

US Sale of AWACS to Pakistan

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At the outset it is important to mention that this is an analysis from a policy or political viewpoint. There has been so much ongoing debate about the implications of Pakistan acquiring AWACS from the United States that the point has been lost in a vast morass as to whether India is merely reacting to it or whether India should itself acquire one.

The analysis points to the fact that:

- 1) AWACS is important and necessary on its own strength as intrinsic part of modern technological equipment. It is far seeing and futuristic as well as relevant.
- 2) The acquisition of an early warning airborne system is necessary irrespective of whether Pakistan has one or not.
- 3) That after defining the nations needs we should make it politically imperative to have one.

The above can be more clearly understood if the implications of the sale of AWACS to Pakistan are put into a foreign policy analysis perspective. All this is part of a greater scheme, that of Indian foreign policy making. What has been the Indian foreign policy goals? In short, three:

- 1) Legitimacy in the world order
- 2) Credibility as a major power
- 3) Its regional role

Expanding on the above, it is clearly seen that the Indian profile in the world order has been high. India has been one of the major members of the United Nations Organisation. It has taken part in joint operations under the U.N. Flag (Congo crisis, Korean war) and is an active participant of developmental agencies, both social and economic. It is also a member of other international organisations. This has served to legitimise its inherent position in world order.

India's credibility as a major power has not really been in question since its attainment of independence in 1947. Its enhanced role as a non-aligned nation and as one of the leaders of the Non-aligned Movement has increased its status in the eyes of most other nations whether non-alignment has been particularly thought of as a devious strategy or an idealist stance is a different

issue.

This really spills over into the significance of India's regional role. It requires some thought especially in the light of the recent Sri Lankan problem and the not so recent Afghan issue. India has managed to wield its foreign policy interests cannily with its own national interests in view, as is the aim of the foreign policy of any 'developed' 'hard' state.

The spiral arms race syndrome with an action - reaction riposte has been almost technically as well as psychologically built into both the Pakistan and the Indian foreign policy framework. Hence Afghanistan, too, has become an issue in the gamut of foreign policy issues. Pakistan is using that to get a substantial arms aid package from the U.S.; India is wary of the same.

Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal either with their military regime instability or their monarchical regimes do not substantially oppose India's major role in the South Asian region.

In the same context, it is best to make the Indian foreign policy tenets clear to give a sharper image to the policy implications of the sale of AWACS. One of the foremost tenets which has overriding significance is the concept of non-alignment. The way India was in its infancy with a colonial history of semi British power, still colours it with the same imagery. The intellectual argument advanced was that India had the difficulty of keeping its head above conflictual waters, equidistant from the two powers. This was the result of the clash of two differing, political systems - the USA, as a liberal, democratic, capitalistic system and the Russian 'leftist, communistic' system, a challenge to the existing western mode, their roles in the second world war and the ensuing power conflict. It was essentially a Nehruvian policy but also underlining a futuristic strategy. It showed almost a compulsion of a Third World Power as regards 'real politik'. It has, as a policy, not been accepted even now by the west e.g. Kenneth Waltz believes that non-aligned third world nations are easily marginalized; that non-alignment is no policy; that the Dullesian doctrine (those not for us are against us) still holds good and therefore based the foundation of complete non-understanding of third world nations.

The Panchsheel emerged from this basic concept and was defined within boundaries of 1) mutual respect for territories, 2) mutual non-aggression, 3) non-interference, 4) equality and mutual benefit, 5) peaceful co-existence (an example of this was the Treaty with Tibet which was actually a master stroke of Chinese diplomacy at keeping India at bay). It fitted in which Gandhian ideals of peace, ahimsa and non-violence, as well as peaceful resolution of conflicts.

These concepts motivated a highly defensive, non-rational defence policy. It was only after the 1962 Sino-Indian debacle that any definitive, rational military policy planning took place at all looking into military systems of the future.

Friendly relations with nations, albeit with neighbours is another tenet of Indian foreign policy. It has recently led to the formation of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). This has major foreign policy implications involving India's self-image in the subcontinent. Especially with its relations to Pakistan and on another level with other countries in South Asia. The self image involves a cooperative image not a conflictual one. Therefore the interplay between India and its neighbours has to be a 'soft' variety, not at all the adversarial kind. This has complex connotations for Indian foreign policy vis a vis Pakistan and China and the need to present as peace loving profile defensive in scope.

India is a democratic republic with a complex interdependent decision making system. This impacts on foreign policy making. Bureaucracy and political forces are constantly reacting with each other projecting different viable modes of policies and decisions. This makes it difficult at times to take the best line possible and get the maximum optimum result. The net policy that emerges is more a compromise solution than a fearless radical alternative.

One main concern of any nation, and certainly that of India's pertains to the Morgenthauian definition of power. Power is getting A to do what B wants done even if A does not really want it. Sometimes an issue depends entirely on this concept. India, too, is no exception to this. Moreover, to develop the Indian image, to be technologically independent, forceful and futuristic it is imperative to understand power.

To deal with definitional qualities of power, made abundantly clear in Martin Wight 'Relations between independent powers'. Morgenthau - International politics like all politics is a struggle for power. Schwarzenberger "Power politics signifies a type of relation between states in which certain pattern of behaviour are preponderant".

Power is a relational concept. Armaments or the lack of, form an important area or bargaining counter for any nation. They become inherent in power diplomacy and encourage a distinct hegemony in the relations between states. Therefore acquisition of AWACS by Pakistan would encourage this hegemonistic tendency in the region.

Indian foreign policy with two aspects to its credit has to react to this keeping in mind idealism and self interest, and trying to resolve the con-

tradition between these two. What is needed is using military capability as a positive source of strength and objective planning of defense needs. There should not, conceivably, be a debate between defense versus development but maximisation of security along with flexibility of military response.

Having said that power is relative, it behoves us to further the idea that there should be sufficient military power along with economic self sufficiency and more. The political power should reside in stability with a medium of resolution of ruling and opposition ideas. The ideological basis ought to contain clarity keeping in mind India's geopolitical significance that of geographical closeness with Soviet Union and China nearness to Pakistan and Bangladesh as well as Nepal.

It is not only the projection of power but the actuality or reality of the situation itself that matters. It is imperative to understand that foreign policy of different countries like U.S.A., U.S.S.R., South Asian nations will have different motives and implications.

Pakistan's situation and foreign policy will be on the basis of its political system viz. dominated by the military. Therefore, its motivation will be different too. Being an authoritarian regime it did not have in-built contradictions of deferring to public opinion or opposition politics be consensualized. Hence it is much easier for Pakistan to be aligned to the United States even if for convenience. Also U.S. holds the key to Regime stability of Pakistan. Indian foreign policy and decision making is constrained by its political system - democracy. Pakistan was not inhibited by it, till the recent elections.

AWACS are equipped to change the very balance of power discussed earlier. AWACS are force multipliers. Any nation having them has a massive added advantage.

Initially, Airborne Early Warning systems helped as part of a defense policy planning. AEW aircraft are good for patrolling strategic areas and though not armed to attack the enemy as such, their deterrence value makes them important to military equilibrium.

Airborne Early Warning Systems have the reputation of being 'eyes in the sky'.

India has always been keen to develop this particular system. Manufacturing, researching, developing this is being done by the AWACS since 1971. They have used the AVRO as the aeromodel with the rotodome on top to house the radar. How effective it is going to be can only be seen when research on the prototype is complete.

The difference between AEWS and AWACS is that the latter is tech-

nologically more sophisticated and the ultimate in the use of electronic warfare where production, deployment and use is concerned. Therefore it is important for India to develop its own AEW systems, motives notwithstanding.

It even helps in defence of the fleet in the form of two possible solutions: 1) to provide a radar sensor in a long range, land based aircraft; or 2) an AEW helicopter organic to the fleet. In this, the naval command would retain an integrated operational scenario by use of dedicated assets.

The principal roles of the AEW helicopter are:

- 1) detection of airborne targets at long range including missiles;
- 2) control of friendly fighter aircraft;
- 3) surface surveillance for targets of all sizes including submarine periscopes/snorts;
- 4) surface target classification;
- 5) control of attack aircraft against surface targets;
- 6) over the horizon targetting; and
- 7) LIMITED Anti-submarine Warfare (ASW) in surface detection.

The AWACS can function as a submarine hunter under conditions when the submarine is emitting radiation, in surfacing, or snorkelling.

The AWACS system is capable of numerous missions ranging from search and rescue to drug interdiction to surveillance of the space shuttle launcher. The E-2C's unique capabilities proved to be a great asset in tracking the shuttle's booster as it fell back to earth.

At the operational level, the AWACS may be perceived to play crucial roles in three important areas; in support of offensive operations; in air battle management; in the struggle for air superiority and defensive operations; and the political uses of the military system including those termed as coercive politics. It is necessary to emphasise the AWACS operations must not be viewed in isolation of other systems and measures. AWACS operations would inevitably be coordinated with the overall defence system, electronic warfare including electronic intelligence gathering, air operations, other military systems or initiatives, and political use of force. Secondly, the scenarios would change significantly if both sides have equally effective AWACS. The asymmetry of AWACS capabilities poses the greatest danger of destabilisation of the security environment.

The employment of AWACS in support of offensive operations would

enable friendly strike aircraft to be supported by providing past as well as the current developing threat situation. Threat perceptions which become an intrinsic part of conflicts can be more manageable.

Pakistani motives seem to be suspect for four reasons:

1) Cruising at 30,000 feet the AWACS can rip off operational secrecy and Pakistan can easily use this against India.

2) The expense is prohibitive and they are getting this as part of \$625 million military/economic package from the U.S.

This according to even Benazir Bhutto will get Pakistan pushed into the "inextricable vortex of super power conflict".

This package could at a later stage compromise Pakistan's position in the region as well as its sovereignty.

3) Technological competence is in question. This is a matter of both conceptualization and training. Pakistan's loss of F-16 over Afghanistan and another two (one hitting a pig), has made, U.S. wary of the competence of Pakistani pilots to man the AWACS. Hence the 'loan' of U.S. pilots for a year. This is not clearly defined, in the U.S. policies while 'sale of defense' becomes a convenient American bureaucratic innovation to circumvent the lapses in the American Congress towards rapid aid to Pakistan.

4) An AWACS is a sitting duck. It does not carry any weapons to protect itself from enemy attack. Therefore about 3 AWACS will be protected by 18 F-16s. Today Pakistan has 37 F-16s and will have to devote half of its F-16s for the defense of its AWACS. This really does not make a feasible or a rational long term military defense policy.

Apart from the above, Pakistan's budgetary considerations make it even less feasible. Pakistan has an external debt of about 30% of its GDP and the AWACS would not figure within its costing expenditure.

Pakistan's motives are far easier to understand and explain in terms of the acquisition of AWACS. The United States motives are far more in doubt. The credibility of the U.S. is at stake. The U.S. Air Force looks upon the sale of AWACS to Pakistan as a golden opportunity to further America's own strategic interests in South Asia. From Saudi Arabia to Pakistan's border with China, the U.S. Air Force wants to build a chain of patrolling AWACS, a long string of aerial watch towers to move over South Asia and the Gulf.

The air attacks from across the Afghanistan border had therefore come to further both the U.S. and Pakistan military strategic interests. It is for this reason that the former Pakistan Air Chief Zulfikar Ali Khan said, that if the

U.S. was leasing the AWACS to stiffen our spine' in the context of Afghanistan, it should be refused. According to him Pakistan would be manipulated by the U.S. and lose its credibility in South Asian politics with other states viewing Pakistani intentions with suspicion and alarm. U.S. colonial intentions would be further defined and the donor-recipient relationship revealed.

Strangely enough, the scenario has changed with the amicability in U.S.-Soviet relations, a political solution to the Afghanistan problem is imminent. The bonafide reason for Pakistan acquiring AWACS no longer holds true. Yet the U.S. is reiterating its stand and pushing for Pakistan's acquisition of AWACS. The underlying reason, of course, is to award Pakistan brownie points for being a loyal ally in South Asia.

Yet the U.S. policy makers are divided on this point only because they fear Pakistan's potential to join the nuclear club, making it a dangerous adversary rather than an unquestioning ally.

China never having had terribly cordial relations with India since 1962 has taken upon itself to help Pakistan develop its nuclear capability. This causes a double danger to India especially in the face of Chinese help to Pakistan for its nuclear triggering device.

These factors do not and should not overwhelm Indian policy makers but just make them more aware of the geopolitical, geostrategic position India is occupying and therefore the urgent need for defense decisions. Further, it is necessary to consider the usefulness of the AWACS on its own merit. Production, deployment and use should be clearly thought out.

So much of policy making goes into decision making inputs for defensive purposes, it is not easy to spot the wood for the trees. The costing, expenditure et al are serious constraints. But more so, unlike Pakistan, India is not a mere regional power but has a global role to play. India's role as leader of the non-aligned is sufficiently highlighted. Ipso facto India needs to be ahead technologically too.

Bearing some of the above factors in mind, the U.S. too is undecided whether to sell or to lease AWACS to Pakistan. Whether or not to 'loan' its pilots. There are senators like Stephen Solarz who insist and justify that the AWACS will not be used against India but against the Afghan border. This is like telling a soldier to point the machine gun in only one direction even if he be threatened from another ! This reason already holds no water. The hopeful factor in the situation is that the U.S. is still not absolutely certain of handing over the AWACS to Pakistan.

But all this definitely would make Indians feel beleaguered. The alterna-

tive systems need to be developed as counters to AWACS. The MIG 31 at Mach 3 speed can fire to pull away before the AWACS can go into action. The Soviet II-76, a less sophisticated but still viable aircraft can be a counter to the AWACS. The AWACS Avro with the radar rotodome can be built into a viable system though it requires time. The last only lacks the system to coordinate and direct an air battle but can work well as an early warning system. Though it has been on the drafting board; the urgency in policy makers and politicians has only now been generated because of overriding events.

Looking at distance, range, capability, viability due to production and expense, it is more imperative and useful for India to have one. Political and defence opinion is building up to them.

Moreover China on India's 'other border' is a big enough threat to make acquisition of the AWACS system important enough for India.

Strangely enough, there is not much reaction from the rest of the world. There is no reaction at all from the western countries. Political pressures - both Democratic and Republican within the U.S. were at odds with each other for a while on the support for India/Pakistan but now there is a hiatus there. Dobrynin from Soviet Union used a reassuring tone to curb measures amongst Indian policy makers but nothing definitive.

The AWACS debate is no longer a debate. It is practically becoming a non-issue but it is useful to know that policy imperative should point to India acquiring one to keep stability in the South Asian region.

Also, the change in the Presidency in the U.S.A. may not provide a radical change in the argument put forth in this paper. This issue may carry on as usual with the doubt still in abeyance of the American Congress handing the AWACS to Pakistan. Though a sympathetic President incumbent of U.S. may rethink this. That is doubtful.

Nevertheless, there should be coordinated effort amongst research organisations, not futile competitiveness. Organisations like DRDO, LRDE, ASWACS etc. should make parallel efforts not overlapping ones to reach their common goal of acquiring this force multiplier.

The military balance is a tenuous equation with dependent variables relating to both conventional and ultra sophisticated weapon systems. Airborne early warning and Airborne Warning and Control Systems rely on sophisticated radars for the three phases in any air defence operation - detection, identification and destruction. This is not mere weaponry but part of a weapons system needing a cohesive framework of production, deployment, use and control. It has serious policy implications. Nevertheless, Indian

decision makers ought to consider it irrespective of whether a 'debate' is resumed or whether the U.S. actually delivers the AWACS system to Pakistan or not or whether the cost is prohibitive which it is not. It would benefit Indian foreign policy making in long term future strategies.

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TOTAL ARMED FORCES (IN LAKHS)	42.0	4.79	0.25	11.2
AVAILABLE MANPOWER (IN LAKHS)	1592.99	162.51	20.62	1210.75
CONSCRIPTS SERVICE PERIOD				
ARMY	2-4 Yrs	VOLUNTARY & LASTS 2 Yrs	VOLUNTARY -RY	VOLUNTARY
NAVY	5 Yrs			
AIR FORCE	4 Yrs			
ALLIANCES & ORGANISATIONS	IACO, UN IAEA, UN 30 Yrs. TREATY WITH USSR	ADB, COLOMBIA PLAN, GATT IAEA, G-77 ICAO, OIC, UN.	COLOMBIA PLAN, ICAO, UN	NAM, ICAO UN, TREATY WITH USSR.
ANNUAL MILITARY EXPENDITURE (OF GNP)	16%	24%	8.4%	18%

