

Vignettes from 1947-48

Major General VK Singh (Retd)*

Introduction

The years 1947-48 were perhaps the most turbulent in India's history. There was widespread jubilation when the Country became free after 200 years of British rule. The joy of liberty was blighted by Partition, which resulted in a mass migration of millions of people across the newly created borders. Barely two months after Independence, the Armed Forces were called upon to repel an invasion in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, becoming embroiled in a war that lasted well over a year and a conflict that continues to date. The history of those turbulent times has been documented by many historians. However, many stories remain untold. The vignettes recounted in this article have been collated from various documents, some hitherto unpublished.

The Sacking of Mirpur

One of the saddest events of the Jammu & Kashmir operations in 1947-48 concerns Mirpur, which was sacked by the Pathans after being evacuated by the State Force garrison on 26 November 1947. Mirpur could have been saved – it was just a day's march from Jhangar, which 50 Para Brigade had occupied on 19 November. Brigadier YS Paranjape, Commander 50 Para Brigade wanted to do exactly this, but was ordered to proceed to Kotli instead. Why did Major General Kalwant Singh, GOC JAK Division, decide to forsake Mirpur, against the advice of his subordinate as well as his superior? More importantly, why did the Mirpur garrison, comprising 600 troops, pull out without a fight? A much smaller force at Skardu withstood sustained attacks for six months. Punch was besieged for a year before it was relieved. Was it poor leadership, or the fighting quality of the troops that made the difference? Probably both played a part. Colonel Puran Singh, the commander of the Mirpur garrison, was not made of the same mettle as Brigadier Pritam Singh and Lieutenant Colonel Sher Jung Thapa. Also, Mirpur was garrisoned entirely by State Force troops, while Punch and Skardu both had a fair number of regular Indian Army soldiers.

On 13 November 1947, elements of 50 Para Brigade consisting of 1 Patiala and a troop of 7 Light Cavalry had reached Akhnur. On 16 November Major General Kalwant Singh, GOC JAK Division, issued orders for the relief of Naushera, Jhangar, Mirpur, Kotli and Punch. According to his plan, 50 Para Brigade was to relieve Naushera by 16th, Jhangar by 17th, Kotli by 18th, and Mirpur by 20th November. Another column from Uri, consisting of two battalions of 161 Infantry Brigade under Brigadier LP Sen, was to move on the Uri-Punch axis on 16 November, reaching Punch the same day.

The plan was ambitious and had several flaws. The officiating C-in-C, Lieutenant General FRR Bucher, felt that the advance of two columns was 'positively dangerous', and the despatch of a column from Uri to Punch, with the enemy still in position, was 'almost foolhardy'. Brigadier YS Paranjape, Commander 50 Para Brigade, had several objections. Apart from the dates being unrealistic, he felt that after establishing a firm base at Jhangar, Mirpur should be relieved first, so that the advance to Kotli was not interfered with by the raiders. Both his battalions, 1 Punjab and 3 Rajput were below strength, with 350 to 400 men in each. However, he was overruled by the GOC and the operations commenced on 16 November 1947.¹

Naushera was occupied on 18 November, after a brief engagement. Paranjape had just three companies with him, and wanted to wait till the rest of the column fetched up. However, Kalwant ordered him to continue and capture Kotli. The advance was resumed on 19 November and Jhangar occupied the same day. From Jhangar, two roads forked out, one leading to Mirpur, and the other to Kotli. Paranjape was in favour of relieving Mirpur before going for Kotli, so that his flank was secure. However, Kalwant did not agree and ordered him to head for Kotli. The advance from Jhangar was resumed on 20 November and Kotli was relieved only on 26 November, after negotiating 47 road blocks. By this time the fate of Mirpur had been sealed - it was torched by the raiders the same day. About 400 soldiers and 10,000 refugees managed to escape, and reached Jhangar. The Pathans killed several hundred soldiers and civilians, and captured hundreds of women who were taken away as war booty. Many of them were sold for 150 rupees after being paraded naked through the streets of Jhelum by the exultant Pathan tribesmen.

On 27 November, the day after it had been relieved, Kalwant ordered Paranjape to fall back on Jhangar. This was

accomplished on 28 November. Soon after this, Brigadier Paranjape was hospitalised, and Brigadier Mohammad Usman took over command of 50 Para Brigade. If Kalwant's decision to rush to Kotli without securing his open flank by securing Mirpur was surprising, even stranger was his decision to fall back to Jhangar, immediately after its capture. In the event, Mirpur was lost. Why was Kalwant in such a tearing hurry to reach Kotli? It is said that the wife of one of Maharaja Hari Singh's ADCs, who was rumoured to be one of his many mistresses, lived in Kotli. Reportedly, a large treasure belonging to the Kashmir State was also kept in Kotli. Was Kalwant's haste to relieve Kotli attributable to these two factors, rather than tactical reasons? The lady and the treasure were probably saved, but the lives of several thousand men and the honour of several hundred women were lost. 2

Why was Mirpur evacuated, even before it was attacked? The report submitted by the garrison commander, Colonel Puran Singh, states:

"The original Mirpur Grn consisted of 600 S.F. tps approx 12,000 non-Muslims. On the night 25/26 Nov, the enemy with a force of approx 3 Bns attacked on all sides, sp by Mtn Arty. Own cas due to shelling were 50 to 100 killed. The cas among the refugees amounted to approx 100 to 1000. The refugees were pouring into the mil camp and it was decided to withdraw. The camp site with the tents and army vehs incl the dead were left, lest any suspicion should be raised. About 500 OR and the refugees withdrew Eastwards after last lt on 26 Nov through the mountains and not by rd. The party was attacked en route once during the night; own cas estimated were 30 IOR and 500 refugees. Eventually approx 400 IORs and 10,000 Civ got back to Jhangar safely. The rear gd of 100 IORs and 1000 refugees have not yet reached. (this rear gd with refugees is reported to be hiding in the jungles at Puna 15 miles South West of Jhangar)".3

The story of the sack of Mirpur is best told by one of the survivors. Given below are extracts from the statement of Mr Inder Singh Bali, son of Sardar Tehil Singh, State Jagirdar and Chief of the Punjab, aged 24 years, of Mirpur proper:-.

"On 25th Nov 1947 our town (Mirpur) was bombarded and what looked like canon and mortar fire was opened on the town resulting in the complete blowing up of the roofs of the houses and causing lots of casualties among the civilians. The state troops did not put tough fight and the raiders occupied the town at 2 pm and set the entire town on fire. There were about 350 men of the state troops in the town itself and had placed pqts around the town and about 200 men were in the Cantt. When the posn became hopeless the troops in the town decided to surrender and run away and placed themselves in touch with the Offr commanding in the Cantt, and with the concerted action of troops both in the town and the Cantt, the civilians from the town managed to reach the Cantt.

Out of our party about 300 girls were forcibly taken away and when we reached Thatala camp we heard from the Hindus that had already reached there that their 500 girls had also been taken away. At Thatala we found that not less than 2,000 Pathans all with 303 rifles were present.

The concentration at Thatala swelled up to about 5000. Here again the Pathans sorted out young girls and carried them away. Thatala is about 15 miles from Jhelum city. Among these Offrs there were one Lt Col, one Capt and a few JCOs and men in all numbering 50. These officers and men were not wearing Regtl Signs. All these offers and men were wearing black caps and from their uniform I would see that they belonged to the Punjab Regt. We spent two nights at this camp. Out of the raiders three men who belonged to my town and were very well-known to me took pity on me and managed to deliver me at Jhelum camp (at the house of Lt. Avtar Narain) after they had relieved me of all my belongings. I am the only survivor from Mirpur."4

The Abduction and Sale of Captured Women

The two major incentives for the tribesmen who invaded Jammu & Kashmir in 1947 were money and women. Instances of rape and looting occurred at almost all towns and villages that came in the way of the tribal lashkars, including Uri, Baramula, Rajauri and Mirpur. However, Mirpur seems to have come in for special attention, its fall being accompanied by the town being set on fire and the abduction of a large number of women who were sold like cattle in Jhelum and other towns. This engaged the attention of the highest in the land, including Prime Minister Nehru, who took up the matter with the authorities in Pakistan almost on a daily basis. In a telegram dated 1 December 1947, shortly after the fall of Mirpur, he wrote:

For Prime Minister, Pakistan, from Prime Minister, India.

I have also been informed that 3,000 abducted Hindu women have been brought to Gujarat from the Bhimbar area and they are being sold like cattle at Rs.150 each. I am asking an Offr on the staff of the Deputy High Commissioner at Lahore to go personally to make enquiries to Gujarat district and I hope you will ask West Punjab Govt to give him all facilities.⁵

The next day, on 2 December 1947, the Prime Minister sent another telegram:

For Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan from Jawaharlal Nehru.

I have recd info that Mirpur town has been completely destroyed and out of 13,000 (half of 26,000) non – Muslims only 2,000 (half of 4,000) have reached within 15 miles of Jhelum. The fate of these refugees as well as of about 3,000 (half of 6,000) from the rest of Mirpur area is not known, but there are reports that large numbers of abducted Hindu women have been brought into Jhelum district by Pathans. The Pathans are causing panic among non-Muslims refugee pockets in that district, are firing indiscriminately and shot dead a Mahratta soldier the other day.

I am gravely concerned about the fate of the non-Muslims pockets in Jhelum district and of the Hindu refugees in particular the abducted women who have been brought from Jammu by the raiders. I shall be grateful if you will give all facilities to our MEO org to evacuate them to India.⁶

The very next day, i.e. 3 December 1947, Nehru sent yet another telegram to Pakistan:

I have been drawing your attention to large concentrations of tribesmen and others in West Punjab near the border of Kashmir State and to the abduction of large numbers of women from Kashmir who are being offered for sale in West Punjab....⁷

The report of the sale of abducted girls in Jhelum is corroborated from several other sources. An extract from a report forwarded by a civil intelligence officer of the Government of India in Pakistan says:

In Jhelum no Hindu except our staff is left. The district liaison officer, who has to depend either on the information received from the high district officials or from some of his Muslim friends reports that in Jhelum girls abducted from Mirpur side are sold in Jhelum city at Rs 20/- each. The local police refuse to interfere on the ground that the girls were not removed from the Punjab and also they express their helplessness because of the attitude of the armed Pathans possessing these girls.⁸

The Capture of Zoji La

The capture of Zoji La in November 1948 was a spectacular feat of Indian arms, paving the way for the relief of Leh. Though innovative use of armour and bold leadership were the decisive factors in the battle, the state of morale of the enemy also played a part. It was reported that in the Ladakh Valley the enemy morale was very low on account of shortage of rations, clothing and the fast approaching winter. About 400 bodyguards of the Mehtar of Chitral in Skardu refused to go to Leh, and the matter was reported to Burhan-ud-Din in Gilgit for necessary action by Mata-ul-Mulk. Burhan-ud-Din not only berated his nephew Mata-ul-Mulk, but told him that he would be reaching Skardu shortly to sort out the matter. (Burhan-ud-Din was the brother and Mata-ul-Mulk the son of the Mehtar of Chitral).

The low state of morale of the enemy is obvious from intercepted messages that were exchanged between enemy commanders. One such message from the enemy commander at Dras – Zoji La to the Supreme Commander at Gilgit is given below:

“From Jamil (XOB) to George (QLC) RPT JAL (.) A 174 (.) Secret (.) Ref your D 255 (.) My men are underfed and underclothed (.) For days they go without food (.) Believe me they will not sit if after fortnight on the highest peaks of Zojila if nothing will be done for their rations and clothing since now (.) Rations and clothing so far received from rear usual to nothing for A C D wings (.) Tps have frankly told us that they will not work if they will not be properly fed and clothed (.) Please realise the coming winter at highest peaks of Zojila and send rations and clothing otherwise it will be too difficult for us to make our men to fight (.)”⁹

An intercepted message from Burhan-ud-Din to Mata-ul-Mulk not only brings out the deteriorating relations between them but gives an indication of the extent of involvement of the Government of Pakistan in the operations. (Shortly after this, Burhan-ud-Din himself took over from Mata-ul-Mulk).

“From QLC to XOD (.) S – 89 (.) Secret (.) Following from Nasim in reply to your.....to end very disappointed after all that I have done for you and your men (.) Is only for me that you have not been sent under escort to Chitral in spite of Governor NWFP instructions to this effect (.) What ever men do will reflect on you (.) Warn you not to get yourself in trouble and ruin the men also (.) Islam is in danger (.) Your recalling of your men from Nubra highly enraged all Pak officials (.) Defence Secretary especially coming for purpose of looking into your conduct (.) Send some one and have them immediately recalled (.) They should get back by forced marches (.) I will reach (.)” 10

Nehru and Zoji La

The first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, was a Kashmiri. His attachment to the land of his forbears is well known. What is not known is his extensive knowledge of the terrain in Kashmir and the interest he took in operational matters. By inclination, he was adventurous and fond of the outdoors. He had trekked extensively in the hills of Kashmir, Himachal, Garhwal and Kumaon and is said to have spent his honeymoon in a travellers’ hut at Baltal. It was no surprise that he took a special interest in the plans being made by Thimayya and Cariappa to capture Zoji La. This is brought out by the two letters reproduced below, one from SS Khera, the Commissioner at Meerut, addressed to Nehru and the other from Nehru to Major General Kalwant Singh, who had recently moved to Delhi as the CGS. Significantly, Nehru wrote to the CGS and not the C-in-C, who was then a British officer.¹¹

The first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, was a Kashmiri. His attachment to the land of his forbears is well known. What is not known is his extensive knowledge of the terrain in Kashmir and the interest he took in operational matters. By inclination, he was adventurous and fond of the outdoors. He had trekked extensively in the hills of Kashmir, Himachal, Garhwal and Kumaon and is said to have spent his honeymoon in a travellers’ hut at Baltal. It was no surprise that he took a special interest in the plans being made by Thimayya and Cariappa to capture Zoji La. This is brought out by the two letters reproduced below, one from SS Khera, the Commissioner at Meerut, addressed to Nehru and the other from Nehru to Major General Kalwant Singh, who had recently moved to Delhi as the CGS. Significantly, Nehru wrote to the CGS and not the C-in-C, who was then a British officer.¹¹

DO No 200/L&OG
Commissioner’s Office,
Meerut
July 8, 1948

Dear JAWAHAR Lal Ji

- (1) 1. I take the liberty of sending this bit of information in case it is of any use.
- (2) In the MAHCHHOI area beyond the ZOJILA there are certain rather obscure routes which have not been traversed either by me or to my knowledge within the last three or four years. I have marked them on the attached Map. The routes in each case are difficult and not possible for animals, but men with loads can traverse them. The one from the telegraph hut just beyond the high point of the ZOJILA pass is fairly easy and gives access to the head of the AMARNATH valley and so down towards BALTAL and also through PANCH-TARNI towards SHESHNAG. The snag about this route is that unless care is taken to keep right under the shoulder of the AMARNATH peak, the party will find itself on the edge of impracticable precipices. There is another route which goes up the long nala between MAHCHHOI and MATAYAN. It is a long nala about ten miles to the head, with many bends and apparently leads nowhere; but there is a way over the top down into the PANCH-TARNI plain.
- (3) Both these routes provide access between PAHALGAM and the MAHCHHOI-MATAYAN area.

- (4) There are other routes over the ridge of the main HIMALAYAN Range between ZOJILA and NUN-KUN, but these are fairly obvious and well known.
- (5) Incidentally, as I have trekked a fair deal over the area between the ROHTANG pass at the head of KULU valley and the SASERLA which is about 60 miles NORTH OF LEH, and also in the ZASKAR valley from its head down through DRAS to the ZOJILA, I would be happy to answer any questions, although of course probably our Army knows all the answers themselves by now.

Kind regards,
Yours sincerely,
Sd/-x-x-x (SS KHERA)

PRIME MINISTER
New Delhi
INDIA
July 10, 1948
My dear KALWANT SINGH,

I am sending you a letter I have received from the Commissioner of MEERUT Division, also a map which he has sent me.

I might mention that in 1916 I crossed the ZOJILA, went to MATAYAN, and then tried to go to AMARNATH cave from MATAYAN across the high mountains. We climbed some glaciers, reached the top of a huge ice field and were only about 3 or 4 miles from AMARNATH cave. It started snowing then which made it very difficult to cross the crevasses. Indeed I slipped into one and had to be pulled out by the rope which was tied around me. So I did not succeed in reaching AMARNATH and had to come back to MATAYAN.

I rather doubt if we can take much advantage of these difficult mountain routes which KHERA has pointed out. But if you wish to enquire further into this matter, please write to KHERA or even ask him to come up here for a day.

Yours sincerely
Sd/-x-x-x-x (JAWAHARLAL NEHRU)

Major General KALWANT SINGH
Chief of the General Staff
Army Headquarters,
New Delhi

The two letters along with the map were sent the very next day to HQ Western Command with copies endorsed to the Director of Military Intelligence. It is not known whether the maps were found useful or the services of SS Khera were utilised in the plan for the capture of Zoji La. However, they bring out the personal interest that our first Prime Minister took in matters military. Soon after Zoji la was captured, Nehru visited Kashmir to personally congratulate the troops who had taken part in the operation. Exactly a year earlier, he had visited Kashmir immediately after the recapture of Baramula accompanied by Indira Gandhi.

.*Major General VK Singh (Retd) was CSO Western Command and Joint Secretary (Tel) R & AW. He has authored many books and has been a USI Research Fellow.

Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CXXXVIII, No. 573, July-September 2008.

Welfare of Armed Forces Personnel

Major D S Bisht (Retd)

Introduction

Many brave soldiers from the Armed Forces have made the supreme sacrifice while defending the Country during various wars and conflicts since 1947. These wars and operations have left many broken homes without a bread winner. A large number of Armed Forces personnel have become disabled, imposing severe handicaps on their capacity to maintain themselves and to support their families. Soldiers render yeomen service not only in times of conflict and calamities but also in peace time. They guard our land, sea and air frontiers round the clock under extremely hazardous conditions. They also undertake valuable service in aid to civil authorities to restore law and order and also render help in the event of natural disasters. On numerous occasions, Indian Armed Forces have played an effective role in the UN Peacekeeping operations around the world. It is, therefore, mandatory for the Government to ensure that the Armed Forces personnel and their families are well taken care of.

The requirement of keeping our Armed Forces young and active necessitates their release / retirement at a comparatively young age. Each year about 55,000 soldiers, sailors and airmen, between the ages 35-40, are released or transferred to the Reserve List. These men are young, physically fit and mentally alert, and have qualities of leadership, drive and discipline. Since compulsory retirement is affected in the interest of the Service, resettlement of Ex-servicemen (ESM) becomes a moral responsibility of the Government. Befitting rehabilitation of the released Armed Forces personnel contributes to a large extent towards the maintenance of high morale of serving personnel. It also motivates young men to get attracted towards a career in the Armed Forces when they become aware that the terms and conditions of service are favourable, in comparison to other professions, and that the nation takes care of its ESM and their families.

Welfare within the Armed Forces

Besides the Flag Day collections every year, numerous funds (created through contribution from soldiers or donated by public and industrial houses/institutions) running into crores of rupees are lying in the control of various authorities at Services Headquarters, Central Governments, State Governments and District Headquarters which has resulted in multiple welfare schemes on the one hand and very high overhead expenditure on the other, yet they are unable to deliver the benefits of various schemes to entitled soldiers, ESM, war widows, disabled and their dependents. It had been reported a few years back that about 7000 petitions from ESM were pending with the Ministry of Defence and another 350 are being received by the Prime Minister's office (PMO) every month from the Armed Forces personnel. In addition, another 6000 cases of serving Armed Forces personnel were reported to be pending in various courts in the country. However, Wing Commander UC Jha (Retd) in his article (in USI Journal June, 2008)¹ states that overall 100,000 cases related to the Armed forces are pending in various courts in the Country. The existing laws, structure, role and functioning of the departments/authorities responsible for the welfare and resettlement need review in the light of changes that have taken place over a period of time after Independence.

“Administration and Maintenance of Morale” are considered two important subjects of the “Principles of War”. Much stress is laid on teaching these subjects while training the Armed Forces personnel; and also when they perform their duties, to ensure that essential needs of “men and machines” are met to achieve victory in war.

Before Independence, the colonial British government took great care for the welfare of their Indian soldiers and succeeded in getting the best out of them in the two world wars. The role and responsibilities of the Indian Armed Forces have undergone significant changes since Independence. They are now primarily required to safeguard the territorial integrity and internal security of their own country. To fulfil these duties/responsibilities, the Armed Forces personnel are motivated to serve and fight, and go to the extent of making the supreme sacrifice.

Due to gradual democratisation of the polity, control and direction of matters related to welfare of the Armed Forces personnel (serving and ESM) have gone into the hands of far too many agencies – not all of whom are either altruistic or accountable. This has resulted in steady decline and degradation of serving soldiers' and ESM's welfare, thus causing frustration and lowering of their morale.

In case soldiers fail to get their legal entitlements during service and after release/ retirement, the welfare schemes become totally irrelevant. It is, therefore, necessary to examine the following issues related to welfare and resettlement of ESM and their dependents:-

- (a) After all, why there are so many authorities/agencies/organisations/funds resulting in wastage in terms of manpower/money/buildings/stationery etc. without sufficient accountability?
- (b) To what extent badly planned/organised departments, schemes, rules and procedures are responsible for inefficiency and corruption in the organisations created for the welfare of defence personnel?
- (c) To what extent, multiplicity of organisation / agencies/funds have resulted in more expenditure being incurred by the Government on the employees of the department responsible to manage/execute welfare funds/schemes than the concessions/funds actually reaching to the beneficiaries?
- (d) What is the aim of inventing new welfare schemes/funds by Government/private agencies independently – which are neither known to the officers incharge at the grass root level nor to the beneficiaries?
- (e) What action is to be taken if employees entrusted with the management, misuse / misappropriate the facilities and funds released or designated for the welfare of ESM and entitled dependent?

Civil Administration and the Armed Forces

Earlier it was said that the Military - Civil Service interaction constitutes a vital relationship pattern in any modern society. This may have been true when the Armed Forces enjoyed sufficient powers and autonomy to deal with civil matters affecting Armed Forces Personnel. But today in the democratic society and polity, the Armed Forces personnel are totally dependent on the civil administration, for all matters affecting their living. This interaction is said to have been conducive to favourable action in the early 1950's. But ever since, there started a trend towards a gradual erosion in this harmonious interaction. As a result, there has been a change in the perception of the 'jawan', he feels that he is now not getting due consideration by the civil administration. Hence, it has become necessary to review and analyse the substantial dilution in the Armed Forces - Civil Service interaction. The change has manifested in several spheres. According to a paper published by United Service Institution of India in 1986,² the following four major indicators had been identified then to support this contention:-

- (a) The lack of adequate and ready response from the civil administration is the first major indicator of the substantial erosion in the Military-Civil Service interaction. The 'jawan' has a growing feeling that he is not being attended to with much care. His pressing grievances are generally being ignored, or looked into belatedly and in a slipshod fashion. Whenever the 'jawan' has some problem, he puts up his petition through the "command channel". The Commanding Officer normally sends a demi-official letter to the concerned civil authorities to look into the problem. Earlier, every such letter invoked a courteous and prompt response from the civil administration. But both are dismally lacking today. And if a reply comes after repeated reminders, it is usually not positive in its content. Hence, weakness in effectiveness of grievance redressal system is clearly discernible.
- (b) Secondly, there has been a fall in the prestige and value of the Armed Forces services' – except during war, when soldiers are hero worshipped and thereafter forgotten. Such decline in the social estimation and ranking has reduced this once "premier occupation" into a "job of the last resort category". Therefore, vacancies exist at some levels in the hierarchy of the Armed Forces.
- (c) Thirdly, the degree of erosion in the interaction pattern is also discernible from the persistent family problems of the soldiers. The social process of nuclearisation, coupled with the lack of adequate co-operation from the civil administration, has heightened the insecurity in the soldier's family. Marriages have frequently broken; divorce and desertion have become widespread; and marital discords have eaten into the vitals of a happy family life.
- (d) The fourth indicator is the mounting frustration among the jawans. In an age of controls, quotas, permits and reservations, they do not get the kind of attention they used to get in the past. Since they neither have the money nor the time, either to bribe their way through or patiently await their turn, they feel anguished, angered and let down. Individually, when a jawan's needs and problems remain unresolved for a long time, a feeling of resentment, relative deprivation and despondency builds up in his psyche. In extreme cases, this mental state leads to desperation and may even culminate, either in his suicide or fratricide.

Changing Milieu

With social change, the socio-cultural milieu of the Indian society witnesses two contradictory social processes at two different levels. At the normative level there is a trend towards "levelling" or "equalising"; while at the existential level, the "inequality" structure is further reinforced. This social structure is conveniently twisted by the bureaucracy to

suit its own motives. It denies special privilege and preferential treatment to an honest and sincere jawan by taking refuge in the normative order, while it resorts to all sorts of manipulations so as to favour particular parties or persons who have the resources to keep them in good humour.

The jawan has neither enough 'dough' to grease the palms with "speed money", as it is called, nor sufficient political clout to exert significant pressure on the officials. He is an hapless victim of the system, much worse than a common man who may have either one or both of these requisites.

Again, the failing of the civil administration can be attributed to low level of professionalism; inept handling of the major problems faced by the nation; inability to innovate and come up with imaginative solutions; lack of cost-consciousness, extreme reluctance to take decisions and, above all, the unpardonable neglect of routine administration. It has miserably failed even in discharging its age-old regulatory function. The administrative machinery has come to a grinding halt in some areas, while in a few places it is on the verge of collapse. The bureaucrats have arrogated to themselves an ivory-tower syndrome, losing touch with the reality at the grass-root level of administration. Added to it is the peculiar caste-class bias of particular narrow-minded administrators. All these have converged on to project a public image of the civil administration as, what Mr Appu has dubbed, "a thoroughly demoralised, spineless, inefficient, dilatory and corrupt body."³

Further, as a result of the tremendous proliferation of State's activities in the present welfare era, the volume of work has increased manifold for the Collector and the Superintendent of Police at the district level. The number of soldiers from most of the districts have also increased, thereby increasing the possibility of paying lesser personal attention to individual cases. In addition, civil administration is faced with other pressing problems, like those of Backward Classes, the SCs and STs, linguistic and religious minorities, landless labourers, etc. And above all, the rigorous pursuit of "procedure" by the civil administration, and the unusual interest of the courts in quick disposal of the pending cases without bothering about the convenience of the soldiers who are far away from their native places, make the administration unresponsive to the needs of the soldiers.

Another pertinent causal factor is the "dirty politicking" by the local politicians and rural leadership. Because of numerous permutations and combinations of group alignments, they exert pressure on the civil administration to look after the interests of their members only. In most cases, the civil administration does succumb to these political pressures. But the soldiers, being apolitical and absent from rural scenario, cannot identify themselves with any of the groups. Or, if his family is identified with a particular group, he is treated almost like a 'sleeping partner' and is given the last place in the order of preference within the group; thereby, his interest suffers.

Civil-Military Interaction

High aspirations among the soldiers is another factor which contributes to their frustration. Due to our traditional and historical legacy, the soldiers have inherited a view of themselves as deserving something more than the common man. And it does have a good and justifiable rationale behind it. He defends the country and is prepared to sacrifice his life in doing so. Thus, his performance is extraordinary, and expects some special attention in return. Some extra consideration has been shown to the soldiers down the ages world-wide. But in India, there exists a wide gap between their high expectations and low satisfaction, and this causes mounting frustration in them. Except cash awards and land grants, petrol pump agencies etc, given to decorated soldiers and war widows, there are many instances when the soldiers feel frustrated and deprived of their legitimate benefits due to apathy of civil administration.

These indeed are a few pertinent factors contributing to the erosion in the interaction between the Armed Forces and the Civil Administration. There is still time to make amends and take corrective measures to restore the high degree of credibility which once prevailed in their pattern of interaction. But such measures shall necessarily be based on the premise that: what is needed is not any revolutionary change or systemic overhaul, but an optimum combination of both preventive and curative approaches at the sub-systemic and micro-systemic levels. Such restorative measures can be analysed in the five broadly identified areas : security of the family, security of land and property, disposal of litigations, general welfare and rehabilitation, and reform within the domain of civil administration.

Social Security and Welfare of Soldiers

Bureaucracy is the interface between the Government and the people. It provides informational inputs and feed-backs to the former, and conveys the decisional outputs to the latter. Thus, it significantly contributes to the formulation and implementation of public policies. An ordinary citizen depends on the bureaucracy for fulfilment of his needs and

aspirations, redressal of grievances. The Armed Forces are an integral and important part of the civil society. Therefore, they are also dependent on the civil administration. This study attempts to assess the degree of dependence of the Armed Forces personnel on civil administration for the following vital aspects, which affect their welfare and morale:-

- (a) **Security of Family :** Due to changes in the society and modern living trends, the traditional Indian joint family system has broken down. Consequently, the responsibilities of the soldiers towards their nuclear families are far more enhanced and complex as compared to their civilian counterparts – mainly, because they are away from their families for prolonged periods, due to their service commitments. In this situation it is the responsibility of the civil administration to provide preferential security to the soldiers families back at home. Failure to do so, has begun to seriously affect the mind and morale of the soldiers and also the security and well being of the Nation. Since both are interdependent, it is the direct responsibility of the civil administration to meet the security and administrative needs of soldiers' families in close coordination with military authorities. In a society today when civil administration remains fully occupied with the security of the public at large, the security of jawans' families requires special attention and arrangement. In this context, the role of the civil administration needs to be defined clearly to facilitate mandatory guidelines and provisions to ensure their implementation by concerned authorities.
- (b) **Security of Property:** Security of property is the second issue for which a soldier is dependent on civil administration. Here, property mostly means jawans land in rural areas. As part of planned economic development of rural areas, the Government has undertaken various land reform programmes which have also affected soldiers interest from time to time in varying degrees in different states. Besides land in rural areas, properties in urban areas both rented or self occupied are also to be protected from all kinds of illegal action taken by dubious elements. It is therefore necessary for civil administration to address this problem also, conscientiously.
- (c) **Security of Profession:** It is the duty of the Services' Headquarters to ensure that a soldier gets all his due entitlements of pay and allowances, postings and promotion etc up to the date of his retirement. This aspect is not being attended to promptly and efficiently. Large number of grievances including court cases continue to rise not only from personnel below officers rank (PBOR) but also from officers. To what extent Service Headquarters and Defence Services Regulations have failed to address this problem, directly affecting the morale of soldiers also needs examination. Due to early release / retirement, the problem of job security for PBOR after retirement has been a serious problem that has been affecting the morale of soldiers who continue to be on the Reserve list of the Armed Forces. It is necessary to examine the efforts made by the civil administration to ensure re-employment of ESM, both in Government and private sector and to what extent various schemes have benefited the ESM. The worse part of rehabilitation is that after re-employment of ESM, the issues related to pay fixation, seniority, promotions and pension for civil service are placed under litigation due to insensitivity and inefficiency in civil administration.
- (d) **Security of War Casualties:** The next important issue before the Services' Headquarters, Central Government and State Governments has been the care and rehabilitation of war-widows, disabled soldiers and their dependents. large number of schemes are there to help the affected casualties but the rules and procedures laid down by the civil administration fail to produce desired results due to absence of accountability. Normally, help is rendered in a discretionary manner and on charitable basis. It is, therefore, necessary that each scheme, both for monetary benefits and rehabilitation drawn by the Government for war casualties, is examined and remedial measures are undertaken to protect war widows, disabled soldiers and their dependents from further exploitation by unscrupulous people.

Except for the Seminars held at the united service Institution of India, New Delhi and students undertaking research projects for obtaining a Ph.D. degree on 'Welfare of ESM' as part of Military Science, no comprehensive study has been undertaken by experts on all matters connected with legal rights of soldiers as citizens of India, and privileges, facilities and concessions available to Defence Services personnel during service and after retirement. Besides large number of grievances published in various newspapers, views expressed on problems faced by serving soldiers and ESM, conveyed through print and electronic media, including feature films made to highlight the problems of soldiers (like allotment of petrol pump to family members of martyrs), no worthwhile study has been carried out to address the increasing number of grievances of serving soldiers and ESM in the larger interest of national security. publicity of grievances through print and electronic media is not good for the morale of Armed Forces. It is therefore, necessary to identify all issues affecting the Armed Forces personnel connected with their legal rights, privileges and concessions available to Armed Forces personnel as citizens of India both during war and peace. Even though Armed Forces Tribunal Bill, 2007 has been passed by the Parliament as an appellate authority for serving and retired soldiers, the

importance of updating the Army Act, rules and regulations that are in existence to regulate service conditions cannot be over emphasised. The specific areas/subjects affecting Armed Forces personnel are as follows :-

- (a) Conditions of service and privileges under Military Law.
- (b) Armed Forces and Civil Liberties.
- (c) Indian Soldiers (Litigation) Act, 1925.
- (d) Pay and Allowances of Armed Forces personnel.
- (e) Pensionary and monetary benefits for Armed Forces personnel.
- (f) Concessions and benefits available under state laws.
- (g) Welfare and resettlement of ESM.
- (h) Jurisprudence affecting Armed Forces personnel.
- (j) Civil Service Regulations and Armed Forces personnel.
- (k) Civic governance, corruption in society and how it impacts the Armed Forces.

Conclusion

Indeed, the Armed Forces occupy a pivotal and pre-eminent position in the country. The very existence and survival of the Country as a Nation primarily depends on the quality of its man power and strength of the Armed Forces. history is a witness to the fact that from the days of Chandragupta Maurya right upto the advent of the British Raj, and even beyond, the military was the prime cementing force, which maintained the unity and integrity of the empires/country. It would not be an exaggeration to opine that the rise and fall of the major empires in the world depended mainly on the strength, efficiency and functioning of their existing military machine.

In the present context, the Indian Armed Forces have a dual responsibility. Besides protecting the national borders (15,168 kms of land and 5,689 kms of maritime boundary) and acting as a deterrent against any form of real or anticipated foreign aggression, it maintains internal unity and integrity of the nation by coming to the aid of the civil administration in emergency situations. The peacetime functions have become more pronounced now than they were in the past. The jawan (soldier, sailor and airman) is an important human element behind the grand military machine. He has the great honour to wear the country's military uniform; and in return, he is willing to lay down his life for the defence of the country. But like every human being, he does have his own problems, frustrations and inclinations, which need to be cared for by the nation. His problems have to be attended to with sincerity, sympathy and urgency.

Considering the magnitude of a jawan's immense responsibility, it is logical to conclude that it is in the interests of the nation to accord a preferential treatment to him. Indeed, no human life carries a price tag, and the least of all the jawan's. So the person who is willing to die while serving the nation, certainly deserves some extra consideration. Therefore, it is the sacrosanct duty of the bureaucracy, the executive arm of the Government, to look after the interests of the jawan.

In a transitional society, bureaucracy as an initiator of change, has an important role. It must respond to the perceptions and problems being faced by the Armed Forces personnel positively. Its present unresponsiveness, marked by red tapism and corruption, are affecting the well being of soldiers adversely. It is felt that there is an urgent need for the bureaucracy to sharpen its professional ethics and performance. This will restore its credibility and strengthen the will of the country's fighting forces to fulfill their assigned roles and responsibilities enthusiastically. If the present down slide continues, the responses and performance of the Armed Forces are likely to get degraded, which would not be acceptable to the country. It must be realised that frustration and demoralisation of the soldiers, ultimately leads to a gradual covert unwillingness on their part to either take risks (while performing their arduous duties) or to make the supreme sacrifice while fighting the enemy on the borders, or within the country. It has therefore become necessary to streamline the existing organisations and civil administrative set-up, to ensure that welfare needs of the Armed Forces personnel are met with perceptible sincerity for the maintenance of their high morale.

Major D S Bisht (Retd) was commissioned into 7th Battalion, The Jat Regiment on 30 Jun 1963. presently, he is working for Central Himalayan Institute at Dehradun which has been established to undertake studies for good governance and development to strengthen national security.

Self Reliance in Emerging Defence Technologies

Lieutenant General AKS Chandele, AVSM*

Introduction

To provide national security, the Indian military must be able to dominate the complete range of military operations. Key to achieving this full spectrum dominance will be the ability of defence forces to acquire technologies that enable it. Technological superiority being the decisive factor in future battles, it is imperative to build indigenous capabilities, relevant to specific requirements. It is becoming increasingly important for a country like India to be able to exercise its own independent foreign policy in the interest of its national security. This can be achieved only through a sustained effort to technological self reliance that would not only enable the country to have an independent techno-military strategy for defence but also provide the nation with the vital techno- economic strength.¹

In the complex matrix of achieving self reliance, the role of Defence R&D is clearly to provide the ‘Critical Technologies’ for defence needs and to build the ‘Core Competence’ for enriching the technology base in the country. An effective long term ‘Self Reliance’, implementation plan therefore must advocate selective investments in ‘Critical Technologies’ that would help realise the ‘Self Reliance’ objectives specific to national needs.²

The development of technologies in line with a comprehensive and realistic security doctrine could radically alter our entire strategic and tactical vision, not only on the conventional and sub-conventional battlefield, but in every aspect of the national enterprise.

Technology Forecasting

Technology forecasting enables to identify the likely opportunities and threats, and to develop a technological road map for the future. Technology forecasting has now assumed importance in India due to the structural reforms introduced in our economic system with a view to creating a market driven economy. Technology forecasting is used for the purpose of scanning the technological environment, anticipating emerging technological changes and identifying suitable technologies by evaluating various alternatives.³

To enable the military to meet the challenges of the future battlefield, we need to initiate research and development in some of the emerging technologies like Nanotechnology, Directed Energy Weapons, Smart Munitions, Biomimetics, Micro electro mechanical system / Micro opto-electro mechanical system, Artificial Intelligence and Armour Materials.

Nanotechnology

Nanotechnology is the miniaturisation of technology to one billionth of a meter (10⁻⁹m), to design and manufacture intelligent miniature machines, programmed to perform specific tasks. The reduction of size into the nanometer area often results in characteristic properties of substances and materials undergoing change which can be exploited for new applications. Nanotechnology, the science of designing microscopic structures in which materials are machined and controlled atom by atom, has the potential to produce further miniaturisation of weapons. The use of Nanotechnology in defence equipment opens up ways to improved weapons, innovative materials and new application areas.

In vehicles and aircrafts, conventional structural materials could be replaced by more rigid and lighter materials. Improvements could also be achieved in direct (armour) and indirect protection for military vehicles (camouflage through colour changes with ‘intelligent’ surface coatings). Important impact of nanotechnology can also be expected in the conversion and storage of energy ie suitable membranes and catalysts for operating fuel cells, and enhanced battery performance. There are many possible applications in military reconnaissance based on the use of nanotechnology components in sensors, sensor systems and sensor networks. Weapons and munitions are also being directly affected by the improved sensory capabilities, enhanced computing power and storage capacity due to nanotechnology. Another option is the development of nano scale powders for use in propellants and explosives, enhancing the energy yield and speed of explosion.

The impact of nanotechnology is expected to be greater than the combined influences that the silicon integrated circuit, medical imaging, computer aided engineering and man made polymers have led in this century.

Biomimetics

Biomimetics (imitate life) is an inter disciplinary effort aimed at understanding biological principles and then applying them to improve existing technology. This process can mean changing a design to match a biological pattern or actually using biological materials such as proteins, to improve performance. The scope of biomimetics appear to vary widely depending upon the specialised discipline of the investigator. Electronic companies are supporting biomimetic research with a view to learning the way biological systems process information. Material scientists view biomimetics as a tool for learning to synthesise materials under ambient conditions and with least pollution to the environment. Engineers attempt to explore the relationship between structure and function in natural systems with a view to achieve analogous synthetic design and manufacture.

Another interesting case of learning to design from nature pertains to characteristic feature of fish. It has the ability to accelerate very fast, has low turning radius of only about 10-30 per cent of its body length, high velocity and the conservation of energy during a dive to lower levels. The tail of the fish pushes the water backwards and creates a column of moving fluid called a ‘jet’. The jet includes the vortices and derives its propulsive efficiency which is about 86 per cent. In contrast, the propeller driven underwater ships reach an efficiency of only 40 per cent. It is the body of the fish, rather than the tail, that creates the strongest vortices. Based on these observations a swimming machine with a flapping tail has been constructed and submarines and boats with a flapping tail are likely to be seen soon.

Sensors capable of detecting electro magnetic radiation across the spectrum from the infrared through the visible and into the ultraviolet regions have become integral part of military weapon system. There are biological systems possessing sensing capabilities unmatched by current technologies. The infrared sensitive beetle (*Melanophila acuminata*) is attracted to fires and smoke 50 km away. The forest fires emit infrared radiation that the beetle detects via a specialised infrared sensor known as the infrared pit organ or infrared sensilla. By understanding the mechanism and the biological process involved in this infrared sensor, one could develop new and improved materials and sensors for various applications.⁴

Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence is the capability of a machine to imitate intelligent human behavior. The conventional Artificial Intelligence includes methods such as expert systems, case based reasoning and Bayesian networks. Expert systems process large amount of information and provide conclusions. Case based reasoning is the process of solving new problems based on the solutions of similar past problems. It has been argued that case base reasoning is not only a powerful method for computer reasoning, but also a pervasive behaviour in everyday human problem solving.

Bayesian networks are used for modelling knowledge in medicine, engineering, image processing, data fusion and decision support systems. The military application of Artificial intelligence includes target extraction in images (pattern recognition), identification friend & foe, Multilayer Neural Networks, testing of intelligent systems and autonomous Robotic systems.⁵

Use for Decision Making. Increasing amount of information available from surveillance, reconnaissance and target acquisition systems makes it a near impossible task to collect and analyse. This job has to be done by a computer. Computers are becoming more and more capable of making decisions – of which weapons to select and when to fire them. The concept of using computers for making important decisions has been on the anvil for a long time. Neural cells are being utilised to make smart decisions whether they are for force structuring, adopting the most suitable doctrine or form of warfare.

Directed Energy Weapons

Directed Energy Weapons have very useful capabilities in the battlefield. Charged or neutral particles can travel close to the speed of light in vacuum, but traveling through air slows them down to about 1000 km/sec. A highly directional beam should be able to pick up and destroy a single enemy target without damaging friendly forces nearby.

The function of a directed energy class of weapon is to place on target, sufficient energy to inflict lethal damage or at

least disable some critical component of the target. LASER Directed Energy Weapons thus have two levels of applications, one for Electro Optic Counter Measures (EOCM) where relatively low energy LASER is used to disable hostile sensors or front-end optics. The other is the use of high power LASER for direct structural damage to attacking enemy platforms or weapon systems. A high-energy LASER sweeping across the battlefield could be a potent psychological weapon, particularly when inflammable materials catch fire. It may be militarily useful against soldiers with little protective clothing. Attack on battlefield sensors with modest-power LASER beam, cause them to lose track of what they were observing.

A high-energy LASER takes somewhere from a second to several seconds to do enough damage to “kill” a target, though actual times are classified and will depend on the type of target. An intense charged particle beam could do the job in a single short pulse. There are many types of physical or mechanical damage that could be lethal to a military target. Missiles and aircraft could be destroyed by rupturing fuel tanks and causing explosions, and enabling some critical components to malfunction. As the intensities needed to cause mechanical damage are much higher, the requirement of making such high power LASERs battlefield worthy is of importance.

The Tactical High Energy Weapon is a high-energy LASER weapon system that uses proven LASER beam generation technologies, proven beam-pointing technologies, existing sensors and communication networks to provide a new active defence capability in counter air missions. It can provide an innovative solution not offered by other systems or technologies for the acquisition and close-in engagement problems associated with short-to medium-range threats, thereby significantly enhancing coverage of combat forces and theatre-levels assets.

Micro Electro Mechanical System (MEMS)/Micro-Opto-Electro Mechanical System (MOMS)

MEMS includes mechanical and electrical elements that convert one form of energy into another, operating by transduction. The transducer is a device that is actuated by energy of one form and supplies energy of another form. Transducers encompass both sensors and actuators. Micro Electro Mechanical devices are made of extremely small parts or microchips. This miniature device comprises mechanical elements, activators and electronics on a common silicon substrate, which is fabricated using micro systems technology. Micro sensor converts a non electrical quantity, for example, pressure, temperature, gas concentration or magnetic phenomenon, into an electrical signal. Actuator converts electrical signal back into non electrical quantity.

MOMS overcomes challenges posed by Micro Electro Mechanical System. It offers higher bandwidth, lower cost, smaller size and an easier integration. Micro Electro Mechanical System pressure sensors and accelerometers are being used for missile applications, rate gyro's and measuring exhaust emissions.

Bots and Nanobots (robots in combat)

Talking about robots in combat, such a robot, the Pack Bot was actually deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan. It entered caves, scouting around and reporting to human operators using wearable computers. In the future, its role could accommodate combat duties – such robots could be loaded with explosives to blow up locations not accessible to soldiers. Thanks to its 802.1 lb connection, the PackBot can also be operated over the Internet, allowing for remote operations. Another Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) funded project, dubbed the High Mobility Tactical Microrobot (HMTM), is in the works. Weighing just 5 lbs, it is being designed for surveillance and reconnaissance. The HMTM has a camera on top of a periscope to look around corners, in addition to an inbuilt homing device that will work even if its 802.1 lb connection breaks.

Smart Dust

Smart Dust can help reduce casualties, which was a primary goal during the Iraq war. The central idea is to replace people with machines that could gather intelligence. In Iraq, the US military used smart robots and small UAVs to reduce danger to personnel. Another DARPA-supported technology, called Smart Dust, could possibly reduce casualties and gather information even more effectively.

Smart Dust is an “autonomous sensing and communications device in a cubic millimeter” package. A millimeter device has not yet been created, but the goal is to package a light sensor, power supply and circuitry, a communication device, and a programmable processor into a small space. On achieving the desired apparatus, aircraft can “spray” Smart Dust over a conflict area. The specks would be light enough to stay afloat and monitor the movement of enemy troops, or perhaps the presence of biological or chemical weapons. In a recent test, a Smart Dust researcher controlled

a drone about 8 inches long which flew at 100 kmph for 18 minutes, carrying a camera that sent live feed back to headquarters!

Smart Munitions

Smart ammunition is the one, which after being fired can be controlled to a certain extent, towards the terminal part of its trajectory, incorporating homing device, guidance system and target seekers. The sensor fuzed ammunition has fixed intelligent sensor which identifies a target and fires a projectile towards it.

The sensor used in this ammunition is a Millimetric wave Radar in which Millimetric wave frequencies of 35-94 GHz are able to penetrate poor weather conditions and battlefield smoke to give high target signature resolution. The infrared detector sensor identifies targets through their hot spots and creates an image. Targets can be perceived through adverse weather and smog. The dual mode seeker sensor is potentially more cost effective due to its lower false alarm rate and increased tolerance to counter measures.

The brilliant munitions employ multi sensors and have many steerable surfaces. Owing to their bulk, these are delivered as sub munitions by large calibre guns (203mm) or by rockets. These sub munitions autonomously seek targets with freedom of flight direction, enabling it to locate targets within a large radius of the dispensing point. Also, these munitions provide first round hit against a universal target set, including hot and cold, stationery, moving and hard or soft targets.

Armour Materials

The Armour materials presently in use and under development are steel armour, aluminium armour, titanium armour, composites and ceramics. The synergistic combination of aluminium armour with outer layers of hard steel has been adopted to provide greater protection than that afforded by a single type of armour. Where space allows, the effectiveness of aluminium steel combination can be further increased by separating the two armour layers by an air gap. As an alternative to steel, there is also possibility of combining aluminium armour with plates of titanium. The ballistic performance of titanium and the prospects of its cost coming down have encouraged its greater use particularly, as hard outer layer over softer Aluminium armour structures.

Ceramics are ballistically effective because of their hardness, which is considerably greater than any other material, and also they are lighter than steel. Titanium diboride will serve as protection against projectiles of the future having cores of tungsten-cobalt composites. Flexible ceramic armour, consists of small ceramic spheres embedded in an electrometric matrix. The damage in this kind of armour would be confined to a relatively small area instead of spreading across, which enables the armour based on them to withstand multiple closely spaced hits.

Way Ahead

Research organisations must take initiative in developing the above emerging technologies required by the Army. Memorandum of understanding and agreements in the field of defence technologies must be undertaken with major foreign partners. The technologies developed by research agencies should be transferred to industry for production.

Where ever it is technologically feasible and economically viable, effort should be made to locate and develop broad based indigenous supply sources both in public sector as well as the civil trade for sophisticated and complex equipment. A significant change should be brought about in the role of private sector/ civil trade in the field of indigenisation i.e. from the role of supplier of raw materials, components, sub systems, they should become partners in manufacture of complete defence equipment/ systems. The defence industry sector, which was so far reserved for the public sector, has now been opened up for participation by the Indian private sector. The Indian companies are now eligible to apply for licence to set up defence industry for manufacture of all types of defence equipment. There is also a need for a major overhaul to convert the defence PSU's into unprotected competitive entities to succeed in the new environment of economic reforms and open market competition. The self reliance in critical technologies should be a 'national mission' for a country like India, with co-ordinated efforts at National level and commitment from R&D organisations in the country.

Emerging technologies will revolutionise warfare in this Century and India cannot remain a mute spectator to this change. The fact remains that countries that can exploit emerging technologies and synergise the same with the

innovative operational doctrines and organisational changes could achieve far higher levels of relative military effectiveness.

.***Lieutenant General AKS Chandele, AVSM** is currently Director General Electronics and Mechanical Engineers.

Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CXXXVIII, No. 573, July-September 2008.

Super Power Politics and Growth of Insurgency in Eastern Arunachal Pradesh*

Dr Narayan Singh Rao**

Introduction

Arunachal Pradesh¹, located in the eastern most corner of India, is a strategically important state of the Indian Union. Measuring 83,743 kms, it has a population of 10,91,117 people,² which comprise Kshatriya clans³; namely, the Adi, the Aka, the Apatani, the Bangni, the Khampati, the Mishimi, the Monpa, the Nyashi, the Wancho etc.⁴

Historical Facts – Countering China’s Claim

The scholars are of the opinion, that Arunachal Pradesh was covered by the waters of the great Tethys Sea in the cretaceous period. The formation of Himalayas brought the present Arunachal on map of the Indian sub continent.⁵ Post Mahabharata, a large number of defeated Kshatriyas migrated to Southeast Asia, through the passes of Arunachal Pradesh. Thus, Hindu culture reached the eastern world via Arunachal Pradesh. Ramayana suggests that Sugriva, King of Kishkindha, deputed a Vanara general Vineet to search for Sita in the hills of Arunachal Pradesh. Ramayana also mentions the Kingdom of Pragjyotishpur ruled by Narakasur who exercised sway over the territory from Bihar to Southern China.⁶

Narakasur’s son Bhagdatta was placed by Lord Krishna on the throne of Pragjyotishpur.⁷ Subsequently, Lord Krishna moved up to Merugiri Mountain and Tibet. Lord Krishna in Northeast India, rescued Anirudha, his grandson from the captivity of Aka Chief called Banasur.⁸ Lord Krishna killed Banasur and placed Kumbhand on the throne of Shonitpur Kingdom. Kumbhand’s grandson, king Bhaluka laid foundation of Bhalukapong fort in the Aka Hills (Kameng district) near Balipara. Many tribes of Arunachal Pradesh consider King Bhaluka their great ancestor and hold him in high esteem.⁹

The Mahabharata also informs us about Pandava brothers journey to Arunachal Pradesh and marriage of Bhima with Hidimbha, of Dimapur.¹⁰ Lord Krishna married Rukmini, the daughter of King Bhishmak of Vidarbha (Lohitya Kingdom) in Arunachal Pradesh.¹¹ As a part of Digvijaya campaign, Arjuna and Bhima moved with their army in Arunachal Pradesh and established diplomatic relations with tribal Chieftains of this state.¹² The tribal Chiefs of Arunachal participated in the Mahabharata War and played a crucial role in the outcome of the war.¹³ Interaction between the rulers of Arunachal and Assam was highly significant in olden times.¹⁴ The Ahom rulers established diplomatic relationship with all the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. Ahom King Pratap Singha granted cultivable land to the tribal Chieftains and permission to collect Posa tax.

They exercised political control on entire territory of the present Arunachal Pradesh. Clearly, Arunachal Pradesh has always remained an integral part of India. China’s claim on parts of Arunachal Pradesh is fictitious and baseless.¹⁵ Consequent to the fall of Ahom Kingdom and Anglo-Burmese War, the British occupied entire Northeast India in 1826. The British Government established its headquarters at Sadiya in 1835. In 1882 the post of an Assistant political officer was created. Jacks Francis Needham (1882-1905) and Noel Williamson (1905-1911) explored the entire territory up to Tibet and Myanmar border.¹⁶ Regular administrative machinery was organised in this state after the Anglo-Adi war of 1912-13. This process continued upto 1987 when Arunachal attained full fledged statehood.¹⁷

Designs of Great Britain, America, China and Pakistan

The British administrators seemed to have political designs in mind, if at all India became independent. These included (a) creation of a Crown’s colony, (b) merger of this region with tribal areas of Burma, (c) constituting a Union or federation of Hill States under the British Crown. However, due to one reason or the other none of these plans could be put in motion.¹⁸

America, in league with European countries, too worked out several plans to destabilise India. America was very keen to acquire a foothold in the Northeast India, Myanmar and South China so as to keep a close vigil on the countries which were friendly to Russia.¹⁹ After World War II, the office of strategic services (OSS), (later on known as CIA),

considered Northeast India, South China and Myanmar strategically the most important base of overt and covert military operations in the area. The top CIA officials passed through this region, from 1950s onwards. These included, Desmond Fitzgerald and Richard Stilwell. Several American secret agents moved from Yunnan in China and entered Arunachal Pradesh for their overt and covert missions.²⁰ Similarly, China and Pakistan have been engaged in training and arming of terrorist organisations. In 1950's, Pakistan's Army Chief General Ayub Khan identified north east India as a second and one of the most durable theatres of proxy war against India. Nagas were armed and trained by Pakistan and China to such an extent, that they could fight against India, for more than half a century. After 1962 war, Chinese Army provided armed support to launch struggle against the Indian Union. The nexus between China and Pakistan in their anti India activities through terrorist organisations operating in this region, is an issue of serious concern for India.²¹

Naga Insurgency and Its Impact on Arunachal Pradesh

British rulers penetrated into Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland between 1830-40. After World War II, the Nagas formed Naga National Council (NNC) in 1946. In 1947, NNC suggested that Naga Hills be kept under the guardianship of India for 10 years. On 27-29 May, the Nagas and Akbar Hydari, Governor of Assam, negotiated a Nine Point Agreement. But the Nagas were pressurised by Phizo to declare their Independence on 14 August, 1947. In 1951, Phizo met Prime Minister Nehru and demanded Independence, but Nehru rejected this demand. Phizo, then adopted a course of confrontation. In 1955, NNC formed a parallel Government. In 1956, Phizo escaped to East Pakistan and subsequently to London, where he died in 1990.²² The moderate Nagas joined the peace committees. The Government of India accepted a sixteen point agreement in July 1960. President Radhakrishnan inaugurated a new State of Nagaland in December, 1960. In 1966, the rebel groups supported by the Church and Chinese Army decided to send the Naga youths for training in China. About 800 Naga volunteers reached Yunnan in China in two batches. When a group of trained Nagas, numbering 165 was returning from China, they were captured with their leader Mowu Angami in March, 1969. In 1972, Government of India banned NNC and FGN and lifted the ceasefire.²³ In order to consolidate the peace process, Shillong Accord (1975) was signed whereby the Nagas accepted the constitution of India. However, the supporters of Phizo repudiated the Shillong Accord.²⁴

Formation and Split of National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN)

Shillong Accord was rejected by Isac, Swu and Muivah who returned from China. In 1979 Isac-Muivah convened a National assembly in which SS Khaplang was elected as Federal President. In 1980, Muivah, Khaplong and Isac Swu announced the formation of NSCN replacing FGN (Federal Government of Nagaland). But NSCN leaders could not work together for long. On April 30, 1988 SS Khaplang raided the camp of Isac and Muivah and killed 140 men. With this NSCN formally got split into two factions. Khaplang formed NSCN (K) and Isac and Muivah formed NSCN (IM). The split of NSCN resulted in bloody conflicts between the two groups. The division within the ranks of Naga insurgents and increased attention of the super powers on the Northeast India, destroyed the peace and tranquility of Arunachal Pradesh.²⁵

The demand for creation of greater Nagaland by dividing Arunachal Pradesh has significantly contributed to the growth of terrorist activities in this State. Armed clashes and feuds between the two factions of NSCN are going on since 1990's. China is actively supporting NSCN groups by providing arms, ammunition, logistics as well as its territory for free movement towards South East Asian countries and setting up of camps. The movement of the armed militiamen in the east Arunachal Pradesh has created serious law and order problem. The people are subjected to harassment, extortion, and blackmail. A kind of parallel government is established by the separatist groups in the area.²⁶ Armed bands of the terrorists organisations force villagers to abandon their religion. Any one who dares to oppose the conversion is mercilessly beaten up, and humiliated.²⁷ The insurgent groups, backed by foreign powers, have also interfered in the politics of the State. Initially, their intervention remained confined to only Eastern part of the State. But from 1990 onwards, the NSCN (K) strengthened its position in other areas too. In 1998, Chipu Menon, a self styled Colonel of NSCN (K), became virtually a kingmaker in the State. On 15 December, 1998, the NSCN (K) kidnapped all the twelve MLA's of Tirap and Changlang districts and transported them to Jeduwa. In a conclave of twelve Legislators and opponents of the then Chief Minister Gegong Apang a blueprint to effect the fall of the Apang Government was worked out. Consequently, the Apang government collapsed in January 1999 and the assembly elections were held in October 1999. Mukut Mithi became the next Chief Minister who also secured victory in assembly elections and formed Ministry on 11 October 1999. The withdrawal of support to Gegong Apang under pressure from the terrorist organisations and the fall of Apang Government is an event of very high significance. The NSCN (K), a dreaded terrorist organisation, supported by the Foreign Powers and Church had assumed the role of a king maker in this State. Due to armed clashes between NSCN (K) (IM) and interference by cadres of these groups,

there is a constant threat to peoples lives, kidnapping, extortion and rampant violence has become the order of the day. Young men and women are forced to act as head load carriers for the militants. Everyone knows everything but no one can dare to speak out.²⁸

About 27 violent incidents took place in 1999, 51 incidents occurred in 2000 and 47 in 2001. The insurgency related incidents in this peaceful State have substantially increased from 1992 onwards which is proved by the data given in the Tables No I and II. Table I shows that the NSCN (IM) and (K) started operating with violence and terrorist acts from 1990 onwards and caused blood-bath and killings in the State. Gradually, the Eastern Arunachal Pradesh had become a hotbed of conflict between the NSCN (K) and (IM) as both are trying to outsmart each other and establish their mastery over this area. Large quantities of weapons, supplied by foreign powers, are recovered from the cadres of the terrorist groups. The recovery of arms, incidents of extortion and killings in this State, bordering China, are a pointer towards the growing security threat to our Country. Foreign powers are trying to penetrate this strategically important State of India through the terrorist organisations.²⁹

The NSCN (IM) and (K) factions are also trying to raise local terrorist organisations in the State³⁰. In 1990's, Arunachal Dragon Force also known as East India Liberation Front (EILF) was formed by some disgruntled elements influenced by NSCN (IM) and Church, to create a separate Teola Country. ADF cadres became active in East Arunachal and adjoining areas of Assam. The ADF cadres were trained and equipped by NSCN (K), ULFA and NSCN (IM).³¹

The details about other local level minor terrorist organisations operating in the State suggest that it is slipping into the hands of terror groups. The following terrorist organisations have also sprung up in various parts of the State with the support of NSCN, ULFA etc.

S.N.	Particulars of the Terrorist Organisation	Area of Operation in the state
1.	United Peoples Volunteers of Arunachal Pradesh UPVAP)	Lohit and Changlang district
2.	United Liberation Movement of Arunachal Pradesh (ULMA)	Lower Subansiri
3.	United Liberation Volunteers of Arunachal Pradesh (ULVA)	East Siang
4.	United Liberation Army of Arunachal Pradesh (ULAAP)	West Siang
5.	Patriotic Revolutionary Army of Arunachal Pradesh (PRAAP)	Lohit District
6.	Liberation Tigers of Arunachal (LTA) (Controlled by ULFA)	Papum Pare/Itanagar
7.	Arunachal Dragon Federation (ADF)	Lohit District
8.	All Liberation Tigers of Arunachal Pradesh (ALTAP)	East and West Siang
9.	National Liberation Front of Arunachal Pradesh (NLFAP) controlled by NSCN (K)	Lower Subansiri

The above mentioned terrorist outfits are indulging in extortion, harassment and coercion of state officials and people. With the help of local outfits ULFA, NSCN etc are planning to expand the area under their influence. Thus, through the terrorist outfits the foreign powers are planning to convert this peaceful State into a hotbed of conflict. Pakistan's ISI and DGFI of Bangladesh are also trying to penetrate this State. In this situation, security agencies of the Government of India must wake up, and take pre-emptive measures. Failure on this count may cause irreparable damage to the safety and security of India.³² The self styled government of the NSCN called Government of the People's Republic of Nagaland is collecting 25 per cent of the earnings from the people working in Arunachal Pradesh.³³ Huge amounts of money collected by way of GPRN Tax, are used by terrorist groups to procure weapons. The ISI of Pakistan, DGFI of Bangladesh and Chinese intelligence agencies facilitate the training and weaponisation of these terror outfits.³⁴ Consignments of weapons for all the extremist organisations are transported from Bangkok to the bordering areas in Kachin state. Subsequently, such consignments are moved within Indian Territory via East Arunachal Pradesh. Several foreign agents have secretly travelled in past to the area located between Thailand, Myanmar and India so as to provide support to the terror organisations operating in India.³⁵

Conclusion

Thus, Arunachal Pradesh has become highly vulnerable as the area falls on the transit route which is frequently used by ULFA, NSCN and other groups.³⁶ If the extremist organisations are not checked in Arunachal Pradesh this peaceful State may come under the grip of anti-India elements. This would further enhance the gravity of Chinese

threat to India. The illegal entry of foreigners from across the border also exposes the weakness of our security system. We must understand that, strategically this State is highly significant for India. From here, one can keep an eye on the entire Eastern world. Super powers have strengthened their position in the region, either by helping all the terrorist organisations who claim to establish either a Christian State or People's Republic on the lines of Mao Tse Tung. The terrorist organisations have set-up their offices across the globe. Huge terror infrastructure is maintained by the separatist groups, which is not possible without support from the foreign powers. To eliminate terrorist organisations backed by foreign powers in this State, Government of India must increase the strength of security forces, conduct sustained army operations against foreign supported terror groups, improve rail and road communication and re-establish the authority of the Government by dismantling the structure of parallel government run by terrorist organisations.

*Based on text of the talk delivered at the USI on 25 Jun 2008.

****Dr Narayan Singh Rao** is Director, Mewar Institute of Management, Vasundhara, Ghaziabad.
Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CXXXVIII, No. 573, July-September 2008.

Media Policies of the Defence Forces and the Way Ahead*

Colonel Anil Shorey (Retd)**

Introduction

A peculiar drift in the working relationship between the Defence Forces and the media is notable today. Unlike previous wars, including Kargil, where the forces earned accolades, the good work being done today are passé, and defence image is at its nadir. Such a situation can definitely be arrested through some soul searching, reviewing of policies and rejuvenation of the defence Public Relations (PR).

This article covers issues such as basic ground realities related to the media and the Defence Forces; existing defence PR set-up; analysis of current defence - media policies; present shortcomings; some foreign defence PR examples; measures required to improve India's PR set-up and finally the idyllic way ahead.

Ground Realities - Media and Defence Forces Media

The media has made tremendous strides in communications, works 24/7, reporting in real time. However, between the media there prevails stiff competition; hence a proportionate rise in unethical reporting practices. The media also lacks awareness about the Defence Forces, apart from being ignorant of national security objectives. India has a free press but no National Media Policy; as such the media is having a free run and is not accountable to anyone, unless it violates provisions of the National Security Act or is accused of defamation. The Press Council of India functions as the media watch dog, but has no penal powers, hence is toothless. As such, no one is insulated from the media, and the more exposed one is to public glare, the more vulnerable.

Defence Forces

Post Kargil, the Defence Forces once again came into the public glare due to numerous scams, rapid expansion, acquisition, increased deployment in natural calamities and counter insurgency (CI) operations. That apart, materialism, perceptible decline in moral values, stiff internal competition, vying for awards, promotional cum posting heartburns and greater dependency on civil courts have also provided cannon fodder to the news - hungry media. Defence Forces could have counter balanced negative reporting, on aberrations by a miniscule minority, by regular projection of the good work being done by majority of men in uniform – but it missed out the opportunity to do so. The situation was better till the early 1990s when Defence Public Relations (PR) had maintained a good working relationship with the media which, at that time, comprised of a more cooperative print media, news agencies and Government run All India Radio (AIR) and Doordarshan (DD) TV channels only. Today the defence - media scenario is totally different.

EXISTING DEFENCE PR SET-UP

Handling of the media by Defence Forces is the prerogative of a few inter service and intra service PR organisations. Their structure and role, commencing with the Ministry of Defence (MOD), are as given in the succeeding paras.

MOD – DPR (Now APIO)

The Directorate of Public Relations (DPR), headed by a Director who has been recently upgraded and re-designated as the Additional Principal Information Officer (APIO), is based at South Block, New Delhi. It handles the entire PR of MOD, the forces, defence establishments and tri-service organisations throughout India. Although under the MOD, it is headed and mainly staffed by officers belonging to the India Information Service (IIS), an organ of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (I&B). All the service PROs and IIS officials are posted on tenure bases to this nerve centre of defence image - projection. While its Army, Navy and Air Force PROs look after their respective services, the PRO (Defence), an IIS officer, looks after inter service organisations, defence institutions and the MOD. The

Directorate also comprises various administrative sections, a Photo Unit, a Broadcast and News Analysis Section and 'Sainik Samachar' - the official in-house journal of MOD. The DPR also controls 25 Regional PROs spread all over India. They are a mix of officers of the rank of Major/Lieutenant Colonel and equivalent, though some in larger media centres are Colonels and equivalent. A large majority comprises IIS officials. They provide PR cover to all the formations, defence units and organisations located within their respective zones. Throughout India, fair amount of interface exists between PROs and PIB (DW), DD, AIR and some regional media, but negligible over national / autonomous media.

Army

Recently the Military Intelligence (MI) Directorate of Army HQ created the Army Liaison Cell (ALC), now upgraded and known as the Additional Directorate General (ADG) Public Information (PI). It handles both PR and Psychological Operations (Psy Ops), apart from bringing out the in-house Army newsletter 'Baat Cheet'. Operational commands have created an Information Warfare (IW) set up, while some corps and divisions have media cells to handle media and Psy Ops. They all function under respective MI branches.

Navy

Naval HQ has recently created a Media & PR (MPR) Cell based at Kotah House, New Delhi. It assists PRO Navy in scripting / compiling answers to fairly lengthy media questionnaires, background checks for interviews and also looks after foreign coordination and intelligence. No similar organisation has been created at Naval Commands or below.

IAF

Except for DPR's PRO IAF, no other PR set up exists with the IAF.

ANALYSIS OF CURRENT POLICIES PRACTICED BY the DEFENCE FORCES

General

The current MOD media policy permits Defence-Media interaction through nominated Defence PROs. However, many existing service rules, regulations and special orders on the subject tend to be confusing.

Rules, Regulations and Orders Specific to the Armed Forces

These are restrictive in nature; give out limited guidelines for communicating with the press, including lectures and broadcasts. It is categorically stated in them that 'Central Government' clearance is required for media interaction, through proper channels, except for regimental and service journals so long as they remain apolitical and non-controversial. Some go into details by stating subjects debarred for publication /lectures, such as operations, deployment, class composition, morale, equipping pattern of troops, classified documents, maps, photographs etc. In short they prohibit the publication of material 'prejudicial to security' or likely to 'embarrass' the Government of India (GOI). 1, 2 &3 Some of these rules and regulations are given below.

Defence Technical Publicity Rules (DTPR) 2004.4 Updated after 'Op Parakram'. It is based on its after action reports.⁵ Highlights are as under :-

- (a) Totally Binding.** Being a MOD document it is totally binding. It states that nominated PROs will act as official spokespersons and interact with the media on daily basis.
- (b) Basic Guidelines.** Apart from structure and tasks of Defence PR setup, it lists comprehensive guidelines related to functioning of DPR, media interaction / visits and regional publicity. It also states all levels of service clearance, but at Army HQ it rests with DGMI. (Earlier it used to be VCOAS / DGMO, but change has been made at the behest of Army HQ in conformity with its 'Army Media Policy 2005'). It states that the lowest level is a Brigade, and equivalent Formation / Station Commander with regard to Air Force. The Navy is restricted to Command level only.
- (c) CI Operations.** It states that CI Operations will be treated at par with Aid to Civil Authority, and media to be constantly informed of all operational aspects, without jeopardising operations, so as to prevent exploiting of the situation by the adversary.

- (d) **Operations and Emergencies.** It lays down policies for media coverage through the setting up of an 'Operational Policy Group' (OPG) under the DGMO (Army), DCNS and VCAS. The OPG will lay down parameters for media briefings, forward area visits, setting up and staffing of Mobile PR Units and Press Camps at suitable locations. Provisions exist for 'embedded journalists' to accompany troops on 'dangerous missions'. These guidelines are based on 'Regulations of Press Censorship in War -1973' issued by the Ministry of I&B.6
- (e) **Defence Correspondence Course (DCC).** It lays down comprehensive guidelines for running the DCC. Army Media Policy 20057

Army Media Policy 20057

This document has not been approved by the GOI, since it is quite similar to the DPTR. However, it states PRO Army and Regional PROs will be single point entities with the ALC to assist / coordinate / disseminate information and conduct Psy Ops. It stipulates the lowest level of media interaction / service clearance at Divisional level only.

PRESENT SHORTCOMINGS

DPR (MOD)

Headquartered at a prestigious part of South Block, image projection should actually start from here. The DPR should look like a show piece of the Defence Forces and MOD alike, and not like today's faceless, cramped corridors, sticky offices where media has to interact on a daily basis. Other deficiencies include a media centre, readily available photo / video banks, fact files, reference library, integral video recording cum editing facilities etc. With regard to staffing, IIS officers have strengths and drawbacks. Though media savvy, but many are uninformed and inexperienced on matters military. Also lacking is inter - service coordination at the macro level. To cite an example, the IAF felt sidelined during the Kargil war. HQ Integrated Defence Staff (IDS), meant to oversee this crucial aspect, has yet to formulate even its basic media doctrine. The DPR, ultimately, is supposed to function under the Chief of HQ IDS.

Defence Forces

The DPR set-up is a workable model but the forces need to improve upon it, ensure quality PROs and streamline their functioning. Some of the shortcomings are mentioned below:-

- (a) **Policy Voids and Conflicting Rules.** The services lack respective PR visions and policies. Without these, gaping voids exist in their PR plans. The plethora of service rules / regulations on media interaction are also confusing.
- (b) **Service PROs.** Seeing the sheer size of our defence forces, most PROs are too junior, lack aptitude and experience. PR is a sensitive issue and problem lies in faulty selection system, lack of education at each command level on the making of ideal PROs and also on endorsing key qualities in ACRs of potential PROs. Often the media gets disappointed due to lack of proper and timely response from the force PROs. It invariably expects a one point contact / spokesman. In cases of inordinate delay or stonewalling of information, the media files its own version, even if it may not be accurate. Seldom does it correct inaccuracies, which leaves the public misinformed. Knee jerk reactions by the services PROs or late rebuttals and denials also prove futile, if not more damaging.
- (c) **Lack of Basic Awareness about Media.** Most officers, including senior officers, are unaware of complexities and nuances of both regional and national media. Some tend to be indiscreet while interacting with media.
- (d) **ALC / ADG (PI) Duplication.** Raising of ALC / ADG (PI), except for Psy Ops, is redundant apart from adding yet another media processing channel. In any case, response to all operational or logistics based media queries are still being processed by respective operations / logistics branches. It also denies media interaction at brigade level, thus creating abnormal caution amongst commanders in dealing with the media, particularly in CI operations.
- (e) **Army PR Ensconced in MI Façade.** Except for DPR, all Army PR set-ups are based on MI / IW facades. Even service matters out in public domain are being handled by the MI, which is primarily meant for quality intelligence acquisition / collation, vetting of sensitive publication material like books etc. Throughout the world, media is chary of intelligence based media reports / handouts since they consider these to be doctored, as in countries where freedom of press is curtailed or censorship rules apply.

- (f) One Point Contact. Till date no 'one point' contact or popular spokesperson exists within the Army or even the services, quite unlike the MEA or even the Inter Service Public Relations (ISPR) set-up of Pakistan.
- (g) No Dedicated Print & Electronic Media Avenues. Barring a couple of in house publications, the forces are devoid of any dedicated space in the print media or electronic channels which can air their views objectively. This is creating a vast information gap amid the general public on matters military, apart from leaving tremendous scope for disinformation.

SOME FOREIGN DEFENCE PR EXAMPLES

USA

Defence PI comes directly under the Defence Secretary, and is headed by a senior service officer on a rotation basis. He also coordinates inter-service publicity. Under him are placed respective defence and service spokesmen. A sound PR Policy exists, and media is taken into confidence in all operational endeavours. All operational commands have dedicated PI officers, while lesser formations / task forces are represented by nominated (and qualified) spokespersons. Brigade Commanders and above are authorised to interact with the media on respective subject matters only.

Pakistan

The Inter Service Public Relations (ISPR) is responsible for all defence PR. The ISPR head is hand picked by the Army Chief, and also acts as the Chief Spokesman for all sensitive military issues. His rank has been upgraded recently to Major General. Its organisation is similar to our DPR, and PROs are posted at every Corps and selected defence establishments. The Army has a strong influence over it, and the Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) has a subtle interface with the ISPR, particularly in POK, NWFP, other troubled spots and in all overseas / UN Peacekeeping operations.

Australia

Its PI Directorate has an organisation quite similar to what we have in India, except that the Navy plays a major role in its policies. Although each Service is represented by nominated spokespersons, Army Corps, Air Force Commands and Naval Fleets have dedicated PI Officers, as do mission oriented special task forces headed by officers of the rank of Major General or equivalent. Inter-service coordination is maintained by the head of its PI Directorate at all times, and a fairly good interface exists with their media.

MEASURES TO IMPROVE INDIA'S DEFENCE PR SET-UP The GOI

In order to curb the media from resorting to scurrilous and unethical practices, a National Media Policy must be framed. It will also provide the frame work for other government and non government bodies to prepare their own policies, apart from providing suitable penal powers to the Press Council of India. The War Reports of 1962, '65 and '71 should be declassified by the GOI, earliest. Even the Henderson Brooks Report on the Sino - Indian war of 1962 is still under wraps. With the Right to Information (RTI) Act gaining momentum, and seeing the mood of the public, stonewalling of information has always proved to be counter productive. The forces have fought well and enough material is already available in public domain, but such anomalous situations are most embarrassing to the forces and GOI itself.

An Empowered and Reorganised DPR Set-Up

DPR / ADG PIO must be upgraded to a proper, vibrant and well equipped Directorate under HQ IDS. It should be headed by a Director General (DG), holding the rank of Lieutenant General or equivalent. That apart, based on the vision of MOD and the three Services Chiefs, respective PR Policies must be formulated. The functioning of the three service PROs should be ensured by a senior serving officer of the rank of Major General / equivalent, designated as ADG (PI), who will also coordinate inter-service publicity. He should be posted to the DPR on rotation basis, should be media savvy and NDC qualified. Routine 'special to service' PR requirements should be best left to respective PROs, but the ADG (PI) should give impetus to the DG, fine tune functioning and oversee media visits and tours. The rank of service PROs at Delhi should be upgraded to that of a Brigadier or equivalent. They, including Regional PROs should be hand picked, held accountable and form the 'single point' service contact at all times. With regard to

staffing, an ideal mix would be IIS officials and qualified and experienced defence personnel, both serving and retired, whose quality domain knowledge could be put to optimal use.

Educating Officers on Media and Proper Code of Conduct

This should begin at the entry level itself, i.e. NDA / IMA / OTA. Thereafter, periodic education through courses of instruction / seminars / cross attachment to media establishments will be necessary. It must be emphasised that there's no such thing as 'off the record' statements, of being 'misquoted' or quoted 'out of context' if media interaction is based on domain knowledge and hard facts, supported by handouts. Major breaches in code of conduct should be dealt with in an exemplary manner.

Improving 'In House' Justice

All service related redresses must be addressed judiciously and expeditiously by the Services, and promotion cum posting procedures streamlined in a fool proof manner. Once this is done, fewer service personnel will take recourse to civil courts which are frequented by the 'sensational news' hungry media.

Educating Media on Defence Matters

Media also needs to be continuously educated on defence matters through more wide based and frequent seminars, workshops, forward area cum regional tours apart from well conducted Defence Correspondents Courses. Territorial Army should be programmed to conduct special training and operational packages for selected media personnel, and thereafter they be permitted to operate with nominated units in operational areas.

Dedicated Defence Mouthpieces

The Defence Forces must have their own dedicated print and electronic media, including FM channels, even if they have to buy news space, as is being done by many nations worldwide. This will enable them to reach out methodically and to regularly 'air' Armed Forces related features, updates and programmes. The overall benefits accrued will far outweigh the cost involved.

THE WAY AHEAD

Once the GOI, MOD, HQ IDS and the three Services set their respective houses in order, the image, morale and prestige of the three Services will see an upswing. These measures will contribute to a number of positive developments such as:-

- (a) The emergence of a pragmatic National Media Policy
- (b) A legally empowered Press Council of India
- (c) A suitably modernised, well equipped and empowered DPR headed by a DG (PI) functioning under HQ IDS
- (d) Proactive annual PR plans prepared imaginatively but based on sound PR vision
- (e) Media related rules and regulations streamlined
- (f) Services represented by relatively senior, specially selected and accountable 'one point contact' PROs at both the national and regional level
- (g) Lowest media interaction level – a Brigadier and equivalent
- (h) MI facade dissolved to restore media trust
- (i) Availability of dedicated space at national and regional print and electronic media for airing defence views, news and programmes
- (j) An efficient tri service judicial system
- (k) A concerted awareness drive and
- (l) An highly improved 'code of conduct' amongst service personnel.

With increased public awareness of the role, responsibilities and functioning of the Defence Forces, a large percentage of youth will start opting for the Services as a challenging career, thereby arresting further shortfall in the intake of quality manpower.

CONCLUSION

Most of the problems related to an efficient defence-media interface are self created and can be resolved. I am reminded of a statement made by General K Sundarji, the former Chief of the Army Staff, at a media seminar at Delhi. He said, “when commanders fail to respond to the media, the field is left open to the critics of the armed forces, then speculation and misleading stories abound”.

*Based on the text of a talk delivered at the USI on 07 May 2008.

****Colonel Anil Shorey (Retd)** commanded 15 PUNJAB, was PRO Indian Brigade in Somalia and retired as PRO in Indian Army.

Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CXXXVIII, No. 573, July-September 2008.

Developments in Bhutan

Major General Y K Gera (Retd)*

Background

Bhutan is a landlocked Buddhist kingdom, with an area of 46,500 sq km and shares 470 km of land boundary with the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) and 605 km with India. Bhutan is sandwiched between the PRC in the north and the Republic of India in the south, east and west. The Country has developed a distinct pattern of socio-economic culture, political institutions and administration. Its geo-strategic importance lies in the fact that it acts as a 'Buffer Zone' between the PRC and India.

The early history of Bhutan is obscure. Due to the difficult and inhospitable mountainous terrain, the country remained in isolation for centuries, with hardly any contacts with the outside world. Historical records are, however, available from the 7th Century onwards, when monasteries like Paro Kitchu, Jumpa and Kujey Lhakhangs were set up in Bumthang Valley.¹ Bhutan remained a theocratic polity for a long time. On 17 December 1907, Ugyen Wangchuck became the first hereditary monarch.

Bhutan's political relations with British India drew focus in the year 1772 after a conflict between Bhutan and Cooch Bihar.² Warren Hastings sent a mission to Bhutan and relations got strained. However, Bhutan was not colonised. The British sent Younghusband's Expedition to Tibet during the year 1903. The king of Bhutan Ugyen Wangchuk successfully mediated between the British and the Tibetans. Consequently, relations between the British India and Bhutan improved. India gained independence in 1947. In 1949, Bhutan signed the 'Treaty of Friendship' with India, formalising relations between the two countries.

Evolution of Modern Bhutan

Structural and Social Reforms. The third monarch, Jigme Dorji Wangchuk, ascended the throne of Bhutan in the year 1952. He introduced constitutional, social, and judicial reforms. a nine member Royal Advisory Council, was established in 1953. A ceiling of 25 acres of land holdings was promulgated. Bonded labour was abolished. Separation of the Executive, from the Judiciary and the Legislature, was introduced. In 1961, the first five year development plan was launched. In 1971, Bhutan became a member of the United Nations.³ King Jigme Dorji Wangchuk came to be known as the father of modern Bhutan.

Political Reforms. The fourth monarch Jigme Singye Wangchuk ascended the throne in 1974. He established 20 district development councils in 1982. The council members were to be elected by their constituencies. During the year 1992, 202 block level committees were set up with 2,614 elected members. The democratic process was instituted to enable people's participation in nation building. In June 1998, the Cabinet was dissolved and the National Assembly was empowered to elect members of the Council of Ministers by secret ballot. The King also issued a written edict to register a vote of confidence by the National Assembly, whereby a motion of no-confidence by two-third majority shall require the King to abdicate in favour of the next in line of succession to the throne.

Absolute Monarchy to Parliamentary Democracy. The present King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk, whose Coronation was held on 14 December 2006, has strengthened the political system by holding the first general elections on 24 March 2008 to phase out absolute monarchy. Two parties were allowed to contest to elect 47 members for the National Assembly, the lower house of Bhutan's Parliament. The Druk Phuensum Tshogpa (DPT) or (Bhutan United Party) won 44 seats in a landslide victory. People's Democratic Party won only two seats. Jigmi Thinley has become the Prime Minister again. The elections were monitored by more than 40 international observers including the UN, and praised by the USA as a "positive step in Bhutan's transition to a democratic constitutional monarchy".⁴

Problem of Refugees in Exile

Bhutan is a Buddhist Kingdom where the majority of the people speak the Dzongkha language. There are three main ethnic, religious and linguistic groups in Bhutan. These are Ngalongs, Sarchops and Nepali speaking Lhotshampas. The forefathers of Lhotshampas came from Nepal and they still adhere to the Nepalese language and Hindu religion. They comprise around 46 per cent of the total population and mostly inhabit southern foothills of Bhutan. The

Lhotshampas began to feel the sting of discrimination in 1985 when a new citizenship act came into force stripping many of them of their status as legitimate citizens primarily due to their ethnic origin. Three years later a new policy of etiquette and manners was instituted that made it mandatory for all citizens to wear Bhutanese traditional clothing in public and use the national language in all government institutions. Those who did not meet the criteria spelt out in 1985 citizenship act were harassed and intimidated into leaving their homes and going into exile into neighbouring India and Nepal. Most of them belong to Lhotshampas ethnic group. Their number has grown to over 108,000, almost one sixth of Bhutan's population of 650,000 or so. In Nepal, most refugees are living in refugee camps in districts of Morang and Jhapa for the last couple of decades. There is pressure on the Nepal social system and complaints from citizens that the refugees drive down wages and contribute to crime. After 15 unsuccessful rounds of repatriation talks between Bhutan and Nepal; in 2005, a USA led core group including Norway, Canada, New Zealand, Denmark, Australia and the Netherlands persuaded Nepal to allow third country settlement of refugees. The USA has agreed to absorb 60,000 refugees. The other six countries have agreed to take in the rest.⁵ On an average 1,500 refugees are likely to be resettled every month. However, some refugees are not happy to go to a third country and would prefer to return home in Bhutan. However, the process of resettlement has started recently.

Chinese Interests and Influence

Bhutan does not have diplomatic relations with China. In 1954 the PRC published A Brief History of China where a portion of Bhutan was included as pre-historical realm of China. In 1958, another map claimed more Bhutanese land and later China occupied about 300 square miles of territory in the North and North East Bhutan. For centuries, Tibet has been a spiritual heartland of Mahayana Buddhists in the Himalayan region. Bhutan had a mission in Lhasa. The Tibetan uprising in 1959, the Dalai Lama's flight to India, and reports of Chinese troops along Bhutan's borders posed a security threat. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) occupied eight Bhutanese enclaves along Western Tibet. Bhutan closed its border, withdrew its representative from Tibet, and put an end to relations.

The border problem posed a serious security threat after September 1979 incursions by China into Bhutanese territory. Bhutan protested. China expressed its desire to solve the problem bilaterally. The process of China-Bhutan boundary talks made some progress in the 12th round with the signing of an interim agreement on 08 December 1998 to maintain peace and tranquility at the border. Since the official visit of Bhutanese delegation to China led by foreign secretary Dasho Ugyen Tshering from 18 to 25 July 2001, China-Bhutan relations have witnessed a change. The Chinese approach in resolving the border issue with Bhutan has been through a package deal. China has proposed to exchange 495 sq km area with an area of 269 sq km in the North West Bhutan. Both sides have agreed to discuss at technical level and then decide.

The India-Bhutan Treaty of February 2007, enables Bhutan to formulate her independent foreign policy according to her economic and national needs. Earlier, Article 2 of India-Bhutan Treaty of 1949, in principle, called for Bhutan to seek India's advice in external matters. Over the years, China has delayed the final settlement of boundary issue with Bhutan during the pre-Treaty era to gain more space to bargain with Bhutan in areas of trade and commerce.

China already has good strategic relations with Pakistan and Bangladesh. Maoist success in Nepal has boosted Chinese strategic influence there. China's policy towards Bhutan appears to aim at further consolidation of strategic influence in South Asia. In New Delhi's perception, South Asia constitutes an integral security unit in which India plays a lead role.

Indo-Bhutan Relations

Bilateral Relations. India and Bhutan friendship is deeply rooted in religion, culture, history, politics, security and economic ties. Recorded historic relations date back to 747 AD when Indian saint Padmasambhava introduced Buddhism in Bhutan which continues to be the state religion. The bilateral relations after the Indian Independence in 1947 were based on India-Bhutan Treaty of 1949, which provided for, "perpetual peace and friendship, free trade and commerce and equal justice to each other's citizens".⁶ Article 2 of the Treaty, in principle, called for Bhutan to seek India's advice in external matters, while India pledged non-interference in Bhutan's internal affairs. Formal relations between India and Bhutan were established in 1968. Resident representatives were exchanged in 1971. Ambassadorial level relations were set up in 1978. In 1971, India sponsored Bhutan's application for UN membership. The leaders of the two countries demonstrated that Article 2 of the Treaty was not a restricting factor in the exercise of Bhutan's foreign policy. In any case this clause has been modified in the new, India-Bhutan Treaty of Friendship signed in February 2007.

Economic Relations. Bhutan's planned development started with the First five year plan in 1961, with total funding and manpower support from India. All development programmes till the Third five year plan were fully financed by the Government of India. Over the years, India's financial assistance has increased from Rs 107 million in the first plan to Rs 9,000 million in the Eighth plan. Bhutan's sources of foreign aid have got diversified after it became a member of the UN. However, India continues to be a major donor accounting for about 40 to 45 per cent of the total external financial outlay. India has provided assistance mainly in the social sectors such as education, human resource development, health care, agriculture and road construction.

Hydro-Power. Bhutan has a potential of producing 30,000 MW of hydro-power which is a good source of energy. It is economically and environmentally an excellent option, particularly when compared to power plants that rely on coal for power generation and emit a lot of carbon dioxide (CO₂) gas as a by-product, and contribute to global warming. Important projects in which India has invested under Government of India-Royal Government of Bhutan cooperation include the Chhukha (336MW), Kurichhu (60MW), Tala (1,020 MW) and Puna Tsangchhu (870 MW).⁷ With a huge Indian market for electricity, Bhutan has no problem in exporting it. Currently, approximately 90 per cent of electricity generated in Bhutan is exported to India.

Trade and Investment. Exports to India from Bhutan, over the last couple of decades, have accounted for 85 per cent of the total. Similarly, imports from India are around 80 per cent. Exports include mineral products, chemicals, base metals, wood and electricity. Imports from India include machinery, mechanical appliances, electronic items, food products and consumer items. In the area of Foreign Direct Investment, State Bank of India has collaboration with the Bank of Bhutan. Indian nationals operate some of the trading and service activities on licenses issued by the Ministry of Trade and Industry in Bhutan. Indian investments encompass manufacturing, construction, engineering, steel, electronic industries, services and consultancy.

Co-operation in the Field of Security and Defence.

- (a) **Training of Military Personnel.** The Royal Bhutan Army Cadets undergo training at the National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla and the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun. The officers are trained at the Infantry School, Mhow, the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington and at the Army War College Mhow. In addition, Indian Military Training Team (IMTRAT) with Headquarters in Haa District of Bhutan, continues to do a good job. There is close co-operation between the two countries regarding training of military personnel of Bhutan.
- (b) **Construction of Road Network in Bhutan.** Road construction in mountainous terrain is very difficult. In India, Border Roads Development Organisation has gained valuable experience in this field. Project DANTAK a part of the Organisation has rendered good service in Bhutan by constructing over 1,000 km of roads in inhospitable mountainous terrain.
- (c) **Flushing out of Militants from Bhutan.** In the year 1996, illegal presence of militant camps using Bhutan as a base and hideout, while rebelling against the Indian Government got confirmed. Bhutan understood the potential danger. In the beginning of 1997 and during subsequent sessions, the issue was discussed in the Bhutan's National Assembly. Militant camps were established by the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), National Democratic Front of Bodos (NDFB) and the Kamptapuri Liberation Organisation (KLO) militant outfits⁸ in jungles of South East Bhutan. The Bhutanese Government urged the militants repeatedly over a period of seven years or so to leave Bhutan peacefully. By the end of 2003, it became clear that militants had no intention of leaving Bhutan till their objectives had been achieved. On 15 December 2003, the Royal Bhutanese Army launched military operations to flush out the militants. The operation was successful. It strengthened Indo-Bhutan relations and mutual respect.

Effects of Globalisation

Bhutan has enjoyed a protected status in its trade relations with India till 1990s.⁹ With Economic liberalisation it is imperative that Bhutanese industries adopt measures to keep abreast and yet remain competitive. Should that not happen, Bhutan will lose market share in the increasingly open market in India. Bhutan will also have to cope with effect of gradual privatisation of public sector undertakings catering for power, petroleum products and so on.

Bhutan has already applied for membership of the World Trade Organization (WTO) thereby displaying her firm commitment for globalisation. Bhutan is a signatory of free trade regimes such as SAARC Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA), and Bay of Bengal Trade and Economic Co-operation (BB-TEC). Membership follows liberalisation, economic reforms, institutions and harmonisation of national laws to conform to the WTO agreements. Bhutan has to

be prepared to institute suitable measures as also to compete and benefit from enhanced market access by removing incongruities with many pitfalls. It is a major challenge requiring a lot of forethought and detailed planning.

The Way Ahead: Vision 2020.10

The Bhutan Planning Commission has worked out the thrust line that will guide Bhutan in maintaining its distinctive Bhutanese path of development in a hand-book titled “Vision 2020”. Six guiding principles have been spelt out. These are – identity, unity and harmony, stability, self-reliance, sustainability and flexibility. These principles are to complement the concept of development, namely the Gross National Happiness (GNH) as distinct from Gross National Product (GNP). Proper implementation of developmental projects and plans, if achieved with a reasonable degree of success, are likely to result in Bhutan achieving some of the following:-

- (a) A modern state with Bhutanese identity.
- (b) A low sustainable rate of population growth through good education and health care.
- (c) Generate more hydro-power while minimising environmental degradation.
- (d) Strengthened democratic institutions.
- (e) Gradual and sustainable growth of private sector with emphasis on professionalism.

Conclusion

Bhutan is a “Buffer State” between India and China. Bhutan has good friendly relations with India. Bhutan-China relations are also improving. China has global ambitions. In South Asia, China already has good strategic relations with Pakistan and Bangladesh. Maoist success in Nepal has boosted Chinese influence there. China is wooing Bhutan to consolidate her strategic influence in South Asia. Bhutan has to tread cautiously to retain balance in keeping with her overall national interests.

Globalisation is a big challenge. It is a complex social, political and cultural phenomenon, as much as, it is about economics. Two principles are dominant – the principle of ‘economic liberalism’ and the principle of ‘social protection’. The first aims at establishment of a self regulating market on a global scale and the second at protecting society, environment as well as production, from the ill effects of the market forces. Bhutan as a sovereign nation will have to achieve a delicate balance between globalisation and counter movements with emphasis on equity and justice in a sustainable development model.

The Kingdom of Bhutan is a progressive State, where reforms in the political, social, economic, and judicial institutions are by and large keeping pace with each other. The concept of Gross National Happiness (GNH) was propounded by the Fourth King Jigme Singye Wangchuk in the late 1980s. It places the individual and the people at the centre of all developmental efforts. It recognises that individuals have material, spiritual and emotional needs. Development plans and “Vision 2020” have been made, keeping the concept of the GNH in mind. A balanced approach to the phenomenon of globalisation and successful implementation of the development plans, if achieved, are bound to lead to prosperity and a better quality of life for the people of Bhutan.

*Major General YK Gera (Retd) was ADG SI and CSO Central Command; and Deputy Director and Editor of USI from 01 Jan 1997 to 30 April 2007.

Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CXXXVIII, No. 573, July-September 2008.

A Report – On the Visit of USI Delegation to the Fourth Trilateral Dialogue Held at Taipei (Taiwan)

Brigadier Arun Sahgal (Retd)*

Background

In pursuance of ongoing annual trilateral dialogue between United Service Institution of India (USI), Okazaki Institute of Japan (OIJ) and Taiwan Strategy Research Association (TSRA), the fourth dialogue on ‘Regional Security’ was hosted at Taipei from 24-26 April 2008 by TSRA. The trilateral dialogue between these Institutions was initiated in 2005 to discuss issues of common security concerns to ensure better understanding on shared perspectives. Previous three editions of the dialogue were held at Taipei, New Delhi and Tokyo respectively. Apart from delegations from the three participating countries, there were also two observers; Mr. Richard Fisher, Senior Fellow, Asian Military Affairs, International Assessment and Strategy Centre, the USA and Mr Gaurav Sodhi from the Centre for Independent Studies, Sydney, Australia.

The USI Delegation was led by Air Marshal VK Bhatia, PVSM, AVSM, Vrc & Bar (Retd), and comprised Vice Admiral Raman Puri, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd), Mr Prashant Aggarwal, IFS and Brigadier Arun Sahgal (Retd), Deputy Director (Research) – the last two from the Centre for Strategic Studies and Simulation, USI.

This edition of the dialogue focussed on four important themes - ‘Development of Asia- Pacific Security Environment and Cross Strait Relationship’, ‘Politico-military Relationship of PLA’, ‘Non-Traditional Security Issues: The Maritime Dimension’ and ‘The Future Development of Trilateral Strategic Dialogue: from TSRS (Trilateral Strategic Dialogue on Regional Security) to MAPSC (Multi-lateral Asia-Pacific Security Conference).

Deliberations

Session I of the dialogue dealt with ‘Development of Asia-Pacific Security Environment and Cross Strait Relationship’. The **Taiwanese delegates** pointed out that Ma Ying-jeou of Kuomintang (KMT) had won presidential elections by a large margin, and the main reason behind incumbent Democratic Peoples Party’s (DPP) defeat was its pro--independence stance that led to strained Cross Strait relations with the mainland China and economic downturn over the last few years. Main planks on which Ma won were, intimate Cross Strait relationship and common market with mainland China. KMT in its foreign policy paper had criticised eight years of ‘Scorched Earth Policy’ of DPP that had left Taiwan, utterly isolated within the international community. KMT promised to adopt ‘flexible diplomacy’ to end nation’s diplomatic isolation and improve Cross Strait relations based on ‘1992 Consensus’ and ‘Mutual Non-Denial’ framework. Ma had criticised former President Chen Shui-bian for turning Taiwan into an ‘international troublemaker’ by pursuing de jure independence and vowed to normalise Taiwan’s trade relations with the Mainland China. Espousing flexible diplomacy, new government stressed that this would be based on principles of sovereignty, economic strength, pragmatism, equality and dignity, and offered to begin negotiations with the other side of the Taiwan Strait in search of a mutually beneficial equilibrium to prevent confrontation between both sides and squandering of resources.

However, majority public opinion in Taiwan appeared more for status quo than an accelerated China appeasement policy; thus, forcing the new government to carry out mid-stream course correction in their foreign policy by declaring adherence to a ‘three No’s’ policy of ‘No unification’, ‘No independence’ and ‘No use of force’. This may have also been done to assuage the feelings of the USA and Japan, who while endorsing a ‘One-China’ policy, favoured continuation of status-quo till democratic ideologies on both sides of the ‘Strait’ matured. It, however, needs to be underscored that post visit there has been a deepening of contact between the mainland China and Taipei, resulting in enhanced flights and increase in tourism. Above does not mean that the People’s Republic of China (PRC) is not concerned; at policy level there is concern about the fact that Taiwan despite these initiatives remains a front line entity in the US East Asian policy.

The Japanese Perspective

The Japanese side assessed political changes in Taiwan and prospects for future USA-China relations from the

perspective of their effects on Japan. Based on Ma's public commitments and statements, they felt that he would aspire for reopening political dialogue with China using appeasement, to not only reduce tense situation in Taiwan Strait but considerably improve it through endorsement of 'One-China' policy. However, on the issue of unification or independence, the Japanese felt that status-quo would be maintained through his 'three No's' policy. On economic issues however, a more robust economic posture including revival via 'common market' of Taiwan and the mainland China and aggressive opening-up of Taiwan economy to mainland China was perceived. With regards to the UN membership, they felt that given 'no independence' being part of his 'three No's' policy, Ma would go slow on it. As far as defence preparedness was concerned, preference for keeping defence expenditure at three per cent of the GDP was proffered. While the Japanese delegates were sanguine that the new government would continue a policy of arms purchases from the USA, despite opposition from China; however, it would not be allowed to grow into an arms race in the region. On other hand, whether Beijing would respond to the call for removing ballistic missiles targeting Taiwan, was seen as a fluctuating variable.

The Japanese were concerned that Taiwan under Ma would be more pro-China as compared to Japan or the USA. However, Ma was expected to maintain a good relationship with the USA, judging by his profile as a Harvard University graduate. With Japan, Ma was seen to be unyielding in political sphere but would strive for deeper ties in economic and cultural areas. This assessment was based on Ma's statement that he would not change position of holding fast to territories and sovereignty as reflected in the issues such as Senkaku islands and perception of history, but at same time, he was enthusiastic about strengthening relationship with Japan by concluding Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and expansive mutual exchange of students.

While evaluating Beijing's reaction, the Japanese felt that China had welcomed KMT's return to power with positive implications for China, given reduced possibilities of Taiwan's independence and UN membership. They visualised easing of tensions with Ma in power and in view of his stated emphasis on improving Cross Strait relations. However, there was likely to be little change in China's basic policy towards Taiwan which remained centred on 'peaceful unification' and 'political solution' under 'one state, two systems'. The Japanese were of the view that Beijing, with its anti-secession law in place could use force, if required. This was seen as a remote possibility in the near future particularly as China remained confident of 'peaceful unification' in the long term. Towards this, the delegation noted that China was already slowly nudging Taiwan towards unification by applying pressure tactics such as, compressing Taiwan's international space, directing political, military and juridical pressure on Taiwan, together with indirect pressures on Taiwan by strengthening relations with the USA and Japan and, by embracing Taiwan gradually into the Sino-economic zone.

The delegation asserted that Japan's fundamental stance on Taiwan issue continued to be reflected in Japan-China joint statement dating back to September 1972, which provided that Japan understands and respects 'One-China' that China promotes; yet Japan did not consent to this joint statement. As for the possession of Taiwan, Japanese perception was that Japan abandoned Taiwan in accordance with San Francisco Peace Treaty, but was not in a position to state, to where Taiwan should revert. However, notwithstanding stated position, Japan was resigned to 'One-China' policy and, along with the USA, wanted to see a peaceful resolution to the Cross Strait issue. Here again, in consonance with the US policy, Japan would like status quo to be maintained till Cross Strait ideologies and political systems converged to uniformly embrace democratic values and ethos which had been so well adopted by Taiwan ; and which, both countries know, may not happen in the foreseeable future.

The above attitude underscored the Japanese apprehensions on possible future unification of Taiwan with the mainland China. There were two main reasons for this. Firstly, China's annexation of a highly developed and prosperous Taiwan, in future, would increase its national strength dramatically. Secondly, with Taiwan no longer providing a maritime buffer to Japan, scope of Chinese naval activities would increase as Peoples Liberation Army (Navy) (PLAN) would gain wide access to western Pacific Ocean and because of this China would have an advantage over Japan by dominating Japan's sea lanes of communication (SLOC). This could also lead to degradation in the credibility of the USA in the region, as China's influence would be enhanced substantially. Another but unstated nuance was Japan being forced to review its pacifist policy and once again becoming a front line state in a regional conflict scenario.

Perspectives on the USA

From the Chinese viewpoint, the USA was preventing a peaceful unification of China and Taiwan and China viewed the USA-Taiwan Relations Act and the US military power and arms exports to Taiwan based on it, and the Japan-US Security Treaty as greatest hindrances to reunification. That was a major reason why China was feverishly

modernising its armed forces. For the PLA it was its 'noble mission' to block dissolution of the homeland. Immediate target of PLA's buildup and modernisation was to create military power potential to dissuade, such armed forces as that of the USA, to come to the assistance of Taiwan in the event of use of force by China for re-unification.

Fundamentals of the US policies towards Taiwan were governed by 'One-China' policy, three communiqués and Taiwan Relations Act. The USA had welcomed and encouraged Cross- Strait dialogue as a process which contributed to reduction of tension and to an environment conducive to eventual peaceful resolution of outstanding differences between both sides. The USA believed that differences between Taipei and Beijing ought to be resolved by people on both sides of the Strait themselves and had consistently stated that its abiding interest was that the process be peaceful. It was clear that the USA opposed any unilateral decision that would change status-quo and that the matters related to Taiwan's future must be solved peacefully and in a manner which was acceptable in its entirety to Taiwan. In this the USA would endeavour to maintain a balance between China and Taiwan. However, in case of use of force by China against Taiwan, the USA would get involved.

President Bush had welcomed Ma's election as "power of Taiwan's democracy." He saw new opportunity for China and Taiwan to resolve their differences peacefully through direct dialogue. However, while he welcomed relaxation of tension in Taiwan Strait, it was argued that the USA would hope the new Ma administration too, would maintain China-Taiwan military balance for the sake of stability of the 'Strait'. Against this backdrop, the USA was pleased with Ma's policy of spending three per cent of Taiwan's GDP on defence and its continuing purchase of arms from them.

The Indian Perspective

Indian delegation had discussed South Asian, Central Asian and Asia-Pacific politico-security issues with other delegations, with emphasis on China, given its prominence in all three regions. Feedback received was of cautious optimism amidst a general backdrop of improving bilateral relations but occasional pin-pricks could not be ignored. Emerging grand strategy of China in South Asian context was that of limiting India. This was being achieved by keeping boundary issue alive as a strategic lever. China was also engaged in reducing Indian leverage in its neighbourhood through trade and infrastructure concessions, port building and through military sales - what was termed as an attempt to create a 'String of Pearls' for strategic encirclement of India.

A perspective also emerged that improvement in cross strait relations or future unification would have serious strategic impact on India with unresolved boundary issue and the challenge posed by simultaneous growth of two major players in constrained Asian landscape. Taiwanese side alluded to reports of redeployment of forces from the Eastern theatre towards Tibet and opposite Myanmar in such an eventuality.

Session II of the dialogue dealt with 'Political-Military Relationship of PLA' and saw a near unanimity of perceptions between all three sides. Relationship between Politburo (PB) of Communist Party of China (CPC) and Central Military Commission (CMC) was essentially seen as reflection of status of civil-military relations in China as this relationship had undergone evolution. In revolutionary era, Red Army was merely an armed instrument of CPC, to be used to achieve Communist Party's military and strategic ends. Control of the Army was always in the hands of CPC and the Red Army was never allowed to dominate CPC. With three decades of reforms and growing professionalism of the PLA, Party-Army relationship had evolved into more of a civil-military relationship.

Structure of power in China was largely based on three pillars: CPC, State apparatus and the PLA. In 1954, the Chinese constitution stipulated that command of the PLA lay with the State apparatus - with the PRC President - then Chairman Mao. In 1959, Mao relinquished the post of President to Liu Shaoqi. However, to regain his dwindling control over CPC, the Cultural Revolution was launched. During this period, as per the 1975 and 1978 constitutions, the command of PLA reverted to Chairman of CPC (Chairman Mao). Deng Xiaoping had launched a decade long reform process after becoming Chairman CMC in 1981. The 1982 Constitution reverted command of PLA to PRC President. During this period, State CMC was also created in order to formalise the role of military within government structure. China, therefore, had two CMCs - Party and State. To ensure integrity of command, membership of both Party CMC and State CMC was the same. Theoretically, Party CMC was elected by CPCs' Central Committee, and State CMC by National Peoples' Congress (NPC). In some ways, State CMC was weaker in position and actual strength lay with Party CMC.

The highest party body, PB Standing Committee consisted only of civilians, and the highest body pertaining to military matters (CMC) was overwhelmingly manned by military persons, and there was a clear trend towards further

separation of civil and military power. It is difficult to say, however, if this separation was being driven by a need, felt for a professional PLA – to meet the challenges of information centred, technologically advanced, asymmetric warfare, or whether it was increasing professionalism of the PLA that was leading to this separation.

It is also important to note that in emerging civil leadership (4th generation), there was hardly any experience of military matters. Among the so called future 5th generation leaders, it is only Xi Jinping who has served as mishu (personal secretary) of the Defence Minister from 1979-82. In the past, many in CPC's civil posts were retired PLA officers, or some civil leaders who could gain familiarity with work of military by working as Political Commissars, or by cultivating close links with the military. This does not appear to be the case for new civil leadership of China.

Interestingly, in the Chinese System, state apparatus is not a party to military decision making in the CMC. This is largely due to the fact that the head of the state apparatus, Chinese Premier (currently Wen Jiabao) is not a CMC member. Though Minister of National Defence (MND), who is a member of State Council, is a member of the CMC, the fact remains that the operational command and control of the PLA lies with Party CMC, and not with MND. In China, MND only has a role of liaising with foreign militaries and governments. This peculiar structure has meant that only the President remained a high level link between highest civil leadership and highest military leadership (He is also Chairman of the National Security Leading Small Group (LSG), Foreign Affairs LSG and Taiwan LSG – all of which had PLA membership).

Thus, a top only decision making, not involving state apparatus and little horizontal communication, risked resulting in lack of coordination among various agencies. It is felt that this ambiguity could be dangerous for highly charged, or escalating situations, as it could lead to miscalculation by any side involved. In such situations, Chinese foreign ministry was not necessarily going to be in the loop, as was illustrated by the example of anti-satellite (ASAT) test. China conducted ASAT test on 11 January 2007. Apparently Foreign Ministry was in dark, because it kept denying the Test until the USA went public with its knowledge of ASAT on 17 January. Chinese Foreign ministry finally acknowledged it only on 23 January. This incident raised questions regarding functioning of decision making process in China, systems for a coordinated response strategy, crisis management, managing international perceptions of China's strategic moves and so on.

Finally, unique structure of military decision making in China could lead to a situation where one individual, who was not head of the government, could still have command and control of the PLA by virtue of remaining Chairman of the CMC. This had happened twice in the past, when both Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin did not step down from the post of CMC Chairman after stepping down from their other political posts. These were unique circumstances when PRC President was not CMC Chairman, meaning that no one in the Chinese Government had command and control over the PLA.

In the present era, with strong emphasis on collective leadership, this was not likely to happen. Earlier when there was one supreme leader like Deng Xiaoping who also had extremely good links with PLA, this arrangement could work. However, it was not certain if such an arrangement would continue to work in present time when President was more of a 'First' among 'Equals'. Clearer delineation and bifurcation of civil and military affairs, continued professionalisation of the PLA, cross-linking at high level, and a perceived ignorance of military matters would all have a direct, though perhaps unintended outcome of lessening of civil control over military. How this would be managed remains to be seen.

Session III of the dialogue dealt with 'Non-Traditional Threats to Security: Maritime Dimension'. In this session too there was a near congruity of perspectives as far as an understanding of maritime threats and opportunities today was concerned, particularly in respect of the Asia-Pacific region. All three sides were agreed on the fact that while Maritime environment presented a valuable resource base with discovery of oil and minerals, fisheries and cheapest mode of transport for global trade, the earlier perceptions of seemingly endless abundance had given way to consciousness of scarcity with its attendant implications for maritime law and security resulting in a shift from freedom of seas to greater control and regulation. This has brought about increased sovereignty claims over ocean spaces and has been legally sanctified after United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS III) leading to increased disputes relating to maritime sovereignty claims.

There were two distinct schools of thought. In Japanese perspective sea lanes through Malacca - Singapore Strait, South China Sea and East China Sea were regional life lines of the North East Asian countries and in a sense 'Achilles Heel' of the world economy. In their view, trans regional connectivity of SLOCs make for what is sometimes called "Broad Sea Lane" or inter regional dimension for their security. In their perspective, the above viewpoint creates

necessity for regional maritime cooperation from the perspective of SLOC security. They highlighted, within the above context, common basic values between India - Japan - the USA and Taiwan, together with the need for collaboration between Indian Ocean Region and Oceania South Pacific Region

The Japanese side highlighting the importance of the Indian Ocean Region emphasised the need to convert this major economic and security artery from an arc of instability to inseparability i.e. coordination and cooperation effort to connect the two economically dynamic regions. Impetus for such a cooperation from the Japanese perspective is provided by growing mutual bilateral relations between India, the USA and Japan. It was argued that such a multilateral Maritime Security Coalition could develop into Broad Maritime Security Cooperation with other democratic maritime power groups.

The Indian side on other hand focussed on good maritime governance to deal with growing challenges of piracy and terrorism. Maintaining that dealing with these challenges was the responsibility of coastal states it emphasised that this, first and foremost, required focus on securing of littorals. Furthermore, non traditional threats were inseparable from international security concerns and coexist with maritime sovereignty, offshore infrastructure etc. Highlighting growing vulnerabilities, the Indian side discussed new challenges at sea to include restricted operational space at ports and other locations, opaque and amorphous maritime environment, lax governance and poor security, and focussed on the need to replicate land capabilities at sea to deal with the challenges of Low Intensity Maritime Environment. In terms of changing tactics; hijacking of speedboats to collide with oil tankers or Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) carriers; using boats as platforms for dispersal of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) agents; using vessels as tools of disruption at critical choke points; and use of IEDs, submersibles, high-speed boats, and mini submarines was emphasised.

As a strategy to deal with this threat the Indian side highlighted changes in focus ‘from the land to the sea’ as against the old notion of just ‘at sea’. Towards this they emphasised on degrading the land capabilities of the asymmetric actors. An effective strategy, the Indian delegation highlighted, required political will, institutional synergies, operational endurance and cooperative threat engagement strategies.

Conclusion

The salient points that emerged during discussions in the various sessions of the fourth dialogue were:-

- (a) While participating countries were at ease with economic growth of China, worrisome fact was the unprecedented defence modernisation programmes and rapidly growing military might of China.
 - (b) Of special concern was the build up of maritime and aerospace power of China.
 - (c) Both Taiwan and Japan were especially keen on creating a maritime security alliance of democratic countries in Asia-Pacific region including the USA, Australia, India and Singapore.
 - (d) In pursuance of the above aims, to enlarge existing trilateral strategic dialogue to multilateral Asia-Pacific Security Conference.
- The dialogue once again provided a forum for deliberating upon issues of common concern and understanding of different perspectives. An important aspect of the ‘Trilateral Dialogue’ is that it provides an understanding of South and East Asian perspectives which in a way contributes to its uniqueness.

***Brigadier Arun Sahagal (Retd)** is Deputy Director (Research), Centre for Strategic Studies and Simulation at the USI.