerated military build-up and development of its western regions. This shift in Chinese focus towards its west was not sudden. The Gulf War I in 1991 was a *blitzkrieg* military campaign by the US. Apart from Saddam's Republican Guards, it also put the Chinese in 'shock and awe' with the demonstration of its vastly superior military power. Soon, the US military interventions in former Yugoslavia on humanitarian grounds in the mid-1990s rattled China fearing that the same principles could be used by US for military interventions in Tibet and Xinjiang.¹ Later, the ease with which Afghan Taliban was subjugated in 2002 by awesome use of American military power in China's immediate neighbourhood further reinforced China's fears for its western periphery.

The US was meanwhile cosying up with an emerging India and opening up a series of bases on the Chinese periphery in the west, using the Afghanistan campaign as a pretext. It roped in Tajikistan as well as Uzbekistan, which from its Kandabad air base at Karshi offered invaluable assistance to American forces till 2005. Kyrgyzstan had also permitted a US military base since 2001 at Manas, near the Kyrgyz capital Bishkek. China is much concerned that its Central Asian neighbours are inching closer to America or Russia. This projection of the American power into the center of the Eurasian land has been viewed as contradictory to the long-term Chinese strategic and energy interests. Thus, the compulsions of an aspiring superpower China to protect its interests on its western periphery, subdue remnants of Tibetan and Uyghur resistance and project its economic and military might towards west and south has propelled China to convert these once forbidden lands into another upcoming Chinese provinces with gleaming highways and superfast trains. This article endeavours to place this western shift as part of a well formulated Chinese strategy based on modernization, economic interests and their response to the changing geo-political realities of the region.

Quieter East and Demanding West

General

It is a well-stated Chinese position that Taiwan and Tibet are its core-interests. As regards Taiwan, it is now getting quiet on the eastern front with a pragmatic leadership in Taiwan. The US too is playing up. In October 2008, the Republicans gave a reduced arms sales package to Taiwan, approving only a package worth approximately US \$ 6.46 billion out of the total package of US \$12 billion which was under active consideration. While things seem to be looking up for China in the east, all is not well on its western front. Islamic fundamentalism threatens to sweep in to Xinjiang from Pakistan and Afghanistan, close ally Pakistan is slipping into chaos while Tibet remains an open question despite heavy Chinese security presence. Three of China's largest provinces - Tibet, Xinjiang and Qinghai - constitute about 37 per cent of the total area but have only two per cent of the population. Among these, Tibet secures China's southern border and provides access to South Asia while Xinjiang does likewise for Central Asia and Russia. The rim, thus, provides protection to the Chinese heartland. Tibet also provides China access to the Arabian Sea through Gilgit-Baltistan in Pakistan occupied Kashmir.³ China has often reiterated that its concepts of warfare and capability upgradation go well beyond meeting the present challenges. This implies that China's military capabilities shall continue to grow unabated even as the Taiwan issue thaws and that the Chinese national security strategy is set to be focused to look beyond Taiwan⁴, now clearly westwards.

Taiwan

Evidently, relations are beginning to look up between Beijing and Taipei. Since the inauguration of President Ma Ying-jeou in May 2008 in Taiwan, regular cross-strait negotiations have been resumed, and People's Republic of China (PRC) and Republic of China (ROC) have signed 12 agreements covering food safety, cross-strait air transport, sea transport and postal service. This has led to the commencement of daily passenger charter flights across the Taiwan Straits. President Ying-jeou has made many efforts to improve cross-Straits relations, and this is being reciprocated by the mainland.⁵ Many argue that Taiwan is actually a stateless economic mode, so central to the global economy that almost no electronic instrument is lacking a Taiwanese component. A disruption in its economy - whether due to war or economic calamity - would be disastrous for everyone equally, including China. Taiwan is the largest foreign investor in the mainland's factories and enterprises, far greater than the US, the EU or Japan, and thus the occasional cross-strait sabre rattling must not be given undue importance. As in 2010, Taiwan's cumulative investment in China from 1991-2009 was US \$ 82.7 billion while estimated number of investment projects in China by Taiwan investors were 80,393.⁶ Taiwan's economy is highly dependent on the mainland, with Taiwanese companies having invested more than US \$ 100 billion there since the late 1980s, and around one million Taiwanese business people living there. These economic links, integration between the mainland and Taiwan and an already healthy presence in the Chinese economy, create a deterrent to conflict, allowing China to focus on its neglected western borders.

The US policy on Taiwan has also undergone a marked shift. Apart from deeply intertwined economies, the USA also require Chinese support on issues like Iran, Afghanistan and North Korea. Not surprisingly, the F-16C/Ds were not part of the October 2008 US arms package to Taiwan. Further, it only agreed to sell only three of the six requested PAC-III anti missile batteries to Taiwan and declined to act on either the request for a design study on submarines or the procurement of some transport helicopters.⁷ In reality, it is said that Washington protects Taiwan as much for its microchips as for its military dignity, but in private opposes Taiwanese independence, hoping that a grand bargain can

be reached whereby Taiwan promises not to secede and China de-escalates. This has enabled China to reassess its long term military deployments and cover the hitherto neglected areas in the west of the country.

Improving Sino-Japan Relations

There has been a recent thaw in the frosty Sino-Japan relations and the political leadership of Japan has adopted a pacifist attitude towards China. The new government of Japan is now sidestepping a century of brutal conflict to flirt with China, especially in regional trade groups like ASEAN + 3. In December 2009, 143 members of Japan's parliament and 500 other people, led by Ichiro Ozawa, the new ruling party chief, flew in five planes for a special visit to China. A history of hostility seemed to disappear at a warm meeting with President Hu Jintao, who agreed to get himself photographed, one at a time, with each guest.⁸ In 2008, China-Japan trade grew to US \$ 266.4 billion, a rise of 12.5 per cent on 2007, making China Japan's top two-way trade partner.⁹ On the other hand, China was the biggest destination for Japanese exports in 2009. It is said that for Tokyo, a healthy alliance with the US is insurance against a future Chinese threat; good relations with China are a hedge against an unreliable US ally.¹⁰ Therefore, a confrontation, in spite of many unsettled issues, is unlikely.

China's Central Asian Interests

The Central Asian states are the new players in the heart of Asia which China seeks to influence. China is concerned that the Central Asian Republics, particularly Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan are getting closer to the US and intends to counter that with significant military presence and infrastructure upgradation on the Tibetan plateau and Xinjiang. In fact, Central Asia is the new chess board between the US and China. The US perceives the Central Asian states from the perspective energy resources, countering fundamentalism and containing Russia and China. On the other hand, the Chinese strategists in Beijing realise the strategic importance of the Central Asian states and its surrounding area, particularly their role in the world's supply of energy.¹¹ China also considers the Central Asian states in context of Eurasia wherein the future of political and economic cooperation in the whole Eurasian continent would be seriously affected by any turbulence there, adversely affecting Chinese economy. China has 3000 km long borders with three Central Asian countries - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Most of the border issues with these republics were skilfully settled by the Chinese government by late nineties.¹² Thereafter, there has been significant cooperation in the defence spheres and the five countries had signed an Agreement on Mutual Reductions of Military Forces in the Border Regions in Moscow in April 1997. China is aware that these states will rely upon their natural resources for invigorating their economies and that the speed of restructuring in other economic sectors will remain slow. China, therefore, is focussing on creating transport infrastructure and investing in building light industry either in Central Asian states or in western China to produce consumer good for the Central Asian markets. China needs to ensure that the economic development of its western part is connected not only with Central Asia but also with overall economic development in Eurasia.¹³

Shanghai Cooperation Organization

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), virtually led by China, is primarily centred on its member nations' Central Asian security-related concerns. Here, China is an ally of Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and thus needs to give due attention towards its western neighbours. The SCO has ties to the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), an overlapping military cooperation agreement between Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. In October 2007, the CSTO and the SCO signed a Memorandum of Understanding, laying the foundations for military cooperation between the two organizations. This SCO-CSTO agreement involves the creation of a full-fledged military alliance between China, Russia and the member states of SCO/CSTO. It is worth noting that the SCTO and the SCO had held joint military exercises in 2006, which coincided with Iran's military exercises.¹⁴

Iran

China has economic ties as well as a far-reaching bilateral military cooperation agreement with Iran. Iran also has an observer member status within the SCO since 2005. According to Neil King Jr. Reports, a tip from the US intelligence agencies in 2009 led Singaporean customs authorities recovering large quantities of a chemical compound used to make solid fuel for ballistic missiles. The intended recipient was Shahid Bagheri Industrial Group which is responsible for Iran's efforts to develop long-range missiles.¹⁵ Presently, China is (supposedly) strategically encircled by South Korea, Taiwan, Australia, Vietnam, India and Russia. Large numbers of American forces are based in Afghanistan, Central Asia and Iraq. Israel is a solid US ally while several Arab states are *de facto* US protectorates. This explains the strategic basis of China's relationship with Iran, the only autonomous oil producer in the Persian Gulf. A nuclear but independent Iran is in China's strategic interest compared to a non-nuclear Iran under US domination. This also explains China's "delay and weaken" strategy with regard to UN sanctions on Iran.¹⁶ The western provinces of Tibet and Xinjiang are only possible land routes to Iran.

The Look West Rationale

The Historical Perspective

Millennia of Chinese history have been a virtually continuous struggle to unite under a single order. Its self-feeding mix of despotism and patriotism has retained a strong sense of anti-western feeling as it seeks to overcome the humiliating extra territorial concessions imposed by the British during the mid-nineteenth century Opium Wars and the additional resentment of German colonies being handed over to Japan in the post-World War I Versailles Treaty. China has an astonishingly long border of more than 10,000 miles which needs to be defended against local and distant threats. During the imperial era, raids by nomadic tribes had threatened the Chinese periphery. In the early modern era, the periphery was threatened by great imperialist powers, including Russia, Germany, Great Britain, and France. Since World War II, militarily strong and industrialised states - Russia, Japan, India and the US - have posed new security challenges on the Chinese periphery. This key consideration to defend its periphery has shaped China's basic approach

to political and military security throughout its long history.

According to a RAND study **18** by Michael D. Swaine and Ashley J. Tellis, the security strategies employed by various Chinese regimes converge into an overall “Grand Strategy” that strives for three interrelated objectives. Firstly, to control the periphery and ward off threats to the ruling regime; secondly, to preserve domestic order and well-being in the face of different forms of social strife; and thirdly to attain or maintain geo-political influence as a major state. However, today things are only half-way home and China is not as united as it seems. Dividing China into four quadrants, the south-east region contains 60 per cent of China’s wealth due to economic roles of Hong Kong, Shanghai and Taiwan and is almost equal in development with the US and the EU. The northeast quadrant, including Beijing, has been lifted solidly out of the Third World through rapid industrialisation and impressive infrastructure development. China’s two western quadrants – including provinces of Tibet and Xinjiang - are still a vast Third-World realm of natural resources and a peasantry of seven hundred million feeding the empire. These quadrants of China, as well as its diaspora of fifty-five million people, constitute the four Chinas merging into one massive second-world superpower.**19** Therefore, if China has to attain a true superpower status, its western regions cannot remain isolated and underdeveloped.

The Civilization Angle

Samuel P Huntington in his famous book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* has divided the world into various civilizations and has concluded that the core state of respective civilization, for security reasons may attempt to incorporate or dominate some peoples of other civilizations, who, in turn attempt to resist or to escape such control.**20** China has historically conceived itself as encompassing a “Sinitic Zone” including Korea, Vietnam, the Liu Chiu Islands, and at times Japan; and “Inner Asian Zone” of non-Chinese Manchus, Mongols, Uighurs, Turks, and Tibetans, who had to be controlled for security reasons; and then an “Outer Zone” of barbarians, who were nevertheless “expected to pay tribute and acknowledge China’s superiority.”**21** Contemporary Sinitic civilization is becoming structured in a similar fashion; the central core of Han China, outlying provinces that are part of China but possess considerable autonomy, provinces legally part of China but heavily populated by non-Chinese people from other civilizations (Tibet and Xinjiang) and Chinese societies that are or are likely to become part of Beijing-centred China on defined conditions (Hong Kong and Taiwan). In the post Cold-War era, China has redefined its role in world affairs. It has set two goals: to become the champion of Chinese culture, the core state civilizational magnet towards which all other Chinese communities would reorient themselves, and to ensure its historical position, which it lost in the nineteenth century, as the hegemonic power in East Asia. Therefore, China attempting to incorporate Tibetans and Uyghurs into the Sinitic civilization and Chinese investments in infrastructure in these areas are a reflection of the same.

The ‘New’ Great Game

Today’s ‘New’ Great Game in Central Asia and Afghanistan is between expanding and contracting empires. According to Ahmed Rashid, in his famous book *Taliban, The Story of Afghan Warlords*, as a weakened Russia attempts to keep a grip on what it still views as its frontiers in Central Asia and control the flow of Caspian oil through pipelines that traverse Russia, the US is thrusting itself into the region on the back of proposed oil pipelines which would bypass Russia. Iran, Turkey and Pakistan are building their own communication links with the region and want to be the preferred route of choice for future pipelines heading east, west or south. Amongst all this, China wants to secure stability for its restive Xinjiang region populated by the same Muslim ethnic groups that inhabit Central Asia, secure the necessary energy to fuel its rapid economic growth and expand its political influence in a critical border region **22**. Thus, it is prudent for China to now look westwards and develop extensive communication links in Tibet and Xinjiang.

Western Development Campaign

The restive provinces of Tibet and Xinjiang provide China with access to western Eurasia. They are both weak links in the Chinese polity, and susceptible to manipulation by China’s “enemies”. China is particularly wary of ethnic unrest, especially after the Serbian province of Kosovo declared independence in 2008 with the backing of most Western governments. Indeed, Beijing perceives Tibet and Xinjiang as potential ‘Kosovos’ on its own territory, and will do all it can to suppress rebellion there.**23** Therefore, it was no surprise that to ensure long-term “stability” the Chinese leaders launched the Great Western Development Campaign in June 1999. Jiang Zemin explicitly said that the campaign “has major significance for the future prosperity of the country and the [Party’s] long reign and perennial stability”.**24** Chinese strategists see the campaign as a means to consolidate its control over Tibet and other strategically important regions.

Energy and Resource Security

Beijing’s primary economic objective of investment in Tibet and Xingjian is to exploit their rich natural resources. The Tibetan Plateau abounds in mineral resources. In the central and western areas of Tibet, Chinese experts have estimated mineral reserves worth US \$ 81.3 billion, and the Chinese government is investing US \$ 1.25 billion in prospecting and developing these resources.**25** China has already started constructing pipelines to transport oil and natural gas to energy-thirsty East China in collaboration with western companies. The Sichuan-based Chengdu Mineral Research Institute claims Sinopec is considering building a gas pipeline in Tibet to connect to the 4,000-km West-East pipeline linking reserves in Xinjiang region to big cities like Shanghai on the country’s eastern seaboard.**26** In 2009, China also built the 1,833 km long Central Asia-China gas pipeline for supplying natural gas from Central Asia to China.**27** China in the 21st Century is driven by an insatiable demand for energy and natural resources. Massive infrastructure development and significant military deployment will invariably precede energy exploitation.

Power Projection

In 1996, when PLA was hectoring Taiwan with missile tests, President Clinton ordered two aircraft-carrier strike groups

into the region, one of them headed by the provocatively named *USS Independence*. China had to back down.²⁸ Today, China has moved beyond such threats. In the past decade, China, flush with money from its trade surplus with the US, had embarked upon a lavish military build-up. In Pentagon, the US military commanders are concerned, wondering why China needs a strategic military force with global reach when it claims the build-up is just to help invade Taiwan, 100 miles from the Chinese mainland, or to guard sea lanes already guarded by the US Navy.²⁹ But, progress is a mechanical necessity for China's leaders, who are keenly aware of previous eras of superlative glory. The Chinese leadership believes that infrastructure development is a basic prerequisite for theatre development, and for encouraging the Han population to settle in sparsely populated Tibet and Xingjian, leading to Sinocisation. Once Tibet is completely linked-up and interfaced with existing links like the Karakoram Highway, China gets strategic access to the Arabian Sea and the Gulf region. The Karakoram highway also links Islamabad with Kashgar which is linked by rail to Urumqi and China's northern railway network. Therefore, operating on interior lines of communication, China can improve her force-projection capabilities in this region.³⁰

The Missile Game

The new deployment sites / bases for the DF-21 missiles on the Tibetan plateau have increased the power projection capability of China in Central Asia which was earlier a Russian domain with some US influence. In fact, the issue of DF-21 missile sites merits closer examination. These missiles are located at the Delingha site in Haixi Mongol and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai, which is about 2,000 km from New Delhi and are under the command of 812 Brigade of the SAC.³¹ From Delingha, with a range of 2,150 kilometers the DF-21s would not be able to reach any US bases, but they would be able to hold at risk all of northern India.³² Moreover, DF-21s would be within range of three main Russian ICBM fields on the other side of Mongolia: the SS-25 fields near Novosibirsk and Irkutsk, the SS-18 field near Uzhet, and a Backfire bomber base at Belaya. Whereas targeting New Delhi could be considered normal for a non-alert retaliatory posture like China's, targeting Russian ICBM fields and air bases would be a step further in the direction of a counterforce posture.³³

Conclusion

In the initial decades since the founding of the PRC in 1949, coastal China raced ahead and left western China stagnated. Later, once the economy of coastal China acquired a self-sustaining momentum, policy-makers under President Hu Jintao subsequently turned their attention towards western China. From the massive infrastructure investments and related developments in Tibet and Xinjiang, it is evident that China intends to now pursue its strategic interests on its western borders. Lucian Pye³⁴, the eminent scholar has stated that China has always been "a civilization pretending to be a nation". Having otherwise been the region's dominant empire, there is no trepidation about embarking on that path again because for China, it is simply back to the future. The growth of Chinese military power since the 1990s – precipitated initially by a desire to protect its interests in Taiwan but now driven by the necessity of fielding a competent military commensurate with its rising status – may increasingly put at risk elements of the security system that traditionally ensured stability in Asia.³⁵ Once this military necessity matched with internal security, energy and economic interests – the ongoing transformation of once remote Tibet and Xinjiang into another Chinese economic, energy and military powerhouse – was an inevitability. In fact, Tibet and Xinjiang are the new expansion spaces or *lebensraum* for the Han majority as well as the new windows through which China seeks to lead the post-western world by showcasing its military might. The Dragon is decidedly turning West. More likely, it is eying the West to devour resources than to spit fire.

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Impact of Technology on Warfare

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Introduction

Advancements in technology have revolutionised warfare already. By 2025, technology would have gone to the next step or perhaps the next to next step. With continuing volatility in India's neighbourhood, we may be faced with heightened threats in future through the spectrum of conflict particularly; in the asymmetric spheres, along with militarisation of space and heightened hostile activity in cyberspace. There is a need to examine how technology will impact future warfare, what our voids and weaknesses are with respect to technology and what initiatives we need to take in order to enable India gain its rightful place in the comity of nations.

Present Impact of Technology on Warfare

Technology enables hi-tech wars that are short and swift. Ranges, accuracy and lethality of weapons have increased very considerably. Concurrently, the space and time continuum has been greatly compressed. There is exponential increase in situational awareness and battlefield transparency as forces are shifting from platform centric to network centric capabilities. Simultaneous handling of the strategic, operational and tactical levels is possible. Improved battlefield transparency in turn has increased the importance of dispersion of forces and need for deception. Technology has ushered the advent of offensive cyber warfare, information dominance, space wars and Effect Based Operations (EBOs). Ironically, technology has also empowered the terrorist to cause more severe damage.

Future Scenario

The regional security environment surrounding India today includes failed and failing states. We are faced with nuclear threat, missile threat, cyber threat, cross border terrorism, infiltration, demographic assault, conventional threat and insurgencies. Besides, we are battling continuing asymmetric wars waged by both, China and Pakistan. The 27 odd terrorist organizations operating in India including the Maoist insurgency are open to exploitation by our adversaries. The US thin out from Af-Pak Region and increased Chinese forays into POK, Pakistan, South Asia and the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) will enhance collusive threat from China and Pakistan.

Pakistan's obsession to control Afghanistan and get the Indians out is unlikely to recede. India should, therefore, be prepared to continue to battle asymmetric war with overlaps of conventional war (both with China and Pakistan) under the nuclear shadow. Insurgencies in India are likely to continue with burgeoning population unless we can manage the social change very well, of which the signs at present are not very encouraging. Cross border terror may escalate with ISI's tail up, Pakistan's *jihadi* policy, tacit support by China and expanding globalization of terror outfits like the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT). Existing LeT footprints in Maldives, Kerala and efforts to link-up with the Maoists spell more danger, especially for South India. The current Opposition in Bangladesh is known for its links with anti-India terrorist organizations and change of guard in Bangladesh could increase our problems. Space and cyber space will be active battlegrounds, particularly because of credible capabilities of China. Militaries alone cannot cope with new threats, courtesy globalization. Ability to conduct integrated operations with other components of Security Sector is necessary. The entire Security Sector will need to integrate to cope with 21st Century challenges. The Security Sector will encompass the Armed Forces, Special Forces, Para Military Forces, Central Armed Police Forces, Coast Guard, Intelligence Services, Private Security Services, Customs and Immigration Services, concerned Government Ministries / Departments and the like. Therefore, while developing and planning future defence related technologies, it would be prudent to look at the entire Security Sector.

Cyber warfare may emerge more dangerous than even nuclear threat due to ambiguity in the source of attack and the potential to cripple critical infrastructure of a country, bringing it to a standstill. Internet has increased vulnerability to cyber attacks. Prevention is being replaced by pre-emption and the cyber race is becoming endlessly vicious in the absence of any international norms. 25 million strains of malware were created in 2009 alone¹, whereas, 286 malware variants were detected in 2010 – average of one every 0.79 seconds². Offensive information dominance is the new buzzword. Under threat are national security and our economic well being. Cyber security is talked more in terms of "cyber insecurity"; courtesy hackers, phishing, malware, viruses, automated internet tools, e-bombs, logic bombs, electro-magnetic pulse (EMP) and high pressure microwave (HPM) attacks. Critical infrastructure and distribution systems are highly vulnerable. Geographical distribution of networks and sheer size of devices and networks is a challenge, especially with the use of different interoperable protocols and diverse equipment and largely untutored work force with little interest in IT security. Effects of errors and omissions are increasingly catastrophic. Attacks are organized, disciplined, aggressive, well resourced and sophisticated. Adversaries are nation states, terrorist groups, criminals, hackers, non-state actors, latter largely a misnomer. Significant exfiltration of critical, sensitive information, planting malicious software occurs on regular basis. Major cyber attacks on critical infrastructure and control systems have occurred since 1982 involving oil / gas pipelines, emergency alert systems, floodgates of dams, communications and power of airports, sewage system, nuclear monitoring system, power grids, train signaling system, canal system, nuclear power plants, hospital communication system – to the power blackout in Hong Kong Stock Exchange in 2011. The prolonged power blackout at Terminal 3 of Indira Gandhi international Airport on 06 Aug 2011 could well have been caused by a cyber attack.

Future Technological Developments

Listing out all the likely technological advancements with military applications by say year 2025 would require many pages but existing improved assault rifles will perhaps include phased plasma guns. Plasma weapons already reported in Russia, focus beams of electromagnetic energy produced by laser or microwave radiation into upper layers of atmosphere to defeat targets flying at supersonic or near-sonic speeds, bumping the targets out of trajectory. Laser weapons would be fielded on land, sea and air. Our DRDO is developing a Laser Dazzler for police forces that will impair vision temporarily to control unruly crowds. DRDO's Laser Science & Technology Centre (LASTEC) is developing

a vehicle mounted gas dynamic laser-based Directed Energy Weapons (DEW) system, named 'Aditya' as a technology demonstrator. A 25-kilowatt laser system is also under development for hitting a missile in terminal phase at a distance of 5-7 kms. DRDO identifies DEWs, along with space security, cyber-security and hypersonic vehicles as future projects. MoD's "Technology Perspective & Capability Roadmap" identifies DEWs and anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons as thrust areas over the next 15 years. However, given the track record of DRDO, how much they will actually deliver by 2025 is anybody's guess.

While there was much talk of stealth helicopters in the recent US Navy Seals raid in Pakistan to kill Osama bin Laden, the US has already developed a Reusable Space Plane (X-37B) – another step in weaponising Space. In addition, a powerful conventional weapon (Prompt Global Strike), as alternative to nuclear warhead, is under development, which can travel halfway around the world from launch to target in less than 30 minutes, using missile launch, release of hypersonic gliders and eventual release of 1000 pound deep penetration bombs. The revolution in communications equipment is already visible in commercialized products. The narrative of technological advancements can go on endlessly. China's indigenous aircraft carrier could be twice the speed of existing carriers with a catamaran type of hull greatly reducing pitching, yawing, swaying and capacity for simultaneous launch and landing of aircraft from twin flight decks. India's Space Vision 2025 envisages satellite based communication and navigation systems for rural connectivity, security needs and mobile services. Imaging capability is to be enhanced for natural resource management, weather and climate change studies. Indian Regional Navigational Satellite System (IRNSS) with seven satellites is to be up by 2012, enabling deployment of indigenous GPS. Space missions and planetary exploration are planned to understand the solar system and the universe. Development of a heavy lift launcher, Reusable Launch Vehicles as Technology Demonstrator missions leading to Two Stages To Orbit (TSTO) and human space flight are also planned.

Technological Transformation

Considering the rapid rate at which technology is progressing, 2025 should actually see a quantum jump. Fully Networked Centric Warfare (NCW) capable forces would be operationalised. Better PGMs would be available including High Energy Lasers, Plasma, Electro Magnetic, Ultra Sonic and DEWs. ISR and communications would be revolutionalised. Long range strategic Aero-Space Platforms would be in play. Stealth and Smart Technologies and Artificial intelligence would be optimized. Improved nukes would be more compact and lethal. Nano weapons and equipment, including Micro UAVs, Ant Robots and the like would come in. Cyber Warriors, Worms, Viruses, CyBugs would be common. ASATs would be in use. Considerable progress can also be expected in the ongoing research of mind control, albeit this too can have adverse effects for mankind, should it fall into wrong hands. Most of these technologies, as mentioned above, would have come in China by 2025 and some of them by extension in Pakistan.

Impact on Future Warfare

Technological advancements, as mentioned above, will greatly affect the manner in which wars will be fought. Conflict will be five dimensional to include Aero-Space, Land, Sea, Electro-Magnetic and Cyber. Information Warfare will include Network Centric Warfare (NCW), C4I2 Warfare, Electronic Warfare, Cyber Warfare and all other forms of operationalized Cyber Space. Space Combat, Cyber Space Combat, Radiation Combat, Robotic Combat, Nano-technology Combat will add to the forms of Combat. Operations will be increasingly inter-agency involving greater application of all elements of national power. States like Pakistan will continue to employ hi-tech irregular forces. Asymmetric wars will be an ongoing affair. Information superiority will be as important as land, sea and aero-space superiority. The central feature of 21st Century warfare will be that force application must include all domains of diplomacy, information technology (offensive and defensive), military operations and economic activities (DIME). India must invest in all aspects of DIME in areas of our strategic interest. At national level, there would be requirement of constant synergy. De-conflicting actions are required to achieve a united national front. Military jointness is an absolute imperative in the Armed Forces. Ability to conduct integrated operations with other components of Security Sector is necessary.

Technology Related Requirements

Considering the threats to our national security by 2025 coupled with technological advancements, our wish list should be as under, which should also be the focus for DRDO, PSUs and Private industry for development of technologies:-

- (a) Networked elements of national power.
- (b) Information dominance and information assurance.
- (c) Ability to paralyse enemy C4I2 infrastructure.
- (d) Credible deterrence against state sponsored terrorism.
- (e) Long range expeditionary strategic forces.
- (f) Stand off weapons to pre-empt enemy attack.
- (g) Mix of DEW, PGMS, ASATS etc.
- (h) Ability to disrupt enemy logistics / sustenance.
- (j) Mix of hard kill and soft kill options.
- (k) Layered strategic air and theatre missile defence.
- (l) Competitive cyber warfare capability.

(m) Ability to exploit space and cyber space.

(n) Conventional forces capable of winning high tech wars.

Leave aside the Security Sector, even the Military presently does not even have common data structures, symbology and interoperable protocols. A true "System of Systems" approach has yet to come. The Military must accelerate establishment of Integrated C4I2SR system. Integrated communications must be established to provide seamless communications vertically and horizontally. All platforms must be network enabled. Cyber security must graduate to information assurance and information dominance. A holistic review should be done to ascertain requirements of stand off PGMs, DEWs, ASATs. Technologies like Steerable Beam Technology, Wide Band / Software Defined Radios, Network Security, Common GIS, Data Fusion and Analysis, Alternatives to GPS, Dynamic Bandwidth Management, Lasers to shoot UAVs, Camouflage and Concealment etc should be exploited.

We should not lose focus on equipping the soldier at the cutting edge who is constantly engaged in the sub conventional conflicts. This also applies to the cutting edge of the entire Security Sector including the PMF, CPOs and Police. The Government must focus on indigenous production of critical hardware, software, telecom equipment and chip manufacture. The Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) with the cosmetic annual review does not meet present day requirements. Its review should be outsourced incorporating academia, think tanks and private industry. Both the civil and military leadership should lend themselves to attitudinal change to accommodate the concept of NCW. The Military Leadership must adapt to the changing nature of war. With respect to intelligence, technology should be exploited for real time / near real time dissemination of the Common Operational Picture (COP) and incorporation of a Decision Support System (DSS) to assist analysis, assessment and decision making. The Military should undertake holistic examination of its ISR and Intelligence requirements. Networking of Services Intelligence with "all sources" intelligence and real time / near real time dissemination should be ensured.

The Government must identify focus areas for R&D. Unveiling of our LCA with 40 per cent imported parts including the engine concurrent to China unveiling its Stealth Fighter, indicates the pathetic state of our R&D. Mr Anil Manibhai Naik, Chairman L&T laments in his letter to the Prime Minister³, *"Defence Production (MoD) Joint Secretaries and Secretaries of Defence Ministry are on the Boards of all PSUs — sickest of sick units you can think of who cannot take out one conventional submarine in 15 years now with the result that the gap is widening between us and China and bulk of the time we resort to imports out of no choice. The defence industry which could have really flowered around very high technological development and taken India to the next and next level of technological achievement and excellence is not happening"*. There is a positive requirement to slash the business empires of the DRDO and make them focus on critical areas. DRDO's recent announcement of having produced a mosquito repellent indicates how unfocused this elephantine organization is. We must truly open defence sector to the private industry, instead of the current practice of "through DRDO and PSUs." The DRDO and PSUs need to be made accountable and responsible. Groups of private industry should be identified for focused requirements. R&D allocations should be reviewed and appropriate share must go to private industry / group (s) of private industry tasked for defence requirements. The DRDO /and PSUs should learn the art of 'reverse engineering' to cut short development time, as is being done by China.

Information revolution and networked environment give rise to various entities. Services must retain core competency and have ability to integrate with other domain specialists. Concept Development Centres (CDCs) should be established involving modelling, simulation and synthetic environment that will provide a powerful aid to visualisation analysis, test, evaluation, training and rehearsal throughout acquisition lifecycle. Simulation is the best way to understand and optimize dynamics of manufacturing processes and support chains. CDCs require networking with knowledge entities. In year 2005, China already had 90 laboratories for chip manufacture. We have yet to establish the first such facility, which proves how unfocused we are as a nation.

Conclusion

By all indications, India will have to face heightened threats from its immediate neighbourhood by 2025, particularly from China and Pakistan. Technological advancements will activate the domains of space and cyberspace. The widening military gap between China and India will magnify these threats, which need to be taken seriously. We urgently need a revolution in military affairs (RMA) to take us into the next level of military capabilities to meet future challenges. A draft national cyber policy has been prepared, and comments and recommendations have been invited by the Government. The crux will be its speedy implementation and layered cyber protection for security and critical infrastructure protection, leading thereon to information dominance. It is possible if the Government and the Military take various initiatives and pursue them vigorously to ensure speedy execution. We have to act consciously and speedily.

Endnotes

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