

1962 - Battle of Se-La and Bomdi-La*

(A View From the Other Side of the Hill and a Comparison with the Battle of Chosin Reservoir)

Major General PJS Sandhu (Retd)**

Introduction

Even though nearly half a century has elapsed since the 1962 debacle, its impact continues to be felt on the Indian psyche at all levels. Our thinking and responses continue to reflect the trauma that the Nation went through during those fateful days. The time has not proved to be a great healer because its shadows continue to be cast on the present ongoing situation on our borders and our interactions at bilateral, regional as well as international levels.

How do we come to terms with that terrible experience? One simple way is to face the truth and then move on. Unfortunately, we have kept the happenings of that period under wraps on the pretext of national security. The soundness of such a thinking is questionable. It still continues to be debated extensively in the military as well as academic circles without much success. This has hampered any meaningful research into events of that period. However, some Chinese literature is now available to reconstruct the events as seen from the other side; of course much of this literature is in Chinese and one has to depend on translation which again is not easy.

Some excerpts from the official and semi-official books published in China are available in USI Archives and these have been translated. Using this material as the base and some literature published in the West, I have tried to reconstruct the events of 1962 in the Kameng Sector as seen from the Chinese side and in the process dispel some of the myths that have existed and tend to get perpetuated.

Preview

The article is laid out in three parts as under :-

- (a) **Part I.** Battle for Se la-Bomdi La, as reconstructed from the Chinese documents.
- (b) **Part II.** In Retrospect - a comparison of the above battle with one of the battles from the Korean War, i.e the Chinese attack against the US 1st Marine Division in Nov 1950 in the area of Chosin Reservoir.
- (c) **Part III.** This part contains an analysis of some politico-diplomatic interactions that took place just prior to the Chinese intervention in Korea in 1950 and the Sino-Indian War of Oct-Nov 1962.

Part I - Battle for Se La - Bomdi La (Reconstructed from Chinese Literature)

Prelude

After the battle of Thag La Ridge Indian Army was pushed back to South of Tawang and concentrated its main force on the Axis Se La - Bomdi La. The hill features there are dangerously steep and the Indian Army considered the area to be a natural obstacle.

Deployment of the Indian Army

Indian 4 Infantry Division with a strength of about 12,000 troops as assessed by the Chinese was holding coordinated defences on Axis Se La- Dirang Zong - Bomdi La as under :-

- (a) **Se La.** 62 Infantry Brigade having five infantry battalions supported by a field regiment and a troop of heavy mortars, and other combat support elements (approximately 3300 troops) was deployed in general Area Se La - Senge Dzong.¹
- (b) **Dirang Dzong - Lae Ma Dong.** 65 Infantry Brigade with two infantry battalions and other administrative elements having a total strength of about 1500 troops.
- (c) **Bomdi La - Thembang - Poshing La Area.** 48 Infantry Brigade having three infantry battalions with a battery ex 6 Field Regiment, a total strength of approximately 2200 troops.
- (d) HQ 4 Infantry Division with HQ 4 Artillery Brigade and other administrative elements having a total strength of approximately 5000 troops was located at Dirang Dzong and nearby areas. This includes the infantry strength of three companys ex 62 Infantry Brigade for protection of the Division HQ.
- (e) 67 Infantry Brigade was located at Missamari and was to be used to reinforce 4 Infantry Division Sector

As per Chinese perceptions, Indian 4 Infantry Division was tasked to block the PLA's southward advance and wait for an opportune moment to retrieve the lost ground at Tawang by a counter attack. However, they also believed that the

Indian military strength had been considerably depleted after the battle of Namka Chu. Further, after complete annihilation of the 7 Infantry Brigade in one day's battle (at Namka Chu), the air of arrogance of the Indian Army had entirely disappeared. The majority of *Indian Army officers and soldiers had developed a strong sense of fear towards Chinese forces and their fighting spirit had almost vanished. This created a situation (in the Chinese mind) that a further attack by the Chinese forces would crush the opposing army like dry weeds and rotten wood. Such was the feeling of confidence and élan of the Chinese troops on the eve of the battle.*

Chinese Force Level Opposite Kameng Sector

The operations (which were termed as the counter attack) were undertaken and coordinated by the Tibet Frontier Military Region under the Command of Zhang Guo Hua, a veteran of the Korean War. Chinese forces in this sector were as under :-

- (a) 55 Infantry Division with under command 163, 164 and 165 Infantry Regiments.
- (b) 11 Infantry Division with under command 32 and 33 Infantry Regiments, and possibly a battalion ex 31 Infantry Regiment.
- (c) Force 419 with under command 154, 155 and 157 Infantry Regiments.
- (d) Four infantry companies from Shannan Military Sub-district (SMS).
- (e) Three artillery regiments (306, 308 and 540).
- (f) 136 Engineer Regiment (five companies).
- (g) Other services elements.
- (h) Total strength - 22,000 troops approximately; infantry component being eight regiments plus.

Strategy, Operational Concept and Plan

It was on 06 Oct 1962 that Mao and the Central Military Commission (CMC) decided in principle on a large scale attack to severely punish India.² The 06 Oct directive from Chairman Mao to the PLA Chief of Staff, Lou Ruiqing, also laid out the broad strategy for the projected offensive. *The main assault was to be in the eastern sector, but Chinese forces in the western sector would "coordinate" with the eastern sector.* The CMC staff was then directed to draw up a detailed operational plan for a campaign to expel Indian troops from the area North of the traditional and customary boundary (i.e. China's claim line at the southern foothills of the Himalayas) in the eastern sector.

The Chinese Military Command appreciated that the Indian Army's main defences lay at Se La and Bomdi La. The concept of operations that was evolved by the Tibetan Military District Command was to advance along different routes, encircle these two positions and reduce them subsequently. The plan was approved by Marshal Liu Bocheng, Head of a Core Group of the Central Military Affairs Commission. *He outlined the strategy of concerted attacks by converging columns. Under this strategy, Indian positions were to be split into numerous segments and these were to be destroyed piecemeal.*

Marshal Liu compared the Indian Army dispositions with an analogy - 'a copper head with the tail made of tin, a stiff back and a soft under belly'. After some debate, the operational concept that was evolved entailed : 'smashing the head (Se La), cutting-off the tail (Bomdi La), snapping at the waist (Road Se La - Dirang Dzong) and dissecting the belly (Dirang Dzong).

The Operational Plan

Please refer to **Sketch 1**. The overall Chinese plan in the Kameng Sector was as under :-

- (a) 55 Infantry Division (comprising three infantry regiments and three artillery regiments) was to advance along Axis Tawang - Se La and launch the main attack against Se la. They were given the task of '*smashing the head*'.
- (b) Simultaneously with the above, troops of 419 Tibetan Division (three infantry regiments) were to advance from the West through the narrow corridor between Se La and Indo-Bhutan border, assist in the capture of Se La from the South and capture Dirang Dzong in concert with troops ex 11 Infantry Division advancing from the East. This was aimed at '*dissecting the belly*'.
- (c) The four companies of SMS were to carry out an outflanking move from the East and position themselves North of the road connecting Se La - Dirang Dzong; their task being to '*snap at the waist*'.
- (d) In coordination with the attack against Se La, 157 Infantry Regiment ex 419 Tibetan Division was to carry out a further outflanking move to South of Se La, capture Senge Dzong and link-up with the four infantry companies of SMS which were carrying out a similar outflanking move from the East, in order to cut-off the Road Se La - Dirang completely.
- (e) 11 Infantry Division (comprising two infantry regiments) was to carry-out a wide outflanking move along route Rho - Tse La - Poshing La - Thembang and cut-off Road Dirang Dzong - Bomdi La (*cutting-off the tail*). Thereafter, in concert with 1 or 2 infantry regiments of 419 Tibetan Division to capture Dirang Dzong, and develop further operations for the capture of Bomdi La.
- (f) 164 Infantry Regiment ex 55 Infantry Division was to act as reserve and was tasked to clear the road axis to Bomdi La.

(g) The offensive was to commence at 0830 hours on 18 Nov 1962.

Sketch 1

Sketch Showing Chinese Concept of Operations in Kameng Sector



Not in scale

The Battle

Advance on Multiple Axes

The concentration of troops for the offensive took place from 10-15 Nov 1962. The Chinese troops advanced on four different routes as shown on Sketch1. 55 Infantry Division under the command of Wang Yu advanced astride Road Axis Tawang – Se La, while troops of 419 Tibetan Division advanced West of the Road Axis on two separate routes through the narrow strip East of Indo-Bhutan border. The Chinese troops had strict instructions not to violate the sovereignty of Bhutan. 11 Infantry Division and troops ex-SMS carried out the eastern outflanking move aimed at cutting off Road Se La – Dirang Dzong while contacting Dirang Dzong (HQ Indian 4 Infantry Division) and

Bomdi La simultaneously. By this manoeuvre, the Chinese had split the Indian 4 Infantry Division in three pockets which were isolated from each other. They had also struck and isolated the Division HQ at Dirang Dzong which pulverised the command and control elements. This was to have a disastrous effect on subsequent conduct of the battle.

Capture of Se La

157 Infantry Regiment ex 419 Tibetan Division (part of the western outflanking force) was to meet the troops from the SMS at Lae – ma – dong (South of Se La) by 17 Nov and cut off the Road Se La– Dirang Dzong, thus isolating Se La defences which were to be attacked on 18 Nov by the main force of 55 Infantry Division.

The attack on Se La – Senge Dzong was launched jointly by troops of 419 Tibetan Division (154 Infantry Regiment) and 55 Infantry Division (163 and 165 Infantry Regiments) under the overall Command of Chai Hong Ouan, Commander 419 Tibetan Division. The attack was supported by three artillery regiments. 154 Infantry Regiment attacked from the western flank and after capture of the southern part of the defensive position moved on to Senge Dzong. 163 and 165 Infantry Regiments attacked from North and East, thus completing the capture of Se La. The attack commenced at 0830 hours on 18 Nov and the battle was over by 1800 hours the same day. From the Chinese accounts it appears that Brigadier Hoshiar Singh, Commander 62 Infantry Brigade was killed on 23 Nov when his withdrawing party had an encounter with a detachment of Chinese soldiers ex 154 Infantry Regiment near Phudung.

Advance on the Eastern Flank

It was the advance of 11 Infantry Division with 32 and 33 Infantry Regiments under command that was the most spectacular part of the Chinese offensive which unhinged the defenders completely. 11 Infantry Division with 33 Infantry Regiment leading under the command of Yu Zhi Guo commenced its advance from its Concentration Area on 10 Nov and carried out a wide outflanking move from the East, passing through Tse La and Poshing La. Poshing La was captured on 15 Nov. The formation moved on man pack basis, each soldier carrying about 30 kg of provisions in addition to his personal weapon and ammunition. They were also provided 1000 porters recruited locally. The Division marched approximately 160 kms for six days and nights, and secured Thembang by last light 17 Nov. During Night 17/18 Nov, they seized a vital bridge on the Road Dirang Dzong – Bomdi La and thus cut-off HQ Indian 4 Infantry Division from the South.

While the above manoeuvre was in progress, the troops from SMS (four companies) commanded by Guo Zhinxian and led by an old man from the Monpa tribe marched for three days outflanking Se La from the East and reached at a place five kms East of Senge Dzong. After a brief firefight with Indian soldiers and taking a wide detour, they reached Lae – ma- dong in the early hours of 18 Nov and intercepted the highway between Se La and Dirang Dzong.

It would be seen that by the morning of 18 Nov 1962, i.e the commencement of the main attack on Se La, the troops of Indian 4 Infantry Division had been split into three isolated pockets at Se La, Dirang Dzong and Bomdi La.

Capture of Dirang Dzong

After reaching the eastern flank of Indian positions at Dirang Dzong –Bomdi La, 11 Infantry Division decided to launch an attack towards Dirang Dzong on the morning of 18 Nov, coinciding with the attack on Se La. They employed 32 Infantry Regiment to attack Dirang Dzong from the East and South East, while 33 Infantry Regiment was simultaneously moving further South to attack Bomdi La. The Indian troops had already withdrawn and the position was occupied by 32 Infantry Regiment.

Capture of Bomdi La

While the above attack was in progress, 33 Infantry Regiment ex 11 Infantry Division whose initial task was to prevent any re-inforcements coming to Dirang Dzong from the South, finding no Indian troops moving up, commenced their southward advance to Bomdi La. The 3rd Battalion of the 33rd Regiment made contact with Bomdi La defences on 18 Nov (AN) and immediately commenced its attack. The Chinese expected Bomdi La to be held strongly and had made

extensive preparations for the attack. However, after initial contact they found that the defences had been abandoned in a haste. They entered Bomdi La town in the early hours of 19 Nov.

The Pursuit

Having secured Bomdi La without much of a fight, 3rd Battalion of 33 Infantry Regiment commenced pursuit towards the South on 19 Nov. At this stage, HQ Indian 4 Infantry Division had ordered two battalions of 67 Infantry Brigade (possibly, 3 JAK LI and 6/8 GR) to re-inforce Bomdi La and to move further North to extricate Indian troops who were trapped at Dirang Dzong and were withdrawing southwards. 3 JAK LI which was leading the northward move of 67 Infantry Brigade, met troops from 48 Infantry Brigade who were withdrawing towards South, about 3 kms North of Tenga Valley. It was then they realised that Bomdi La had been lost. Not knowing whether to proceed, they (3 JAK LI) decided to disperse and sent a strong reconnaissance party (60 men, possibly a company) to Bomdi La.

This reconnaissance party ran headlong into the leading elements of the Chinese 3rd Battalion of 33 Infantry Regiment advancing southwards at about 1230 hours, 19 Nov. A sharp engagement ensued between the two vanguards and soon enough the main bodies of both the units joined battle. However, the Indian battalion was at a great disadvantage as they were in a valley with all the hill sides dominated by Chinese troops. Finally, bulk of the Indian troops (about 300) were surrounded in the valley from all sides and had to break contact, trying to escape as best as they could. Despite the disadvantage, small parties of Indian troops, surrounded from all sides and without any fire support, continued to put up a gallant fight and inflicted some casualties on the Chinese. *In one such action, the Chinese Battalion Commander was killed.* The battle was over by 1500 hours, 19 Nov. It had lasted for about two and a half hours.

It would be worthwhile to mention the casualties suffered in the battle of Tenga Valley by both sides as per the Chinese estimates. In this battle, Indians suffered 170 killed (including a Major) and 34 were captured (including the Commanding Officer). On the Chinese side, they suffered 22 killed (including the Battalion Commander) and 53 wounded. By all standards, the Indian Battalion (3 JAK LI), even though surprised and at a great tactical disadvantage, had fought in the best tradition of the Indian Army. However, its heroic action has been subsumed in the bigger debacle.

After this short and sharp engagement, the 2nd Battalion of 33 Infantry Regiment resumed the pursuit southwards to Chaku. They made contact with Chaku defences by about 0200 hours on 20 Nov and launched a speedy night attack. The Indian defences were not well organised as 6/8 GR had arrived only the previous day and were preparing for the move North when they were attacked. The Chinese had also cut-off withdrawal routes to the South. There was much hand to hand fighting during the hours of darkness. The battle was over by 0700 hours, 20 Nov.

Overall Casualties

The HQ of 4 Indian Infantry Division had moved to Tezpur and the Division had ceased to exist as an effective fighting force. As per the Chinese estimates, the Indian Army lost about 5100 all ranks killed / wounded and captured. The Chinese suffered 225 killed (27 officers and 198 men) and 477 wounded (46 officers and 431 men).

Unilateral Ceasefire and Withdrawal

An important part of the operational plan which is not well known, were the circumstances and reasons for unilateral ceasefire and withdrawal by the Chinese troops. It was during the planning process in early Oct 1962 that the idea of terminating the war by a unilateral Chinese halt, ceasefire and withdrawal was developed. Some practical difficulties associated with China's domestic situation had a bearing on this decision.³ These difficulties could be the poor economic situation, famine and the likelihood of resultant social unrest. This was the period of Mao's 'Great Leap Forward' (1958-62) which caused a great famine in which nearly 45 million Chinese had perished.

On 20 Nov 1962, the General HQ issued orders for ceasefire. At 2350 hours on 21 Nov, orders were again issued to stop pursuit and concentrate at the key positions that had been captured. *The order read , "The Central Committee of the CPC had decided that from 22 Nov morning onwards, our Army will stop counter attack, no more attack, no more pursuit. Wherever own forces are as at 2400 hours on 21 Nov, they will stay put there only. No more preparations will be made for continuing further advance".* As per these orders, all the units turned back one by one, carrying-out search operations and eliminating Indian troops that they encountered enroute. For instance, from 19 Nov to 05 Dec 1962, 55 Infantry Division and its units while carrying-out such operations claim to have killed 300 Indian troops, and captured 400 rifles and machine guns (all types) and 30 guns (all types).

Part II - In Retrospect

(A Comparison with the Battle of Chosin Reservoir from the Korean War)

The operational plan of the Chinese for the battle of Se La - Bomdi La can be compared with the Chinese plan for the battle of Chosin Reservoir during the Korean War 1950-53. It will be worth the while to recapture some details from this battle.

(This sketch has been copied from the book by David Rees; 'Korea : The Limited War', London Macmillan Co Ltd, 1964, xvi, 511 p)

Please refer to **Sketch 2.** The US 1st Marine Division, part of X Corps of the UN Forces had been advancing to Yalu river on the eastern flank of the UN Forces 8th Army. By about 25 Nov 1950, the US 1st Marine Division, under the command of Major General Smith had reached the Area of Chosin Reservoir and was poised for its final push to the Yalu River. It was disposed of with its two regiments (5 and 7) at Yudam-ni, a regiment(minus) at Chinhung-ni (1 Marine

Regiment) with a marine battalion and some US Army troops at Hagaru, which was kind of an operational base with a vital airstrip. The rest of Smith's command with the British Marine Commandos from 41st Independent Commando Unit were at Koto-ri. Task Force 'Faith' consisting of three battalions of 7 Infantry Division (South Koreans) was operating on Axis Sihung-ni - Hagaru ready to advance to Changjin on the Yalu River. Thus, the US 1st Marine Division was strung along from Yudam-ni in the North to Chinhung-ni in the South, a distance of about 62 kms. The two regiments (5 and 7) of the Division had started clearing the road westward to Mupyong-ni on the Night 27/28 Nov 1950, when the Chinese struck.

Operating against the US 1st Marine Division were the 12 divisions of the Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) IX Army Group consisting of three Chinese armies. Three Chinese divisions were in action Yudam-ni and another five on the supply route to Chinhung-ni. For detailed dispositions and Chinese direction of attack, please refer to Sketch 2. By the morning of 28 Nov 1950, the Marine Division had been split into three isolated perimeters at Yudam-ni, Hagaru and Koto-ri by Chinese attacks which had reached upto Chinhung-ni, nearly 62 kms South of Yudam-ni.⁴

The situation that the Indian 4 Infantry Division found itself on the morning of 18 Nov 1962 was almost a mirror image of what the US 1st Marine Division found itself on the morning of 28 Nov 1950, exactly 12 years earlier. The Indian Division was split into three pockets at Se La, Dirang Dzong and Bomdi La, a distance of approximately 61 kms and all the pockets came under attack almost simultaneously. While the US 1st Marine Division was being attacked by eight Chinese divisions, the forces operating against the Indian 4 Infantry Division amounted to about three PLA divisions (11,55 and 419) i.e eight infantry regiments plus a battalion and three artillery regiments. The parallel stops here.

Sketch Showing Splitting Up of the US 1st Marine Division of the UN X Corps by the Chinese Army Group IX Employing Eight Divisions during the Korean War : 27 Nov - 09 Dec 1950.



Sketch 2

(This sketch has been copied from the book by David Rees; 'Korea : The Limited War', London Macmillan Co Ltd, 1964, xvi, 511 p)

The US 1st Marine Division was advancing to Yalu River and there was a feeling of déjà vu, a kind of élan that successful attacking troops would naturally have. They were well supplied, equipped and overwhelmingly supported by air. As against this, the Indian 4 Infantry Division had already suffered a serious reverse on Namka Chu three weeks previously; they were in prepared defensive positions at Se La and were in the process of moving to the other positions in the South. They were ill equipped by way of clothing, weapons, ammunition and with very little artillery support. Some units were not even acclimatised. Air support was non-existent as the Indian Air Force was not used as a result of a conscious decision of the political leadership of that time . There was no coordinated battle plan, the morale was low and above all, the higher direction of war was seriously flawed.

The near congruency of the two operational plans makes for fascinating comparison. See **Sketch 3**. If Se La were to be shown in place of Yudam-ni, Poshing La in place of Sihung-ni, Dirang in place of Hagaru (with Axis Poshing La - Dirang replacing Axis Sihung-ni-Hagaru) and Bomdi La in place of Koto-ri, the similarity is startling. The distance between Se la and Bomdi La is 61 kms, while that between Yudam-ni and Koto-ri is about 60 kms. Each of the two divisions were segmented into three parts and each segment dealt with almost simultaneously. A more historically aware higher command could have better anticipated the Chinese strategy and planned accordingly. Those who do not learn from the lessons of history are verily condemned to repeat them.

The outcome - the US 1st Marine Division survived as a fighting force, though they suffered nearly 4400 battle casualties, 718 of them fatal and over 7000 non-battle casualties, mostly frostbite cases who soon got well. Against this the 4 Infantry Division had 5100 casualties of all types. The retreat or more aptly the 'fighting through' by the US Division through Chinese hordes lasted from 28 Nov - 10 Dec 1950 when last of the marines scrambled into Chinhung-ni. The CCF IX Army Group had been so savaged by the American fire power during the march from Yudam-ni to the sea that it was unable to press home an attack on the Hungnum perimeter and even disappeared from the Korean battlefield for three months.⁵ The airpower had played a vital role not only in causing attrition to the Chinese but also evacuated over 4500 wounded from the Hagaru airstrip.

Sketch showing splitting up of the US 1st Marine Division and a Comparison with the Chinese Operations against the Indian 4 Infantry Division with Indian Place Names Superimposed



Sketch 3

Part III : Politico - Diplomatic Interactions

It is generally believed that the Chinese are never forthcoming about their intentions. The historical evidence seems to point otherwise. It will be of interest to briefly analyse the politico - diplomatic interactions that took place just before the Chinese intervention in Korea in Nov 1950, as also prior to the Sino-Indian War of Oct-Nov 1962. It would help us to understand the Chinese way of signaling their intentions.

Let us go back to end-Sep/early-Oct 1950 in Korea. Having reached the 38th Parallel, the Americans were contemplating continuing their push to the Yalu River and thus unify the two Koreas. Chinese were issuing warnings in no unambiguous terms that should the US troops enter North Korea, they would intervene. Around 25 Sep 1950, General Nieh Jung-Chen, acting Chief of Staff of the PLA, informed KM Panikkar, the Indian ambassador to Beijing, *“the Chinese Communists would not let the Americans come up to the Yalu. They may even drop atom bombs on us. What then? They may kill a few million people. Without a sacrifice a nation’s independence cannot be upheld”*⁶

In yet another warning – at midnight on 02 Oct 1950, in Beijing, Chon-En-Lai formally summoned KM Panikar to a conference in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Dismissing the ROK advance over the Parallel as of no consequence, the Chinese Premier declared that should the American troops enter North Korea, China would enter the war ⁷. The Americans considered all these Chinese signals (there were many more delivered through different channels) to be a bluff and came to grief.

Let us now move on to mid-1962. On 23 Jul 1962, Marshal Chen Yi, China’s Foreign Minister and a veteran of the ‘Long March’ met Krishna Menon, the Indian Defence Minister on the sidelines of the Geneva Conference on Laos and discussed issues related to the Sino-Indian border problem. Towards the end of the discussion, Chen said that he did not wish to argue, but the border problem was a “big one”, and the two sides ought to sit down and calmly discuss the same. Chen proposed that he and Menon issue a joint communiqué announcing future talks on the “problem of preventing border conflict”. Menon declined this proposal but said he would report the matter to his Government.⁸

Another signal – Indian forces had established an outpost at Dhola at the southern base of Thagla Ridge in June 1962 as part of the Forward Policy and to push back the Chinese forces from atop the Thagla Ridge. Chinese forces responded by entrenching themselves atop that Ridge in Aug 1962.

By early Sep 1962, Beijing was warning New Delhi that if India “played with fire”, it would be “consumed by fire”. On 08 Sep 1962 a force of 800 Chinese soldiers descended from the Thagla heights to surround the Indian post at Dhola. Neither side opened fire for 12 days, but this display of overwhelming Chinese strength was a clear warning that China was prepared to act. On the other hand, India understood this as another attempt at bluff. On 18 Sep 1962, an Indian Government spokesman announced the Government’s intention of driving the Chinese forces from Dhola at the base of Thagla.⁹ The dice was now cast for a showdown. By early Oct 1962, Chinese leadership was giving final touches to its operational plans. Chinese had conveyed their intention but we still felt that they were bluffing. We were not able to gauge their intentions the same way as the Americans had failed to understand them 12 years earlier.

Now fast forward to the recent events in the East and South China Seas from 2010 onwards. Various incidents involving the Chinese Navy/fishing trawlers vis-à-vis the USA, Japanese, Vietnamese, Philippines and even Indian Naval Ship Airavat would indicate that Chinese have a position which they would defend, even by the use of force. However, timing can be a matter of fine analysis. They would probably wait for American decline and their alliances to weaken further before they decide to enforce their claims. It will be prudent to draw lessons and prepare for such an eventuality.

There is also another developing situation in the South China Sea where the Chinese have objected to joint oil and gas explorations by ONGC (Videsh) Ltd and a Vietnamese company in close proximity to Paracel Islands (claimed by both, China and Vietnam). It is not a coincidence that the Chinese have concurrently announced their plans to expand the ‘depth and scope of oceanic research’ in a 10,000 sq km area in southwest Indian Ocean for which they have already got the approval from the International Seabed Authority for mining of Polymetallic Sulphide ore. It is the beginning of a new situation. There is a need to understand the Chinese mind from their statements and actions on ground.

In retrospect, one feels that only if our leaders (political and military) had studied the Korean War more seriously and derived some lessons, especially after Indo-Chinese relations had begun to sour in 1959, we could not only have been better prepared to face the Chinese militarily, but may have even given them a bloody nose. Alas, that was not to be!

The Chinese had not only known who the Indian Commanders were but had also studied their profiles, especially that of Lieutenant General BM Kaul, Chief of General Staff and later the General Officer Commanding of newly created IV Corps just before the battle was joined. On the Indian side, there was complete lack of intelligence about the strength, capabilities and intentions of Chinese who had concentrated nearly 22,000 troops opposite the Kameng Sector and were ready for a large scale offensive across one of the most rugged terrain in the world. We are still ignorant of the full facts of the campaign and many myths continue to prevail.

One is tempted to fault the political leadership of that time for the debacle that followed. However, the military leadership can also not be absolved of the blame for neglect and sense of complacency. Military considerations must weigh uppermost in a military commander’s mind because on him depend lives of men that he commands. *It is not uncommon the world over that the advice of military commanders may be overruled or disregarded by the political authority but in that case a military commander has a moral duty to perform from which he must not shy away. A career or political goodwill can never be a substitute for discharging one’s military responsibility; for on that depends nation’s well being and security.*

Conclusion

In this essay, I have tried to recapitulate the way the operations were planned and executed by the Chinese in the Se La – Bomdi La Sector during Nov 1962 using Chinese material. The operational plan envisaged multi-directional advance, wide outflanking moves, encirclement and splitting up of Indian positions, and tackling them piecemeal since none of the positions could be reinforced. The attack was carried out with such speed and ferocity that it completely unhinged the Indian defences and pulverised the Indian Command, resulting in panic and often contradictory decisions.

Surprise was also achieved at tactical, operational and strategic levels. For instance, while the main objective of the Chinese lay in the Western Sector, the main effort was concentrated in the Eastern Sector so as to deliver a decisive blow. It was a masterly stroke of the strategy of indirect approach. Diplomatic front was also not neglected; the neutrality of the Soviet Union in case of an Indo-China war was assured.

A parallel with Chinese attack against the US 1st Marine Division during the Korean War (Nov-Dec 1950) cannot go unnoticed by a military historian. The two were a mirror image of each other, though the outcomes were completely different. The US 1st Marine Division attacked by no less than eight PLA divisions not only managed to extricate itself and survive as a fighting force but also put out of action the CCF IX Army Group for three months. Of course, the awesome American fire power contributed to this outcome. The outcome for the Indian 4 Infantry Division is too well known and need not be repeated. Among other things, one can say in retrospect that not using the Air Force was a big handicap for India. For some inexplicable reason, Indian Air Force was not brought into battle, even when the very existence of a division and its 14000 men was at stake. Needless to say, political and diplomatic reservations would not be considered a reason enough, when a history of those times is written.

And lastly, the battle proves once again the importance of study of military history by not only military officers but all those who are concerned with national security. It should even be a subject in our universities from where civilian and military leaders of tomorrow will emerge. Alas, if only the military / civilian leaders of those times had studied the Korean War and imbibed its lessons, the outcome might have been different. It will be generations before we come to terms with what happened in Oct-Nov 1962. *The least we can do is to learn its lessons and apply these in the future, for similar challenges still loom ahead.* Least of all, there is a need to declassify complete material of those times and study it thoroughly, and draw lessons.

Endnotes

1. This strength seems to exclude a battalion deployed in covering troops role between Nuranang-Jang and three infantry companies from two different battalions detached and sent away to Dirang Dzong for protection of the Division HQ.
2. John W Garver, China's Decision for War with India in 1962, accessed on 08 Sep 2011, <http://chinaindiaborderdispute.files.wordpress.com/2010/07/garver.pdf>
3. Ibid
4. David Rees, 'Korea : The Limited War' London : Macmillan, Page 162.
5. Ibid.
6. Panikkar, In Two Chinas, Page 108
7. Ibid.
8. John W Garver, China's Decision for War with India in 1962, accessed on 08 Sep 2011, <http://chinaindiaborderdispute.files.wordpress.com/2010/07/garver.pdf>
9. Ibid.

*This account has been reconstructed from Chinese literature which was translated under the aegis of the USI Centre for Historical Research (CAFHR) through the efforts of Squadron Leader Rana TS Chhina, Secretary CAFHR.

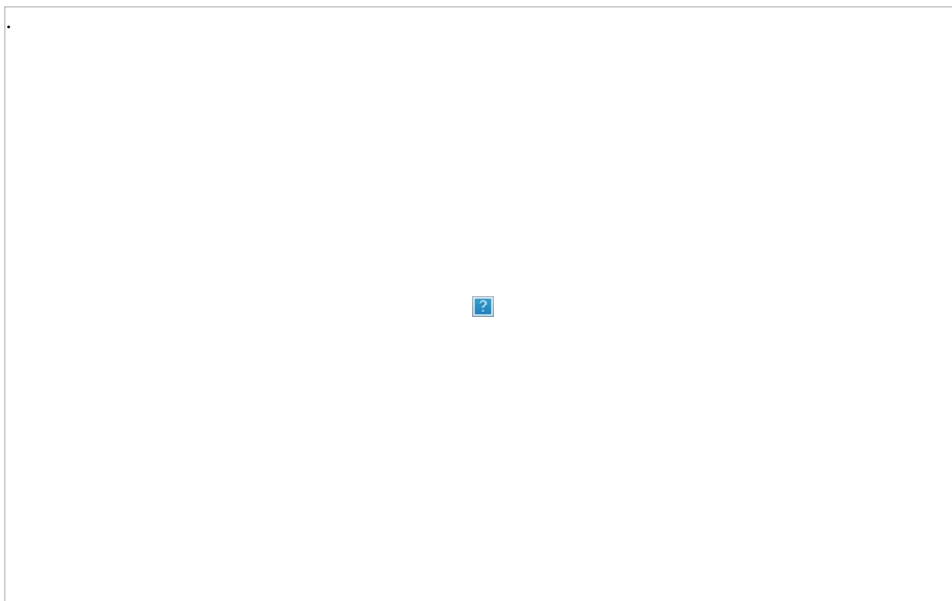
****Major General PJS Sandhu (Retd)** was commissioned into 8th Light Cavalry on 15 June 1966 and later commanded 47 Armoured Regiment. He retired from the Army as Chief of Staff, 1 Corps on 31 July 2003. Presently, he is working as Deputy Director and Editor at USI since 01 May 2007.

Kolahoi Glacier : Kashmir's Vanishing Life Support*

Colonel KS Dhami (Retd)**

General

Kolahoi Glacier is Kashmir's biggest glacier and the main water source of the Jhelum – the life support of the Valley. It is named after the Kolahoi peak – 'Goddess of Light' to the people - that towers above it; and is amongst the fast melting glaciers in the Himalayas. Upstream of Pahalgam Lidder river, with its source in the Kolahoi glacier, is called the West Lidder; and the other, along which pilgrims go to Amarnath cave, is called the East Lidder. Down stream from Pahalgam, it is Lidder till it joins the Jhelum near Anantnag. With the Kolahoi glacier at its head, the West Lidder river valley is amongst the most beautiful in the entire Himalayas. (Refer to Map 1).



Aru (height 8000 ft), about 10 km from Pahalgam is the road head for the trek to the Kolahoi glacier. From Aru, after a steep initial climb, the 10 km trail is gradual right up to Lidderwatt running above the east bank of the river. This stretch goes through fine forests of blue pine, firs and scenic meadows. Unfortunately, the shepherds and Gujjars have played havoc with the forests through reckless cutting of trees and over grazing. From Lidderwatt to the glacier the distance is about 12 km. The trail for some distance is through bhojpatra forests and then through alpine meadows up to a nomadic settlement Satlanjan. At a number of places one comes across nomadic encampments, located in scenic surroundings. From Satlanjan, the climb is gradual along the river, at places the path goes over glacial moraines. Nearer to the glacier, the climb gets deeper over moraines, right up to the snout.

Melting State : Conflicting, Varying and Confusing Views

The extreme views leading to controversy over the melting state of Himalayan glaciers are well known. The Kolahoi glacier is amongst the glaciers subject to conflicting, varying and confusing views. Some interesting facts that need to be taken note of are as under:

A team of Kashmir University scientists who visited the area in August 2008 have stated that the Kolahoi glacier could "completely disappear within the next ten years," and that the glacier has abnormally shrunk—from 13 sq kms to 11.5 sq kms in the past 40 years and is receding at a rate of nearly 10 feet (3 m) a year.¹ The same has also been stated by Rebecca Byerly – a free-lance journalist, reporting for the National Geographic Society News, published in 24 March 2010.² The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), headed by Dr RK Pachauri has been quoted to state that "In the past four decades, Kolahoi has lost between 15 to 18 per cent of its total volume and that the glacier is retreating by almost ten feet (3 m) a year."³ In another TERI assessment "TERI image of Kolahoi snout"⁴ the recession at 10 metres annually has been shown to cover the period from 1965 to 2007 (42 yrs). According to mountaineers from Jawahar Institute of Mountaineering (JIM), Pahalgam in 2008, the glacier has receded by half since 1985.⁵

Online site viewed, even in a photograph shown to be of Kolahoi glacier, is actually of snow beds lying between two heights north of the Lidder nala (as it is called here) and taken from a point about three kms from Satlanjan.⁶ The first full view of the Kolahoi peak and glacier one gets, is only from the last meadow at the bend, below these heights, looking south-east, about a km short of the glacier snout. Another picture published in a journal with a caption "The Kolahoi glacier, in Kashmir, is receding at a rate of nearly 10 feet (3 m) a year." could be of any peak in the Himalayas (no glacier seen in the picture) – a good picture, but definitely not of the Kolahoi glacier (in the same story by Rebecca Byerly mentioned above.⁷

The above mentioned facts clearly indicate that these assessments/views are not backed by ground observations/ checks and are based mainly on satellite imagery. It also appears that the 'original source' stating that the 'glacier could completely disappear in 10 years and was receding by 3 m annually' has obviously made an error; and that the others have also just copy pasted the statement, without giving it a thought. It is this kind of approach which led to the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Chairman, Dr RK Pachauri coming out with the statement that "Himalayan glaciers will melt by 2035". He later acknowledged that he had erred on the date.

Local villagers say that they don't need scientists to tell them how much the glacier has melted. According to them, around 1985, the glacier's snout stretched half a mile (800 m) further down the valley.⁸ This appears to be a better assessment, which works out to about 30 m a year. At the rate of 3 m yearly retreat, there is nothing to worry about as glacier is estimated to be 5 km in length, with an ice field as the accumulation zone. At this rate, it will be many decades before it melts away.

The Geological Survey of India and other Government aided institutions studying the Himalayan glaciers could have given a truer estimate/picture but remained silent spectators as they did not want to contradict the former Environment Minister, Jairam Ramesh who had more than once stated that the "Siachen and Gangotri Glaciers are still advancing but at a decelerating rate". While Dr RK Pachauri got the date wrong, but not the fact that the glaciers were melting fast; Jairam's statement on the contrary was totally incorrect and misleading.

Clearing the Controversies

To put the above controversies to rest, the United Service Institution of India (USI) expedition in its Adventure-cum-Study initiative had fixed the snout positions of Gangotri and Siachen glaciers in October 2010.⁹ In October 2011, *along with a group from Victor Force (15 Corps), USI has added the Kolahoi Glacier to the list of its reconnaissances. The ground reality today is that Himalayan glaciers can be taken to have been*

melting at an average rate of 15 to 20 m yearly, up to a decade ago. Now, the rate has doubled or increased even more as we discovered over a period of ten years in the case of the Gangotri and the Siachen glaciers — smaller glaciers melt even faster.

The exploratory study of the Kolahoi glacier was carried out to fix the snout position by photographically recording the state of the snout zone and top surface of the glacier’s ablation zone. In addition to this, the USI team was tasked to observe and record the state of degradation of forests and pastures in the West Lidder valley. The GPS navigator and GPS data logger were used at all places to record positions, heights and distances. By mid-October 2011, with the monsoons over and the skies clear, the yearly post snow melted conditions were ideal to study the true state of the glacier.

The group comprised Colonel Dhami as the leader, two officers, two JCO's and five other ranks from Victor Force units. The logistics support was provided by HQ 15 Corps. The venture was planned for three days (11-13 Oct, 2011), with two spare days to cater for unforeseen weather conditions. The route and time schedule were: Day-1, from road head at Aru to Satlanjan; Day-2, Glacier snout & back to Lidderwat; and Day-3, back to Road head at Aru. Observations of the group on the glacier and the West Lidder valley are given in succeeding paragraphs.

The Kolahoi Glacier

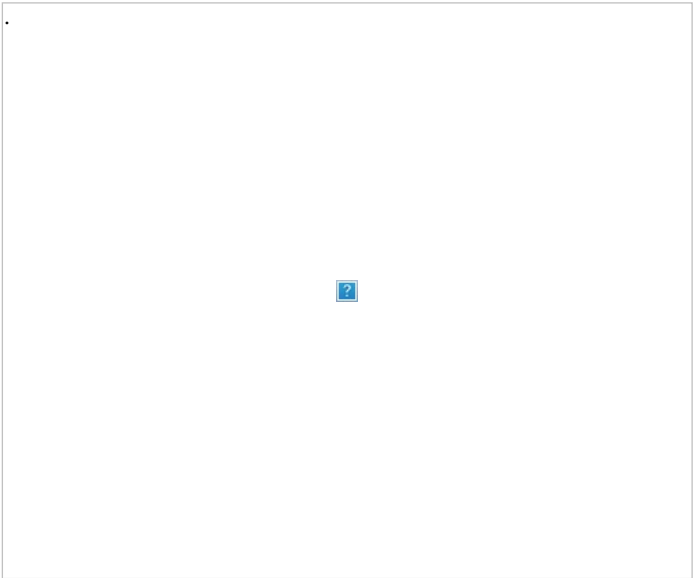
(a) Unlike other glaciers which are mostly valley bound type, the Kolahoi has three distinct characteristics. Upto the point it has receded, it is a ‘U’ shaped valley; after that, it is a ‘hanging type with a steep rise ending in an ice fall’. After the steep rise it is ‘an ice field bedded on gradual slopes like a crescent around the north face of Kolahoi peak’, major part of it being towards its west. (Photograph P-1 refers)

(b) About one fourth of the hanging glacier has melted, the left portion appears like a drape of white snow. The cave like water outlet is just below the point from where the hanging glacier’s steep rise starts. This part of the snout was photographed and coordinates were recorded on the GPS navigator and GPS data logger. Data on the GPS was filmed, showing the snout coordinates and height. The snout location coordinates, as on 12 Oct 2011, are: Long 75° 20’ 12.86" E, and Lat 34° 11’ 29.16" N. Height 3606m. (Photograph P-2 refers)

(c) Considering the conflicting views about its rate of melting, it is not possible to arrive at a definite conclusion, based only on one reading. However, ground checks will be carried out at regular periods. Presently, it is clear that besides the water flow through the cave like opening from melting of the glacier from the top and within the snout face, due to toe cutting, horizontal and vertical crevasses will be subjected to shearing and crumbling leading to faster melting of snout. One can expect the hanging section to melt fast, after which, the snout face of the glacier will give a good visual idea of its depth.

The West Lidder River Valley

(a) I have been right across the Himalayas from the extreme East to the West, including Nepal and Bhutan; and have never seen destruction of trees like one sees on the wonderful Lidderwat trekking trail. In the forests above the trail we can see pockets of dry trees amidst healthy forest covered mountain slopes. Pictures taken by us speak of the manner and the extent of destruction of trees on this route. There is similar damage in other areas of the Valley, but nothing compared to this.



(b) What surprised me the most during my last trek three years ago was the way the Gujjars and shepherds were killing trees when there was so much dead wood lying around. I found the answer this time. They bring down the trees by chopping the trees/fire; let them burn to collect the charcoal; and sell that at a rate of about Rs 500/- per 25 kg bag mainly for their 'kangries'.¹⁰

(c) The alpine pastures are victims of over grazing by shepherds and bakarwals. The Gujjars and shepherds are from local villages of the Lidder valley; the bakarwals come with their herds from across the Pir Panjal Range during summer months to graze their flock of sheep on the higher alpine pastures.

(d) According to a study by the 'Action Aid International' the forest cover in J&K, has shrunk from 37 per cent to 11 per cent - and the study goes on to state, how water bodies like the Wullar lake in Kashmir are an evidence of how the denuding of mountains affects the water flows and water bodies.¹¹

(e) Forests and glaciers are the source and feeders of rivers. All will not be lost with melting of glaciers only. We cannot intervene in the melting of glaciers, but forests can be preserved, added to and pastures can be protected. Only massive and urgent effort, to preserve and add forest cover, can mitigate the impact of the loss in water flow due to vanishing glaciers. It is the forests in many parts of the world that keep the rivers flowing throughout the year — even when there is no rain. Forests are the key to survival — especially for the Kashmir valley. Nobody knows this better than the Kashmiris themselves through their folklore.

Future Scenario

River Jhelum is the life support for the people of the Kashmir valley and the Lidder river is its main source. The Jhelum after picking up flow from the Lidder meanders its way through the Valley catering to the drinking and irrigation needs of the people. After Srinagar, short of Wullar lake, it is met by the Sind river and then it does not empty out into the Wullar lake; but flows, cutting a channel through the highly weeded lake and flows out near Sopore, through the Uri gorge, and finally bids farewell to the Valley as it crosses the Line of Control (LC) into POK to join the river Indus. With reduced water inflow, due to ecological degradation and vanishing glaciers, the outflow from the Wullar lake will stop, it will become land locked; the Jhelum and the lake it feeds will shrink and become highly polluted — and the Valley will face desert like conditions.

Time Running Out

There is likelihood of drastic decrease of water flow due to the environment degradation by the people and melting of glaciers that is taking place in the Valley, especially the West Lidder valley. If the reckless cutting of trees and over exploitation of the pastures is not stopped the soil will lose water holding capacity; with the glacier gone, the river will dry up and become seasonal. It is a man made disaster in the making, getting further aggravated by global warming; not only for the Kashmir valley, but for Pakistan too; as it will lose water to which it is entitled to as per the 1960 Indus Water Treaty. Pakistan needs water not only for drinking and irrigation, but for their hydel power also.

Kashmir's water needs can only be assured on sustainable basis by preserving its green cover and protecting glaciers from human activities on the lines being done to save the Gangotri glacier and the Bhagirathi river valley up stream from Gangotri; and what was done, as a last resort, to rejuvenate the 'Nanda Devi Sanctuary'. Urgent action is required on these lines starting with West Lidder river valley and Kashmir's biggest glacier at the head of which rises 'Kolahoi' revered to by the local people as Gashibrar — "Goddess of Light".

Author's Note

This article is based on ground observations recorded and filmed by our group. References to some amazing and conflicting statements mentioned in the article, like the controversy created by Dr RK Pachauri stating that Himalayan glaciers will melt by 2035, and Mr Jairam Ramesh taking the other extreme view that some were advancing, can be accessed from the Endnotes given below.

Endnotes

1. <http://southasia.oneworld.net/todayshadlines/climate-change-threatening-kashmirs-glaciers#top>
2. <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2010/03/100324-himalaya-glacier-melt-water/>
3. <http://freshinitiative.net/kashmir-news/news/4672-kashmirs-kolahoi-glacier-melting-fast>
4. <http://all-travel-point.blogspot.com/2009/02/kolahoi-glacier.html>
5. <http://southasia.oneworld.net/todayshadlines/climate-change-threatening-kashmirs-glaciers#top>
6. http://www.igsoc.org/journal.old/13/68/igs_journal_vol13_issue068_pg279-283.pdf .
7. [snouthhttpwww.google.co.in/search?q=TERI+Expedition+to+kolahoi+glacier&hl=en&rlz=1T4ACAW_enIN376IN379&prmd=ivns&ei=fs6wTtCfA4LqrAfZmYxC & start=10&sa=N](http://www.google.co.in/search?q=TERI+Expedition+to+kolahoi+glacier&hl=en&rlz=1T4ACAW_enIN376IN379&prmd=ivns&ei=fs6wTtCfA4LqrAfZmYxC&start=10&sa=N) For terminal image of kolahoi
8. *ibid* 4.
9. *USI Journal, Vol CXL, Oct-Dec 2010, No. 582, pg 503-510.*
10. *Earthern pots, filled with burning charcoal, carried by Kashmiris under their loose fitting gowns (Pherans), to keep themselves warm during extreme winter conditions.*
11. *ibid* 5.

*In continuation of USI sponsored adventure-cum-study tours of the glaciers started in October 2010, this was the second such trek undertaken by Colonel KS Dhami alongwith volunteers from the Victor Force by courtesy HQ 15 Corps from 11-15 Oct 2011.

**Colonel KS Dhami was commissioned into 14 Horse on 12 Jun 1960. Later, he volunteered for transfer to the Parachute Regiment, commanded 6 PARA and took premature retirement in 1983. He led the USI sponsored study trek to Gangotri Glacier in conjunction with the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun from 20-25 Oct 2010; and to Kolohoi Glacier from 11-15 Oct 2011.

Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CXLI, No. 586, October-December 2011.

Introduction

A magnitude 9 earthquake occurred off the Tohoku region of North-Eastern Japan at 14:36 hours on 11 March 2011. This earthquake triggered a tsunami that hit approximately 480 km of coastline with a wave of 30m height in places. The maximum depth inland to which the tsunami reached was approximately 30 km in river mouths and 10 km in the Sendai plains. The tsunami resulted in many towns, fishing villages and communities being completely wiped off the map and ultimately in over 21,000 dead and missing persons with more than 750,000 buildings destroyed or damaged. At one time 480,000 internally displaced people were housed in evacuation centres. It also resulted in extensive damage to the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant leading to significant radiation leakage from the power plant.

The Government of Japan was faced with three concurrent crises in this natural disaster. Though it is one of the best-prepared countries in the world and a fully developed country, it had limited previous experience of receiving international assistance, as it has been a donor country for many decades. Therefore, it requested the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) for a UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team to assist it. I was selected by the United Nations to lead this multinational UNDAC team, which consisted of : Arjun Katoch, Team Leader, India; Sebastian Rhodes - Stampa, Deputy Team Leader, UN OCHA; Per-Anders Berthlin, Sweden; Kim Yong Sang, Korea; Olivier Brouant, European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO); Akiko Yoshida & Kirsten Mildren, UN OCHA; Yosuke Okita, Japan; Sebastien Sivadier & Clinton Smith from Telecom Sans Frontieres (TSF) and Anne Frankland & Nick McWilliam from MapAction.

This article is based on my experiences as the Team Leader of the UNDAC team in Japan and is necessarily a subjective viewpoint; it does not by any means claim to be a comprehensive account of the overall response to the Great East Japan earthquake.

Terms of Reference of the UNDAC Mission

The terms of reference of the mission were finalised on 14 March at a meeting of the UNDAC team with the Director of the Humanitarian Assistance and Emergency Relief Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The tasks given to the UNDAC team were:

- (a) To report to the outside world on the emergency situation resulting from the earthquake and tsunami in Japan.
- (b) To advise the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on how to respond to the numerous offers of assistance being received by the Government of Japan.
- (c) To assist, from Tokyo, in the handling of the international urban search and rescue teams which were deploying to Japan.

Government of Japan Coordination Structure

The Government established a very centralised coordination structure. A disaster management committee, located in the Prime Minister's office, headed by the Prime Minister, took all decisions. All ministries reported directly to this committee and all Prefectures (roughly equivalent to Indian States) also reported to this committee. This resulted in all decisions having to go to the very top and very little inter-ministerial coordination below that level.

This centralised coordination structure resulted in difficulties in coordination and in the fact that in the initial days the Government's primary focus (rightly so) was on the radiation leak at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant and therefore, there was less focus on the humanitarian relief issues of the population affected by the tsunami.

International Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Response

The UNDAC team established itself and set-up an On Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC) at the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) International Training Centre in Tokyo. In addition three Sub -OSOCCs were set up at Ofunato, Sendai and Minami-Senriko. 20 International USAR teams were deployed by 15 countries to the affected area from 12 to 21 Mar, 2011 with a total of 890 rescuers and 38 dogs. The international teams were integrated and coordinated by the authorities in the respective Prefectures along with national response units. The OSOCC maintained an overview of the international USAR response. There were considerable difficulties in communication between the OSOCC in Tokyo and Sub-OSOCCs due to the distance and disrupted road and rail communications between Tokyo and the Tohoku region. A table showing the deployment of international USAR assets as on 23 March is at Appendix A.

India had decided to send a USAR team from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) to assist but by the time relevant decisions were taken by the Government, it was almost a month from the earthquake and by then all other international USAR teams had long since returned from Japan. Ultimately, the NDRF team of 46 men was finally deployed at Miyagi Prefecture on 28 March to assist in recovery and rehabilitation operations.

National and International Military Response

The mainstay of the Japanese response to this emergency was the Japanese Self Defence Forces (SDF) supported by the US military. The Japanese military had between 80,000 -106,000 troops in the affected area and they were responsible for the delivery of food, water and other relief supplies to the affected population. In addition, the US Armed Forces in Japan and the US Seventh Fleet were deployed to assist the Government of Japan, providing an additional 20,000 US troops and immense logistics capabilities in the US named 'Operation Todomachi'. UNDAC also established direct links

with the US military, which was a major player on this mission. One of the biggest lessons that ought to be drawn from this mission is the fact that ‘humanitarian military coordination needs to be practised and strengthened’ as most of the response to major disasters relies heavily on domestic military resources, probably supported by international military resources.

Assisting the Government of Japan in Managing the Crisis

The major assistance that the UNDAC mission provided to the Government of Japan was in reporting to the world the events surrounding this emergency and the response to it. In Japan all work, data, and actions are in the Japanese language. Had it not been for the UNDAC team gathering data available in Japanese and presenting it in English Situation Reports, there would have been very little accurate information about the emergency available to the world. This has especially to be looked at in the context of the intense and often sensationalist media coverage of the disaster and its aftermath. The Japanese Government was very appreciative of this function performed by UNDAC.

The Japanese Government also sought the advice of the UNDAC team on how to deal with the numerous offers of assistance received from countries as well as NGOs and other international organisations. There was a need to prevent any uncontrolled influx of international teams and organisations with limited utility to assist in the Japanese response. A map showing the deployment of international agencies and NGOs as on 20 March made by MapAction (a British NGO deployed with the UNDAC team) is at Appendix B.

Impact of the Radiation Issue on UNDAC Operations

The radiation issue related to leakage from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant was the event on which the international media concentrated almost exclusively. It had a major bearing on humanitarian operations as it generated approximately 240,000 internally displaced people once the Government of Japan established an evacuation zone of 20 km radius and a safety zone of 30 km radius. In addition, the US authorities set-up a precaution zone for their own nationals of 80 km radius in which the US rescue and relief units were not allowed without specific safety procedures. UNDAC followed the US precautions. The US Government also provided to Japan very significant technical capabilities from both the US Armed Forces and the US Department of Energy to assist the Government in dealing with the nuclear radiation situation.

The UNDAC team carried out its own monitoring for changes in level of radiation. The levels of radiation recorded with our own intensimeter in the OSOCC in Tokyo were 0.07—0.18 μ Sv/hour. This level of radiation was within the levels of normal background-radiation (0.10—0.20 mSv/hour). Comparatively, the radiation exposure during a trans Atlantic flight from Europe to the Americas is many times higher (3—80 mSv).

Lessons for India

This international response was an unusual response in that it was conducted in a rich, developed country, which could have handled the emergency from within its own resources and had never accepted international systems before. It was also a mission in which we were dealing with three crises in one emergency. These observations are an attempt to bring out some of the lessons that could be drawn by India from this unusual mission.

Sustained Risk Reduction Works. Japan is the one country in the world, which has devoted a lot of time and attention to disaster risk reduction. It obviously works. The 9 magnitude earthquake resulted in less than 100 deaths from collapsed structures. This is a remarkable achievement. All other deaths were because of the tsunami. While we were in Tokyo, during the first week alone, there were 262 aftershocks of greater than 5 magnitude, of which 49 were greater than 6 magnitude and three greater than 7 magnitude. Not a single building collapsed. Imagine if a similar earthquake and aftershocks happened in North India. Since building codes are not followed in most constructions, it would result in tens of thousands of deaths. The lesson for us is to take risk reduction seriously on a sustained basis.

Effective, Integrated Use of the Military is Essential in Response to Major Disasters. The response to the earthquake in Japan was primarily a military response utilising almost 106,000 troops of the Japanese SDFs. In addition there was extensive assistance from the US military. The scale of damage, the difficult terrain and challenging weather conditions combined to make it a task that only the military with its extensive logistics could perform. This is normally the case in most countries including India. The military was integrated into the response at the Prefecture level, quite similar to what it would be in India, if a state were affected. It is essential that in India we integrate and practise the military in disaster response between disasters. Unfortunately, this is not the case right now as the military is not a member of the disaster management committees at the state or district levels. This needs to be rectified at the earliest.

A Clear Chain of Control from the Highest Level to the Community is a Must. No Silos!. One of the shortcomings of the Government’s response in Japan was the fact that at the Central level, Government departments worked somewhat in isolation to each other. The disaster management committee in the Prime Minister’s office was the place where everything was centrally controlled. This slowed down decision-making and while attention of the Government was on Fukushima Daiichi, it resulted in a slower response to the affected population in other areas affected by the earthquake and tsunami. The lesson learned here is that there should be a clear, delegated chain of control in which there is interaction at all levels between all departments of the government as well as NGOs and other responders. No silos should be permitted.

All Levels of Government must Participate in National and State Disaster Response Exercises Mandatorily Once in a Year. All levels of Government, including the political and military leadership, must participate in mandatory National and state level disaster response exercises at least once in a year. Otherwise the response is ad hoc and unprofessional since the decision-makers have had no prior experience of a large-scale response to disasters. These exercises should also endeavour to include in them non Governmental responders such as NGOs, civil society organisations and the Red Cross family that will be made available in communities in any disaster.

Government Institutional Preparedness to Receive Foreign Assistance, including Foreign Military Assistance is Needed. No country, no matter how advanced and wealthy, can handle such major disasters on its own as proved by the Japan earthquake and Hurricane Katarina in USA. As such, the Indian government must be institutionally prepared to receive foreign assistance including foreign military assistance. This is a lot more complicated than it appears and requires pre-established structures and procedures at the Central, state and district levels familiar with humanitarian – military coordination. Our Government does not have such structures in place and should establish them at the earliest.

Community Preparedness and Functioning Emergency Services Key to Saving Lives. While the tsunami took 21,000 lives, community preparedness saved thousands more. In Japan, children from a very early age are taught about earthquakes and tsunami preparedness. Every community practices evacuation drills. These drills undoubtedly saved thousands of lives. In India the concept of community preparedness and drills is almost non-existent. An almost complete neglect of the emergency response sector has left the communities with hardly any effective ‘Fire and Emergency Services’ capability. There is very little community preparedness. A major lesson to be learnt by us from the Japanese earthquake is that community preparedness and functioning Fire and Emergency Services are absolutely essential to save lives.

Handling the Media Requires Professional Training and Preparation. There was intense international and national media interest in the event. However, there appeared to be no real thought through Japanese Government media policy in the initial aftermath of the disaster. As a result, media speculation was rife and ‘social media’ was very active. A major lesson of this disaster was that all governments must have a very clear media policy and trained people reaching out and constantly briefing the media as well as posting this on the social media. It is not clear that decision-makers in the Government of India are fully cognisant of the ramifications of the spread of the mobile phone and social media on the speed of formation of public opinion in such events.

Nuclear Accident Response and Wider Effects of Radiation Leaks Need Serious Consideration. While observing and dealing with issues of Fukushima Daiichi and the radiation leak from it, one fact struck me. Plutonium 239, which was one of the isotopes that leaked from the nuclear fuel used in the power plant, has a half-life of 24,000 years. That is almost three times the length of recorded human civilisation. The larger question to be discussed is: do we really want to create power plants in densely populated India that may possibly result, through completely unforeseen circumstances, in part of the land being poisoned for 24,000 years? This is not a pro or anti nuclear position, it is a thought the Indian public should have an opinion on.

Conclusion

India is a very disaster prone country and is especially earthquake prone. It is only a question of time when an earthquake of such magnitude will strike to test our preparedness. At present we are certainly not prepared for such an event and it appears that the decision-makers in the Government do not even comprehend the scale of damage and casualties such an event can cause. It is hoped that this experience of the Japanese earthquake will result in a certain awakening within the Government, resulting in action being taken on some of the lessons learned from this event.

No discussion on the response to the Great East Japan earthquake can be complete without a tribute to the resilience of the Japanese people. Their fortitude, discipline and community spirit in the face of such a major disaster was an outstanding example to all of us. One only hopes we could emulate them, should we ever be faced with such an unfortunate situation.

The Indo-Bangladesh Border

Shri EN Rammohan, IPS (Retd)*

Introduction

The Indo-Bangladesh border is 4095 km long and traverses five states of India – West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram. The International Border (IB) in West Bengal is in the plains. It is 2217 km long with a riverine portion covering 600 km. The land border is low lying. Assam shares an IB with Bangladesh in two sectors. In Dhubri the IB is 134 km. Of this the riverine stretch across the Brahmaputra is more than 20 km, as this massive river curves into Bangladesh near Dhubri. The second stretch of the IB in Assam is 147 km long in low lying lush green Karimganj district. Beyond Dhubri, the IB is in the hill state of Meghalaya. This stretch is 443 km running roughly East to West. At the eastern end it runs into Karimganj district of Assam merging into the Tripura state. Here the border traverses five low hill ranges, all wooded and thinly inhabited. The Tripura section is 856 km long. The last stretch of the Indo-Bangladesh border is in Mizoram. It is 318 km long.

Border Management

The problems of each of the Indian States' border areas with Bangladesh are directly dependent on the physical nature of the terrain. In West Bengal, out of a length of 2200 km, 600 km are riverine. The land border of 1600 km is generally low lying cultivated area where there is flat ground right upto the border on both sides. It is thickly vegetated in other areas. About 600 km of the IB is low lying and gets inundated during the rainy season (July-October). Both, the Indian and Bangladesh sides are thickly populated right upto the IB. There are more than a hundred villages in India that are located right upto the border line. In many cases the IB runs right through the back gardens of houses on the Indian side. There are also several towns that straddle the border, like Hili, where the houses have the front door in India, while the rear door opens into Bangladesh. The population on the Indian side of the border, in many stretches, consists of migrants who have come from Bangladesh and settled down. They do not have land and their principle means of earning a living is smuggling.

Sizeable population on both sides of the border is involved in smuggling as an occupation. On the Indian side, the financiers of the smuggling are located in all the towns on Calcutta- Siliguri National Highway and Siliguri - Cooch Bihar Highway. Items smuggled from India to Bangladesh are cattle, rice, mustard oil, sugar, Phensydl cough syrup – specially manufactured with high alcohol content for consumption in Bangladesh. In West Bengal, since there is no prohibition, there is no demand for such high alcohol content Phensydl! Normal Phensydl is only used as a cough syrup.

The main problem on this IB is that habitation extends right upto the zero line. On the Western border with Pakistan, there is a clear width of 100 m between the habited area and the zero line. The fencing is constructed about 100 m from the zero line and all habitation is behind the fencing, leaving a clear belt of 100 m for the Border Security Force (BSF) to patrol. There are gates on the fencing for each village behind the fencing. This opens at first light for the farmers to cultivate their land and closes at last light. During the day the BSF patrols along the zero line. There is thus zero smuggling across this IB. The only cases reported are of throwing heroin packets over the fencing or attempts to dig tunnels under the fencing to send heroin packets across from Pakistan. There is of course the odd case of BSF personnel being subverted. Such cases are rare and a few BSF officers have been prosecuted under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act.

The situation on the Bangladesh side is, however, miserable. Since the villages are located right upto the border and the plea of the BSF to resite the villages 100 m behind the zero line has not been accepted, the border is porous. Wherever there is a village right upto the border, there is a break in the fence as wide as the number of houses straddling the border. This is an open invitation for the smugglers to operate and there is a regular stampede across these gaps both ways every night. The situation in the riverine areas is even more scandalous. For about almost 100 km, the riverine streams in the Sunderbans, thickly populated on either bank, has the IB in the midstream of the waterways. A flotilla of boats will be required to police this kind of IB.

Cattle smuggling is the worst chapter in this story. Old cattle collected from Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal and Orissa, is brought to cattle haats in Bengal and then smuggled across to Bangladesh by organised syndicates. These haats are located just behind the 3 km line from the IB. The BSF has jurisdiction only within 3 km of the IB! From here, the cattle are driven across by the smuggler gangs through gaps in the fencing where the villages are located close to the IB. Every night there is a running fight between the BSF personnel and the smuggler gangs. The smuggled cattle are rounded up and taken to the cattle pounds at the Customs post. Here they are auctioned. The smuggler gangs buy this cattle and the circus is repeated. The solution is simple and easy. The cattle can be exported to Bangladesh. However, the Government of India will not do this as it would affect the Hindutva adherents. This is absurd as the cattle are in any case being smuggled, to be slaughtered for beef. The real reason is different. A share of the illegal money generated goes all the way beyond the BSF! The decision for exporting cattle has to be taken in Delhi. I do not know when they will see reason and do this.

In the plains area of Assam, in Dhubri, the main smuggling mode is by boat at night, across the Brahmaputra. As the great river curves into Bangladesh, it is almost 10 km wide here. The border population here comprises entirely of Bangladesh Muslims, which makes the job of the BSF even more difficult. The Bangladesh Muslims are expert boatmen. They even smuggle cattle by swimming them across the river into Bangladesh – even though it is very wide here.

In Meghalaya, the nature of the border terrain is very different. The border here consists of a series of spurs and re-entrants. The hills are densely wooded. The border fencing winds along the spurs and re-entrants. Wherever there are border haats ; one can see thatched sheds, which are used to store tins of mustard oil, rice, sugar and the ubiquitous Phensydl cough syrup with added alcohol content, and other such items meant for smuggling across. The smuggling is done generally at night through gaps in the ambushes laid by the BSF. Across the border in Sylhet and Mymensingh districts, there is a shortage of trees. Groups of smugglers from Bangladesh come into Meghalaya in boats

up the many rivers that flow from Meghalaya into Bangladesh. They park the boats and climb the hills, cut trees and roll them down into the river. The logs are carried into Bangladesh by the current. In most cases, there is a pay-off made by the smugglers from Bangladesh to the headmen of the villages controlling the forest areas concerned. This is a straightforward problem and the BSF handles it well.

The Karimganj section of Assam is where the biggest smuggling net exists. The Kushiara river is the boundary between Karimganj town and Bangladesh. All the Marwari traders have godowns that jut towards the river bank of the Kushiara river, tins of mustard oil, sugar and, of course, crates of Phensydyl syrup are stocked in the godowns. It is generally at night that boats loaded with these goods try to slip across, avoiding the patrols of the BSF. It is very easy to control this smuggling by establishing border trade for all these items with the exception of Phensydyl syrup.

In Tripura the 856 km long border passes through plain areas as well as hill sections. In the plain areas many of the border villages, mainly occupied by Bengali Hindus or Muslims, smuggle the same items, mentioned above. These villages are thickly populated right upto the border and the situation is similar to the situation in Bengal, with many villages and towns straddling the border. Here again the answer lies in re-locating villages behind the border and leave a clear area for the BSF to guard. It is also necessary to establish centres for border trade in the plain areas of the Tripura-Bangladesh border. The hill sections of the border are mainly used by insurgent groups to cross into the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) where they have set up their camps. This problem is almost over as the insurgent groups have been by and large neutralised.

The 318 km of the Mizoram border is akin to the topography of the Tripura border. Here, there are some sections which are plains and have border villages close to the border. Most of the border areas are forested. Smuggling is minimal across the Mizoram-Bangladesh border.

Suggested Plan for Zero Tolerance Smuggling

On the Bangladesh border, the areas to concentrate for sealing the borders are the plains and riverine sections in Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram. Whether one likes it or not; there is illegal movement of people from Bangladesh to India; there is smuggling of different commodities from India to Bangladesh and from Bangladesh to India; there is movement of terrorists from Pakistan via Bangladesh to India and in the reverse direction, after the terrorists have committed a crime. As far as people are concerned, the most painful crime is smuggling of women for prostitution from Bangladesh to India.

During my tenure as Inspector General (Operations) BSF from 1995 to 1997, and Director General BSF from November 1997 to November 2000 and Superintendent of Police, Khasi Hills Shillong from 1976 to 1980, I traversed and surveyed the border areas of India on the Western and Eastern frontiers by walking on foot, moving by light vehicles and flying by medium aircraft. I am, therefore, suggesting a plan for implementation on the ground in the Eastern frontier, which I feel will reduce illegal movement across the IB between India and Bangladesh either way to zero tolerance level.

The model to be adopted is the Western IB between India and Pakistan in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab and Jammu. On the Western border, when Cyril Radcliffe drew the line between India and Pakistan, there was no village or town right on the 'zero line' except for a few places which could be counted on your fingers. Starting from Gujarat, there was Munabao in Barmer district, where the Munabao town extends right to the zero line. So is the case with Poonch in Jammu. Throughout the remaining frontier there was not a single village anywhere near the zero line.

This was not the case on the Eastern frontier. Several towns of India extended right upto the zero line. Hili in West Bengal; Agartala, Khowai and Kamalpur in Tripura and Karimganj in Assam. On the Eastern border the villages and towns are also thickly populated, which cause added problems. As far as commerce is concerned, it does not recognise borders. Commodities that are costly in India and cheaper in Bangladesh will flow from Bangladesh to India, while commodities that are cheaper in India and costly in Bangladesh will flow from India into Bangladesh.

In the 1980's, the need for construction of fencing along the IB Punjab was first realised when the Khalistan terrorists problem arose. The leaders of the Khalistan Commando Force, Babbar Khalsa and other such insurgent groups, started to send their cadres to Pakistan to get them trained and equipped with arms and explosives. It was decided to fence the IB in Punjab on priority. Luckily the zero line drawn by Cyril Radcliffe between India and Pakistan was clear of any villages or towns in Punjab. Since the fencing was required urgently, it was constructed roughly 100 m from the zero line in three tiers. There were two rows of fencing about 2 m apart. The front and rear 4 m high angle iron posts were fixed in concrete with barbed wire. In between, short posts with rolled concertina barbed wire laid. It was virtually impossible for anyone to cross this double fence. For 555 km across the Punjab IB, enough BSF battalions were sanctioned so that each border outpost had enough manpower to have line of sight patrols along its length. The border was then provided with standby generators to be switched on when the main line tripped. With this the Punjab border was effectively sealed. In Punjab, the land was cultivated right upto the zero line by both sides. You could see the Boundary pillars dotting the border between the wheat or paddy plants. To facilitate our farmers, gates were fitted before each village situated 100 m or more behind the zero line. The gates would open at 0500 hrs daily and farmers could go in with their tractors or combines and work till 30 minutes before last light, when the farmers had to move behind the fencing and the gates would be closed and locked. During the BSF day would patrol just before the zero line, and at night just behind the fencing.

Since there are a number of villages and some towns straddling the IB in the Eastern frontier, it will be necessary to mandatorily shift the villages 100 m behind the zero line. Each village can be shifted, by building houses of the same size as the one that is located on the border, at a new site 100 m behind the zero line. If this is cultivable land, land in equal measure can be given between the fencing and the border to the family shifted behind the fence. The system of gates as on the Western border can be adopted on the Eastern border also.

There are a number of rivers flowing from India into Bangladesh. All the rivers have embankments to prevent

floods during the rainy season. In all such cases the fencing will have to come right upto the embankment with a bunker constructed for the BSF. In some cases, as in the area of Sunderbans, the river flows in-between the IB, as for example along the Harbanga - a tributary in the Sunderbans. Here the answer to prevent smuggling, either way, is for the BSF to anchor medium craft or floating BOPs in midstream and use speed boats to patrol along the midstream between the anchored floating BOPs.

As for the towns located on the border on the Indian side, the answer is to demolish all the buildings within 100 m of the IB and reconstruct them behind the fence, so that 100 m of vacant space exists between the buildings and the border for the BSF to patrol. This shifting of houses and buildings in the villages and towns from, right on the zero line, and rebuilding them 100 m behind will cost some money. But, the investment would be worthwhile because it will prevent generation of black money from smuggling between the two countries. It will also eliminate the hassle of border policing.

The next step is to set-up border trading posts at several points along the IB for legal trading of all goods. This should include all commodities that the commerce ministries of the two countries would agree upon from time to time. As for cattle smuggling, India will have to take a decision based on common sense to legalise the export of cattle.

Conclusion

India and Bangladesh have finally signed an Agreement for handing over the Enclaves to each other and also finalised the pending issue of a few km of the IB and of the 'adverse possessions'. This issue was festering for a long period, in which the populations of the two countries have patiently borne all the tribulations of uncertainty. If the two countries could use the momentum of this long delayed Agreement, they could sit down together again and agree to set-up border trading stations for all commodities; it would remove at one stroke all the hassles of smuggling and other illegal activities across the IB.

***Shri EN Rammohan, IPS (Retd)** is a 1965 Batch Assam Cadre IPS Officer. During his tenure as IG CRPF, in early 1990's, he acquired first hand knowledge about the Indian States bordering Bangladesh. He retired as Director General of the BSF in Nov 2000. Post retirement he was Adviser to the Governor of Manipur.

Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CXLI, No. 586, October-December 2011.

Central Asian Region Security Issues: Conditions, Dynamics and Perspectives*

Georgiy Dubovtsev and Leilya Aubakirova**

The Central-Asian Region (CAR) is of much greater interest to the world today than any other region. Many forces are competing to carve out a sphere of influence. This is clearly discernible from American actions. The US forces are conducting anti-terrorist operations in Afghanistan using complex political and ethnic divisions in the country. They are also strengthening their influence in Central Asia by acting against criminal elements amongst the civil population involved in production and transit of drugs.

The increasing importance of the region is governed by two main factors. The first is its geostrategic location. Central Asia lies at the junction of the Eurasian international transport corridor and has vast transportation and communication network. Countries of the region have an access to the Persian Gulf through Iran; to the Indian Ocean through Afghanistan and Pakistan; and the Asia-Pacific region across China. Central location of the region in the Eurasian heartland enhances its strategic importance from the point of view of its impact on security and stability in significant parts of Eurasia. The second factor is the presence of large reserves of natural resources such as oil, gas and other minerals in Central Asia. Many big states have shown keen interest in the exploration of these deposits based on their specific strategic needs, e.g. exercising control on the fuel and energy resources and to gain a secure corridor for their transportation.

According to some experts, the above two factors have the potential of turning the CAR into a focal point of the globalisation process and geopolitical confrontations. There are many problems in Central Asia which are impacting adversely on the development of this region. Many problems arise due to terrorism, activities of extremist groups, religious persecution, separatism, drug trafficking from Afghanistan etc.

Analysis of the situation in the CAR shows that future development of countries is directly connected to: *firstly*, rise in the potential of conflict due to the following factors:-

- (a) Aggravation of political and military situation in Afghanistan.
- (b) Social and political instability in Kyrgyzstan.
- (c) Imposition and strengthening of the Islamic extremist influence on society.
- (d) Adverse impact of global financial crisis on the economies of the CAR.
- (e) Aggravation of interstate contradictions from their border management policies, sharing of water and energy resources, and other conflicting interests.
- (f) Existence of long lasting internal dissensions amongst the ruling elite of major countries in the region.

Secondly, world's major powers are actively engaged in the geopolitical struggle to gain control over energy sources and transportation routes, to establish military bases and to influence the foreign policies of Central Asian states.

Thirdly, there is a growing deterioration in bilateral relations between leaders and erosion of interstate economic cooperation which had developed during the Soviet regime. We can also observe transformation in the regional security system and stability of states in Central Asia due to the following factors:-

- (a) Instability in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (IRA).
- (b) Geostrategic activities of external forces.

Despite the Russian decline; currently, transportation of energy resources in the region and the need for countering the Afghan-Islamic factor remains strategically important for them. Due to historical and geopolitical reasons Russia is more interested in influencing the socio-economic processes and has the most powerful levers to do so. Moscow continues to exercise its influence at the highest levels by actively using their economic clout and integral structures such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), EurAsian Economic Community (EurASEC) and Customs Union. Russia continues to dominate the Central Asian states by its military presence in the region; strengthening economic links; developing new raw materials and hydro-power resources; controlling the transportation routes of oil and gas and creating mutual information and cultural space. Russia is not interested in diversification of national economies in this region, as this process may reduce its influence and also lead to the development of alternative economic projects (without Russian participation). The long-term strategy of Russia in Central Asia takes into account the creation and adoption of a systemic approach to enhance its influence in the region.

Both, the USA as well as Russia, regard the CAR as a 'zone of own strategic interests'. The Eurasian strategy of Washington is based on the concept of, "*The Great Central Asia*", which would attract the regional states to render support for their military operations in Afghanistan. The US policy is primarily aimed at monitoring the fuel-energy resources and the transportation routes through the CAR states.

Due to the proximity of Russia, China and Iran to the CAR: political and military presence of the USA has significant strategic importance. The US operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan would have direct political impact on Russia and China; and also on Iran, if the US decides to strike its nuclear facilities. Washington is trying to limit the presence of other states in CAR apprehending that the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China and the Islamic World have the capacity to reduce its influence in the region. The US is particularly keen to secure a transit system through Central Asia, using the so-called, "*The Northern Distribution Network*" (the northern route) to provide

logistic support to International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. They are, therefore, building new training bases and rendering financial aid to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Generally, the US strategy in Central Asia does not consider investment in the social and economic development of the CAR countries.

Under the cover of struggle against the terrorism in Central Asia, the US is trying to: *firstly*, not allow integration of CIS countries; *secondly*, to take control of the energy resources and to benefit from communication network in the CAR; *thirdly*, to provide themselves a strategic presence in the deep rear of China – taking into account China's rise as a world power; and *fourthly*, to exercise control on “intractable” Iran. It should be noted that the US interests in CAR fit into their concept of ‘*economic globalisation and evolution of unipolar world*’. The military bases in Central Asia provide the USA with control over continental part of Asia, as well as, main strategic areas almost in all the Asian countries. Under specific contingencies, the US military bases in Central Asia would help them in exerting military pressure on Russia, China, Iran, Pakistan and India. Military presence can also be used by the USA to manage regional contradictions and to support various informal political organisations in order to influence the governments of countries in the region.

China's policy towards Central Asia is strategically long-term. Due to political considerations, Beijing realises the futility of early revelation of its ambitious plans in the region; but activities showing their intent, to strengthen its position, have been observed. The Chinese presence in the region is expected to increase gradually and would be directly related to the decline in Russian and American influences. The PRC considers the CAR as its own prepotency as a source of energy and natural resources. By using its own rich economic potential, Beijing is gradually building its relations with the countries of the region. Currently, the main strategic task for China is to strengthen its own position in the region to meet its vast economic aspirations. China's enormous financial and investment potential facilitate an easy access into economic processes in the region.

Recently, an increase in the volume of Chinese investment in Central Asian countries economy has been noted – especially in the development of oil and gas fields, and other trades as well. China is giving more attention to the transportation projects, including construction of the pipeline network. Overall, the Chinese policy is aimed at protecting its strategic interests in three directions. *First*, is a part of the main strategy which seeks to create a safe and stable neighbourhood around China. The main instrument in this direction is the SCO, in which China holds a dominant position. This regional organisation will help Beijing in implementing its policy in Central Asia. *Second*, is to establish close political and economic ties with the countries of the region; and the *third*, is to use the Central Asian factor to establish relations with two other major players in the region – Russia and the USA. An important aspect of foreign policy cooperation between China and Central Asian states is the problem of border security, especially in Xinjiang. Beijing will focus on controlling the ever increasing potential of conflict in Xinjiang by keeping a check on separatist's moves.

In spite of relatively low geopolitical interest in economic terms, the EU continues to demonstrate its increased interest in big projects in Central Asia, Eastern Europe and South Caucasus. Most of the infrastructure projects in the CAR are partially integrated into the programme of the EU Commission to establish transport information highway termed as, ‘*Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA)*’. The European factor, as a special force in the region, is viewed as such. The EU perceives CAR as a “buffer filter”. The EU is keen to provide more support to counter the spread of terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking, which are affecting the national security of European states also.

Generally, the above mentioned factors indicate that Central Asia has become a ‘*zone of intersection*’ of the world and that leading powers' interests significantly impact the changes taking place in the region. A few developments which have aggravated the situation in the region are: hard socio-political issues; trans-border-territorial and water sharing problems; economic, religious and ethnic contradictions. The complex internal problems which influence the economic development and regional security of CAR states are discussed in the succeeding paragraphs.

The economic development, primarily in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan (RK) and the Republic of Tajikistan (RT), has been declining; although, it is observed that Uzbekistan (RU) and Turkmenistan are less affected. The main problems being faced by these countries are :-

- (a) Extreme poverty.
- (b) Poor quality of public health and care services.
- (c) Lack of permanent earnings.
- (d) High level of corruption and inflation.
- (e) Lack of industrial-technical development base.
- (f) Decline in demand for exports.
- (g) Drop in investment and business activities.

The overall decline in traditional sectors of the economy has primarily resulted from low agricultural development – specially in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Another important factor is the ‘*slow economic integration*’ between the CAR countries. Absence of long-term social and economic programmes have also contributed to the growth of social tensions. These problems are causing further stratification of the society. Lack of permanent sources of earnings is leading to mass exodus of able-bodied population to the nearby states. This is typical of Tajikistan; where about 50 per cent of the people, mostly men in search of work, are compelled to leave the state. Tajikistan Armed Forces have faced problems in filling-up vacancies due to non availability of suitable candidates.

Declining levels of education is another problem which is affecting further development of countries in the region.

At the beginning of Independence, enough people with strong basic education were available, however, likelihood of losing them is increasing with the passage of time. The system of education in Central Asian countries needs a review and modification to meet present day requirements. Most of the problems have arisen due to lowering of expenditure on education. Inadequate attention for developing human resources is another reason which has affected the growth of production and economy in the Central Asian countries.

The growing intensity of protests in CAR should be seen in the background of low social standards of the people, harsh political regimes and current events in the Middle East, North Africa and in some Central Asian countries. In April, 2010, social protests instigated the change of political power in Kyrgyzstan. However, even the new leadership is still unable to overcome the socio-economic difficulties.

These days, signs of crisis developing in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are also visible. Illegal meetings between dissatisfied people have taken place. The leadership takes strong action against activities aimed at destabilising the situation in the country. For example, the Uzbek authorities have intensified the activities of their Special Forces to identify and isolate such elements. In addition, controls over media broadcasts reporting events in the Middle East and North Africa have been strengthened. The Uzbek and Tajik authorities are particularly concerned about the connection of some secular opposition groups with the Radical Islamic Organisations (RIO).

Significant growth in the popularity of extremist ideologies has been observed in Central Asia. It is lesser in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. However, in Kyrgyzstan, the activities of various extremist organisations such as '*The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)*' and '*Hizb-ul-Tahrir*' demonstrate the failure of the authorities to check the imposition of radical Islam ideology. As a result, the ranks of RIO are constantly replenished with young people, to help them create a reserve of manpower. The main goal of the RIO is to create "*The Islamic Caliphate*" across the CAR territory.

Since the beginning of 2011, restrictions have been imposed on religious movements promoted by extremist elements located in Pakistan, Turkey and China (Xinjiang) or by people who have undergone special training in extremist Islamic ideology. Central Asian countries are increasing their control over the activities of Islamic educational institutions and spread of the extremist ideology. Some foreign students, studying in Islamic institutions have been returned to their countries. However, strong measures taken by the authorities to suppress the growth of radical Islam have been wrongly perceived as denigration of religious principles, by some members of the public.

The borders of the modern Central Asian states were drawn without taking into account the historical settlements of ethnic groups. This may cause inter-ethnic conflicts in the future. Today, the potential for conflict revolves around the Fergana Valley - which geographically includes the territory of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. This area is problematic because collapse of the Soviet Union has left behind unresolved issues regarding the '*disputed enclaves*' in Fergana Valley. There are six enclaves in Kyrgyzstan; four are in Uzbekistan (Cox, Shakhimardan, Jong-Gara, Dzhangayl) and two in Tajikistan (Vorukhand Western Kalach). The Republics of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have two enclaves (Barack and Sarvak). These enclaves in CAR lead to social and political tensions between neighbouring countries. Regular disputes, related to pastures and water sharing, frequent closure of territory by Uzbekistan, extortion by border guards and mining on border lands provoke inter-ethnic and interstate conflicts around the enclaves. Illegal arms and drug trafficking, counterfeit goods of Chinese origin and illegal migration are carried out intensively in these areas. Such activities lead to conflict between the main ethnic groups (Tajiks, Uzbeks, Kirghiz) living in the area.

The Fergana Valley is a "dangerously explosive" region, as majority of the people living here have negative attitude towards the central authorities. Internal and political problems between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have continued for a long time; which may turn into cross-border conflicts, and interstate confrontation with Uzbekistan. According to the Uzbek leadership estimates, the emissaries of 'religious extremist forces' are trying to take advantage of the situation and calling for support of the Uzbek diaspora in Kyrgyzstan. The Uzbekistan authorities are also troubled by the intensification of RIO in Sughd region of Tajikistan. It is important to note that Fergana Valley is historically a stronghold of Islamic activity in Central Asia. Since the beginning of 2000, it has become a region frequented by armed RIO fighters. Most of the tragic events of modern history have occurred in this region: "blood purge" of the Meskhetian Turks (1989); the Kirghiz-Uzbek riots (1990); the invasion of illegal armed groups Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) in Kyrgyzstan (1999 and 2000); the Andijan Uprising (2005); and the massive fights between the Kyrgyz and the Uzbeks (2010). The latent nature of conflicts in Central Asia points towards the possibility of the region being turned into a zone where military forces would play a significant role. The low-intensity conflicts in the region have the potential of increasing the risk of Kazakhstan's involvement also.

Traditionally, complex relationships between the heads of Central Asian states had helped in solving of problems in this region; but presently, the diversity in views regarding the development of the region have significantly increased the vulnerability of Central Asia. The main problems of CAR are summarised in succeeding paragraphs.

It should be noted that water disputes in Central Asia have caused intrastate and international conflicts. The countries, with abundant water resources use it as lever to put pressure on some users. The problems connected with the use of water from the rivers Syr Darya and Amu Darya, between Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, also increase the potential of conflict between countries. At present, the situation around Rogun Hydroelectric Station (HES) in Tajikistan is causing anxiety. The Uzbek authorities have repeatedly objected against its construction.

The Tajik-Uzbek relations remain strained because of complex interpersonal relations between the two presidents. Economically, Tajikistan depends entirely on Uzbekistan because its main communications with other CIS states run through Uzbekistan. Due to existing political disagreement between the two countries, Uzbekistan often impedes the movement of Tajik transport through its territory; and as a result, Tajikistan sometimes is confronted with complete economic blockade. Along with this, Uzbekistan often stops the supply of gas and electricity to Tajikistan, which affects the economic activities adversely, causes much hardship and significant rise in food prices.

Another major factor, which destabilises relations between the two countries, are the minefields laid along the Tajik-Uzbek borders. These obstacles are installed by Uzbekistan to prevent the ingress of RIO militants into the country from the territory of Tajikistan. In case of deterioration of relations with Tajikistan, Uzbekistan may try to destabilise the situation by using the religious extremist forces and other destructive elements under its control. The absence of political compromise and mutual trust amongst the leaders of Central Asian states is impacting the integration processes in the region critically.

Lastly, the problem regarding the resolution of legal status of the Caspian Sea is affecting the relations between neighbouring states. The increase in military capabilities and existence of disputed oil fields in the region also aggravate the political and military situation.

* Edited version of the paper presented at the Joint USI-Military and Strategic Studies Centre (MSSC), Kazakhstan Bilateral Seminar held at USI on 10 Oct 2011.

** **Mr Georgiy Dubovtsev** is Chief of the Military Strategic Studies Centre. He is a Colonel in Reserve and a PhD. **Ms Leilya Aubakirova** is a Scientific Researcher at the Military Strategic Studies Centre.

Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CXLI, No. 586, October-December 2011.

Report on USI Delegation Visit to Vietnam

Major General YK Gera (Retd)*

Background

The Institute for Defence International Relations (IDIR) of Vietnam and United Service Institution of India (USI) have bilateral arrangements for periodic interaction. The first USI Delegation visited the IDIR from 10 to 15 May 2006. Ever since, the two Institutions have come a long way with regular exchange of visits and participation in seminars. A USI Delegation comprising the following visited Vietnam from 02 to 07 October 2011 :-

- (a) Major General Youdishter Kumar Gera (Retd), Leader
- (b) Shri Sudarshan Kumar Bhutani, IFS (Retd)
- (c) Commander Sandeep Dewan, Research Fellow, USI

Programme

The visit programme was well balanced. Professional discussions on strategic and security issues were held at IDIR and Institute for Strategic Study (IDS) on 03-04 Oct 2011. The USI delegation also called on the Deputy Minister of Defence Lieutenant General Nguyen Chi Vinh and visited places of historical significance.

Seminar at IDIR

Senior Colonel Yu Tien Trong, Director IDIR welcomed the USI Delegation at the Seminar on "Security Issues and Co-operation in Asia Pacific : the Rising of China and India; the Role of the ASEAN". He stated that the Seminar was part of a continuing engagement between the two Institutions to discuss common security concerns of India and Vietnam, and to develop a nuanced appreciation of complementarities and points of convergence. The Seminar was conducted in three sessions to cover: 'Relations between Major Entities' ; 'The Rise of China and Implications for Asia Pacific Regional Security' and 'The US-China Relations and Challenges for the ASEAN'. Recognising the role that India and Vietnam would be required to play in the promotion of regional security, it was necessary that both the countries take further steps to develop their bilateral defence and security ties. In that context, this visit of the USI Delegation assumed even greater importance.

Opening Remarks by Leader of USI Delegation. Vietnam and India have a long and traditional friendship. Top leadership of both countries interact regularly through high level visits. Dialogue between the two Institutions provides a good opportunity to exchange views on contemporary issues and to review long term perspective of the global, regional and sub-regional developments. Both, Vietnam and India, have been developing at a very good pace over the past decades. Vietnam has excellent law and order situation, good governance and political stability. The Vietnamese Armed Forces are respected and admired for their military successes in wars with France (1946-1954), with the USA (1965-1975) and with China (1979). During my earlier visit to Vietnam in June 1987, as a member of the National Defence College Team, detailed briefing about the Vietnamese operations against China was given. The Team was taken to the area of military operations and was very impressed with the layout of the Vietnamese defences. Some disabled Chinese tanks were seen strewn around on the battleground. The impression gathered by us was that the Vietnamese Forces had displayed tremendous valour, grit and determination.

Relations between Major Entities. Three presentations were made in the first session: "Look East Policy and India - ASEAN Relations" by Major General YK Gera (Retd) of USI; "Vietnam-India Relations : Situation and Challenges" by Professor Dr Ngo Xuan Binh, Director Institute of India and West Asian Studies, Institute of Social Science; and "China-ASEAN Relations" by Professor Dr Nguyen Thu My, Institute of China Studies. The following points emerged during presentations and discussions:-

- (a) India's 'Look East Policy' was initially directed towards the South-East Asian nations. It started as an economic initiative but has gained political and security significance as well. China, Japan and South Korea were added to the geographic ambit later.
- (b) The crux of the policy is to leverage 'Strategic Dynamics' in the shifting balance of global-economic equilibrium in the region. It envisages the ASEAN States, Japan and South Korea as key partners in Asia.
- (c) India's efforts to improve relations with China have received lukewarm response.
- (d) Close to 33 per cent of India's trade comes from this region. There has been a surge in trade. In 2007, trade figures were US\$ 15.06 billion which have jumped to US \$ 60 billion approx.
- (e) During the last few years, South East Asia has generally remained stable, peaceful and dynamic in development. However, there are some uncertainties due to disputes over territories and resources as also non-traditional security issues.
- (f) Main dispute in East Asia is over the territorial sovereignty of Spratly and Paracel Islands: among China, Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia and the Philippines. Besides its great strategic significance and rich natural resources, the area is important both economically and militarily.
- (g) Non-traditional security challenges include terrorism, piracy, drug trafficking, illegal migration and transnational crime. These issues may endanger peace, cooperation and development.
- (h) China was quick to establish relations with the countries of the Region to become an important partner. China and

ASEAN have established Free Trade Area (CAFTA). China also has a 'Treaty of Amity and Co-operation' in SE Asia. China is striving to develop comprehensive relations with ASEAN in order to compete with the USA and other nations in the Region. For more than a decade, ASEAN has been the 'fifth biggest trading partner' of China. Trade between ASEAN and China accounts for more than US \$ 130 billion.

(j) China, India and ASEAN are set to become the world's largest economic bloc. The grouping is expected to account for 27 per cent of global GDP and is likely to overtake the EU and USA economies in the near future.

(k) The 10 ASEAN countries include: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. ASEAN 'Plus 6' grouping is symptomatic of the evolving geopolitics of the Region. From security angle, inclusion of India, USA, Russia, Japan, China and South Korea provides checks and balances in the Eastern Ocean.

(l) Japan's role is expanding through co-operative relations with ASEAN in general and with ASEAN members individually. Japan has 35 years of diplomatic relationship with the ASEAN grouping. Besides economics and trade, Japan is strengthening its security role in SE Asia.

The Rise of China and Its Implications. The three presentations in this session were: "South China Sea Situation and Vietnam's View Point" by Ambassador Chin from Ministry of Foreign Affairs; "The Rising of China and the Implications to the Security of Asia Pacific Region" by Professor Dr Nguyen Huy Quy, Deputy Director of Institute of China Studies, Institute of Social Science; and "India-China Relations: The Present and Future" by Shri SK Bhutani, IFS (Retd) of USI. The following points emerged during this session:-

(a) Asia-Pacific is the region, from China's point of view, where all its vital national interests exist and converge. It also attracts competition between major powers.

(b) China is becoming an economic powerhouse. Its challenge lies in persuading the regional countries to understand that Chinese economic development is not a threat to them, but it brings in opportunities for their progress also.

(c) Towards the end of 2003 and early 2004, senior leaders of the Communist Party of China (CPC) studied the rise of great powers in history, noting the destructive inventory of conflicts that proved to be the engines of supremacy from the 15th century onwards. Central theme of their examination, that emerged, was: 'Could China dominate without recourse to arms?' Unfortunately, in reality China has shown no propensity to establish cooperative stabilising arrangements as reflected by recent happenings.

(i) In March 2010, North Korea sank a South Korean warship - China failed to condemn it.

(ii) Reassertion of China's claims to the Spratly and Paracel islands.

(iii) Sovereignty over virtually the entire South China sea. This conundrum continues to bring together like-minded states into countervailing security arrangements.

(iv) Non resolution of the Sino-Indian boundary dispute and the Sino-Pakistan nuclear tie-up, both in weapons and civil fields, further pushes the relations downhill. Strategists have predicted Sino-Indian relationship to be one of rivalry, as both powers are developing their Comprehensive National Power (CNP) through economic development at a rate of close to 10 per cent.

(d) Impact of globalisation and sweeping surge of nationalism has helped China to formulate an affordable military strategy and developing asymmetric weapons called "The Assassin's Mace". It is a war fighting strategy, to develop capabilities designed to give advantage to a technologically inferior military over a technologically superior adversary. This unorthodox strategy has set into motion the modernisation process of PLA forces.

(e) China's military doctrine and operational capabilities have been developed during the last decade and a half. China's investments in cyber warfare, anti-air, anti-ship and anti-carrier weapons, nuclear submarines, nuclear powered attack submarines, aircraft carrier group Shi Lang (ex Varyag) with SU-30s, all make for a force that is lethal and enhanced in reach.

(f) China's infrastructure development, from Sittwe and Aungmye in Myanmar; Hambantota in Sri Lanka; Maroofa in the Maldives and Gwadar in Pakistan ('String of Pearls') would give teeth to the long range access denial within the Third Island Chain.

(g) Technology has placed disproportionate destructive power in the hands of Non State Actors. Pakistan is the fountainhead of terrorism and emergence of Islamic Jihadi groups. China's involvement with maverick nations such as Pakistan and North Korea does not enthuse confidence for prospects of a stable future in the Region.

The US-China Relations and Challenges for the ASEAN. Three presentations were programmed for the last session. However, due to paucity of time, only one paper "The US-China Relations : Opportunities and Challenges for ASEAN" by Mr Nguyen Hung Son, Deputy Director of Institute for Foreign Policy and Strategic Studies, Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam was presented. The following points emerged during the presentation and discussion:-

(a) China's first goal is to maintain stable relations with the USA and major powers; the second, is to keep good relations with regional countries - for fear of a US led alliance that may seek to contain and restrain China.

(b) China's perception that the USA is trying to contain it is an obsession that has to be factored into all strategic calculations by the ASEAN countries. Both are competing in SE Asia. But China has the advantage of geographical proximity. China is, therefore, stepping up trade and investment in all SE Asian countries.

(c) The USA and China enjoy good economic relations. However, the American posture in the South China Sea may lead to conflict, given the strategic links that the USA enjoys with Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and other littoral states of this Region.

(d) The US influence in the ASEAN Region is significant. The USA has traditional military alliances with Thailand, Singapore and Philippines and maintains troops in several military bases in these countries. The US military presence in the Region may ostensibly be for Global War on Terror (GWOT) but it could well be for containing and restraining China. The aspect of China's greater importance, as an immediate neighbour, was stressed as also the desire not to provoke either of the two powers.

IDS-USI Bilateral Meeting

Lieutenant General Tran Thai Binh, Director, IDS led a team of five officers from his Institute. He mentioned that erstwhile Military Strategy Institute had been recently renamed as 'Institute for Defence Strategy'. He welcomed the USI Delegation for bilateral interaction and talked about the existing informal bilateral interaction arrangements between the IDS and the USI. He was looking forward to the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two Institutions for further cementing this relationship and generating a spirit of better understanding and co-operation.

Leader of the USI Delegation thanked the Director, IDS and mentioned that the aim of the interaction was to discuss contemporary issues and promote mutual understanding and cooperation. He reiterated that he was also looking forward to signing of the MoU between the two Institutions. Salient points of the discussion held at the IDS are given in the succeeding paras.

Review of Global and Regional Security

Senior Colonel Dzung Kim Le, Director Department of International Studies in his brief rundown on Global and Regional Security issues stated that the USA, sole global power, was on the decline. However, the decline was likely to be very gradual and China would take a long time to become a world power, if it continued to rise peacefully. However, he mentioned that time alone would tell if its rise in fact turned out to be peaceful. He also mentioned that India was also a rising power and hoped that India would soon become a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council. Vietnam on its part would support India's case for permanent membership of the Security Council.

Regional security in the Asia Pacific during the last decade or so had been stable and peaceful. However, with reassertion of claim by China to the Spratly and Paracel islands; and sovereignty over virtually the entire South China Sea; the tension in the Region had gone up. Efforts were on to resolve the issue diplomatically, but the same was likely to be a long drawn battle of wits and nerves. He talked of existing good Vietnam-India relations. He appreciated the firm stand taken by Indian ONGC Videsh's Oil Exploration Vessel (September 2011) when challenged by China and added that the vessel was clearly in Vietnam EEZ Waters.

The speaker raised the issue of requirement of English teaching instructors for imparting education in Vietnam. Currently, Australia was helping Vietnam in the field of education. He suggested that India could help Vietnam in this field.

Within ASEAN countries, tension between Laos and Cambodia continues. No satisfactory solution to their contentious issue was in sight.

The USI delegation leader stated that problems affecting most of the nations today were: 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 were best resolved regionally pooling in expertise, resources, information and intelligence. With problems now taking on a formidable and, in certain cases, a sinister dimension; like piracy, sky rocketing oil prices, WMD proliferation, nuclear terrorism, and so on; a re-look had become imperative. Their adverse fall out would affect more than one nation and perhaps the entire region. Thus, it was incumbent upon all those who were part of a regional entity to resolve all such issues in a spirit of sincere cooperation beyond narrow partisan interests.

Responding to the issues raised by members of the IDS team, he agreed with the perception that China would take quite some time to catch up and overtake the USA as the sole superpower. The USA would do its best to prolong her present status for as long as possible. He thanked the IDS team for supporting Permanent Seat for India in the UN Security Council. Regarding assistance in educational field, efforts would be made to provide all possible support.

At this stage a Memorandum of Understanding between IDS and USI was signed and documents exchanged.

Courtesy Call on the Deputy Minister of Defence

On 04 October 2011, at 1600 hrs, the USI delegation made a courtesy call on the Deputy Minister of Defence, Lieutenant General Nguyen Chi Vinh. He raised the following points:-

(a) **Research.** There is need for better co-operation between Vietnamese and Indian Institutions in selected areas of security. This could take the form of exchange of research scholars for short durations; joint papers; publication of articles in each other's journals and other publications. Exchange of views, participation in joint seminars and other academic activities will go a long way in keeping abreast and covering new ground.

(b) **UN Peacekeeping Operations.** Vietnam Armed Forces are likely to participate in UN Peacekeeping operations. There is a requirement of training and re-orientation for them before they are sent on such assignments. They want help from India in this field. Instructors from India could come to Vietnam for imparting training.

(c) **Educational Training.** For teaching English, Australia is providing help by providing instructors. We also seek help from India in this field.

Leader of the USI Delegation assured the Deputy Minister of National Defence, Socialist Republic of Vietnam that all possible efforts would be made to ensure that the needful was done expeditiously.

Visit to Places of Historical Significance

The War Remnants Museum. The War Remnants Museum is a museum in Hanoi that primarily contains exhibits related to the American phase of the Vietnam War. Operated by the Vietnamese Government, the Museum was opened in September 1975 as “The House for Displaying War Crimes of American Imperialism and the Puppet Government of South Vietnam.” Later it was known as the ‘Museum of American War Crimes’, then as the ‘War Crimes Museum’ until 1993. Its current name follows liberalisation in Vietnam and the normalisation of relations with the USA.

The Ho Chi Minh Museum. The Ho Chi Minh Museum is located in Hanoi, Vietnam. It is dedicated to the great Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh and Vietnam’s revolutionary struggle against foreign powers. It was constructed in the 1990s.

The Halong Bay. Halong Bay, literally meaning the “Descending Dragon Bay” in Vietnamese, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and a popular travel destination. The Bay features thousands of limestone karsts and isles in various sizes and shapes. Halong Bay is a centre of a larger zone which includes Bai Tu Long Bay to the northeast, and Cat Ba islands to the southwest. These zones share similar geological, geographical, geomorphological, cultural characters and climate. Halong Bay has an area of around 1,553 sq kms, including 1,960 islets, most of which are limestone. The limestone in this bay, according to a guide, has gone through 500 million years of formation in different conditions and environments. Halong Bay is home to 14 endemic floral species and 60 endemic faunal species.

The Tunnels of Cu Chi. The tunnels of Cu Chi form an immense network of connecting underground tunnels located in the Cu Chi district of Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), Vietnam. It is part of a much larger network of tunnels underlining most of the country. The tunnels of Cu Chi Complex was the area of several military campaigns during the Vietnam War, and was the Viet Cong’s base of operations for the Tet Offensive in 1968. The tunnels were used by Viet Cong guerrillas as hiding spots during combat, as well as serving as communication and supply routes, hospitals, food and weapon caches and living quarters for numerous guerrilla fighters. The tunnel systems were of great importance to the Viet Cong in their resistance to American forces, through which they secured American withdrawal from Vietnam and ultimate military success.

Reunification Palace. Reunification Palace, formerly known as Independence Palace, built on the site of the former Norodom Palace, is a landmark in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. It was designed by architect Ngo Viet Th   and was the home and workplace of the President of South Vietnam during the Vietnam War. It was the site of the end of the Vietnam War during the Fall of Saigon on 30 April 1975, when a North Vietnamese Army tank crashed through its gates. In November 1975, after the negotiation convention between the communist North Vietnam and their colleagues in South Vietnam was completed, the Provisional Revolutionary Government renamed it as Reunification Palace.

Overall Impressions

Vietnamese officials exude an air of confidence – a result of successful but protracted armed struggle for Independence in the second half of the last century. First, the French were defeated in their attempt to restore Colonial rule. Then, the USA attempted to deny victory to the Viet Minh led by Ho Chi Minh in order to prevent Vietnam from being ruled by Communists. The end result was quite the contrary: all of Indochina - Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, came to be ruled by the Communists. The end of protracted wars in 1979, allowed Vietnam to focus its energies on economic reconstruction and development. Vietnam today is a major exporter of rice, rubber, coffee, and cashew. Light industry has been developed with foreign capital. Singapore and Taiwan are major investors. Indian investment is welcomed.

The Vietnamese are conscious of the pressure China has exerted throughout history. In contemporary era, the pressure relates to maritime boundary. China occupied (by force) the Paracels under the control of South Vietnamese regime, when that regime collapsed in 1972. Vietnam challenged the occupation forcefully. The Chinese prevailed but Vietnam refused to legally concede the occupation. The maritime dispute now extends to whole of South China Sea. China’s claim to the Sea and the islands therein, has been collectively contested by the ASEAN. China’s attempt to deal individually with ASEAN states has been resisted. Military pressure employed recently by China, has allowed foreign powers to contest China’s claim. The USA, Japan, India and Australia have supported ASEAN nations.

Vietnam and the Philippines have borne the brunt of Chinese military and political pressure. Vietnam has successfully mobilised support from the USA, Japan and India. The Vietnamese leaders have travelled to several countries in recent weeks. The Prime Minister visited Uzbekistan, a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), and Ukraine (a significant supplier of military hardware to China) in September. The President travelled to Russia and was scheduled to visit India in mid-October. The Prime Minister subsequently visited Japan and secured Japanese investment in a Nuclear power station and exploration of ‘rare earth’ materials. It may be recalled China had denied export of such materials to Japan after a clash on sea involving Chinese and Japanese ships. To keep channels of communication open, the Vietnamese Communist Party leader travelled to China in mid-October. While the dispute lingers on, it is hoped that the tensions will ease and no armed confrontation will take place. It is unlikely China will drop its claims and is no mood to seek a compromise at present.

On the situation in the region, Vietnamese officials acknowledged the domestic political stand-off in Thailand and mentioned the secession problem in Southern Thailand. They hoped that the new Thai government would settle the boundary dispute with Cambodia. On Burma, no views were expressed by the officials.

India’s relations with the USA generated a detailed review. It was explained that India and the USA shared

common values even when there were policy disagreements. Post-Cold War, the two countries had moved closer. People of Indian origin occupied political and administrative positions in the US federal and state governments. There was a constant exchange of views and coordination of positions on international issues. India's role in East, Southeast and West Asia was recognised. Asked whether Pakistan was an obstacle in relations, the answer was 'no'. Rather, Pakistan's sponsorship of terrorism has become a common concern of both. Pakistan was a factor in Sino-Indian relations. China was generous with military supplies to Pakistan, but civilian aid was left to the US and other Western states. China was motivated by a desire to stymie India's relations with its South Asian neighbours. History, culture, belief in rule of law and democratic institutions, limited China's attempts to exploit disparity in size of the South Asian states, to its own advantage.

China was discussed at some length. Our counterparts stressed the giant strides made by China in economic and military sphere. Our attempt to draw attention to the negative international reaction to China's current economic strategy and the long-term consequences of social policy (e.g., one child norm), did not elicit any response. The rise in expenditure to maintain social stability and control dissent elicited no response. Neither side raised the issue of unrest in the minority provinces of China.

***Major General YK Gera (Retd)** is Consultant (Research) at USI and in that capacity heads the Centre for Strategic Studies and Simulation (CS3). He retired from the Army in April 1993 as CSO Central Command. He was Deputy Director & Editor at USI from Jan 1997 to Apr 2007.

Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CXLI, No. 586, October-December 2011.

Introduction

History has shown that wars are won not only by the courage and strength of the men and women on the battlefield; but also, by the evolving technology adopted by the military. In the cyberspace, two distinct regimes emerge for the military. The *first* regime is the open network with its inherent risks and vulnerabilities which is essential for collaboration, information sharing, logistics etc. The *second* regime of closed network meets the demands of security, speed of operation and availability of information at the right time and place. To maintain confidentiality, integrity and availability, closed network is air gapped from open network. In addition to these networks, the military is also exposed to commercial off the shelf (COTS) hardware and software products for wireless, cellular phones, computers, networking equipment etc. Therefore, increased dependence of the military on civilian cyberspace capabilities have inherent risks and make them vulnerable to cyber-attacks by attack vectors which are prevalent in commercial/open cyberspace. This paper draws attention to current cyber threats and challenges that the military faces.

Cyberspace

Cyberspace includes not only the internet but also telecommunications, cellular phone technologies and wireless data services. The technologies involved, such as bandwidth, interoperability, processor speed, functionality and security vulnerabilities have evolved over time.

Design Flaw. Internet which is the major platform in cyberspace is loosely based on the legacy model of Open System Interconnection (OSI) in which most commonly, internet protocol (IP) is paired with Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) to form TCP/IP. The three way handshake of the TCP software for packet exchange is user-friendly but is one of the causes of flooding and other attacks.

SCADA. Increasingly today, supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) devices are being used to control the logical processes in the industry and weapon systems. These are designed to maintain isolation in the cyberspace. However, the need for remote access for management by a private/public network introduces significant dependency of the SCADA devices to other elements of cyberspace.

Data. Cyberspace is also about its contents / data in storage, transmission and processing. Preserving the confidentiality and integrity of data is of concern to the Military.

Social Networking. The discussion on cyberspace is not complete without the man-made digital world created to gain access to information and share it between people and machines. With the ever increasing popularity for on-line communities, blogs, social networking, cyberspace is having an increasing impact on the economy, society and national security. Recent events in North Africa, Middle East and even the Wall Street protests are pointers to the phenomenon.

Threat Scenario

Today, every nation with a reasonable employment of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a victim of cyber attack. The long list of victims, according to a report by the security company McAfee, include the governments of the USA, Taiwan, India, South Korea, Vietnam and Canada among others. In the case of United Nations, according to the report the hackers broke into the computer system of its Secretariat in Geneva in 2008, hid there for nearly two years and spied through secret data. Added to these are the recent headline grabbing hacks, such as on Lockheed Martin, the International Monetary Fund, Citigroup, Sony Corporation; and RSA, the security division of Enterprise Strategy Group (EMC) etc. Such attacks have continued for more than five years. Added to these are the cyber attacks which are employed in coordination with kinetic attacks, to act as force multiplier or as a tool to effect cyber espionage and for massive scanning and mapping of adversary's assets of information in cyberspace. Currently attackers are able to exploit all the advantages of operating on the internet including operational agility, massive force multiplication and rapid development of attack to exploit newly discovered vulnerabilities. A factor fuelling growth of cyber attacks is bot (ROBOT) software. Bot controlled machines give attackers economies of scale in launching attack and allow them to set-up virtual super computer that could rival the computer power of a nation state. Bots can conduct massive flooding, crack crypto-keys or mine sensitive data. The interchangeable modular software in a bot offers an attacker to maintain flexibility and deniability. Attackers also increasingly rely on polymorphic codes to evade signature based detection tools. The 'moving target' of code make analysis by defenders more difficult. Because of the spread of the bot network, the attack typically comes simultaneously from multiple countries often fuelling trust deficit among friendly countries. Significant threats emanating from embedded systems in imported equipment call for stringent standards and certification. Supply chain threats emerge right from the design stage to development and finally in its deployment.

Players in Cyberspace

The cyber warfare is a unique domain, unlike other military domain when the players are limited. In every other domain, military had the exclusive preserve of its weaponisation and security. However, in this man-made domain, both the adversary and defender share the same virtual territory. A hacker coexists in the same network as the critical infrastructure and is very difficult to identify. The various types of players are :

(a) **Individual Players.** Increase in sophistication of cyber attack tools and automated deployment enable even individual players to attack and cause significant damages to an organisation/state. The word 'hacker' at once brings to mind a person who is socially dysfunctional, brilliant at software programming and with a desire to save mankind. That would be true, but now there are enough individual varieties to merit a zoology-like classification - White Hat, Grey Hat, Black Hat, Script Kiddies, Mules, Herders and so on.

(b) **Hacktivists.** In contrast to individual geeks, these loosely organised group of hackers come together to attack a nation/organisation for a cause and ideology. More important than the individual skills are their affiliations. At the top are the hackers with political belief. They are the *Brahmins* of the hacker world. The most famous of such groups is Anonymous which, ironically, uses hacker attacks to force governments and corporations to become more transparent. It was Anonymous that attacked the websites of Visa and MasterCard when they stopped accepting donations meant for Wikileaks' Julian Assange.

(c) **Cyber Criminals.** Cyber criminals are much more organised today rather than in the past and have a parallel economy running underground. Business process are getting sophisticated and resemble major economic model in real world with service providers, middlemen and consumers. Rival business are controlling bot networks along with Mules and Herders and command and control services.

(d) **Cyber Terrorists.** Terrorists significantly leverage the internet to carry out their activities such as communication, propaganda, recruitment and other activities. The digital revolution and easy availability of technology has unleashed non state actors and individuals to control, occupy and operate in cyber territory. This creates new power asymmetry and magnifies their clouts.

(e) **Non-State Actors.** These players may or may not have an affiliation with the Government. But today, they play a significant role in making the cyberspace insecure and bring international communities in a huddle to bring them to book.

(f) **State** The asymmetry in conventional arms as also asymmetry in internet penetration are driving some of the less developed countries to adopt clandestine operations to set-up offensive projects in the cyberspace. Non attributability and deniability are causes of worry.

Targets

The range of targets vary from individuals to nation states:-

(a) **Individuals.** Individual data such as personal, business and financial information is being stolen for various purposes such as impersonation and financial fraud.

(b) **Individual Organisations.** Business secrets, intellectual property and personal information of employers are being targeted.

(c) **Nation States.** The individual nations are experiencing cyber attacks on their critical infrastructure which lead to leakage of state secrets and compromising SCADA systems etc. Espionage and data theft are the prime motives of an attacker during peace time. Such actions could lead to military intervention also.

Military Challenges

As the cyberspace is all pervading and touches each and every aspect of life, it is very difficult to categorise the challenges as military or otherwise. Some believe that an attack on economic infrastructure could constitute an act similar to that of war, as today it can impact the national security. The entire spectrum of attack, from the scanning of network to cyber-crime espionage and finally the full scale cyber attack, need to be studied to draw the distinction. The major challenges to the military are:-

(a) **Classification as an Act of War.** The biggest challenge that the military faces today is to identify "an act of war". During the Distributed Denial of service (DDoS) attack on Estonia, while one country was suspected of launching the attack, more than 17 per cent of DDoS traffic originated from another country. Can this be taken as an act of war by either of them? Also, even if the nation state is not directly involved, such actions by a single person/group of person may be recognised as hostile action by the affected country, e.g. pulling down nuclear installation causing an accident and stealing critical information. Would such acts automatically imply that a country has started the war? The question answers: what constitutes cyber war? Can attacks on critical infrastructure owned by private sector, which also support humanitarian activities, be used to achieve military objectives and recognised as aggression? Legitimate cyber soldiers are indistinguishable from script kiddies. Therefore, should they be treated as non-combatants? Again, how does one know if third parties are acting on behalf of a nation state. When does cyber espionage graduate to a cyber-war? How do the Geneva and Hague conventions get correlated in the cyberspace? All these questions pose a major challenge to the military, which has to effectively defend the nation's sovereignty in cyberspace.

(b) **Attributability.** Nowhere in any domain, except in cyberspace, it is easy to remain "anonymous". It is very difficult to attribute a hostile act to a nation/individual player, when lethal attacks, such as DDoS attacks are launched. Attribution to a state is easy but, it is more difficult to pinpoint responsibility in case of non-state actors. Often, the country of origin of the attack turns out to be neutral player and the hostile actor is never identified to facilitate conviction. Even in the case of DDoS against various countries and the recent StuxNet attack, the act of warfare in cyber domain could not be clearly attributed. Thus attribution problem marks an important distinction between cyber warfare and traditional warfare regarding intent and identity, which are not revealed clearly.

(c) **Maintenance of airgap.** The military strives to maintain airgaps between its sensitive network and open network. However, the need for updation of software, upgradation, transfer of data/software between the classified and unclassified system etc. often pose a threat to the entire military system.

(d) **Policy Compliance.** People, process and technology are the three pillars to maintain cyber security. However, in spite of the technology and the policy for implementation, the processes incorporating the best practices are often ignored due to lack of awareness and the auditors lacking teeth to ensure policy compliance.

(e) **Protection of SCADA system.** It is in the news that probably the StuxNet was introduced by way of insertion of a thumb-drive containing the malware on to the classified system. How does that happen? The internal threat by way of a prepositioned human mole or simply an ignorant and unaccountable user could jeopardise the security of the 'SCADA' system.

Weaponising Cyberspace

Even though, the term "Cyber Warfare" has been used for more than two decades, it was only recently that the world saw StuxNet. StuxNet employed no fewer than 'four zero' – day vulnerabilities and demonstrated deep knowledge of the inner working of the SCADA. This shows very clearly that weaponising the Cyber Warfare is very complex involving detailed planning by one or more nation states, non-state actors and private players. A malware specifically affecting only the adversary's network, without any collateral damage to civilian/humanitarian networks that too at the critical time, is still far away before being productionised at a mass level and is a great challenge. It is visualised that future weapon stockpiles will include stashes of zero day vulnerabilities, botnets, control codes and sophisticated malware.

Human Resources

In the rapidly evolving field of cyber operations, it is a major challenge to attract and nurture talent. The shelf life of an expert is very less unless he is exposed to new technologies and concepts. Numerous studies have shown that the military in its present state, tends to get overwhelmed by lack of expertise; unlike the adversaries who exploit the knowledge and expertise of young generation and thus amass faceless hackers in thousands to attack a nation's infrastructure.

Developing Deterrence Capabilities

The evolution of Cyber Operations doctrine is still in its nascent stage. However, some of the strategic documents available in public domain seeking international cooperation are professing deterrents, proportional response and action in self defence. Deterrence must be based on credible assurance of the capability to punish. How does deterrent work when capabilities are secret, weapons undemonstrated and adversary unidentified. With attributability being a major technical challenge cyber offence may not be the best form of cyber defence. Added to these are the challenges posed for adherence to internationally accepted laws of armed conflict and determination of threshold for the military to exercise proportional response.

International Cooperation

Operational stability and security of critical information infrastructure is vital for security of any country. Most countries have adopted comprehensive domestic cyber laws. India, too, has enacted IT Act 2000 (amended in 2008). However, national laws are not sufficient to address global concerns. Thus various international initiatives have been taken at the level of United Nations, ITU, EU and other regional bodies to harmonise domestic laws with international norms. The efforts made by these organisations and more specifically Internet Corporation for assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). At present, the coordination of cyber domain is de-facto exercised by a few international organisations including ICANN, Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) etc. for its governance. The root servers are not spread out evenly geographically. The military needs adequate cooperation from these organisations and service providers to address large scale attacks. Efforts for Internet governance by International Telecommunication Union (ITU) World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), ICANN and some of the other organisations are laudable but at times they act at cross purposes.

The fundamental difference between other domains and cyber domain is that the latter is a borderless domain. Today internet is torn apart by three separate but related forces. The Governments are reasserting their sovereignty, IT companies are constructing and controlling their digital territory while individual owners of data assert their rights to privacy and IPR. Territorial jurisdiction and jurisdiction in cyberspace need to be distinguished. Hence, any initiative for cyber peace and its implementation will succeed only when all stake-holders/nations are involved in framing a consensus. The international community must come together and realise that enormous benefits of internet will be lost if it is used as an instrument of harm outside the rule of law. The nation states must come together to work collectively to harness the power of cyber domain and pledge not to use cyberspace for hostile activities that pose threat to international peace and stability. As far as military domain is concerned, the following aspects need attention of international community:-

(a) **Act of Cyber Warfare.** To quote Clausewitz "*War is continuation of political activity by other means*". Since all / most attacks are not politically motivated, they need not be termed as cyber war. A consensus must be evolved amongst all nations to define the "Act of Cyber War" without expending all other instruments of nation security. All acts, howsoever malevolent need not be hyped to the level of cyber war. Law enforcement agencies and legal instruments of respective nations should play their legitimate roles. Therefore, nation states need to cooperate to de-escalate weaponisation of cyberspace, though proactive defence and technological innovation in cyberspace are a necessity.

(b) **Cooperation Against Cyber Attacks.** Defence against cyber attacks will only be successful, when the countries co-operate and mount a coordinated defence. Recent DDoS attacks, has brought the importance of cooperation during the attack. If trust develops, most such attacks can be dealt bilaterally or unilaterally.

(c) **Deterrence.** The UN charter and existing international legal framework need to be respected. Policy level framework must be evolved to define the threshold and nature of deterrence. Technological innovations need to be adopted to counter non-attributability so that wrong inferences are not drawn. Also one of the unique characteristics of this domain is that its weapons are not solely controlled by the military / political leadership and also most such weapons are mere softwares residing in obscure covers.

(d) **Legal Framework.** There are three overlapping legal regimes : law enforcement, intelligence collection and

military operations that may apply to cyberspace. These activities need to be in synchronisation with international treaties and domestic laws of both originating and intermediate nations. A minimum acceptable legal framework must be defined, so that the same can be ratified in each country, which will enable provisions of legal action based on cooperation among law enforcement agencies.

(e) **Enhancement of Existing Treaties / Conventions.** Most of the conventions/treaties pre-ICT era do not cater to situations arising out of cyber incident/attacks. The framework must identify such provisions and propose amendments. Recent initiative by East West Institute in examining the Geneva and Hague conventions along with its efforts to form a Working Group with Russia and US experts to define various terminologies have drawn attention. More recently, Russia & China have co-sponsored a resolution in UN General Assembly for defining international norms. The orchestration of international accords should be such that norms evolved would limit disruptive activity by some states against other states and deter non-state actors.

(f) **Building Trust.** Embedded hardware systems pose a great threat and provide enormous potential in cyber warfare. Capability for certification of national interests rests in the hands of very few countries. It is necessary to build trust relationship between the nations, so that information technology development can be embraced smoothly and with complete trust. Common criteria group needs to be expanded with equal participation.

Conclusion

Cyberspace has emerged as a major new environment for political and military competition and would necessitate political and military intervention to protect economic and informational interest vital for national security. The challenges for military in the era of on-line connectivity and information flow are unique and require a great amount of coordination among the nations. The challenges get enhanced as cyberspace does not strictly confine itself in military domain and encompasses civilian activities to a great extent. However, governments of many countries are reacting typically to these challenges by expanding their cyber warfare capabilities, yet the politico-military vision that would undermine these efforts are mostly vague and riddled with definitional inconsistency. A joint civilian defence cooperation including public-private partnership and consensus amongst all nations is required to defend the cyberspace in the interests of national security and international stability. Cyberspace should be guided and constrained by political norms and ethical values. Neither the military nor the technological perspective can substitute the strategy for building-up trust and stability for safeguarding international peace and harmony.

*Text of the paper presented at the 7th Northeast Asian Security Policy Forum Meeting held under the auspices of Research Institute of National Security Affairs, National Defence University of South Korea, Seoul on 18 Oct 2011. Theme of the Conference was "Changes in International Strategic Environment and Multi-lateral Security Cooperation". Brigadier Abhimanyu Ghosh (Retd) was nominated to represent USI at this Conference.

****Brigadier Abhimanyu Ghosh (Retd)** is a Fellow of Indian Institute of Electronics and Telecommunications. Presently, he is the Adviser on Cyber Security with the National Security Council Secretariat.

Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CXLI, No. 586, October-December 2011.

Introduction

China and South Asia represent a unique example of the world's two ancient civilisations that have evolved at close proximity to each other over thousands of years. Nine countries¹ in South Asia (including Myanmar) have consistently tried to deconstruct their own history including one about their ties with China. Rivers and mountains link China and South Asia in physical terms but the cultural and traditional links are also interwoven in wider context. Their interface became somewhat negative during the colonial subjugation. Given China's sensitivity on Tibet, which is regarded as her underbelly, China's South Asia policy had always been guided by strategic and security considerations particularly by the risks of interference by some external powers that wanted to undo the country's Communist revolution. These trends were clearly visible in China's military invasion and fortification of Tibet, and later, cultivating close strategic ties with the military regimes in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Burma, as well as the monarchy in Nepal. China's relations with these South Asian countries became part of her indirect approach in dealing with India, which Beijing continues to see as a major challenge, particularly after evolving strategic ties between Washington and New Delhi in later part of 2005.

For India, majority of the countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri-Lanka and Bhutan were, one way or the other, under the British Colonial Empire; and after India's Independence in 1947, should have come under Indian Domain. Had it been in China's case, the country would have called them the renegade provinces and would have claimed them. But India preferred or could not assert its position. From India's perspective, the growing bonds between China-Pakistan and China-Nepal perhaps present the most critical element of South Asian security environment. It is a unique example of interstate relations, which has no comparison whatsoever. Given the proximity and historical interdependence of these smaller South Asian countries with India, Chinese indulgence has not resulted in any formal military alliance with any of India's neighbours. At the same time, however, this indulgence did have a major impact on South Asian threat perceptions, which has been mainly responsible for vitiating the India's vision about China. This has also provided an opportunity for other world powers to seek influence in the region. The USA's active participation in Nepal's post conflict phase, after 2005² through various forms of aid, is an example of expanding US strategic interest in the region, where it has been critically involved in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The US and her allies seek more role in Sri Lanka and Nepal in the form of bilateral cooperation, inclusive of assistance for peace building through greater cooperation in the Information Technology, infrastructure development and education. According to the US government's official statistics, Sri Lanka has emerged as the USA's 79th good trade partner in recent years.³ On the other hand the US's biggest ally, the UK has become Sri Lanka's second largest trading partner (exports and imports combined).⁴

In an effort to build stronger linkages with South Asian countries, China has emerged as a major supplier of military hardware and technology to smaller South Asian countries like Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Burma. This indulgence has been understood in terms of Beijing's strategic vision of emerging as an Asian leader which has a direct bearing on the South Asian security and strategic environment. After almost 50 years of lull along the border, India and China have again started serious argument over border issue in Arunachal Pradesh.⁵ In recent years, particularly since the beginning of the year 2010, the military build-up along the border areas from both the countries and the exchange of words at academic and semi-official levels do not indicate any pleasant development in the region.

If India is suspicious about China's intentions in South Asia, China seems concerned about India's enlarging activities in Southeast Asia. China's concerns are not only related to its unresolved territorial disputes in the South China Sea, with some ASEAN countries, but also about the implications of India's activities in East Asia, particularly in the context of Japan and Taiwan. India's assertiveness in inducting Japan as an observer to South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) to counter balance Nepal's proposal to introduce China also as an observer during the organisation's Summit meeting in Bangladesh in 2005 could very well be understood as India's move to counter balance China.

".. the move for inclusion of China in SAARC as an observer came as a rude shock to India. On the eve of the Summit, India was all set to grant membership to Afghanistan as SAARC's eighth member. However, Nepal's attempt to link Afghanistan's membership to China's quest for observer status was a corollary to India's move. Though India has been aware of China's intentions to intrude into its backyard, the linkage of Afghanistan's membership to China's entry to SAARC demonstrates China's rising diplomatic and economic clout in the region. India has long believed South Asia to be its sphere of influence and considered SAARC as a South Asian organisation with common problems of poverty, unemployment and slow economic development. The region was seen as bound by common culture and common aspirations. China has no role to play in the region.." ⁶

Despite various challenges, China and South Asia can serve the common interest of South Asian countries by promoting trade and economic relations. A common goal in South Asia has to be, the improvement in living conditions of one-third of the world population in the region. While each nation can design means and strategies to achieve this end, a new partner in the exercise can be China, which can provide an impetus to economic advancement. The countries in South Asia then will have a common objective of bringing real prosperity to the region. Traditionally, China's role has been dominantly towards East Asia and the Pacific in the past decades. Slowly but steadily, it has started taking keen interest in South-Asia as well. The growing differences with India over the past decades keep haunting the Chinese leadership but the temptation to gain something from South Asia has never stopped China from looking at new avenues. Both China and India are world's fastest growing economies, which will ultimately change the existing global market order. Importantly enough, China's relations with rest of the South Asian countries are very cordial. At the same time, growing focus of the US in poor countries in South Asia has alarmed both India and China in a peculiar way. Both feel strategic threat from the US.

Although the US and India have been striving for strategic partnership and enjoy deepening trade and military cooperation, the issue of Tibet is definitely a major focus of such a partnership. Given China's repeated protests over alleged anti-China activities of various Tibetan groups in Nepal, including those that flow in and out from India from time to time, by taking advantage of the open and unregulated border between Nepal and India, there is tremendous pressure on Nepal to strictly adhere to her declared policy of "One China"; meaning that Tibet Autonomous Region is an integrated and inalienable part of the People's Republic of China and that Nepal would not allow any anti-China activities on the Nepali soil. With growing economic and military clout, China will become increasingly assertive in Nepal on the question of Tibet. This is likely to clash with the Indian interests even as New Delhi also adheres to "One China" policy but is home to the Dalai Lama and his government-in-exile. At the same time, the US and European Union would like to make their presence stronger in the geo-strategically located Nepal. Thus, Nepal provides a convenient strategic venue for the US and EU to engage with both India and China in a comprehensive dialogue to settle lingering disputes in the region.

Rising China and Its Implications

There are indications that the world is taking notice of China's rise in Asia. The claim of China over land and sea areas in her neighborhood, China's claim for Spratley Islands in East Asian sea and border dispute in Arunachal Pradesh with India in particular, is likely to trigger some confrontation in the future. Such confrontation may result in full-scale war; where India as the largest country in South Asia may find herself dragged into it. As a result, some of the countries in South Asia may lose their identity as a nation forever. In such cases two countries are more vulnerable, Nepal and Bhutan.

As China's military is becoming more and more assertive on foreign policy matters in recent years, realising the Communist Party's dependency on them, any act of aggression from them would have a catastrophic impact in the continent. China's military adventures in the past (in the form of territorial pre-emption in Korea in 1959, Vietnam in 1979, India in 1962, or into the former Soviet Union in 1969) took place when China was not a very strong military and economic power. Today, when, the Communist Party is facing social problems, ranging from one child policy to the right of ethnic people against the assimilation into Han majority, to keep the country and her people united by preaching the 'threat theory', the military could trigger some sort of military adventurism.

Head on confrontation between China and India will definitely cause large scale destruction in the ancient civilisations. On the contrary, peaceful rise will bring prosperity in the region. One third of the population of the world will reap the benefits of such harmonious conditions in the region.

China in South Asia

China's policy towards South Asia has undergone changes at various stages. After the fall of Imperial China, the policy of the People's Republic revolved around Mao Ze-Dong's ideas basically drawn from the ancient Chinese history. The 'Class Struggle', and 'self-reliant development' prescribed by Mao, were undoubtedly the main domestic goals. To facilitate their attainment, during the period of Mao, China joined hands with the Socialists.

The second phase started with the end of Cultural Revolution in 1976 and the rise of Deng Xiaoping. This phase saw a drastic change in China's priorities as Deng adopted the path of 'socialism with Chinese characteristics' and 'opening up' to the outside world. The main objective of this phase was to bring China out of the past policy formulation and establish herself as a major power in the world. Deng's successors have been trying their best to continue with his legacy, to date.

When Jiang Zemin came to power in March 1993, he introduced his theory of three major historic tasks, modernisation, national reunification and safeguarding world peace and common development. He also adhered to the path of pursuing 'Independent foreign policy of peace'. This policy had only one goal, *'to make the Communist party a representative of the people'* which meant, to reinforcing Deng's visionary policy. Hu Jintao succeeded Jiang in March 2003. He laid emphasis on balanced development, a clear shift from China's GDP centric growth earlier. He tried to refine the policy taken by Jiang, by introducing the concept of creating a harmonious socialist society through sustainable development and gave the slogan of scientific outlook of development.

These three stages are nothing but the continuation of the old legacy - to rule ruthlessly and expand influence in the world. Chinese leadership knows very well that its population is getting exposed to ideas from the outside world to a large extent and, sooner or later, will get influenced by them. Hence, they use 'modern' methods to hold their brains captive to their policies. Hu Jintao's idea of 'scientific outlook of development' is prime example of giving a doze of new ideas continuously, to retain people's loyalty to the regime.

The country's history, taught in the Chinese schools and universities, portrays that China was humiliated and squeezed by foreigners in the past. The period between 1840-1945 is portrayed as *"A century of humiliation"*, when foreigners were dictating China's fate. Mao Ze-Dong's popular slogan to *'Stand up'* against the foreigners still holds true in the Chinese mind, from the school children to the leadership. It has become the main foundation of Chinese Nationalism.

The way China is asserting itself in world affairs, makes the Chinese people to feel proud. They, therefore, do not see any need to go against the Communist party as yet. The problem lies with those people who want to see China 'more freer', and blame the Communists for not understanding how an average Chinese mind works. Basically they are pragmatic people with deep-rooted Confucian principles.

At the outset, the Chinese leaders seem very sober and philosophic in their remarks about their policies, but the world should read between the lines. For example, Hu Jintao put forward the idea of *'harmonious world for a lasting peace and common prosperity'*, after he assumed office for the second term. It sounds very good but the underlying principle of the Communist party is to start asserting their ideas on other countries in the name of peace. During his

visit to Pakistan in April 2005, Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao clearly said, "What China needs for its development first and foremost is an international environment of long term stability and a stable surrounding environment".⁸

It means that China wants to establish itself as a world power and intends to have its say in international affairs and for that peaceful neighbours are needed. What he did not say was that 'China would actively involve itself in neighbouring countries affairs'. Two years after these remarks, the way China extended support to Sri-Lankan government (to address its separatist movement), reasserted its border dispute with India, intervened in Nepal's domestic politics, are some examples that reveal its assertive mindset.

China firmly believes, and has begun to convince her society that China has now come close to attaining a near super-power status. But the method is slightly different. China wants all Asian countries, including South Asian ones, to support China in her bid to make the Western countries and the US a target, for trying to contain the Asian rise. "*..The 19th century belonged to Europe, the 20th century to the United States. The 21st century, as we are coming to realise, can be the Asian century. But with that comes great responsibility-to lead, to guide, and to take ownership of the collaborative agenda...*"⁹, which means, the China has the capacity and leadership to influence the world.

Conclusion

If we compare South Asia and China from politico-cultural point of view, they are oceans apart. In China, right from the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949, successive leadership has one thing in common - consolidation of the people to a single goal of national interest. There was some internal problem for a period during the cultural revolution but no outside power could play or make the leaders dance to their tunes. As a result it was easy for Deng Xiao Ping to initiate his idea of reform and opening-up. The cadres he chose for the line of succession are still towing his line under the principle of democratic centralism.

In India, after their Independence in 1947, the leadership, spent too much time, perhaps decades, to keep on denouncing the colonial rulers and their intention behind dividing the country. However, no attempts were made to either bring the neighbouring countries back or to develop stronger linkages. Even now the Indian leadership is divided on whether to cherish the foundation of democracy and industrialisation laid by the colonial power or to keep on denouncing them for occupying the country for so long. The political confusion in India after the Independence is still continuing in terms of recognising 'friends or foes'.

In order to make the 21st century as an Asian one; both China and India will have to come forward with a strong will, and talk meaningfully to resolve all outstanding problems and contentious issues rather than confronting each other with infructuous arguments.

Endnotes

1. The countries are: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
2. The armed Maoist group (declared terrorist by both the USA and India) signed a 12 point agreement under the auspices of India in 2005 and that is believed to have pushed Nepal into a post conflict phase.
3. <http://www.ustr.gov/countries-regions/south-central-asia/sri-lanka>.
4. http://www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&page=article-details&code_title=20223
5. A large area in India's Arunachal Pradesh is claimed by China as Southern part of Tibet.
6. <http://www.india-defence.com/reports-917>.
7. People's Daily Online June 23, 2006.
8. Wen Jiabao's interview with Associated Press of Pakistan, carried by People's Daily, 4 April 2005.
9. Asia at the Helm: Beijing Review, Vol.53, No.44 November 4, 2010.

*Text of the talk delivered at USI on 21 Sep 2011.

****Dr Pushpa Adhikari** is an Associate Professor at Central Department of Political Science, Tribhuvan University, Nepal. He specialises in China-South Asia relations.

Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CXLI, No. 586, October-December 2011.

Transformation of PLA Logistics System : An Analysis

Major General SB Asthana, SM, VSM*

General

The People's Liberation Army of China (PLA) is undergoing a revolution in Military Logistics. A historical review of PLA operations since Vietnam War (1979) reveals that logistics and combat sustainability have been a weak link in PLA's prosecution of operations. China's entry into Korean War (1951) and subsequent campaigns including the 1962 conflict exposed shortcomings in the Chinese logistics system. During this period, China followed the operational doctrine of 'active defence' wherein the logistics system had short lines of supply, lacked rapid mobilisation and strategic transport capabilities. It was rigidly compartmentalised into separate service and regional systems, with little integration between them.

Growing Importance of Logistics

In 1991, Jiang Zemin, Chairman Central Military Commission (CMC) and Party General Secretary, included 'logistics support' as one of the five major requirements to build-up the Army. He pointed out, "There would be no high combat effectiveness without a strong logistic supply". In 1999 he signed "PLA Joint Logistics Regulations" considered a landmark in transformation of PLA Logistics System.

Administrative requirements to support modern wars under high tech conditions/ informationalised conditions and lessons learnt from the US Iraq-Afghanistan wars compelled China to organise a "precision logistics" system which would render rapid, accurate and timely logistics support by using information technology, scientific organisation of logistics structures and adopting modern management means.¹ The PLA is working on a multilateral approach to build a modern logistics system. It has initiated massive infrastructure development for integration of border areas, which have military implications as well. This paper analyses salient aspects of PLA's futuristic logistics system and their military implications.

Logistics Focus of PLA

Chinese Strategic Focus Impacting Infrastructure and Logistics Developments. With main strategic focus towards South and East China Sea (Taiwan and Spratly Islands), development of 'blue waters Navy and capability of projecting power beyond regional waters, China has not lost focus towards conventional operations in her periphery. The PLA would like to improve its military strength and overall capability to protect its energy sources and supply routes. The General Logistics Department of the PLA has embarked on modernisation of its combat logistics capability to enable sustained operations well beyond borders. China has also embarked upon massive infrastructure development in Tibet for integrating it with the Chinese system.

To this end, it is now improving its logistics system to support joint operations involving the three Services and Strategic Missile Forces (Second Artillery). This would facilitate rapid deployment and amphibious operations of integrated forces. Enhancement of strategic airlift and mid-air refuelling capabilities, up-gradation of aircraft and development of blue waters Navy form part of the overall process to project China's power across its maritime boundaries and the Indian Ocean.

Doctrinal Issues having Logistics Implications. Doctrinal issues which have impacted the reorganisation and modernisation of PLA logistics system are enumerated below:-

- (a) Integrated logistics support to sustain future wars.
- (b) Additional requirements to support mobile warfare, amphibious and airborne operations.
- (c) Logistics system to support projection of power missions and protect land and sea lanes of communications for unhindered flow of energy and commerce.
- (d) Technical know-how to enhance strategic/tactical mobility and lethality of firepower.
- (e) Need for lighter and modularised logistics system which would be compatible with the operations conducted by Rapid Reaction Forces (RRF).

Reorganisation of PLA Logistics System

Concept of Comprehensive Support. In contemporary Chinese military terminology all logistics functions fall under the concept of "comprehensive support," which include separate categories of 'logistics' and 'armament' (or equipment) support. The PLA has two separate, systems to manage its comprehensive support needs.² The first is the national-level General Logistics Department (GLD) which oversees "logistics support," and the second is the General Armament (or Equipment) Department (GAD or GED) which has jurisdiction over "armament support."

The GLD is the apex body providing logistics support to the three Services and Second Artillery.³ It has sub-departments which manage a wide range of support services, including supplies, transportation, military communications, financial affairs, health, petroleum, oil and lubricants, economic production, barracks and capital construction. The GLD also oversees PLA's efforts to grow much of its own food and production of clothing, equipment and consumable items.

The GAD was raised in 1998 at Beijing to provide wholesome armament support to PLA including procurement/acquisition of major weapons, equipment and ammunition, repair and maintenance, as well as R&D programmes. It maintains numerous research institutes, weapon test centres, nuclear test bases and satellite launch

and tracking bases. Both, the GLD and GAD supervise an array of professional military education and research institutes.

Joint Logistics Support System. In 2000, the logistics departments of the seven Military Regions (MR) were reorganised and integrated into Joint Logistics Department (JLD) to manage all the administrative resources. Under the 'joint logistics' scheme, Air Force and Naval fleet transferred their 'general' logistics support elements common to all services (such as hospital, fuel, motor vehicle maintenance, etc.) to the MR JLD, while keeping 'specialised' logistics support elements unique to their own service. About 30 logistics sub departments are subordinate to MR, each consisting of hospitals, warehouses, depots, and transportation units. Logistics sub departments form mobile support units to accompany combat forces in the field or at sea, away from their bases.⁴ As part of reforms in PLA reserve units, each MR has established a Reserve Logistics Support Brigade.

The GLD, through JLD of MR, manages approx 80 per cent of logistic needs; and Logistics Department of specific services manage balance 20 per cent of their specific requirements. The JLD is subdivided into regional logistics support (managing material and services within MR). The GLD has direct control over a number of supply units and strategic rear support bases around the country, providing *general logistics support*. The logistics department of arms and services is divided into *Organisational Logistics Support* which fulfill 'service specific' logistic needs, and *Logistics Support for Special Purposes* e.g. support for strategic rail mobile missiles. JLD has achieved commendable interface with the National Logistics Infrastructure.

Future Logistics Philosophy. A high priority is accorded for improving the combat service support functions in consonance with new operational concepts. The Chinese writings indicate that "The focus of logistics support will shift from reliance on quantity to reliance on speed and information, making full use of the technologies of informationalisation and digitisation; and delivering requisite quantity of resources at the right time and place. The degree of precision of logistic support in terms of time, space, variety, quantity, and the deployment of strength becomes a sign of effective support"⁵. An analysis of open source inputs reveals that future Chinese logistics philosophy would be characterised by following developments :-

- (a) Unified joint logistics to overcome compartmentalisation among the Services.
- (b) Light and modular logistics system compatible with mobile operations by Rapid Deployment formations.
- (c) Integration and utilisation of civil transport and infrastructure.
- (d) Emphasis on 'Just in Time' logistics as part of Precision Logistics.
- (e) Integrated technological support for field formations and communication zones.
- (f) Application of scientific methods in management of logistics.
- (g) Increasing outsourcing / socialisation by reducing direct business operations by PLA and redeploying military resources for better combat logistics support.

Reforms in PLA Logistics System/Procedures

Aim of Logistics Reforms

The aim of reforms in the logistics system is to strengthen the existing joint logistics set-up to meet the requirements of modern warfare under high tech/ informationalised conditions. Major ongoing reforms in the PLA logistics system are covered in succeeding paragraphs.

Unified Joint Services Logistics Apparatus

PLA created its first-ever 'Unified Theatre Logistics Command System' in Nanjing Military Region in 1995. The Theatre Joint Logistics Department or Joint Logistics Department of Military Area Command is responsible for joint logistical support for all 'in-theatre' units of the three Services. This is a war time Command Centre with a support headquarters that comprises of representatives of the Logistics Department of the various Services arms. Jinan MR has set-up a joint oil distribution network to overcome supply shortfalls. Nanjing MR has established a joint military-civilian vehicle spare parts and maintenance operations system. Efforts are on to create a Corps of '*joint logisticians*', who would be trained to think about joint logistics support, rather than service-specific operations.

Mobilisation

China has established a system of National Defence Mobilisation Committees (NDMC) extending from Beijing to the county level. The NDMC system is the focal point for the integration of militia and civilian logistics assets to support active duty and reserve PLA operations and joins together the government, communist party and military leaders at all levels to oversee the functions of mobilisation. Along with local PLA headquarters, NDMC's organise civilian personnel, trucks, ships, and other material required to support PLA operations. Many local NDMC's are organised and equipped to serve as joint military-government-police headquarters in times of emergency. PLA is conceptualising to have Cyber Mobilisation Platforms (CMP).i.e. a network down to company level, enabling immediate call-up of every reserve officer and soldier as also gathering supplies, equipment and vehicles with the click of a mouse.

Strategic and Tactical Mobility

In earlier wars, PLA's transportation capabilities relied heavily on ground assets and were primarily tactical in reach. By 2012, PLA would have the lift capability for supporting three corps level operations, simultaneously.⁷ A modest fleet of transport aircraft and naval transport vessels have been acquired to boost strategic mobility. PLA is purchasing

heavy lift assets from Russia to move their Heavy Brigade Combat Teams (HBCTs) and supplies from mainland to outlying provinces/remote parts of the world. The Chinese defence industry is also building cargo planes and ships that will replace foreign-purchased ships and aircraft by 2012.⁸

Logistics Support to Amphibious Operations. PLA Navy's amphibious lift capacity is estimated to be about one infantry division i.e. 10,000-12,000 personnel and equipment.⁹ (This is discounting a large number of amphibious vessels under construction in Chinese shipyards and resources of Ship Transport Units of PLA Ground and Air Force, and civil fleet). The airlift capability, is limited to about 11,000 parachutists in a single lift, depending on the quantity of equipment required to be lifted at the same time.¹⁰ The PLA plans to incorporate civilian ships, aircraft and crews for its wartime transportation requirements. Additionally, PLA in-flight refuelling capability is in its infancy and limited to small number of tankers and fighter aircraft. PLA Navy has a relatively small contingent of large logistics support ships and majority of its small support vessels are suitable for operations along the Chinese coast only.

Emergency Support Units and Reserve Logistical Support Brigades

Quick reaction logistical support units are vital to support frontline RRF. Senior PLA leaders have outlined the requirement of "emergency" logistics teams for deployment in the field. A network of small-scale emergency support units and depots have been established in all MR over the past few years. PLA Navy has established emergency support units to support prolonged operations from detached forward bases. Reserve logistical support units have been set-up in recent years.

Joint Battle Zone Logistics Support

PLA is anticipating that vast quantities of material in future wars would necessitate restructuring of its battlefield logistics system. The new structure would integrate "fragmented logistics units" of PLA Army, Navy and Air force to provide regional joint support, under the "joint battle zone logistics support" concept, wherein the MR logistics departments and branches will be responsible for the unified supply of materials and general services to units within the battle zones. The reforms are focussed to provide unified leadership, planning, management of logistics resources and services to support joint operations. PLA has expressed interest in creation of more mobile logistics forces (two to three logistics support brigades per MR), rather than relying primarily on fixed depots and supply points.

Forward Stockpiling of War Materials. The PLA's strategic war materials reserve system is concentrated inland and needs extensive reorganisation and relocation to coastal /forward regions.

Socialisation / Outsourcing and Privatisation of Logistics Functions

A major element of logistics reform is "outsourcing," or contracting with local civilian entities to provide services previously performed by members or units of the PLA.¹¹ The GLD and PLA are linking civilian and military logistics to provide, what the former Chairman of the Central Military Commission, Jiang Zemin called, "precision logistics."¹² PLA is testing such outsourcing activities in various operational exercises.

Centralisation and Automation of War Materials Supply System

Market mechanism system is being introduced to improve efficiency and to save on costs. The military supplies are being centralised, automated and reorganised to improve warehousing, distribution and procurement system during peace and war time periods. The effort is to make logistics management more professional and "scientific"; and to improve mobile logistics support for units away from their bases.¹³ Some of the areas selected for such improvements are:-

(a) **Computerisation.** PLA has been carrying out mock emergency procurement drills to test its new computerised procurement system with local suppliers in North East China (PLA Daily, September 26). The success of the exercise demonstrated that the system was viable and indicated the way for future "Integrated army-civilian emergency procurement systems."¹⁴ PLA is also developing comprehensive capabilities of automatic identification that deal with logistics information e.g. bar code readers and radio frequency identification equipment

(b) **Integrated Command Platform of Field Logistics.** The Integrated Command Platform of field logistics connects the three Services in one network. In early May, a special support coordination exercise was organised by JLD under the Nanjing, Military Area Command (MAC). In the exercise, commanders of the three Services were reporting and submitting demands, generating support plans, regulating and controlling material flows, and simultaneously commanding support actions in different areas through the command platform, showing the integration capacity of information systems.

Infrastructure Development

Peoples Republic of China has been carrying out extensive infrastructure development to improve its surface and air mobility to prosecute operations. Many key highways and railway lines have been developed to link developed coastal region to border areas. China's massive infrastructure development in Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) is part of her overall economic as well as sectoral development plans which have military implications; besides, integration or Sinocisation of Tibet. Some strategists feel that, 'The infrastructure development is well beyond the genuine needs of 27 lakh people of Tibet'.¹⁵ With development of Qinghai Tibet Railway line (QTR), China has proved her resolve and capability of infrastructure development to the world. Hu Jintao noted, "The project is not only a magnificent feat in China's history of railway construction, but also a great miracle of the world's railway history."¹⁶ In TAR and areas close to Southern borders, China has undertaken extensive infrastructure development which indicate her resolve to ensure that the resultant economic development hastens the pace of integration of TAR with China. This will also provide impetus to PLA's logistics capabilities, to enhance its operational potential in TAR. The inhospitable terrain and extreme climate, however, restrict her capability in TAR.

The opening of rail link to Lhasa and trade route via Nathula, indicate China's mindset and emphasis on development of infrastructure and trade in India's strategic neighbourhood. It is significant to note that China is putting together a policy of engaging its periphery through a series of infrastructural developmental projects that provide her an easy access to energy sources, trade routes and access to warm waters from its landlocked Western region. The development of 'land and strategic energy corridors' through Pakistan, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Vietnam, and Greater Mekong Sub Region are part of the above strategy.

Research and Development

PLA is increasing scientific research on logistics equipment and making greater investments in R&D. Over the past few years, PLA has finalised the designs of 92 types of new generation special logistical equipment – some of the items match up to advanced international standards. In April 2004, more than 340 manufacturers from 26 countries, took part in the Fourth Beijing International Exhibition on Military Logistical Equipment and Technology Exhibition. Military delegations from 16 countries were invited to attend the exhibition as well as the international symposium on the development strategy of military logistical equipment and technology.¹⁷ These exhibitions and military exchange programmes contribute much in 'military diplomacy'. China has realised that development of indigenous production capabilities of high technology equipment and technological innovations are an inescapable necessity to sustain war effort in the future.

Logistics Training

PLA has a multi-dimensionnel system for logistics training with over 20 institutes. The Logistics Command Academy is conducting training at theatre and operational level since 2000. PLA is sending large number of logistics staff officers for training in various reputed institutes abroad to achieve indigénisation, technological innovations and modernisation of production facilities. Logistics training exercises are also being conducted at all levels for all weather high-altitude support.

Logistics Support for Events of National Importance

PLA organises and provides logistical support for key national and international events with meticulous precision. Some of the examples are: The National Day Parade, Naval escort operations in the Gulf of Aden and waters of Somalia, joint exercises with foreign military forces, security work for the Shanghai World Expo and Beijing Olympics. China provides strong and reliable logistical support for rescue and relief operations following disasters, such as the Yushu earthquake and the Zhouqu mud-rock slide.¹⁸ These activities enhance the capabilities and confidence of PLA logistics system.

Assessment of Logistics Reforms

By creating the GLD and well defined, fast paced reforms under focussed leadership, PLA has come a long way to improve the effectiveness of its logistics system. While the reforms may be sufficient to support local campaigns, within or just beyond China's borders, they have not been focussed on extending expeditionary capabilities across oceans.¹⁹ The new systems and procedures are yet to be war tested. PLA units still lack high-mobility transportation assets for power projection missions. The synergy between the joint system is also suspect due to some resistance from ground forces towards integration.

With China's main strategic focus towards South and East China Sea, PLA would like to achieve logistics capability to intervene militarily to protect its energy supplies and to have an effective deterrence capability to safeguard national interests. It would take some time for China to be able to support a decisive large-scale war well beyond her borders. PLA has been quite successful in developing a modest modern conventional force projection capability in her periphery. The following factors have strengthened their logistics system:-

- (a) Unified command and control of logistics resources.
- (b) Focussed leadership, determined to push through the reforms.
- (c) Sizeable budget for modernisation.
- (d) Policy of combing around the world to acquire military knowhow and equipment.
- (e) Well developed industry for production of military hardware, oriented towards export.
- (f) Their will and ability to mobilise civil resources during emergency.
- (g) Their focus, determination and ability to fast track infrastructure development.
- (h) Improvement in availability of resources in border areas in recent times.

Analysis of PLA's Logistics Capabilities

- (a) Strategic and tactical mobility for operations beyond China's borders is consistently increasing with induction and integration of civil transportation resources.
- (b) PLA is purchasing heavy lift assets from Russia for moving their formations and heavy assets to outlying provinces, including Fuzhou (which can be used as a platform to invade Taiwan).²⁰ By 2012, the Chinese defence industry will replace foreign-purchased ships and aircraft.
- (c) China does not have a blue water Navy and has limited amphibious capability. A large number of ocean going transport ships and airliners can be interfaced to enhance rapid sea lift/ air lift capability.

(d) The present logistics capabilities are limited; however, if the current pace of military modernisation is maintained, PLA may be in a position to invade Taiwan by 2015.

(e) High priority has been accorded for sustained logistics support for RRF operations on her periphery and beyond.

(f) Land based transportation capability is increasing at a fast pace due to rapid development of road, rail and air transportation infrastructure.

(g) Socialised support network, civil infrastructure and resources have been integrated to make military logistics system efficient, responsive and cost effective.

Analysis of PLA's Logistics Capability vis-à-vis India

China faces no major constraints in inducting forces required for conventional operations. It can use the three highways, railways and air transportation for moving forces up to major townships near the Indian borders. No additional acclimatisation period is required because induction of Chinese forces in TAR is spread over a long time. Lack of deployment space and capacities for maintenance of tracks along likely places of deployment restrict the overall force levels needed for launching operations speedily. Application of forces along Indo-Chinese borders will continue to be restrained by terrain, extreme climate and limited campaigning period. Application of RRF along the Indian borders would require ground based logistics support suited for mountain warfare. Air operations will continue to be affected by problems related to high altitude factors, although PLA is trying to mitigate it by air to air refuelling capabilities and other measures.

Applicability of PLA Logistics Reforms to Indian Military Logistics System

PLA undertook logistics reforms to keep pace with China's future goals, strategic focus and doctrinal and organisational changes. A large number of them would be applicable to the Indian Armed Forces in varying forms.

Integration of Defence Logistics

PLA, as well as most defence forces in the world, have shifted emphasis from 'service specific' to 'joint' logistics systems and have economised their logistics investments and efforts. In the Indian Armed Forces, bulk of the logistics continue to be service specific. We need a 'Defence Logistics Agency' for higher direction, control and co-ordination of logistics effort within the three Services headquarters to provide an interface with other logistics agencies in the country. It should project the logistics perspective plan and forge close co-operation between defence research and development, defence production, public and private sectors.

Need for Revolution in Military Logistics in India

PLA has justified the saying, "There can be no worthwhile Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) without worthwhile Revolution in Military Logistics (RML)." The RML intends to transform logistics system to ensure that the right stuff reaches the right place at right time, for best value. While Indian Armed Forces are also undergoing logistics reforms, some of the areas which we need to look at are as under :-

(a) **Mobilisation.** Establishing National Defence Mobilisation Committees at grass root level for involving the civil sector, population and reservists for speedy mobilisation. Due to advances in Information Technology in India, Cyber mobilisation platform can also be adopted.

(b) **Theatre Logistics Command System.** We can think of having 'theatre based' logistics system for establishing a 'grid pattern' logistics infrastructure, which could support all elements of the Defence Forces, including the Para Military Forces.

(c) **Enhancing Indigenisation and Defence Production.** To ensure that National interests are not compromised, we need to be self-reliant in defence production. Defence production should be export oriented to enhance our surge capabilities to cater for fast paced, short duration wars.

(d) **Defence-Industry Partnership.** Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) could be a forum for closer interaction and synergy between industry and defence logistics. It would ensure close cooperation between development and production in the defence, public and private sectors. We need to adopt 'partnership' approach with the industry.

(e) **Absorption of Technology.** We should increase the pace of absorption of state of the art technology, IT and scientific management techniques for better cost effectiveness. There is a need to improve the Research and Development capabilities for Defence Technology, specially by incorporating the private sector also.

(f) **Logistics Training.** We need more formalised institutes for logistics training to nurture logisticians as specialists.

Infrastructure Development in Border Areas

The Indian Armed Forces should formulate a broad framework for infrastructure development specially in border areas and pursue it vigorously in conjunction with civil agencies. The pace of infrastructure development in border areas has been very slow due to fallacious reasons. We need to ensure that the current asymmetry between India and China, in terms of infrastructure development in border areas is reduced. There is also a need to encourage development of civil infrastructure in border areas to include land and air communications, tourism, adventure activities, agriculture, poultry, dairy, and civil cooperatives.

Conclusion

Considering logistics as an important force multiplier, PLA has fast tracked its logistics reforms. The measures undertaken by them will enable China to sustain independent operations beyond its borders and enhance her power projection capabilities. Infrastructure development along India-China borders, coupled with other strategic and operational parameters, will improve the PLA soldiers quality of life, morale and capability to wage war.

Realistic analyses of China's logistic capabilities along our borders should compel the Indian Armed Forces to pursue its logistics and infrastructure development plans vigorously to ensure that we do not lag behind them.

Endnotes

1. Peoples Daily online: Precision Logistics; Focus of PLA logistics Changes. Accessed on 20 Jun 2011
2. Dennis J Blasko China Brief,, Chinese Military Logistics: The GLD System, 11 April 2004, pp 2
3. CK Kapur, Chinese Military Modernisation, Manas Publications, 2003, Chapter 10, pp 149.
4. Dennis J Blasko, loc cit, pp3
5. Cheng Kuaile and Zhang Ping, "Precision-Oriented Logistics: Objective of (the) Logistics Revolution in the 21st Century, Zhongguo junshi kexue, 20 November 1999, translated in FBIS, 4 February 2000.
6. Sinodefence.com/overview/organization/gld. General Logistics Department : Accessed on 21 jun 2011
7. David A Payne, Army Logistician : Chinese Logistics Modernisation. Vol 140, Issue 4, Jul-Aug 2008, pp1
8. Ibid.
9. US Department of Defence Annual Report on the Military Power of the People's Republic of China, dated June 2000.
10. International Institute for Strategic Studies, The Military Balance, 2003-2004, (London: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 155.
11. CK Kapur, loc cit, pp 152
12. Peoples Daily online: Precision Logistics; Focus of PLA logistics Changes. Accessed on 20 Jun 2011.
13. Lonnie Henley, "PLA Logistics and Doctrine reform, 1999-2009," in Susan M Puska, ed., People's Liberation army After Next (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2000), pp. 55-77
14. Modernising PLA Logistics, China BiefVolume : 5, Issue: 25, December 6, 2005.
15. Times of India, November 7, 2007.
16. Abanti Bhattacharya, Strategic Implications of the Qinghai-Tibet Railway, July 07, 2006.
17. English.chinamil.com.cn 2008-03-17: Chinese Military : Open and Transparent, Revolution in Military affairs with Chinese characteristics), PLA Daily: 17 March 2008.
18. Multilateral Approach to Building a Modern Logistics System: China's National Defence in 2010, English.news.cn 2011-03-31 11:16:43
19. Dennis J Blasko, loc it, pp 4
20. David A Payne, Army Logistician : Chinese Logistics Modernistaion. Vol 40, Issue 4, Jul-Aug 2008.

***Major General SB Asthana, SM, VSM** was commissioned into Assam Regiment in Dec 1978. As Senior Fellow at USI (2005-06), he published the monograph 'Military Implications of Chinese Developments in Our Strategic Neighbourhood'. Presently, he is Addl DG Infantry, Integrated HQ of MOD (Army), New Delhi.

Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CXLI, No. 586, October-December 2011.

Security Challenges and Opportunities Facing India

Lieutenant General HC Dutta, PVSM (Retd)*

Introduction

The two main challenges to India's security are from China and Pakistan. China is an economic giant and an unfriendly super power breathing down our neck - laying claim to vast stretches of our territory and ever ready to threaten us. Our litany of woes is endless. We befriended China at the earliest, and espoused its cause for membership of the UN and later the Security Council. We sang songs of "*Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai*", supported "*Panchsheel*", basked in the so called personal equation between Nehru and Chou-en-Lai. In the euphoria of friendship, we endorsed, perhaps unwisely at the time, Chinese suzerainty over Tibet, following the UK example although the latter hedged it, stipulating special rights of China alongside autonomous status of Tibet.¹

Threat from China

The Chinese response to our friendly attitude was brutal hostility. They inflicted a humiliating military defeat on us in our North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) in 1962. Since then, it continues to be in illegal possession of vast stretches of our territory in Aksai Chin, Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh. Worse, it lays claim to the entire Arunachal Pradesh², on the specious grounds that historically it was part of Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR), which is now part of China. To rub it in, in May 2007, China refused visa to an IAS officer, Ganesh Koyu, pointing out that hailing from Arunachal Pradesh, he is a Chinese national so he does not need a visa to enter China. It issued only stapled visas to Kashmiris. It has tightened its grip on Tibet by constructing rail-road links, and settled large numbers of ethnic Han Chinese in Tibet, altering its demography. It ruthlessly put down the agitations for Tibetan Independence. It is building dams across Brahmaputra River and its tributaries in Tibet, endangering the entire ecological system with grave repercussions for the riparian states of India, Bangladesh and Myanmar.

China has been assiduously courting nations of South and SE Asia with trade pacts and other blandishments. It has been particularly active in India's immediate neighbouring countries, Tibet, Pakistan, Nepal, Myanmar, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka - a strategy termed as 'encirclement of India'. The Chinese have built an impressive infrastructure of airfields, rail and road communications and POL storage facilities in Tibet³, which would undoubtedly enhance her war waging capability in Ladakh, UP-Tibet border and Arunachal Pradesh; hence, a cause for serious concern to us.

China has forged close relations with Pakistan, according them the status of an "all-weather friend". It is a major supplier of arms to the Pakistan Armed Forces. Worse, it has transferred nuclear know-how and materials support, including aid for Pakistan's first nuclear test. It has provided missile designs and ongoing technological support and lately, assistance in building nuclear power plants. It gives Pakistan unstinted support on Kashmir and has constructed roads to ensure surface links for assured military support. In short, China-Pakistan nexus constitutes the single greatest factor of Pak belligerence and terrorist threats to India, arguably only next to American support and largesse. Chinese inroads into Nepal are particularly worrisome. Nepal has been a traditional friend of India and has been part of our area of influence. China has built roads over passes from Tibet, offered trade concessions and exported Maoism to Nepal, thereby destabilising its political and social system.

Engaged in a major effort to modernise its armed forces since the last two decades, China has built-up a formidable military machine which though still not equal to that of the USA, nevertheless poses a threat of awesome magnitude to India and countries of Asia. Its vastly improved Navy is making strides to dominate the Indian Ocean; and is busy building naval bases in Sittwe in Myanmar, electronic hub on Coco Island in Sri Lanka and Gwadar port on west coast of Pakistan - termed a 'string of pearls' in the Indian ocean".

Indian Options vis-à-vis China

What are our options? Clearly, we are not going to be able to match China in economic power or military prowess for a long time, if at all. Also, we cannot hope for a friendly China or a relationship of equals. Therefore, a policy of confrontation is out of the question. At best, we can expect to live in intense rivalry or watchful co-existence, i.e. a policy of "engagement", which seems to be the current wisdom. However, being a loose, undefined term, it is liable to be misconstrued as an alibi for inaction. What is the true 'policy of engagement'? It would cover a wide spectrum of options, from inaction or passive acceptance to active protests, to defiant objections, to mobilising world opinion, and at the extreme end, brinkmanship. This range of actions will perhaps be followed by India in a selective manner for various disputes, depending upon the validity of our stand on issues, state of global perceptions and state of relative military preparedness and our ability to take calculated risks, important thing being not to take any transgression lying down. Hence, policy of active or muscled engagement; certainly brinkmanship, presupposes capacity to fight a limited, high intensity military action, should things go wrong, hence, the reported plans for raising additional formations and additional air assets in the Eastern Sector.

In addition, we should vigorously drum up support for our cause, building-up lobbies against Chinese wrongdoings to us or to others. We could target their dismal record of human rights violations against Tibetans and other minorities such as Uighurs, demolition of Tibetan culture, and worst of all, destruction of the ecological system of Tibetan Plateau which will have disastrous impact on entire Asia and perhaps the world ecological balance. Diplomatic insults such as denial/stapled visas, and Chinese objection to visits by our Prime Minister and Dalai Lama to Arunachal Pradesh should be repudiated in strongest terms. Indeed, India should emphasise in clear, declaratory manner that it does not accept the Chinese so called claim lines or their claim to Arunachal Pradesh. India has a legitimate cause to lodge formal protest in the UN forums against adverse possession by China of Aksai Chin Plateau and other Northern territories and areas of erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, illegally ceded to them by Pakistan. We should declare, to reserve the right to use force to make amends, whenever we are in a position to do so. The Chinese position regarding the validity of McMahon line and annexation of Tibet (extending the concept of suzerainty to total sovereignty) is debatable. These issues could be raked up in the world forums. In the prevailing mistrust and apprehension regarding China the world

powers such as, the USA, the UK, EU and Russia would probably favour giving justice to Tibetans.

The dialectics of big power versus middle or small power relations, call for skill and nerve on the part of the smaller powers to survive in an imperfect world where might is usually right. Sure, there would be risks, but it need not inhibit the lesser beings from talking tough and at times even acting tough, whenever possible and then raising a hue and cry for the big players to step in. We would do well to study the antics of Pakistan against us and more importantly their practice of the art of masterly brinkmanship in their dealings with the USA, and how they managed to hoodwink a mighty super power, milking it of billions of dollars for decades.

How does China plan to contend against the USA, a vastly bigger power. Apart from diplomatic ball-juggling at which they are an expert, the Chinese have been devising a workable strategy and building requisite capability. China lacks the capacity to risk armed conflict with the USA – theirs strategy is to restrict American capacity to operate in South and SE Asia at extreme range. The limited aim being, to be left free to bully and coerce smaller powers in the region, ie, strategy of “anti-access capability”, so as to establish itself as Asia’s dominant power by eroding the credibility of America’s security guarantees. For this, the Chinese plan to deploy low cost non-nuclear ground, sea and air launched missiles with the backing of only a small number of long range nuclear ICBMs – should things get out of hand. Similarly, India and the smaller countries in the region will have to think up such ‘out of the box’ answers. Equally, the Indian military will have to devise a cost effective strategy for taking on the Chinese and to ‘do more with less’. Indeed a new ground-air war doctrine for the mountains and high altitude warfare is required.

In response to China’s strategies of ‘encirclement’ and ‘string of pearls’, we need to mend fences with our neighbours. We should forge new links with Myanmar,⁴ which is being courted by China, as it will give them access to the Bay of Bengal. It is also important for its reserves of natural gas. It had drifted into the Chinese camp, consequent upon UN sanctions and our ill-conceived support to the movement for democracy, but there are signs that Myanmar is seeking ways to balance out its dependence on China. Indeed, this is the story for almost all states of Central Asia, South East and South Asia; who are becoming apprehensive of the growing might of China. Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka – in fact all countries with the solitary exception of Pakistan are nervous. Hence, our “Look East” policy has come into play not a day too soon. Same would be the case for countries of the outer ring, ie, Russia, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. Indeed there are signs that countries are exploring possibility of a multi-polar world instead of only a bi-polar order between the USA and China. In addition to shoring up of bilateral relations, India will need to rethink its traditional aversion to alliances and pacts for trade, defence, intelligence sharing and so on.

Amongst our immediate neighbours, friendliest relations with Nepal are of vital importance. We have had a special relationship and common ethnic ties for centuries. We maintain an open border, currency convertibility, and full freedom to Nepalese to live and work in India. Thousands of Gorkhas serve in the Indian Army, including a number of officers in senior ranks. We have a long standing treaty of Peace and Friendship with Nepal⁵ since 1950, though actual relations have had minor ups and downs. Now, the advent of China on the scene has exacerbated the situation with Maoist propaganda which apart from infecting the Nepalese body politic has also spilled over to the Terai. China has also built roads over the mountain passes from Tibet. China’s influence has given an opportunity to Pakistan to exploit the open border to infiltrate Jihadists to infect Muslim communities living in north UP and Bihar. All in all, an extremely sensitive and complex political and security situation for India, which calls for tact, firmness and blunt speak. Nepal must be made to cooperate and accept full responsibility for the open border and respect special privileges and concessions. India does not want to have to seal and fence the border but the fact remains that India dare not leave this gaping big hole in her ‘vulnerable upper cerebrum’ unguarded.

Threat from Pakistan

The second major challenge to India’s security is from Pakistan. A country born in hate and Islamist bigotry, it has been motivated exclusively by twin forces of fundamentalism and visceral hatred of India through all 64 years of its existence. The situation has been further exacerbated by the canker of Jihadism and terrorism which has become its state policy. It has earned the dubious sobriquet of being the epicentre of global terrorism. It has been India’s nemesis. Its avowed state policy is ‘make India bleed from a thousand cuts’. Its hand is seen in all devilry perpetrated against India: aid and abetment to the Sikh insurgency in Punjab; aid to Ulfa movement in Assam; the ongoing virulent insurgency in Kashmir; cross border infiltration; terrorist attacks in Indian cities; attack on Indian Parliament; plane hijacking; attack across the LC at Kargil; fake currency racket through Nepal; “Karachi project”⁶ to train Indian Mujahidin for committing acts of terror and sabotage in India; the commando raid in Mumbai in 2008 (26/11); attack on Indian Embassy in Afghanistan; et al. It has acquired nukes and missile technology from China and North Korea, which it has traded to Libya, Iran and perhaps countless other countries. Since the Russian invasion of Afghanistan in the 1970s, Pakistan has milked the USA of billions of dollars and a trove of the latest armaments, in addition to arms aid from China. As a result, it has built-up a formidable military machine and fearful capacity for clandestine activity. For a decade now, Pakistan has bamboozled the USA, on the pretext of aiding American war effort against Al-Qaida and Taliban in Afghanistan, but playing both sides as a master stroke of duplicitous behaviour. In fact, it is largely responsible for the American imbroglio in Afghanistan.

Its trump card is its Nuclear arsenal and the spectre of its falling into the Jihadists’ hands – a card which it plays with great aplomb and truculence. Interestingly, Pakistan has been likened, by one of its own journalists, to “a man holding a pistol to his own head, threatening to pull the trigger if his demands are not met”. In a word, Pakistan is the scourge of our time. Unfortunately, India is its prime target. So, how do we deal with Pakistan? The answer is, we cannot; certainly not in the manner we have been trying to do, since 1947. A few home truths. One, Pakistan will always be hostile towards us – never friendly. It will never respond to reason or friendship. Two, stranger things have happened in history, but on its record so far, it would seem that in all probability, Pakistan may never become a responsible peace loving state. Hence, contrary to the fond hopes of our intelligentsia and lofty idealism of our politicians, the current mantra that “a strong and stable Pakistan is in the interests of India” would be building a house on sand. In truth, it will be a dangerous leap of faith on our part to trust Pakistan. Our good man of peace, Vajpayee, perhaps, had time to rue his well-intentioned ‘bus diplomacy’ in February 1999 to swear undying friendship to Nawaz

Sharif, which was promptly followed in May, 1999 by Pak attack on Kargil. Also, our experience has been that whenever Pakistan was strong and doing well, there was a marked increase in her belligerence and a spike in infiltrations across the LOC. Three, the myth that the Pakistan Army is the villain of the piece, but the people are overflowing with good will for India. In reality, it is the darling of the Pakistani people whereas India's Army is most unpopular. Four, threat of Pak's Nuclear Weapons falling in Jihadist hands is the biggest myth masterfully conjured up by Pakistan. The fact is that the Pak Army controls most Jihadist factions. Besides, the nukes are extremely well guarded by their Military for their own good and to guard against danger of possession or deactivation by the USA. Another bogey is that if provoked, Pakistan is irrational enough to use Nuclear weapons against India. Not true. They know that a Nuclear strike by them will instantly invite a massive Nuclear response from India, and that in any Nuclear exchange, Pakistan will cease to be.

Indian Options vis-à-vis Pakistan

It follows, therefore that the only viable option of engaging Pakistan, is to deal with them as you deal with a bully, that is to hit him hard whenever he steps out of line. That is the only language its leadership understands; not reason, not love - only force. We must not be misled by fanciful formulations like 'non-state actors'. These are just alibis to which we also fall prey, as an excuse to avoid making of hard decisions. Instead, India should have a clearly stated policy - "any attack emanating from Pakistan soil will be instantly punished", which should be given out as a simple, unequivocal, one-line directive to the Armed Forces, who should then be given a free hand to plan, create capability and train the combined force. In this context our past experience is revealing. The usual drama starts with a Pakistan attack, whether it is hijacking of our aircraft or commando raid on Mumbai. It is immediately followed by much hue and cry from its leaders that it could only have been the work of non-state actors, hence India should be dissuaded from retaliating, in which case Pakistan will have no option but to use Nuclear weapons. So, its masters (the USA and China) go into diplomatic overdrive advising restraint on India, and cautioning against 'unintended consequences'. By way of doing something, to assuage the agitated public, Indian leaders declare stoppage of bilateral dialogue till the perpetrators are punished. After six months of diplomatic notes and a flurry of demarches, and the US pressure, India 'reluctantly' agrees to resume dialogue. Business as usual till the next outrage. Sounds familiar!?

Indeed, Pakistan is a test case. How, we succeed in putting it in its place, will be the benchmark of effectiveness of the Indian State. The whole world, specially the super powers, the USA and China, are watching. Most importantly, all our smaller neighbours are looking at our reactions. Our credibility is at stake. The situation is equally unacceptable with regard to China.

Conclusion

The question, often asked is: is the country getting a full bang for its buck? In the aftermath of the Mumbai carnage with the tempers running high, a noted industrialist asked, "How can such a thing be allowed to happen? We maintain a huge military, if it is not fully equipped to protect the country, let the Government tell us how much more money it needs". That is the crux of the situation. We are a Nation of more than a billion people, we have the third largest military of the world, we boast of being one of the fastest growing economies, our bureaucracy is supposedly packed with brains and our leaders are full of sagacity and wisdom. Yet a 'failed state' like Pakistan can tweak our nose at will, and China can threaten us and inflict provocations with border violations, territorial grabs and preposterous claims. On the diplomatic front, we have more enemies and fence sitters than friends. How have we allowed ourselves to come to such a sorry state of affairs and what should be done to put things right?

We have to make up for a lot of lost ground and we do not have the luxury of too much time. Firstly, India would need to sculpt a 'National Vision Statement' and a 'Grand Strategy' to fulfil that vision. Of course, this will require national unity, as against the present spectacle of politicians squabbling over local issues as also, to somehow, overcome the evil of political expediency inherent in coalition politics. The Grand Strategy, in essence, an exercise in systematic weighing of 'ends and means', should spell out as to what are our options; short term as well as long term, across the board in economic, political, social and military spheres. Thereafter, like other major organs of the Government, the Military will work out coherent strategies, operational doctrines pertaining to different sectors and threats, requisite capability in terms of men and material, including induction of advanced weapon systems as also procedures and training required for welding various components into integrated commands, formations and battle groups. Above all, what will then be needed is a political will and resolve to activate such a purpose-oriented and motivated power structure. India will have to understand and cultivate a culture of power and force. In the past, India has been economically rich and famous for soft power, but never as a political or military power, since after the Maurya and Ashoka Periods. Whereas the reality is that no country may count for much unless it has the hard capacity and the will to protect its people and territory.

Equally, apart from modernisation of our Armed Forces, overhaul of the intelligence system and systems for timely threat assessment, the country needs to improve governance, streamline systems for policy formulation and, institute an effective decision making apparatus at the highest level. There should be intimate interface between the Defence Services and Foreign Service, both concerned with developments abroad and in other countries. Equally, most importantly, the service heads and military commanders of integrated theatre commands must be in the decision making loop at the highest level, at all times and in an institutionalised manner. For a country whose politicians have little expertise in military matters or experience of having served in the armed forces; and a country which is living in the most unsettled times in history, amidst the most violent and hostile neighbours, it is dangerous not to have the benefit of professional advice from the military commanders on a continuing basis. Similarly, the Nation should not be deprived of their experience and talents in other fields - there is a conspicuous lack of senior retired service officers in the ranks of ambassadors, PSU heads, and as advisers in various echelons of the Government. As a result we do not have a military culture or flair for muscled diplomacy, and our political leaders expend most of their talents and energies on internal politics and local issues. This, perhaps, is one reason why our foreign policies, though strong in academics and sophistry, have been singularly lacking in muscle and blunt speak.

Lastly, there is an urgent need for an institutionalised system whereby an independent government body carries out annual "performance evaluation" of important organs of the Government like the Defence, External Affairs, Finance,

Home etc. This could take the form of Parliamentary hearings somewhat like the Congressional/Senate hearings in the US system. It should be, of course, in addition to the office of Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG). This must be preceded by 'self or internal audit'. The fact of the matter is that no organisation is perfect, so periodic stock-taking and fine tuning is necessary. The system will identify oversights and bottlenecks and highlight areas of critical concern like the continuing shortages in personnel and equipments of the Indian Army which has been recently described as "unfit for war" in a topical journal.⁷

Endnotes

1. UK relations with Tibet. Sir Algernon Rumbold, President of Tibet Society of the UK.
2. China's 'Aggressive' Territorial claim on India's Arunachal Pradesh by Namrata Goswami, Strategic Analysis (IDSA), Volume 35, Number 5, September 2011.
3. Infrastructure Development and Chinese War Waging Capabilities in Tibet by Shailender Arya, Journal of Defence Studies IDSA. July 2011, Vol.5 No.3.
4. Sino-Myanmar Military Cooperation and its Implications for India by H Sivananda, same publication as 3 above.
5. Text of Indo Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship signed at Kathmandu on 31 july,1950.).
6. CTC Sentinel, Article by Praveen Swami dated 3,May,2010 titled, "Riaz Bhaktal and the Origins of he Indian Mujahidin".
7. India Today November 7, 2011. Articles "The Big Story, Unfit Army' and "Dragons' Familiar Dance" by Brahma Chellaney.

***Lt Gen HC Dutta (Retd)** served in 8 Gorkha Rifles, commanding its 5th Battalion in Chhamb-Jaurian Sector in 1965 war. He was an Instructor at the Defence Services Staff College and Commandant, College of Combat, Mhow, before serving as GOC, 2 Corps and GOC-in-C, Central Command.

Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CXLI, No. 586, October-December 2011.

Internal Security Challenges - Gravity, Manifestations and Responses*

Shri Prakash Singh, IPS (Retd)**

Introduction

The internal security situation of the country presents a dismal scenario. Terrorists are spreading their tentacles all over the country. J&K continues to be on the boil with Pakistan pushing infiltrators from across the border and refusing to dismantle its infrastructure of terrorism. Northeast is also in a state of turmoil, though there have been some encouraging developments lately. The Naxalite influence is spreading in ever widening circles to different parts of the country.

Internal Security - A New Threat Every Decade

If one were to take a panoramic view of the internal security situation as it has evolved since the dawn of Independence, we find that every decade saw a major problem being added to our internal security kitty. The fifties saw the Northeast going up in flames. Phizo raised the banner of revolt in Nagaland in 1954 and, in due course, the sparks flew to Mizoram, Manipur and Tripura. The sixties saw the beginnings of the Naxalbari movement starting from a small village at the tri-junction of India, Nepal and what was then East Pakistan, the movement has today spread over twenty states of the Union. The seventies saw turbulence in Assam with the formation of the United Liberation Front of Assam seeking to liberate Assam from the Indian “colonial regime” through armed struggle. The eighties witnessed one of the most lethal terrorist movements in Punjab aided and abetted by Pakistan. The nineties saw the beginning of insurgency in Kashmir, though the seeds of trouble were there in the wake of Partition. The current decade has been marked by the onslaught of international terrorism in the hinterland; what was so far confined to Jammu & Kashmir has gradually become a pan-India phenomenon.

Lack of Strategic Vision

The question arises, why is it that the problems instead of getting resolved, are getting multiplied? There are, basically, three reasons for the deteriorating internal security scenario. Firstly, the country has not shown adequate strategic vision. As Clausewitz said, “Wars are lost or won by their strategists, even before they are begun”. When there is no long term strategy, the outcome cannot be good for the country. Our leaders are obsessed with the present and, at the utmost, with the next elections. Secondly, national security is unfortunately not being given high priority in the country. More often than not, it takes the back seat as against politically expedient considerations. Thirdly, the law enforcement apparatus in the country is fragile and is just not geared to meet the kind of challenges we are being confronted with. We have a colonial police with a feudal mindset and the entire criminal justice system is almost on the verge of collapse.

International Terrorism

International terrorism poses the greatest challenge to the security and stability of the country. It was until recently confined to the state of Jammu & Kashmir but has gradually spread across the length and breadth of the country. These terrorists are opposed to the very idea of India; they want to destroy its icons and its symbols. They have been repeatedly causing explosions in Delhi because it is the political capital of India; they have been repeatedly attacking Mumbai because it is the commercial hub of the country; they have been perpetrating incidents of violence in places like Ayodhya and Varanasi because these are the holiest places of the Hindus; they have been active in Bangalore because it is the IT hub of the country. In other words, they want to destroy India politically, economically and culturally. This mindset is best illustrated in the speeches of Hafiz Mohammed Saeed, the chief of Lashkar-e-Taiba. Speaking in Lahore on November 3, 1999, he said:

“The jihad is not about Kashmir only About 15 years ago, people might have found it ridiculous if someone had told them about the disintegration of the USSR. Today, I announce the break-up of India, Insha-Allah. We will not rest until the whole (of) India is dissolved into Pakistan.”

On another occasion, speaking at the Al Qudsia Mosque in Lahore on February 5, 2007, Saeed said:

“Jihad in Kashmir will end when all the Hindus will be destroyed in India.... Jihad has been ordained by Allah. It is not an order of a general that can be started one day and stopped the other day.”

Nasr Javed, a trainer of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) suicide attackers, delivering a speech after the evening prayers at the Quba Mosque in Islamabad on February 5, 2008 said, “Jihad will spread from Kashmir to other parts of India” and that “the Muslims will be ruling India again”.

Terrorist modules are active in several urban conglomerations. The security forces and intelligence agencies of the country are quite capable of handling the terrorist threat, but they are hamstrung by government policies. We have no comprehensive anti-terror law even though the country has been facing different shades of terrorism for the last nearly fifty years. Other countries like the USA and the UK, which faced the brunt of terrorism during the last decade only, have stringent laws to deal with the menace. It is a great pity that the government is shy of tackling terror as terror and that it prefers to deal with terror as “unlawful activity” only. It is also unfortunate that we have not been able to codify our anti-terror policy. Countries like the USA have very clearly stated that they shall not compromise with terrorism but we are chary of making any such bold enunciation. Successive governments have preferred to deal with terrorist situations in an ad hoc manner depending upon their own perceptions.

The year 2008 was particularly bad; there were a series of incidents across the country, which were climaxed by a devastating terrorist onslaught in Mumbai on 26/11. The Mumbai attack was orchestrated by the ISI of Pakistan

operating through the LeT.

| Terrorist Incidents in 2008 | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|----------------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| (2008)Date | Place | Attacks | Casualties | Terror Group |
| Jan 1 | Rampur | CRPF Group Centre attacked | 8 dead | LeT |
| May 13 | Jaipur | 8 serial blasts | 80 dead | Indian Mujahideen(IM) |
| July 25 | Bangalore | 8 low intensity blasts | 1 dead | IM |
| July 25 | Ahmedabad | 17 blasts in 10 areas | 53 dead | IM |
| Sep 13 | Delhi | 5 blasts in 3 areas | 26 dead | IM |
| Sep 29 | Malegaon | 1 bomb blast | 6 dead | Abhinav Bharat |
| Oct 30 | Guwahati | 9 blasts in 4 areas | 84 dead | ULFA/HUJI |
| Nov 26-29 | Mumbai | Multiple terrorist attacks | 186 dead | LeT |

India's tough response to the 26/11 attacks in Mumbai, even though at the diplomatic level only, and the international pressure on Pakistan ensured that there was no terrorist incident in the country for the next 14 months. The lull was interrupted by a bomb blast in Pune on February 13, 2010 in which 17 persons were killed. There was another blast in Varanasi on December 7, 2010 in which two persons lost their lives.

During 2011, there have been three terrorist incidents so far. Two of these were in the Delhi High Court, one on May 25 and the other on September 7. In the latter incident, 13 people lost their lives. Another major incident was in Mumbai on July 13, when there were explosions in Zaveri Bazar, Dadar and in the Opera House in which 26 people were killed and 123 sustained injuries. This was actually the third attack at Zaveri Bazar which is the country's largest bullion market; it was also the 13th terrorist attack in Mumbai since 1993.

It is thus clear that the country remains highly vulnerable to terrorist attacks essentially because of the half-hearted approach of the government to tackling it and the inherent weakness of the law enforcement apparatus. In fact, India is considered one of the worst affected countries by terrorism and political violence in terms of the number of incidents and casualties. The recent incidents have exposed the chinks in our armour.

The Government of India (GOI) had, in the wake of 26/11, taken a number of steps to strengthen its anti-terror capabilities. National Security Guard (NSG) hubs were set-up at Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai. Twenty counter-insurgency and anti-terrorism schools are being raised. The state governments were advised to augment their police manpower. Coastal security is being beefed up. Multi-agency centre for collection and collation of intelligence was activated. A National Investigation Agency (NIA) was raised. However, we have still a long way to go. The counter-terrorism apparatus needs a lot more strengthening.

There are, meanwhile, disturbing indications of Pak Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) putting pressure on militant groups of Punjab like the Babbar Khalsa International (BKI), Khalistan Zindabad Force (KZF), Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF), International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF) and their collaborators in European and North American countries to revive militancy in the Punjab. According to data compiled by the Institute for Conflict Management, a total of 134 terrorists were arrested in Punjab over the past decade (2001-2011). Over five kilograms of explosives and detonators were recovered from a car parked outside the cantonment railway station in Ambala on October 12, 2011. It is learnt that the explosive-laden car was headed for Delhi for a terror strike during the Diwali celebrations. Both the BKI and the KTF are said to be recruiting 'hit men' to perpetrate incidents in Punjab. Cyberspace has meanwhile emerged as a fertile source of recruitment for Khalistani activists. There are over 40 websites and 200 groups on facebook dedicated to keeping the movement for an independent Sikh homeland alive.

Economic terrorism is yet another dimension of international terrorism that the country has to contend with. Pakistan has been flooding the country with counterfeit currency with a view to subverting the economy of the country. It is estimated that at least 10 to 20 per cent of the total currency in circulation (approx Rs 6,10,000 crores) is counterfeit. A recent report prepared by the Research and Analysis Wing, Intelligence Bureau and the Department of Revenue Intelligence shows that the infusion of Fake Indian Currency (FICN) into India to destabilise the economy and fund terror activities was being supported by Pakistan's High Commission in Dhaka and Kathmandu through the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI). The crime syndicate of Dawood Ibrahim is also used for the purpose.

Jammu & Kashmir

The GOI has been committing blunders in Jammu & Kashmir from the very beginning. Some of the major blunders were

as follows:-

- (a) Referring the matter to UN when the Indian Army was in the process of flushing out the invaders.
- (b) Nehru's uncalled for assurance that the wishes of the people of the State would be ascertained.
- (c) Bartering away the territorial gains of 1965 War at Tashkent.
- (d) Indira Gandhi could have dictated settlement of the Kashmir question in 1972 following the liberation of Bangladesh.
- (e) Release of militants in exchange for Rubaiya Sayeed by VP Singh on Dec 13, 1989.
- (f) Not crossing the Line of Control (LC) while clearing the aggression from Kargil.
- (g) Handing over three militants (Masood Azhar, Omar Sheikh, Mushtaq Zargar) at Kandahar on Dec 31, 1999.

There have been some positive developments in the recent past in the form of people to people contacts and opening up of trade. Elections to the State Assembly were held peacefully in 2008. However, on the negative side, there is no progress on the substantive issues and Pakistan has not dismantled its infrastructure of terrorism across the border.

The GOI's policy has broadly followed the following pattern:-

- (a) Confidence building measures with Pakistan with emphasis on promoting and facilitating people-to-people contacts on both sides of the LC.
- (b) Promoting all round economic development of the State.
- (c) Encouraging dialogue with and among different segments of population in the State.
- (d) Relief and rehabilitation of persons affected by militancy/terrorism - related violence.
- (e) Coordinated operations against the terrorist outfits with minimal collateral damage to civilian life and property and protecting human rights.
- (f) Allowing people to exercise their democratic rights - holding elections periodically.

The policy has, on the whole, worked well and the level of violence has been sharply coming down, as the following figures show:

| Casualties in J&K | | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Year | Civilians | Security Forces | Terrorists | Total |
| 2008 | 69 | 90 | 382 | 541 |
| 2009 | 55 | 78 | 242 | 375 |
| 2010 | 36 | 69 | 270 | 375 |

Source : SATP Portal

The security forces have been able to inflict heavy damage on the terrorists' capabilities. Among the 270 terrorist killed during 2010, at least 31 were self-styled commanders.

The State witnessed a period of youth unrest in 2010. Inept handling of the situation led to heavy casualties (112). The GOI thereafter sent an all party delegation to assuage the feelings of anger and resentment in the Valley. An 8-point plan for J&K was approved. In pursuance of this plan, Rs 100 crore was released as grants for schools and colleges and to improve the infrastructure in the State. The Centre also authorised payment of Rs 5 lakhs to the families of each of the deceased in the civil disturbances. This was followed by the appointment of Dilip Padgaonkar, Radha Kumar and MM Ansari as interlocutors to talk to the different sections of people. The interlocutors submitted their report on October 12, 2011 recommending regional autonomy, devolution of powers, economic development, and bringing the state into the national mainstream.

The year 2011 has seen a significant decline in militancy in J&K. There is, however, no room for complacency. Pakistan continues to stoke the fires of insurgency through its non-state actors. According to an estimate, about 2500 terrorists are believed to be waiting in some 42 training camps across the border to infiltrate into India. The LeT, Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM) appear to be gearing up for a fresh offensive in the state of Jammu & Kashmir. The GOC 15 Corps on October 12, 2011 said that the strength of militants across the LC is at an all time high and that there are about 600 militants concentrated opposite the Shamsabari Range and Uri.

Northeast

Northeast has been convulsed with separatist and secessionist movements of different hues. These movements could broadly be attributed to:-

- (a) A feeling of neglect by the Central Government
- (b) False propaganda by leaders of the area.
- (c) Alienation of tribals.
- (d) Changes in the demographic pattern caused by the influx of people from across the borders.
- (e) Availability of sanctuaries in Myanmar and Bangladesh.
- (f) Assistance to rebel groups by countries inimical to India.

Nagaland has been the epicentre of armed insurrection in north-eastern India. The sparks later flew to Mizoram, Manipur and Tripura. Assam also witnessed upheaval due to the large scale influx of foreigners into the State.

The GOI policy, broadly speaking, has been to :-

- (a) Assure the tribals that their rights on land would be protected and that their social customs and cultural traditions would not be interfered with.
- (b) Take counter-insurgency measures, wherever unavoidable.
- (c) Implement schemes for the economic development of areas even if these are witnessing insurgency.
- (d) Engage the separatist/secessionist groups in political dialogue.
- (e) Enter into suspension of operations agreements with the insurgent groups.
- (f) Meet their legitimate aspirations by granting them autonomy or even statehood.
- (g) Have understanding with neighbouring countries (Bhutan, Myanmar) so that the insurgents do not get any shelter there.

Nagaland has been having suspension of operations since 1997. About 60 rounds of peace talks have been held, though there is no agreement on the substantive issues yet. The NSCN (IM) has taken full advantage of the cease-fire period and violated the terms of agreement with impunity to augment its strength and build its finances.

Manipur has about 15 militant groups operating in the Valley and the Hill districts. These groups have, however, lost their political moorings and their sole effort now is to have an area of influence whence they could extort money and claim some kind of authority. The Minister of State for Home Affairs (M Ramachandran), however, told the Lok Sabha on August 9, 2011 that the insurgent outfit of Manipur were trying to form a United Front. These outfits include Revolutionary People's Front/People's Liberation Army (RPF/PLA), United National Liberation Front (UNLF), Kanglei Yawol Kanna Luip (KYKL), People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK), Noyon faction of Kangleipak Community Party (KCP-Noyon), Progressive faction of PREPAK, and United People's Party of Kangleipak (UPPK).

In Assam, the sharpness of ULFA has been blunted, thanks to Bangladesh's cooperative attitude. Besides, the leaders of the insurgent outfit have shown willingness to negotiate with the GOI and have abandoned their insistence on recognition of 'sovereignty' as pre-condition for talks. On February 14, 2011, Arabinda Rajkhowa, Chairman of ULFA, accompanied by his Vice Chairman, Pradeep Gogoi and 'foreign secretary' Shashadhar Choudhury called on the Prime Minister in Delhi, signifying that the ice had been broken. Another round of talks was held between Arabinda Rajkhowa and the Home Secretary, GOI on October 25, 2011 at which ULFAs 12 point charter of demands were discussed. Paresh Baruah, commander of the armed wing of ULFA is, however, opposed to any talks with the GOI until the "core issues" of sovereignty and independence of Assam are also discussed. Baruah has about 150 armed cadres with him along the China-Myanmar border.

A disturbing development in the Northeast is China's renewed interest in the region and culpable involvement with the insurgent outfits. The China North Industries Corporation (NORINCO), a state owned weapon manufacturing company, has emerged as the largest supplier of arms to the underground of the Northeast through Myanmar and Bangladesh. It has office in Bangkok and operates through a network of agents spread over Southeast Asia. The charge sheet filed by the National Investigating Agency (NIA) against Anthony Shimray, chief arms procurer of the Issac-Muivah faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-IM), specifically mentions NORINCO, and states that the NSCN-IM rebels had allegedly paid \$ 100,000 to NORINCO to buy 10,000 assault rifles, pistols, rocket propelled grenades and ammunition. Shashadhar Choudhury, ULFA's 'foreign secretary', after coming overground, stated that "the Chinese sold ULFA weapons but indirectly". He also disclosed that Pakistan's ISI had trained the ULFA armed cadres. The Chinese are also reported to have asked the UNLF leaders from Manipur about the location of India's nuclear tipped Agni missiles in the Northeast and details of the deployment of Indian Army in the region. GK Pillai, former Home Secretary, GOI, is on record, having said that "there is a lot of smuggling by Chinese arms agents who come to India mainly through Myanmar and Bangkok". Recently, on December 7, 2011, the minister of state for Home Affairs said in the Rajya Sabha that the insurgent groups in the Northeast were getting arms through "smugglers" from China's Yunnan province, Myanmar and South-East Asian countries. The Chinese strategy seems to be "to keep the Northeast on the boil and simultaneously profit from arms sales".

Maoist Insurgency

The Naxal problem has been described as the biggest internal security threat to the country. The Home Minister admitted that various groups subscribing to the Maoist ideology have pockets of influence in 20 states across the country, and that over 2,000 police station areas in 223 districts in these states were partially or substantially affected

by the menace.

The year 2010 recorded the highest number of killings by the Maoists, as the following figures show:

| Year | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
|------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Incidents | 1509 | 1565 | 1591 | 2258 | 2212 |
| Civilians Killed | 521 | 460 | 490 | 591 | 718 |
| Security Forces Killed | 157 | 236 | 231 | 317 | 258 |
| | | | | | |

Source: MHA

The salient features of the movement today are as follows :-

- (a) Spread over a large geographical area.
- (b) Increase in potential for violence.
- (c) Unification of Peoples War (PW) and Maoist Centre of India (MCCI).
- (d) Plan to have a Red Corridor.
- (e) Nexus with other extremist groups.

Geographical Spread. The movement which started from a small village in 1967 has spread over a vast swathe of the country during the last over 40 years. Thirteen states of the country are particularly affected. These are: Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Kerala, Karnataka, Haryana and Tamilnadu.

Potential for Violence. The Naxals' potential for violence has increased substantially with their acquisition of sophisticated weapons and expertise in the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). The Naxals are said to be in possession of at least 8,000 regular weapons including AK 47 rifles and SLRs. The armed wing of the Naxals is about 10,000 strong.

Unification. The movement got a tremendous boost when its two major components, the PW and MCCI, merged on March 21, 2004. The unified party is called the Communist Party of India (Maoist). The merger, apart from augmenting the support base of the party, gave it the character of a pan-India revolutionary movement.

Red Corridor. The Maoists plan to have a Compact Revolutionary Zone stretching from the Indo-Nepal border to the Dandakaranya Region in the south - from Pashupatinath in Nepal to Tirupati in Tamilnadu.

Nexus. The Maoists' nexus with the other extremist organisations has added to the complexity of the problem. The PW cadres received training in the handling of weapons and IEDs from ex-LTTE members. Besides, they have *entente cordiale* with the NSCN (IM). Some batches of Naxals received arms training from the ULFA. Besides, the Communist Party of India (Maoist) has fraternal relations with the Communist Party of Nepal. According to a recent report, the ISI is also trying to reach out to the Maoists.

Chhattisgarh is the worst Maoist-affected state in the country today. The state government launched an *Operation Green Hunt* to dislodge Maoists from their areas of influence, but the Maoists have been inflicting heavy casualties. They killed 75 CRPF personnel in one single incident in Dantewada district on April 6, 2010. Jharkhand is the second most affected state. Naxalism has flourished in the state essentially because of corruption at the highest level. Bihar is in bad shape because the political leadership is unwilling to confront the problem head-on. In Orissa, a lackadaisical administration has enabled the Maoists spread their wings. In Maharashtra, Gadchiroli district is badly affected. In West Bengal, the Marxist government blew hot and cold in tackling the Maoists. Mamta Bannerji was hoping to have a peace dialogue with the Maoists, but she appears to be getting disillusioned. On September 26, 2011, she sent a stern warning to the Maoists that they could not remain janus-faced and continue their killing spree while complaining about the state's human rights violations and police excesses. The liquidation of Koteswar Rao alias Kishenji on November 14, 2011 in an encounter in West Midnapur district would appear to have ruptured the earlier bonhomie.

The socio-economic dimensions of the problem are recognised and handsome grants have been released by the Planning Commission for the development of the affected areas from time to time. An Integrated Action Plan (IAP) for 60 selected tribal and backward districts including 48 in the LWE affected areas was approved on November 25, 2010. The districts covered under IAP have been provided a block grant of Rs 25 crore in 2010-11 and Rs 30 crore per district to be provided during 2011-12. A Committee headed by the District Collector and comprising the Superintendent of Police and the District Forest Officer will be responsible for implementation of the scheme. The scheme should have proposals for public infrastructure and services such as school buildings, Anganwadi centres, primary health centres, drinking water supply, village roads, electric lights and public places, etc. The instructions are that these schemes should show results in the short term. The unfortunate experience so far has been that the benefits of these schemes are not reaching the poorest segments of population due to rampant corruption. As the Rural Development minister, Jairam Ramesh recently said, "We are combating not just a destructive ideology, but are also confronted with the wages of our own insensitivity and neglect".

Illegal Migrations

One of the biggest problems facing India and having a direct bearing on the country's economy and security is that of the continuing illegal migration of Bangladeshis into India. The factors which have been encouraging the influx from Bangladesh side are:-

- (a) Steep rise in population with increasing pressure on land and mounting unemployment.
- (b) Recurrent natural disasters like floods and cyclones, uprooting large segments of humanity.
- (c) Better economic opportunities in India.
- (d) Religious persecution of Hindus and discrimination of tribals.
- (e) Islamic interests encouraging expansion of territory.
- (f) Organised immigration by touts and anti-social elements, and
- (g) Porous and easily negotiable international borders.

The bulk of the Bangladeshi immigrants are in the states of Assam, West Bengal, Bihar, Delhi and the North-eastern states. The Task Force on Border Management, which was headed by Madhav Godbole and submitted its report in August 2000, contained the following indictment of the political establishment:-

"There is an all round failure in India to come to grips with the problem of illegal immigration. Facts are well known, opinions are firmed up, and operating system is in position. But the tragedy is that despite this, nothing substantial happens due to catharsis of arriving at a decision in this regard due to sharp division of interest among the political class."

The Task Force estimated the total number of Bangladeshi immigrants in India to be 1.5 crore. Considering that ten years have elapsed since then, the figure must have reached at least 2 crore.

The Supreme Court of India, in a landmark judgment (July 2005), while repealing the notorious Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunal) IMDT Act, observed that "there can be no manner of doubt that the State of Assam is facing 'external aggression and internal disturbance' on account of large scale illegal migration of Bangladeshi nationals" and directed the Union of India "to take all measures for protection of the State of Assam from such external aggression and internal disturbance as enjoined in Article 355 of the Constitution".

A parliamentary panel expressed the view (April 2008) that "the large presence of illegal Bangladeshi immigrants poses a grave threat to the internal security and it should be viewed strongly". The GOI unfortunately continues to drag its feet in the matter and has not initiated any definite measures to throw out the illegal migrants.

Other Threats

There are threats to internal security from certain other factors also. These include:-

- (a) Regional aspirations.
- (b) Inter-state disputes.
- (c) River water sharing issues.
- (d) Communal problems.
- (e) Caste tensions.
- (f) Demand for reservations, etc.

These factors, from time to time, also pose a formidable challenge. Thus, the demand for a separate state of Telengana led to normal life being disrupted in several areas of Andhra Pradesh for 42 days during September-October, 2011. Schools were closed, buses did not ply in the districts of Telengana and the government services were thrown out of gear. Inter-state disputes also throw up problems. There is a boundary dispute between Assam and Nagaland. The lifelines to Manipur, NH-2 and NH-37, are choked by the Nagas whenever the latter have a grievance, real or perceived, and this results in great hardship to the Manipuris.

There are river water disputes over the sharing of Cauvery and Krishna rivers. These were referred to Tribunals in 1990 and 2004 respectively. The Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT) passed orders in April 1992, December 1995 and February 2007. The party States have, however, filed SLPs in the Supreme Court against the decision of the Tribunal and the matter is sub judice. These disputes involve the states of Kerala, Karnataka, Tamilnadu and the Union Territory of Puducherry. The Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal (KWDT) passed orders in June 2006 and has framed twenty-nine issues for adjudication. The dispute between the states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka remains pending. There are inter-state disputes over the sharing of Godavari and Narmada rivers also. These disputes occasionally lead to local agitations.

Communal confrontations take place now and then. There were riots in several parts of the country following the demolition of the disputed shrine in Ayodhya on December 6, 1992. Gujarat witnessed riots in different parts of the state following the Godhra incident in which pilgrims were burnt alive in a railway coach. According to Home Ministry figures, between 2001 and 2009 there were 6,541 communal clashes in the country in which 2,234 persons were killed.

Caste tensions between higher and lower castes, in certain areas create serious problems for the district administration. Demand for reservations manifests in the form of ugly agitations. The Gujjars of Rajasthan held the state to ransom, blocking the important Delhi-Jaipur highway.

Conclusion

The country needs an internal security doctrine urgently. It should be based on components mentioned in the succeeding paragraphs.

Political. Assessing whether the challenge is secessionist, separatist or regional? Reasons for the same to be analysed. If the demands are genuine, whether any Constitutional Amendment is called for? A secessionist movement, as a matter of principle, will have to be put down with a heavy hand. The country must have a clear policy and stringent laws to deal with such elements. Separatist elements would also have to be dealt with firmly. Regional aspirations would require a comparatively softer approach. Ethnic demands should get a sympathetic response.

Socio-economic. Finding out if the challenge is due to genuine socio-economic grievances of the people? Are they suffering from acute poverty, unemployment or displacement? In such cases, the socio-economic grievances will have to be addressed by planned development, ensuring that there are no regional disparities and the fruits of development are equitably shared by all sections of society. Besides, the spirit of nationalism will have to be fostered and de-radicalisation programmes undertaken.

Administrative. Determining, whether the administrative machinery been dysfunctional in certain areas? Has the administration reached out to people in the remotest areas? If not, governance will have to be improved. Criminal Justice System of the country must be revamped, and the resources and the capabilities of the law enforcement machinery given necessary upgradation and augmentation. The administration and the police must be insulated from extraneous influences. Corruption must be contained for the simple reason that corruption and development cannot go side by side.

Military. The internal and the external dimensions of the challenges have got meshed and they impinge on each other. The country's Armed Forces, the Paramilitary Forces and the Coast Guard should, therefore, be maintained at the highest levels of efficiency. The GOI should, however, be careful to use the appropriate forces for a specific threat.

Intelligence. The intelligence agencies must coordinate internally as well as with the agencies of friendly countries. It should have both defensive and offensive capabilities: defensive to forewarn and, wherever possible, neutralise the impending threats; and offensive to weaken such assets of the hostile country as are used for trans-border operations.

It is a great pity that our response to various challenges has generally been feeble. We have a strong military and our economic strength has been growing steadily. Yet, we have been dealing with multifarious problems confronting the country in a manner which exposes us to the charge of being a 'soft' state. A country-specific report prepared by the Counter Terrorism Committee of the United Nations revealed gaping holes in India's preparedness to tackle terrorism. The report called for adoption of comprehensive counter-terrorism legislation to overcome the menace and highlighted the need to plug the finances of terrorist groups. This must be done. India has all the resources and the trappings of an emerging great power and we should be able to deal with the threats to internal security more effectively.

*Text of the talk delivered by **Shri Prakash Singh, IPS (Retd)** at USI on 07 Dec 2011 with **Lieutenant General SK Sinha, PVSM (Retd)**, Former VCOAS, and Former Governor of Assam and Jammu & Kashmir in the Chair.

** **Shri Prakash Singh, IPS (Retd)** is a former Director General of the Border Security Force. He was DGP Uttar Pradesh and DGP Assam also. The writer is a recipient of Padmashri. He writes regularly on issues related to National Security.

Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CXLI, No. 586, October-December 2011.

Director's Page

Dear Members,

Another eventful year has come to an end at USI and it has been a year of great satisfaction. The President's Report for 2011, which is available on the USI website, gives an idea of our activities in brief.

Apart from our usual activities of lectures, seminars and bilateral/trilateral dialogues with various institutions in other countries, there are two events that I would like to make a special mention of :-

(a) An International Conference on "Peacekeeping Vision 2015 - Capabilities for Future Mandates" was conducted at USI from 06-08 April 2011. This was the first event of its kind and was organised jointly with the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations. It was supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs as also by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs. The Conference was followed by a technical workshop to discuss the capabilities and standards for a generic UN Infantry Battalion to support inter-operability and overall effectiveness of infantry units in peacekeeping operations. A full report on the event is available on the USI website.

(b) The USI National Security Seminar 2011 on the subject "Peace and Stability in Asia Pacific Region : An Assessment of the Security Architecture" was held at USI on 17-18 November 2011. The keynote address was delivered by Admiral Nirmal K Verma, PVSM, AVSM, ADC, Chairman COSC and Chief of the Naval Staff. Two special addresses were delivered by Lieutenant General Tran Thai Binh, Director General, Institute for Defence Strategy, Ministry of National Defence, Vietnam and Lieutenant General (Retd) Bang Hyo Bok, President, Korean Institute of Defence Analysis, Republic of Korea. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the Foreign Secretary could not personally deliver the Valedictory Address and this was read out on his behalf by Shri A Mukerji, Additional Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs. The panelists included delegates from Australia, China, Italy, Japan, Russia, South Korea, Taiwan, the USA, Vietnam and of course, India.

I would like to share with you the details of a project that we have undertaken at the USI recently. The project involves putting together first hand accounts of India's wars as seen through the soldiers eyes, i.e, those who participated in these wars. Since Independence we have fought six wars. The first was in 1947-48 and the last was the Kargil war in 1999. To capture a more intimate flavour of these wars and record a more personalised version of actions and events the USI proposes to publish a book that contains narratives from individual officers who took part in these wars. We would welcome contributions from all officers, even those who are not our members, so please do inform all officers whom you know.

To enable the USI editorial team to compile this unique volume we request all officers who have taken part in the wars of 1947-48, 1962, 1965, 1971, IPKF Operations and the Kargil War of 1999 to forward a record of their personal experience and the actions that they have taken part in. While not wanting to restrict your style of writing may we request that the following guidelines be observed:-

- (a) Please avoid hearsay. Be as clinical as possible while recapitulating events.
- (b) Confine to what happened as you saw it. Yes, these are your personal views and war as seen through your eyes.
- (c) Please be brief while offering personal views and comments.
- (d) Photographs and other documents/memorabilia would be welcome.

The USI will pay a modest honorarium to those who contribute. Contributions may please be forwarded by 01 March 2012 at the address given below:-

- (a) By email : dde@usiofindia.org
- (b) By Fax : 011-26149773
- (c) By post : Maj Gen PJS Sandhu (Retd)
Deputy Director & Editor
United Service Institution of India
Rao Tula Ram Marg
Post Bag No. 8, Vasant Vihar P.O.
New Delhi - 110 057

I am happy to inform you that like in previous years our Course Section is continuing to do excellent work. This year a total number of 1236 officers attended the DSSC/TSC Correspondence Course. 39 out of 40 competitive vacancies for DSSC were secured by the officers who had attended our course. Similarly, 53 of the 70 officers nominated for the TSOC had attended our course. Even amongst the "reserves", our candidates did very well - 20 out of 25 for DSSC and 9 out of 10 for TSOC are our candidates. An excellent show by all standards for which the Chief Instructor and his team deserve kudos.

Our Research Section (CS3) and the Centre for Armed Forces Historical Research have made their mark in research in issues related to strategic affairs, international relations, national security and historical studies. They have published 41 books on various topics between 2008-2011. A list of USI publications is given towards the end in each Issue of the USI Journal.

The stature of the USI Centre for UN Peacekeeping keeps growing each year and we are now internationally recognised as a Centre of Excellence.

It has indeed been a very satisfying year for all of us on the Staff of the United Service Institution of India. Through this column I also seek much greater participation by the members for our various events like lectures and seminars. I would like to emphasise that serving Armed Forces officers posted in Delhi, even if they are not members of USI, are permitted to attend the USI events.

On behalf of all of us on the staff at the United Service Institution of India, I would like to wish our members a HAPPY NEW YEAR. We look forward to meeting you at the USI.

With regards,

Lieutenant General PK Singh (Retd)
Director