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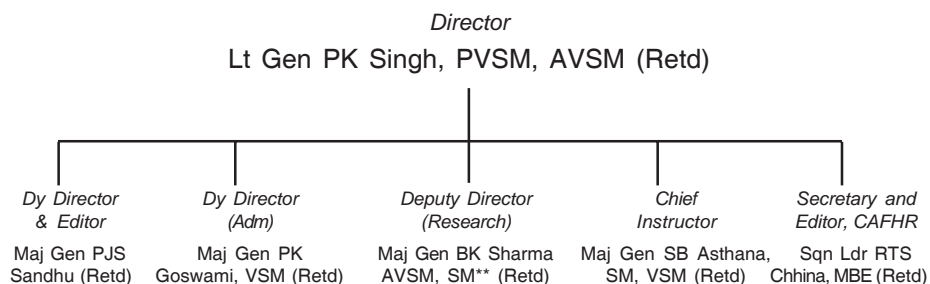
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1. Members are welcome to forward original articles pertaining to national security and defence matters for publication in the USI Journal. **Articles should preferably not exceed 2,500 words.** These should be forwarded in double space on A-4 size paper, along with a CD/DVD as a Word document. The articles should be sent to the Editor, United Service Institution of India, Rao Tula Ram Marg, Post Bag No. 8, Vasant Vihar PO, New Delhi-110057. Alternatively, articles may be sent through e-mail on [dde@usiofindia.org](mailto:dde@usiofindia.org). The author should render a certificate that the article has neither been published in print or online, nor has it been offered to any other agency for publication. The Editor reserves the right to make alterations.
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3. Abbreviations if any, should be used in their expanded form the first time and indicated in brackets.
4. The full name and address of the author along with a brief Curriculum Vitae should be given. Serving officers are advised to follow the prevailing Services instructions for publications of their articles.
5. The author will receive a copy of the issue of the Journal in which his/her article appears along with three offprints. A suitable honorarium will also be paid after the article is published.

## GUIDE TO WRITING ENDNOTES

1. Endnotes are notes added to the main body of a paper or an article, in which the author directs readers to sources referred to or to add extra comments of his or her own. Endnotes are placed at the end of the paper/article. A superscript number (<sup>1,2,3,4,.....</sup>) at the end of the sentence signals the reader to look for the corresponding endnote at the end of the article. The endnotes should be numbered consecutively, starting from '1'. Citations should include the author's name, title of the book (in italics), publishing information (in parenthesis) and pages consulted, all separated by commas.

For example :-

<sup>1</sup> Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy : A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*, (Oxford University Press, London, 1988), p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> Lina Bolzoni and Pietro Corsi, *The Culture Memory*, (Bologna : Societa editrice il Mulino, 1992), p. 45.

2. Use of *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, and *loc. cit.*

*Ibid.* refers to the immediate preceding reference; *op. cit.* refers to the prior reference by the same author and *loc. cit.* is used instead of *op. cit.* when reference is made to a work previously cited and to the same page in that work. For example :-

<sup>4</sup> R Poirer, *Learning Physics*, (Academic, New York, 1993), p.4.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> T Eliot, *Astrophysics*, (Springer, Berlin, 1989), p. 141.

<sup>7</sup> R Millan, *Art of Latin Grammar*, (Academic, New York, 1997), p.23.

<sup>8</sup> Eliot, *op. cit.*, p.148.

<sup>9</sup> Eliot, *loc. cit.*

3. Where websites have been used to access information, the complete web address of the website should be cited, followed by the date the website was accessed by the author.

For example :-

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1497degama.html>.  
Accessed on 06 January 2016.

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**R-79	China's One Belt One Road : Initiative, Challenges and Prospects Edited by Maj Gen BK Sharma & Mrs Nivedita Das Kundu	650	2016
R-80	Developments in Central Asia : India-Kyrgyzstan Relations. Edited by Maj Gen BK Sharma & Mrs Nivedita Das Kundu M/s Pentagon Press, New Delhi	2016	795
**R-81	Geopolitics, Security and Bilateral Relations : Perspectives from India and South Korea Edited by Maj Gen BK Sharma & Cdr MH Rajesh	2016	695
R-82	In Memoriam – The Fallen Air Warriors By Air Marshal Bharat Kumar, PVSM, AVSM (Retd) M/s IMR Media Pvt Ltd, 8A Ashok Marg, Silokhra, Gurgaon-122001	2016	695
R-83	China Strides in Bhutan, Nepal and Myanmar – Option for India By Col Subodh Kumar Shahi M/s GB Books	2016	995
**NSP-33	Power is a Dynamic Concept : Challenges to India's Strategic Autonomy in the Coming Decade and How we can Shape the Strategic Environment By Lt Gen Vijay Oberoi, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd)	2016	195
**OP-1/ 2016	Nuclear Security Summit – The Challenge Continues Dr Roshan Khanijo	100	2016
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**NSS-62	The Indo-Pacific Region – Security Dynamics and Challenges" Edited by Gp Capt Sharad Tewari, VM (Retd) & Dr Roshan Khanijo	850	2016
<b>** Available from Vij Books</b>		<b>* Available from USI</b>	



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## NOTE

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## From Director's Desk

**Dear Members,**

At the outset, the year 2016 having come to an end, I thank you for the support I received from you in multifarious activities conducted by the United Service Institution of India (USI) during the year. I would also like to put on record that without the support and guidance from the Vice Patrons (Service Chiefs), Council Members, members of various Boards and senior members of the Institution, it would not have been possible to keep up our tradition of excellence. I have no doubt that the USI will continue to receive your support and patronage in 2017 as well to carry forward its rich heritage of 146 years and in the years ahead. We, at USI on our part, will continue to strive hard to build on the rich legacy of USI. However, to do so, we will need to assiduously preserve the Institution's autonomous character which is our pillar of strength and also the basic ethos of the USI, one of the oldest think tanks in the world.

I take this opportunity to thank the Service Chiefs for their unstinted support to the USI in their official capacity and as the Vice Patrons of the Institution. We wish Air Chief Marshal Arup Raha, PVSM, AVSM, VM, ADC, Chairman COSC and Chief of the Air Staff and General Dalbir Singh, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC, Chief of the Army Staff who superannuated on 31 Dec 2016, the very best in post-retirement life. I would also like to congratulate and felicitate Lieutenant General Bipin Rawat, UYSM, AVSM, YSM, SM, VSM and Air Marshal BS Dhanoa, PVSM, AVSM, YSM, VM on their elevation as the Chiefs of their respective Services and on assuming the mantle of Vice Patrons of the USI. We look forward to their support and guidance.

The Centre for Strategic Studies and Simulation (CS3) continues to work hard to achieve new milestones in the field of research, net assessment and strategic gaming exercises. I am proud to highlight that the Centre has expanded on the quality and content of its research on strategic affairs. The Centre undertook two study projects for the Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff (IDS) namely, "SWOT Analysis of Bangladesh" and "Scenario

Building and Scenario Analysis of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)". During the year, four Strategic Gaming Exercises were conducted, two each for National Defence College, New Delhi and Army War College, Mhow. The feedback received from these two prestigious institutions has been most encouraging.

We were also privileged to conduct a seminar at the HQ South Western Command, Jaipur on "Analysis of Growing Pak-China Linkages: Its Effects on India's National Security and Options to Mitigate the Same". We plan to build on this effort and will continue in our endeavour to spread awareness of the strategic issues to the operational and field levels of the three Services.

The USI conducted the Annual National Security Seminar on 03 and 04 Nov 2016 on the subject "Strategic Balance in the Indo-Pacific Region: Challenges and Prospects" where 26 participants from 10 countries i.e. Bangladesh, China, Germany, Russia, South Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Taiwan and of course, India participated. We also organised "Bilateral Security Dialogue" with Afghan Institute of Strategic Studies (AISS) in two tranches, one each, at New Delhi and Herat. These were mutually beneficial.

Taking forward our relationship with organisations abroad, a number of joint workshops with international universities were conducted during the year; namely, with Daniel K Inouye Asia-Pacific Centre for Security Studies, Hawaii, USA, on "*Transnational Threats and Border: Challenges and Opportunities for Regional Security*"; Korean National Defence University (KNDU)-Research Institute on National Security Affairs, RINSA, South Korea on "*Emerging Geo-Political Dynamics in the Asia Pacific Region and its Implication for Regional Peace and Security*" and International Ataturk - Alatau University, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan & Sichuan University, China. CS3 also conducted an 'Internship Programme' for Christ University, Bengaluru. The Centre regularly has students coming from various Universities for doing their internship on important strategic issues. This year, the Centre signed five MOU's with International and National Institutions. Also, four panel discussions were conducted for foreign diplomats from Foreign Services Institute (FSI). Series of lectures on strategic issues were conducted for the National Defence College, Oman. Our networking and partnership is enlarging.

Roundtable Discussions / Seminars were held with delegations from countries such as Vietnam, China, Japan, the UK, the USA, and Australia. Members from USI also participated in various international events such as the Herat Security Dialogue, at Herat, Afghanistan; 7<sup>th</sup> Xiangshan Forum, Beijing; "Taiwan PLA Studies International Program 2016" at Taipei, Taiwan; the Galle Dialogue, Colombo and the RAND-CAPS, Taipei NDU Conference on PLA in Washington DC.

The USI also came out with number of publications, including books written by research scholars, seminar books and joint publications with foreign universities. These are available with CS3 and the USI Library. This year, the USI also published a number of Occasional Papers on various contemporary issues. For the first time, we published the USI Strategic Year book 2016. It has been well received and it is our endeavour to continue the publication of this book as an annual feature. It is also our intent to make as many publications as possible available digitally. Till date, we have digitally published 26 articles as Strategic Perspective on our website and posted 122 articles on the USI Blog.

The USI Centre for Armed Forces Historical Research (CAFHR) continues with its efforts to highlight the role played by the Indian Armed Forces in the First and Second World Wars. Towards this end, it jointly organised a one-day symposium on 19 October 2016 in London, with the Imperial War Museum (IWM), the Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton & Hove, and the Golden Tours Foundation (GTF). The event brought together a steering group to discuss ways to collaborate and create a collective remembrance of the contribution of Indian soldiers in the two World Wars. This historical event concluded with a reception organised at the House of Commons where the group shared the outcome of the day's discussions with Members of the British Parliament.

CAFHR has also taken a notable step towards institutionalising a national culture of remembrance of soldiers through the 'India Remembers' project. The intent of the project is to generate awareness across a broad spectrum of society about the valour and sacrifice of personnel of the Indian Armed Forces in the Service of the Nation, both before and after Independence. The CAFHR continues to actively support quality research on subjects of Indian

military history. Recent publications include a book titled "*Les Hindous: Indian Army on the Western Front: 1914 – 1919*". This book was launched jointly by the French and Belgian Ambassadors at the Embassy of France on 22 November 16. The Centre is also assisting the Government of India in providing display material to the Bangladesh National Liberation War Museum in Dhaka.

It gives me great happiness to share with our members that Squadron Leader Rana TS Chhina (Retd) Secretary, CAFHR has been made an Honorary Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) by the British Government, after prior approval of the Indian Government; a rare honour, in recognition of his services and contribution to Indo-UK relations and for work on the Great War Centenary Commemoration (1914-18).

Contribution towards the professional advancement of serving officers of the Defence Services has always been one of the important objectives of the USI. As far back as 1903, the Institution offered to assist officers in preparing for various promotion examinations. In 1910, we started assisting candidates in preparing them for the Defence Services Staff College Examination. I am delighted to bring to your notice that even to date, we continue to do so and the results are most encouraging. The courses run by the Course Section of the USI are well subscribed and the subscription to various courses in 2016 increased by about 15 per cent vis-à-vis 2015. The success rate of USI trained candidates in 2016 was over 88 per cent.

As was done in the last year, our endeavour this year too has been to upgrade services provided to the members of Colonel Pyara Lal Memorial Library and add new books and journals. Our library is known to be a "gold mine of information" for those who wish to undertake research on strategic and security related issues. In 2016, about 600 new books covering wide spectrum were added to the library. The daily news and editorial highlights continue to be uploaded promptly on our website.

The USI Journal which has an uninterrupted record of publication since 1871 continues to grow in content and stature and I acknowledge the meaningful contributions made by our members and other scholars, strategic thinkers and experts. I am

proud of the fact that the USI Journal finds its rightful place in the racks of various libraries and partner institutions nationally and internationally.

Colonel Pyara Lal Memorial Lecture, General Samir Sinha Memorial Lecture as well the National Security Lecture were conducted on carefully selected subjects of contemporary relevance and pitched at strategic level. These evoked great interest among both serving and retired officers which was evident from the overwhelming attendance. Their transcripts have been published in the USI Journal and are being read with great interest and the feedback from members is encouraging.

The annual USI Gold Medal Essay Competition in Group A and B provide insight into the thinking of the current generation of serving officers on professional issues and help to develop strategic thinking. The subjects selected last year were "Managing Civil-Military Relations: How to Bridge the Gap" and "Transforming Our Armed Forces to Face Challenges of Jointness" respectively. The participation in this competition was encouraging. I urge more serving officers to put their pen to paper as this helps to develop logical thinking and improve the writing skills.

Since 2015, we have also been conducting Lieutenant General SL Menezes Memorial Essay Competition on subjects related to Military History. The response has been most encouraging. For 2016, the choice of subject was left to the candidates themselves; hence we received entries on wide ranging subjects. Through this essay competition we hope to generate interest in the study of Military History which can be quite valuable in creating awareness about India's military heritage in all sections of society. It needs to be noted that this essay competition is open to all citizens of India.

The USI, as a founding member of the Challenges Forum, Sweden and the Peace Capacities Network, Norway has been actively participating in their events. This year we have contributed large number of research papers. I am happy to inform that we have active participation from our former Permanent Representatives to the United Nations, Military Advisors/Deputy

Military Advisors and Force Commanders/ Deputy Force Commanders in various events/discussions conducted at the USI related to peace operations. We now have an exclusive section at the USI devoted to research on peace operations and responsibility to protect (R2P) at the strategic level. Our participation in various forums both at the national and international levels in this regard is being increasingly sought.

I also take this opportunity to put on record the excellent work being done silently by Maj Gen PK Goswami, VSM (Retd), Deputy Director (Administration), and his team of the USI Administrative Branch. The visible output of the USI, be it the seminars, workshops, discussions and the publications would not have been possible without their utmost dedication and hard work. I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of Lt Col BS Varma (Retd) who superannuated on 30 Jun 16, after having worked most diligently as the Assistant Director for nine years.

Coinciding with the end of 2016 will be the superannuation of Major General PJS Sandhu (Retd) who has been the Deputy Director and Editor since May 2007. In keeping with the Service tradition, as the 'Deputy' he keenly and unobtrusively oversaw my assuming the appointment of Director and settling down in my new role in Jan 2009. I could unhesitatingly draw upon him for honest and sincere advice. In his unassuming manner, he was there whenever and wherever he was required to be. With his qualities of head and heart, he could handle any situation or an event in a most dignified manner. In spite of his multifarious duties he still found time to carry out research on subjects that were close to his heart. His contribution to literature on China, especially the 1962 War, the 1965 India-Pakistan War and other strategic issues will be long remembered. He was a pillar of strength at USI and for me, his going away will be a great personal loss. However, as is the law of nature, time moves on and with time, everyone has to move. And, so it is with 'Prince' as he is popularly known. On behalf of the USI fraternity, I wish him all the luck and have no doubt that he would remain connected with USI in the years to come.

I also take this opportunity to welcome Lieutenant General Chander Prakash, SM, VSM (Retd) who will be taking over from



Major General Sandhu with effect from 01 Jan 2017. With his tremendous experience, I am sure he will bring new laurels to this great Institution. I extend to him a very hearty welcome.

Last but not the least, I would like to acknowledge the excellent services being provided by the Residency Resorts in looking after our visitors and delegations. The efficiency and politeness of their staff has been commendable.

Finally, I would like to urge all esteemed members of our prestigious Institution to actively participate in maximum activities organised by the USI. It gives us great encouragement and satisfaction when members, both serving and retired, attend various events in large numbers. I would also greatly appreciate that the members of the USI spread a word around that the serving personnel are welcome to attend the activities of the USI, even if they are not members of the USI. Their attendance is of mutual benefit. May I also request you to regularly access and browse through the USI Website: [www.usiofindia.org](http://www.usiofindia.org) to keep yourself updated on activities conducted/planned. We greatly value suggestions and feedback from our members. Should there be any, the same could be conveyed to the Deputy Director and Editor by mail or post. We also look forward to meeting and interacting with you in person whenever you come to the USI.

On behalf of all of us serving on the USI staff, I wish you all a

“VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR”

With best wishes,

Lieutenant General PK Singh, PVSM, AVSM (Retd)  
Director USI



**Sqn Ldr Rana TS Chhina, MBE (Retd) at his Investiture at  
British High Commissioner's Residence – 19 Dec 2016**



**At Sqn Ldr Rana TS Chhina's Investiture – 19 Dec 2016**

From Left to Right: Maj Gen PK Goswami, VSM (Retd), Deputy Director (Adm) USI, Lt Gen PK Singh, PVSM, AVSM (Retd), Director USI, His Excellency Sir Dominic Asquith, KCMG, High Commissioner of the United Kingdom, Col VK Singh, VSM (Retd), Sqn Ldr Rana TS Chhina, MBE (Retd) Secretary CAFHR, Maj Gen PJS Sandhu (Retd), Deputy Director & Editor USI and Maj Gen BK Sharma, AVSM, SM\*\* (Retd), Deputy Director (Research) USI.







Marshal of the Air Force with USI Staff and other guests

## **RESULTS**

### **USI Gold Medal Essay Competition 2016**

#### **Group A - Managing Civil-Military Relations : How to Bridge the Gap**

**First** – 05213Y Commander Pradeep K Thakur  
DSSC Wellington

**Second** – shared jointly by :-  
IC 42781A Brigadier UV Talur  
HC Wing, Army War College, Mhow.  
04569H Commander RS Sawan  
Indian Naval Tactical Evaluation Group,  
Naval Station, Karanja.

#### **Group B - Transforming our Armed Forces to Face Challenges of Jointness**

**First** – IC 72590A Major A Chakraborty  
5 DOGRA, c/o 99 APO.

**Second** – IC 72405 F Maj S Luhach  
5 RR (JAT), c/o 56 APO.

### **Lieutenant General SL Menezes Memorial Essay Competition 2016**

**First** – 05284 H Commander Sarat Menon  
DSSC Wellington.

**Second** – IC 64271Y Major AK Tripathi  
122 Engr Regt, c/o 56 APO.

## Editorial

‘China, India and Pakistan’ was the subject of the 32<sup>nd</sup> National Security Lecture which was delivered by Shri Shivshankar Menon, IFS (Retd), former Foreign Secretary of India with General VP Malik, PVSM, AVSM (Retd), former Chief of the Army Staff in the chair. Shri Menon dealt with this vast and complex subject in a masterly manner, covering the past, the present and the possibilities that may develop in the future. He also identified the bilateral and external factors that impact the triangular relationship as also the trajectories that the three countries seem to be following. The lecture was well attended and was followed by a most stimulating interactive session in which many other aspects of the evolving relationship were discussed and commented upon in a free and frank manner. A few important ‘takeaways’ from the interactive session are being carried at the end of the text in a summarised form. General VP Malik, PVSM, AVSM (Retd) added a lot of value to the proceedings through his most perceptive comments.

The next article is the prize winning essay of the USI Gold Medal Essay Competition, Group ‘A’ on the subject of ‘Managing Civil-Military Relations : How to Bridge the Gap’ by Commander Pradeep K Thakur. The subject of civil-military relations in India has been a subject of debate since Independence. It assumed even greater importance and urgency in the light of two recent events : the ‘One Rank One Pension’ issue and the implementation of the Seventh Central Pay Commission. The author has done an extremely perceptive analysis of various issues involved and made some logical suggestions which require attention of the decision makers. Needless to say, the earlier this long festering malady is fixed the better it would be for Indian polity. Apart from other things, this continued hiatus is also eroding the ethos and work culture of the Armed Forces which the Nation can ill-afford.

One of the main reasons for the civil - military dissonance is the archaic Higher Defence Organisation that has evolved in India. In the next article ‘India’s Higher Defence Organisational Structure Dilemma: The Way Forward’, Rear Admiral AP Revi (Retd) pinpoints the structural anomalies and makes suggestions for minimal and pragmatic changes which can set the pace for evolving an organisation suitable in the Indian context in the medium term.

Things have been allowed to slide for too long and it will take considerable time and effort, through trial and error, before we can evolve an organisation which would meet the requirements of the prevailing geostrategic and geopolitical environment. It seems a lot of valuable time has been lost, especially since the Kargil War of 1999 and any further procrastination will be at the cost of national security.

Lieutenant General PK Singh, PVSM, AVSM (Retd), Director USI had participated in the 'Galle Dialogue 2016 : International Maritime Conference' conducted by the Sri Lankan Navy at Colombo on 28 and 29 Nov 2016. The text of the paper presented by him at the Conference on 'Fostering Strategic Maritime Partnership – Critical Analysis' is being carried as the next article. Since the appearance of piracy in the Indian Ocean in early part of this Century and the ongoing contestations in the Western Pacific, maritime issues have assumed great significance, more so for India which is a peninsular power and sits astride the maritime cross-roads in the Indian Ocean. Indian Navy must be prepared to fill the vacuum that exists in the Indian Ocean and be the predominant naval power in not too distant a future.

To visualise the kind of maritime challenges that can confront India, one may flash back to Nov 1988 when a group of terrorists tried to take over the Maldives Islands and that Country called upon India for help. It is also well known that India responded magnificently and the Indian Armed Forces (Army, Navy and the Air Force) acting in unison and in a text book manner managed to not only thwart the attempt but also saved the hostages, apprehended the terrorists and handed them over to the Male authorities. In the next article, General VN Sharma, PVSM, AVSM (Retd) who was then the Chief of Army Staff gives a first-hand account of 'Operation Cactus' (code name for the operation) recounting the complete operation which clearly brings out the kind of effort and synergy required at national level to be able to act in real time in a crisis situation. General Sharma also brings out the lessons and pre-requisites for launching such an operation successfully. Sadly, as subsequent events were to show, we have not quite built up on our capabilities to handle crisis situations.



The world order is in a state of flux and re-alignments are emerging quite frequently. In the next article, 'Geopolitical Shift : Evolving Strategic Landscape', Major General GG Dwivedi, SM, VSM and Bar, PhD (Retd) analyses the power shifts that are taking place and how the emerging powers like Japan, India and other regional groups may position themselves in the evolving strategic landscape.

Conflicts are inherent in a world governed and guided by national interests as such interests quite often intersect and clash. The next article 'Conflict Dynamics: An Ever Changing Paradigm in a Globalised World' by Major General KK Pant maps out a theoretical construct of various types of conflicts and the underlying causes which can facilitate their resolutions.

The PLA transformation continues to be in the news. In the next article 'Linking the PLA's Military Region Reorgansiation with Chinese Military Writings', Brigadier Iqbal Singh Samyal tries to establish a connection and a kind of continuity between the ancient Chinese military thought and the ongoing reforms. A careful study of the Chinese military thought, both ancient and contemporary, would reveal that political and military power are closely enmeshed, and application of military power in any conflict situation is decided upon after thorough deliberations involving all stakeholders. Further, it is coordinated and monitored at the highest politico-military levels, while retaining control of the situation in Chinese hands.

The project "India and the Great War 1914-18" continues to break fresh ground and its ambit is expanding. It has given a great impetus to further research about the Indian contribution in that war in many different fields. In the next article 'Murree and Poonch Mountain Batteries in the 1918 Palestine Campaign', Colonel PK Gautam (Retd) looks at the history of the oldest of the pack artillery batteries which later evolved into the present day 24 Field Regiment. It is a wonderful story of the pride that the mountain gunners took in their animals and the equipment, so much so that they could not be separated from the latter even at the cost of their lives. This article is followed by a brief write up by Squadron Leader Rana TS Chhina, MBE (Retd) giving an update on the activities of the project.

The last article is the prize winning essay of Lieutenant General SL Menezes Memorial Essay Competition 2016 on 'The Battle of Hydaspes (326 BC)' by Commander Sarat Menon. It was an important battle from Indian Military History point of view. Though a defeat for the Indian arms it was here that a foreign invader, the famous Alexander was halted by King Porus, unfortunately fighting without the support of other Indian Kings. The author has analysed the battle very critically and brought out many lessons which are relevant even today; namely, intelligence, surprise and deception, and above all the importance of operational art for military commanders.

I would like to share with the members that I would be superannuating from USI on 31 Dec 2016. This is the last Issue of the Journal that I have the privilege of editing and putting together. It has been a wonderful experience and I would like to thank all of you for your support and understanding. I hand over to Lieutenant General Chander Prakash, SM, VSM (Retd) who I am sure will take the Journal to even greater professional heights. I wish him the very best of luck.

Read on -----

## **India, China and Pakistan\***

**Shri Shivshankar Menon, IFS (Retd)<sup>®</sup>**

### **Introduction**

**G**eneral VP Malik, former Chiefs of the Services, Lieutenant General PK Singh, Director USI, Ladies and Gentlemen. Thank you for giving me the honour and opportunity of delivering the 2016 USI National Security Lecture at this prestigious and premier institution to some of the country's best military minds on the Armed Forces Flag Day.

It was suggested that I speak about India, China and Pakistan. These are among India's most challenging relationships, which we have handled with varying degrees of success in the past. I thought that we might consider the prospects for these three neighbours and their inter-relationship. Since the past is prologue to the present and future, let us begin by briefly looking back at how India, China and Pakistan have handled their triangular relationship and how they have developed in the recent past.

### **The Past**

#### **China's Commitment to Pakistan**

It almost goes without saying to an Indian audience that India was and remains the strategic glue to Pakistan-China relations, since at least the late fifties and certainly after 1962. This is certainly true for Pakistan, possibly less so for China. The March 1963 China-Pakistan Boundary Agreement was a public manifestation of this as it sought to dispose of Indian territory under Pakistani occupation in the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

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\*This is an edited version of the 32nd National Security Lecture delivered at USI on 07 Dec 2016 by Shri Shivshankar Menon, IFS (Retd), former Foreign Secretary and National Security Adviser with General VP Malik, PVSM, AVSM (Retd), former Chief of the Army Staff in the Chair.

<sup>®</sup>**Shri Shivshankar Menon, IFS (Retd)** was Foreign Secretary of India from Oct 2006 to Aug 2009 and post-retirement he was the National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister from Jan 2010 to May 2014. Presently, he is Chairman of the Advisory Board of the Institute of Chinese Studies in New Delhi and is also a Distinguished Fellow at the Brookings Institution, Washington.

What is less often said in India is that China's commitment to Pakistan has had its limits, not always to Pakistan's liking, and has changed over time. While China has been ready since the sixties to build Pakistan's military, nuclear and other capabilities as a check and hedge against India, tying India down in the subcontinent, she has been less willing to actually expend her own blood or treasure in defence of Pakistan. In none of Pakistan's wars with India did China intervene militarily, not even in 1971 when Pakistan was breaking up and Kissinger tried his best to get China to act against India, guaranteeing that the US would neutralise any possible Soviet response against China.

China also declined Pakistani attempts to sign a defence treaty committing China to the defence of Pakistan when Bhutto suggested it in 1974 to Zhou Enlai, and possibly on subsequent occasions. Nor are there explicit security guarantees or jointly prepared military responses to contingencies. Instead, what China has done consistently since the mid-sixties is to give Pakistan the weapons that she seeks, including nuclear weapons and their delivery systems, in nuclear cooperation that was formalised during Bhutto's June 1976 visit to Beijing, and which to begin with, was a two-way street. China and Pakistan, therefore, enjoy an alliance, but a unique one, with Chinese characteristics perhaps.

In December 2001, President Musharraf asked China to raise the issue of Indian buildup on the border as a threat to international peace and security in the UN Security Council; to declare that China would defend Pakistan's territorial integrity and to move troops in Tibet to make the statement credible. The Chinese leadership's response after two weeks of deliberations was to tell Pakistan that the other members of the Security Council had no appetite to discuss India-Pakistan issues, that the territorial integrity of Pakistan was the responsibility of the Pakistan Government to whom China would make available all that she could, and that conditions did not permit troop reinforcements or movements in Tibet. Three weeks later in January 2002, Premier Zhu Rongji visited India, the first visit by a Chinese Premier after 1991.

The Zhu visit was part of a period of relative Chinese neutrality on the Kashmir question in public, with China reiterating that this was an issue for Pakistan and India to settle, which coincided with our stance that this was a bilateral India-Pakistan issue. In 1993,

China (and Iran) urged Pakistan not to press her resolution on Kashmir at the UNHRC, which ultimately failed. *And in December 1996, President Jiang Zemin told the Pakistan National Assembly that Pakistan should do with India what China was doing, discussing bilateral disputes without allowing them to prevent the development of normal relations and cooperating where they could.* This echoed Indian advice to Pakistan and is something Pakistan has never been ready to do.

That equilibrium in the India-China-Pakistan triangle survived the ripples of India's nuclear weapons tests in 1998. During the Kargil conflict the next year, China, like the US, urged Pakistan to respect the sanctity of the Line of Control (LC). This state of affairs was made possible by the end of the Afghan war, China's need for internal consolidation after Tiananmen and Deng's accommodationist external policy towards the USA, all of which had reduced Pakistan's immediate utility to China. The signing of the Border Peace and Tranquility Agreement (BPTA) with India in 1993 also made overt hostility unnecessary, even though China's covert support to Pakistan's nuclear weapon programme and her army continued ensuring that their gap with India never grew too large while keeping alive the Pakistan Army's dream of strategic parity with India. For India, China's public neutrality created space which Prime Ministers Narasimha Rao, Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh utilised in their dealings with Pakistan – a space that no longer appears available to the Indian Government.

Today's situation is clearly very different from that period between 1988-2008, even if one discounts recent Pakistani claims that China is now ready to sign a defence treaty committing it to the defence of Pakistan. After the India-US nuclear deal, and more so after China adopted a more assertive policy after the 2008 world economic crisis, *the earlier modus vivendi in India-China relations no longer suffices.* The signs of strain in India-China relations since then are clear, and Pakistan is a big part of them. China's opposition to India's NSG membership (with the implicit goal of bringing Pakistan in as well), her hold on Masood Azhar's listing by the UN as a terrorist etc., are symptoms of a more fundamental shift. Both India and China have expanded their definitions of their core interests: India's response to the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is much stronger than its 1979 reaction to the inauguration of the Karakoram highway; China

today objects to Indian activity in the South China Sea despite our legitimate interests there. The expanding definitions of interest are most evident in the South China Sea. When India began economic reforms in 1991 about 14 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) was from merchandise trade. By 2014, this was up to 49.3 per cent and India had a real interest in freedom of navigation in the seas that trade passed through, including the South China Sea. At the same time China began defining the South China Sea as a core interest and began asserting her rights, as she saw them. Issues like this mean that India and China are rubbing up against each other in the periphery they both share.

China's commitment to Pakistan is today broader and deeper than it has ever been. As China's capabilities have grown, so has the significance of that commitment to India's security calculus. For China a restive Xinjiang, balancing India, access through Gwadar to the Indian Ocean, and Pakistan's role in the Belt Road Initiative (BRI) and Afghanistan are compelling reasons for an increased commitment. For India, this enhanced Chinese commitment to an inveterately hostile neighbour is in itself a game-changer. China's long term presence in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) as a consequence of the CPEC is a Chinese bet on Pakistan's continued hold on Indian territory, and has created a Chinese interest in Pakistan's stability that did not exist before. As a consequence, Pakistan has less incentive to be responsive to Indian overtures, to accommodate India or even to meet India halfway. Besides, the implications of a Chinese military presence in Gwadar, Djibouti and other ports around the Indian Ocean coincide with a shift in declared Chinese strategy towards power projection and an accretion of Chinese capabilities which changes India's security calculus.

### **The Present**

#### **Diverging Trajectories of Development**

*The relative development trajectories of the three countries in these same three decades have also contributed to what Indians see today as heightened China-Pakistan collusion.*

Consider where India, China and Pakistan were in 1950, 1990 and 2015 in terms of GDP, per capita income, the Human Development Index (HDI) and their rankings in world trade and

manufacturing. Until the eighties, Pakistan was doing better than India and China economically, or, to be precise, was improving her condition faster than India and China. But the end of the Cold War, the end of the Afghan war, Deng's 1992 burst of reforms and India's 1991 reforms marked a fundamental shift and divergence in their trajectories. Thereafter, Pakistan began a secular decline into political instability, religious extremism and terrorism, and her economy, which remarkably maintained some growth, began to fall further and further behind. India and China, on the other hand, were the two greatest beneficiaries of the two decades of globalisation and open trade and investment before the 2008 global economic crisis. While China became the second largest economy in the world, India went from the world's tenth largest economy in 2000 to the third largest by 2014 in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms. Even after the 2008 global economic crisis, though India and China may have slowed somewhat, and even if China reverts to the mean, their distancing from Pakistan, and each other, continues to accelerate.

The change in China's internal condition and external posture has been the most revolutionary of the three; Pakistan's the least. The result in terms of improved human welfare has been the greatest in China and the least in Pakistan. For an India that is growing and changing at rates unprecedented in her history, the power gap with both China and Pakistan has been widening in the last thirty years; with Pakistan in India's favour and with China against India.

As a result, since 1990, Pakistan's 'constituency' in the international system has declined, India's has grown and China's has risen phenomenally. This was also the period when the military balance between the three was re-calibrated. The overt nuclear weapon status of India and Pakistan lowered the likelihood of a full-fledged conventional war in the subcontinent but increased the Pakistani incentive to use terrorism and asymmetric means, a temptation she had been ready to give in to since her birth in 1947, in pursuit of her dream of strategic parity with India.

In the last decade China has reached near superpower status in some significant metrics. These are listed below :-

- (a) China has GDP parity with the US in PPP terms, and 2/3 of the US GDP in standard exchange rate terms.

(b) China is the world's top manufacturer by a considerable margin, and has decisive influence in most world commodity and manufacturing markets.

(c) China has the second greatest military budget in the world with modernised, streamlined and high technology armed forces.

(d) China also has what appears to be a stable internal leadership. The nature of the regime and its survival as a one-party state are often questioned by foreigners, but they have so far outlasted all prophecies of doom. (The unchanging nature of the regime in power is one respect in which Pakistan and China are alike.)

China's weaknesses (which, interestingly, are also those that Japan exhibited at the height of her rise in the late eighties), are precisely those areas that China's leaders stress in their plans for the "Double Hundred". These are :-

(a) *Limited influence in global financial markets;*

(b) Insufficient innovation and Research and Development;

(c) A lack of soft power influence and attraction; except perhaps in Pakistan which has the most positive view of China after China itself, according to Pew. Incidentally, about the same proportion of Chinese view Pakistan favourably as view India favourably, a little less than 30 per cent; and,

(d) *Not much say in political and military outcomes on issues outside the Asia-Pacific.*

Let me elaborate on that last point. Deng Xiaoping's accommodationist external political strategy left him free to concentrate on economic reform at home while slipstreaming the US abroad. President Xi Jinping is now staking out independent positions on global issues while trying to work with the US (as on climate change etc.) in a "new type of great power relations"; while putting in place the pieces (such as bases in Djibouti, the BRI, and so on) for a more independent Chinese policy in the future. China-US strategic contention is a reality in the Asia-Pacific, but is so far largely verbal outside the Asia-Pacific. This is one reason why China finds the UN useful, as Xi Jinping's September 2016 speech



made clear, for it affords a declaratory platform even for powers with little real influence on events, and makes few demands for real commitments to making outcomes stick and work.

As China has rapidly risen, Pakistan's internal condition and economic prospects have declined steadily. One consequence of that declining internal capability has been Pakistan's increasing reliance on terrorism and religion as instruments of state policy vis-à-vis India and Afghanistan, and use of terrorism as a negotiating tool with China, the US and now Russia. While Pakistan uses terrorism as a weapon against India and Afghanistan, she offers to manage, deal with or negotiate with terrorist groups for the US, China and Russia. Another consequence is the increasing intertwining of terrorist and extreme religious groups with Pakistan's establishment and political parties. China's dependence on the Pakistani Army has also increased in her fight against Uighur groups and to protect her assets in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Besides, as Pakistan has declined economically, China has had to do more to support her. Before Xi Jinping's US \$46 billion CPEC commitment in April 2015, China's economic assistance was negligible and limited to strategic projects like the Karakoram highway and Gwadar port and to strengthening security ties. A RAND study puts total financial assistance pledged by China to Pakistan between 2001 and 2011 at US \$66 billion, but finds that only 6 per cent of it ever came through. China has never kept Pakistan from having to go to the IMF, even when explicitly asked to in 2008. Pakistani officials put total Chinese investment in Pakistan before the CPEC at US \$25 billion, but official PRC figures speak of pre-2010 DFI of US \$1.83 billion.

The 2015 CPEC, therefore, represents a considerable increase in China's interest in Pakistan. This is still primarily a strategically driven interest rather than an economic one. Within the CPEC (of which US \$34.4 billion are for power projects, most of which are still to begin), it is strategic Gwadar port that has been progressed first— a port that will enable China to secure oil and gas supplies from the Persian Gulf and to project power into the Indian Ocean. The Chinese media itself has been downplaying the commercial significance of an oil pipeline from Gwadar to Xinjiang saying that oil through it would prove 16.6 times more costly than alternative land or sea routes. *It is clearly not the economics of road or rail*

*or pipeline connectivity that is driving the CPEC through some of earth's most hostile terrain, highest mountains and least secure places; but strategy.*

The CPEC is a reflection of China's increasingly assertive role abroad and of her geopolitical pursuits. The CPEC is an integral part of President Xi's Belt and Road Initiative and the location of Gwadar at the top of the Arabian Sea and close to the Straits of Hormuz is critical to that. *As the third leg of the triangle (India) rises, the incentives for China to buttress Pakistan increase, for balance of power reasons as well.*

As for India-China relations, it is evident that the power gap between them is growing. Not just relative or absolute gap matters; but perceptions too. Today peace between India and China is possible because both think that their relative position will be better in the future. In which case why settle or push issues to a decision now? Both wait for a stronger hand. Besides both have better things to do than to indulge in confrontation, concentrating on their internal adjustments and development. But in Pakistan's case the growing power gap with India and internal regression is used to justify cross-border terrorism and a continual state of managed hostility for internal and external reasons, but not an attempt to push matters to a decision, yet (that could come should Pakistan's decline be accelerated and if the Pakistani establishment believe it could only get worse and not be arrested).

### **Larger Factors at Play**

It thus seems to me that the growing divergence between the trajectories of the three countries' development has affected Pakistan and China the most as also the bilateral relations between each of the pairs in this triangle. But there are also larger factors at play in the India-China-Pakistan triangle. These are :-

- (a) Between 2012 and 2014, China and India put in power authoritarian centralisers, conservative within their own traditions, who present themselves as strong leaders and who rely on nationalism for legitimacy (Asia led, Europe and the US have followed). This matters because it makes the dialogue and compromise more difficult in ambiguous and ambivalent bilateral and international situations, thus limiting the scope for successful diplomacy. We are in an age of ultra-nationalism.

(b) Both India and China have no choice but to undertake major internal restructuring of their economies. The CCP and the Indian electorate know that we are at a hinge moment of transformation; but the actual record of ability to change and reform is poor in both the countries. China has implemented very few of the reforms approved by the third plenum three years ago. By one count, India has reportedly partially implemented about nine of the big 30 reforms that this Government promised to undertake when it came to power.

(c) On top of diminished capacity to drive internal change and compromise externally, the external environment is also much less favourable. Uncertainty in the international system has never been so high. We are all wondering how the sole superpower will behave under President elect Donald Trump. Some disengagement from the world and increasing deglobalisation seem likely. The US-China relationship will probably see some turbulence if the President elect's phone call with Taiwanese leader Tsai Ing-wen is anything to go by. But the truth is that no one knows how US policy is likely to evolve under President Trump.

(d) My own sense, however, is that despite the increased uncertainty, the prospect of great power conflict is still low; but that the risks of great power involvement in conflicts with lesser powers or in regional flash-points is today higher than before, particularly in Europe and the Middle East.

(e) The Asia-Pacific is unstable but not critical. Unstable, because of rapid shifts in the balance of power in the region; the world's and history's greatest arms race in the last 30 years in the region; rekindling of territorial and maritime disputes; return of geopolitics or great power contention between China and the US and so on.

### **The Future**

So what should we expect from the foreseeable future in these circumstances? Much will depend upon what China's goals and intentions are, since she is the strongest actor in this triangle.

If history is a guide, one must not expect China to behave as Western hegemons or powers did in the past. She will not be another USA, setting international rules and providing security for

an order that she manages (this is today's equivalent of the eighties and nineties Western myth that China's economic development through capitalism would bring democracy in its wake). To understand China's future behaviour, look at her past. There has never been a *pax Sinica* in Asia even in her immediate neighbourhood and China has never sought to impose one.

China has no historical experience of a multiverse. China has historically been used to her own universe, homogenous not plural, in her own image, hierarchical, obedient, unipolar, not multipolar. She has sought acknowledgement of her status, deference and recognition of her primacy, rather than the responsibility of running an international order or being a provider of security. This is not very good preparation for what China will face in the future if she succeeds in hitting her Double Hundred targets. Would China realise that in order to attain and maintain primacy she would need to work with others as well besides only Pakistan and North Korea and be a net provider of global public goods? If she does there is hope.

Besides, China's past can only be a limited guide to the future. Over two centuries, China has also been influenced in her thinking by the impact of the West. But whether this is more than 'Western technique with Chinese spirit', or represents a fundamental modernisation of strategic thinking is not yet clear. All that can be said with certainty is that China does not, and will not, behave as western great powers and hegemons have in the past.

### **Where to?**

So what should we look for when we peer into the future?

**Internal Politics in All the Major Actors.** Reproductive decisions and demographic composition will affect the three countries – an aged China, a young and angry Pakistan and India. Inequality, injustice and relative position is a source of anger and has affected their politics, creating authoritarian, conservative, centralised leadership and chauvinist governments. How China evolves will have the most significant effect on Asia in the next few years. In my opinion, where China will be in the next ten years would depend less on economics and more on her politics. Will President Xi be a revolutionary or a reformer; a Mao or a Deng; a hard revolutionary trying to change the international system and China's control of it or accommodationist abroad while concentrating on internal

changes? Whatever the prognosis, China will be in the front rank of powers, probably the world's largest economy, with preponderant military power in the Asia-Pacific. But geography ensures that she will be a hemmed in power in a crowded region.

**India's Trajectory.** India's trajectory in the next ten years, on the other hand, depends on our success in managing our economic issues – providing the 11 million new jobs that are necessary to ensure our demographic dividend does not become a demographic disaster; ensuring the raw materials and energy that are missing from our resource endowment; managing the social and security consequences of urbanisation and inequality, and so on. Irrespective of the nature of the party and leaders in power, there has been remarkable consistency in India's external and internal policies for last twenty five years. Ten years from now, India will be a great power – a different power from what International Relations theory predicts; not a superpower in the traditional sense. We still have a long way to go in eliminating poverty, despite our accumulation of hard power and standing in the international system. We would, therefore, remain an internally focussed power, concentrated on our internal transformation – a navel gazer. We would, therefore, still be accused of free-loading on the international system, such as it is or will be, and would still face calls to step up to our international responsibilities, even though our primary responsibility is to our own people.

**China-US Relations.** These are the primary drivers in the Asia-Pacific. For the present, they are characterised by strategic contention with economic interdependence. The balance between the two is what remains unclear, even in the near term. With the coming of President Trump it seems clear that the Obama pivot to Asia is coming to an end, but it is far from clear what will replace it. Trump, with his isolationist tendencies and his desire to make deals, makes US-China accommodation possible. He has already announced a major concession to China in the form of his decision not to pursue the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), thus shifting the balance of economic power in Asia further to China. He has been less than consistent on US security commitments to allies South Korea and Japan, asking them, on one hand, during the campaign to fend for themselves and even go nuclear, while on the other hand, reaffirming that he would be with them to the end, once elected, in meetings and conversations with President Park and

Prime Minister Abe. Will he agree to give China a free hand up to the second island chain in return for concessions on the trade and economic agenda with China enabling him to claim that he has brought manufacturing back to America? No one can be certain, but if his national security picks and his telephone conversation with Taiwan leader Tsai Ing-wen are any indications, it is not going to be smooth sailing for China or US allies before things settle down. If Trump implements even 20 per cent of what he promised in the campaign, we would see a significant US security disengagement from Asia-Pacific, creating space for China. We already see an Asia-Pacific tending towards China; ASEAN has not found a joint voice on the South China Sea for over two years; the Philippines and Malaysia are only the latest to accommodate China's wishes.

### **Going Forward**

To conclude, we are now at a hinge moment, exemplified by the new US administration under Mr Trump, but not solely due to the US. All the major powers are at decision points. China is heading for 19th Party Congress. While President Xi is firmly in control, there are significant leadership choices to be made. Pakistan has significant choices to make of her internal direction; and India has to sustain her progress. The world itself is entering a new global phase of de-globalisation, US disengagement and economic deflation or, at best, a glacial recovery.

In the triangle that we are considering, India and China need to recalibrate their relationship to manage or solve, where possible, the multiple signs of stress in the relationship that have cropped up in the last two years. The *modus vivendi* that kept the border peaceful and allowed each country to develop is today under stress and needs to be recalibrated. The fact that both countries are now more integrated into the world and have built capacities has meant that the definition of their interests has also grown. Both countries rub up against each other in the periphery they share. This needs to be managed and understood and the best way to do so, of finding a new equilibrium in the relationship, would be a true strategic dialogue.

China has already signalled her increased commitment to Pakistan, and projects like the CPEC and Gwadar are long term commitments. Pakistan itself, as the weakest of the three, and

given her structural infirmities, is the one with the least capability to change the dynamics of the triangle, either by changing the pattern of her relationship with India or by lessening her dependence on China.

To me, the likely prospect for India, China and Pakistan, therefore, is a period of fluidity in India-China relations, continuity in Pakistani behaviour, and of increased uncertainty all around. Like all predictions, this one is almost certain to be wrong, which, frankly, would not be an unhappy outcome.

### **Important Takeaways from the Interactive Session**

**On China.** Indian cannot force/contain/wish away China, just as China cannot force/contain/wish away India. Pure opposition is not an option for either. Can embarrass/hedge against/co-opt/work with China and others on desired outcomes. Great powers live and deal with others keeping in mind realities.

**On Pakistan.** Contain and manage, consequences not so serious, don't re-hyphenate.

#### **On India.**

- (a) Keep our head down while balancing internally and deal with the reality of China.
- (b) Have an effective strategy for the Indian Ocean Region and Indian sub-continent. Don't whine but rather, compete & cooperate with China in the sub-continent. **This is the key.** We have strengths that we underestimate, outside state structures with each of our smaller neighbours.
- (c) Work with others; be as integrated and important to the region and others as possible.
- (d) Engage China in a real strategic dialogue to work out a new modus vivendi that would involve - managing differences, sensitivity to core interests where possible, cooperating when opportunity presents itself. This can be done.

**India's Role.** India has always done best when most connected, acting as intermediary or when hedging to build own economy and strength. India has a choice of its role and strategy: watch the geo-strategic environment in the neighbourhood; follow a more proactive strategy, if the space opens up.

**On Two Front War.** If you want to prevent one, be prepared for it and display that capability.

### Endnote

<sup>1</sup> Andrew Small: *The China-Pakistan Axis*; Asia's New Geopolitics, Hurst and Company, London, 2015, page 97. In comparison, The US delivered US \$17.12 billion in military (US \$11.74 billion) and economic (US \$6.08 billion) assistance to Pakistan between 2002 and 2011 in constant 2016 dollars, according to US Government figures.

India and the Great War Publications			
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## **Managing Civil-Military Relations : How to Bridge the Gap\***

**Commander Pradeep K Thakur®**

### **Introduction**

In a modern Westphalian state, sovereignty is preserved by the Armed Forces as per directions provided by the political class based on supremacy of the elected government. Military would always remain an instrument of executing the political will of the nation which is expressed by elected representatives and formulated by bureaucrats. Grand Strategy of a nation which is sum total of its economic, diplomatic, military prowess and ideology, would always dictate the basic framework upon which military strategy is formulated. The execution of the military strategy to unleash it to its maximum potential, thereby contributing effectively to Comprehensive National Power, would always be dependent upon the close coordination between civil component of decision making represented by politicians and bureaucrats and professionalism of military personnel. Hence, civil - military relations form an integral and most crucial component of national security policy. This implies need for firm and unambiguous political control of the military. However, a relationship based on trust and respect between them would result in a polity that is alive to the issues of national security and a participative military. The nations which fail to develop such a balance run the risk of jeopardising national security, resource mismanagement and discontented military. The current state of civil-military relationship in India is mired in a flux originating from lack of this critical balance.

### **Aim**

The aim of this paper is to carry out an analysis of the present state of civil-military relations through historical and theoretical perspective, identify the impediments and suggest a way ahead.

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**Scope**

It is proposed to cover the topic under the following heads:-

- (a) Historical perspective of the civil-military relationship in India.
- (b) Theoretical construct of the civil-military relations.
- (c) Identify the impediments.
- (d) Recommendations and suggest a way ahead.
- (e) Conclusion.

**Historical Perspective**

Post-independence, many incidents and decisions suggested the constant state of tension in the civil-military relationship. There were always undercurrents of disharmony between the bureaucracy and the military with the political leaders either ignorant or even at times, encouraging the bureaucracy to keep the military marginalised. The ill-informed and apprehensive political class usually found it more convenient to keep the military at bay. The Armed Forces have often expressed their displeasure over such state of affairs but have been unable to bring about a change so far. The civil-military relationship has been marred by turf protection, prejudices and mistrust.

Many committees have been constituted for the purpose of defence reforms. They stretch from the time when Jawaharlal Nehru tasked Patrick Blackett, a British Military Consultant, 'to Indianise the military', to the most recent Ravindra Gupta Task Force focussed on indigenisation. The intervening period has been filled by Maj Gen Himmatsinhji Report, HM Patel Report, Kargil Review Committee Report, Naresh Chandra Committee Report, et al. Most of these committees allude to the lack of defence preparedness and military effectiveness. Significantly, all these emphasised the need for modernisation, better coordination as well as integration of the civilian and military components of the national security apparatus. The main underlying theme of the suggested reforms has always been mutual trust and respect. Without moving forward on this front, implementing other reforms would prove to be a non-starter.

### Theoretical Construct

**Samuel Huntington.** The theoretical framework for analysing civil-military relations is based on works of scholars like Samuel Huntington, Morris Janowitz, Amos Perlmutter, Peter Feaver et al. Samuel Huntington's pioneering work, 'The Soldier and the State', laid the foundation of civil-military relations theory. His theory, aimed at determining relationship between the military and the government, classified two styles of civilian control over military viz. Objective Control and Subjective Control. In Objective Control, Huntington argued that military becoming more professional in their sphere of activities, would reduce the likelihood of military trying to exercise control over the civilian government. The idea of Subjective Control is defined as anything that would increase the link between the military and civilian government involving military participation in politics.<sup>1</sup> The Subjective Control approach would attempt at civilianising the military as against Objective Control which would attempt at militarising the polity. Huntington makes it amply clear that Objective Control is preferable because it is possible to simultaneously maximise military subordination as well as fighting power by increasing the military's autonomy. Huntington's theory is one of the most widely referred works of civil-military literature; he, however, does not enumerate specific measures to increase civilian control over the armed forces.

**Morris Janowitz.** Morris Janowitz has reviewed the role of changing relationships between the armed forces and the government. He stresses upon the necessity of the military to change its behaviour in relation to technological advances as the lines between peace and war had been blurred, influencing the military to view itself as a constabulary force.<sup>2</sup> Janowitz's theory states that there must be a greater amount of civilian oversight in military affairs. This conceptualisation has caused the military to become inherently more politicised, necessitating the centralisation of national security within the civilian government, for e.g. formulation of National Security Councils. Like Huntington, Janowitz has little prescription for the best mechanisms, which would allow for increased civilian control and better relationship between the two institutions.

**Peter Feaver.** Peter Feaver seeks to determine the everyday relationship between the military and the civilian government and

address the 'civil-military *problematique*' through the application of agency theory. More specifically, Feaver's theory works to determine when the military will disobey civilian directives and how the civilian could control this phenomenon. Feaver argues that all civil-military relations theories relate to one simple paradoxical "*problematique*" that "the institution created to protect the polity is given sufficient power to become a threat to the polity."<sup>3</sup> When maintaining a military, it is imperative that the force be strong enough to protect its civilians and to carry out necessary military duties; however, any time more power is given to the military establishment, their level of influence over the civilian government directly increases.

Thus, it is evident that the underpinning thoughts which bind the theories of civil - military relations are enhanced impetus on military professionalism, optimum power balance, effective and smooth civilian control over the Armed Forces coupled with greater interaction and synergy between polity-bureaucracy-military triad.

### **The Impediments**

Most of the impediments in civil-military relations arise from institutional deficiencies, perceptual errors and psychologically driven turf wars. These culminate in bureaucratic control without desired expertise and the exclusion of the armed forces from military policy-making, which taken together have a detrimental effect on the military's effectiveness. There are deep sociological, organisational and institutional divides between the political, bureaucratic and military classes in India. The failure of some of the reforms is primarily due to two factors – bureaucratic politics and political apathy.<sup>4</sup> The succeeding paragraphs analyse these impediments in brief in order to make some recommendations.

**Fear of Military Supremacy.** First and foremost is the political leadership's unfounded fear that if the armed forces are involved more actively in governance issues which are related to them, they will become too powerful to handle. Somewhere ingrained is the nightmare of a possible military *coup* in their subconscious mind if they dilute civilian control over the military. However, this at best can be described as fertile imagination of uninitiated minds. It is pertinent to mention that India is an established democracy with diversity of varied dimensions rooted across the country

including the armed forces, thus question of a military *coup* does not arise. The very thought itself is libellous to strong democratic foundations of our society, vibrant media and professional armed forces fully committed to upholding democracy and associated values. The supremacy of the Constitution and decisions of the Parliament are conceptually accepted, documented in the doctrines and regularly ingrained in minds throughout military training in the armed forces. Often comparisons about military hegemony are cited from our western neighbourhood without appreciating factors which fuel it, i.e. disregard for constitutional norms, fundamental values and corporate interests of the military.

**Political Apathy.** Another associated phenomenon is that of political apathy to military matters which is both a cause as well as a result of unfounded fears we just discussed. Only a handful of politicians are interested in defence affairs and fewer still have any expertise in it. Many a times ministers have been appointed in Ministry of Defence (MoD) for varied political reasons and not for their strategic or military acumen or even interest. They are unwilling to push major reforms to avoid taking on any responsibility. The problem is further accentuated when such reforms are in conflict with parochial bureaucratic interests. Pushing such reforms increases the risk of confronting bureaucracy on whose very advice the otherwise uninitiated and ill-informed politicians survive or electoral setbacks. They have nothing to lose electorally as mistakes can be shifted conveniently onto others and the armed forces do not constitute lucrative vote bank. Since Independence, the politicians have not considered it worthwhile to establish workable and cordial relations with the armed forces. Nothing can be more illustrative of this state of affairs than the issue of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), continual degradation in terms of protocol and minimal political support to the issues raised by the armed forces during successive Central Pay Commissions.

**Bureaucratic Dominance and Ignorance.** Another major issue, and perhaps the one fuelling the former, is the opposition of the civilian bureaucracy to make any amends to the existing setup in which their dominance and control over the armed forces is diminished. Bureaucrats continue to maintain that they are just executing the directions of the political leaders. However, the truth is almost the opposite. Given the political indifference in military

matters, the politicians heavily depend upon advice from the bureaucrats which in turn emerges from often skewed perceptions which the bureaucrats themselves suffer from. The civilian bureaucracy, which is drawn from diverse backgrounds, lacks specialised domain expertise in military affairs. Lack of such expertise has the potential not only to induce weaknesses in defence preparedness but cause avoidable civil-military mistrust. Any pen-wielding bureaucrat may stall, stop or divert the progress of a matter which otherwise, in considered and professional opinion of the armed forces, is critical and fundamental. This has psychologically distanced the armed forces from civilian bureaucracy. Many officers feel detached and there exists increasingly overwhelming disdain towards civil servants. They feel that bureaucrats keep adding to their own perks and privileges and have withdrawn that of the Services over a period of time. The situation becomes more difficult to comprehend for the armed forces when they find themselves coordinating efforts, instead of the very same bureaucracy, in emergency situations like floods, earthquakes and other natural calamities.

**Military Procurements.** The considerable time delays in weapons procurement process, which is primarily a bureaucratic function in India, has hampered the effectiveness of the military. There has been recurrent lapse of the capital outlay funds from the defence budget as well as the lack of responsiveness of public sector defence companies. The armed forces have, often and repeatedly, expressed their concern over these issues but to no avail as matters are beyond their sphere of influence. In one of the most egregious cases, the Advanced Jet Trainer (AJT) took 22 years to procure and induct. During this time, there have been more than 200 plane crashes in the IAF. It stands to logic that plane crashes that occurred due to pilot error/trainee officers could perhaps have been obviated by a quicker induction of these AJTs. In some other countries, this neglect would be worthy of a class action law suit.<sup>5</sup>

**Manpower Shortage.** Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) has resulted in state-of-the-art modern systems which necessitated induction of personnel with higher educational levels and technological expertise into the armed forces. This is in direct contrast to declining attractiveness of military as a career. There is a shortage of over 52,000 personnel, including 11,000 officers, as per statement of Defence Minister, Mr Manohar Parrikar in

March 2015.<sup>6</sup> The Indian Army has been beset with officer shortage for over three decades. The shortage is the result of hazards of military service as well as relatively poor pay, perks, facilities and associated social status. More importantly, the persistence of officer shortage as an issue over decades indicates amply that political leaders as well as bureaucracy are not adequately tuned and alive to military issues and concerns.

**Inter Service Contentions.** Other factors that are important to be considered are the inter-service and intra-service differences on military issues. The three Services often see things differently and, at times, have different views on their role in national security. Instead of attempting resolution, these differences are often exploited by civilian bureaucracy to prevent the three Services from coming to one common ground on issues which would make the armed forces stronger as a coherent entity. One such glaring example is the differences between the three Services on the criterion for appointment of the CDS and bureaucracy thwarting its implementation citing these differences.

**Abysmal Strategic Culture.** There is lack of strategic culture in our Country which has also contributed to this state of affairs. Military is not actively involved in decision making on security related issues. The culture of developing domain experts in highly specialised fields of warfare is largely absent even within the armed forces as such experts do not find their rightful place in overall security apparatus. Some of the institutions which were created with the aim of developing strategic thought, have been majority staffed with civilian bureaucrats and their assessments often clashed with military assessments of threats and solutions. The idea behind these institutions - developing greater civilian capacity in military matters - was a laudable one, but it became part of a larger effort to control the military.<sup>7</sup>

**Lack of Interaction.** These problems are not unique to India. Other democracies face similar problems whilst attempting optimum balance in civil-military relations. However, the issue assumes greater and graver dimensions in India as there are limited interface mechanisms for the armed forces to provide professional advice and express their concerns directly to the political leadership. To sum up, the structure of civil-military relations loosely translates into a system where, according to K Subrahmanyam, “politicians



enjoy power without any responsibility, bureaucrats wield power without any accountability, and the military assumes responsibility without any direction.”<sup>8</sup>

### **Recommendations**

Having discussed the theoretical constructs and major impediments in the process of better civil-military relations, it would be prudent to lay down recommendations which are practical and plausible. Any recommendation would not stand test of the time if it does not take into account the realities and is based primarily on utopian view of moral superiority of the armed forces over other stakeholders.

**Political Involvement.** There is dire need for more active political intervention in concerns raised by the military, especially on Service related issues and issues affecting national security. By virtue of their role in democracy, the politicians are more reactive to the public views and perceptions. Media could play a critical role in bridging this gap and the armed forces must use it dextrously, within the ambit of military decorum and conduct, to raise relevant issues which need to be resolved. The armed forces are apolitical and must continue to remain so; however, there could be a provision in the Constitution for one or two veterans to be nominated to Rajya Sabha so that relevant issues can be highlighted in the Parliament.

**Specialised Civilian Bureaucracy.** The lack of domain expertise of bureaucracy in military matters due to generalist nature of the administrative and foreign services needs to be addressed in a systematic and gradual manner. The most practical solution to this problem would be the creation of a new vertical specialisation of civil servants on the line of IFS, IRS etc. who have desired expertise on defence related matters. A professional civilian control (administrative, fiscal and procedural) would be in fact beneficial to obviate some of the inter-services acrimony in matters of procurement, high ranking appointments and policy formulation. Another option, which may appear revolutionary yet feasible, is that selection to the civil services be made only after mandatory service in the armed forces. After a specified period of service, all volunteers should be given opportunity to appear for lateral transfer to the civil services. The option of eventual migration to the civil services would be a strong incentive for talented young minds to

join the military. This would substantially reduce the shortage of officers and also enhance overall leadership qualities across these professions.

**Cross Training.** Regular interaction between civilian bureaucracy and the armed forces at various levels during their respective initial training periods as well as on field would prove catalytic for understanding each other's professions, working ethos and challenges. Field visits for officers, involved in major procurements and policy changes, would not only help them in understanding nuances of the military profession but also needs of the man in the line of fire. There needs to be a substantial increase in vacancies for civilian bureaucrats at higher defence training establishments like the National Defence College (NDC), Defence Services Staff College (DSSC), College of Defence Management (CDM) and Higher Command Courses, as part of their career progression in the MoD.

**Enhanced Role of the Armed Forces.** The exclusion of the armed forces from crucial decision-making forums on national security thus denying them a role in the policy-making process needs to be addressed at the earliest. The armed forces must be given better representation in these forums. Nothing exemplifies this more than a study of the defunct Defence Minister's Committee (DMC), the formal institution that was supposed to involve the Service Chiefs in decision-making.<sup>9</sup> Closely related to this aspect is increased presence, integration and active involvement of uniformed personnel in the MoD. Apart from reducing friction between the bureaucracy and the Service HQs, this would be crucial in providing immediate and independent professional advice on military matters.

**Jointmanship and Chief of Defence Staff (CDS).** It is important that Services attach greater significance to jointmanship and resolve their differences. Perhaps, the most effective and much required reform towards this end is the creation of the post of the CDS. The CDS, as opposed to the Service Chiefs, would be suitably armed to generate most practical solutions particularly on the issues which require three Services to reconcile their priorities. The Government would be benefitted by having a single point of military advice as well as accountability for implementation of the policies. CDS would be instrumental in more efficient, economical and effective

functioning of all the three Services. The unfounded fear of giving a military officer too much power which supposedly haunts the political class as well as bureaucracy is the only impediment in the implementation of a time tested mechanism which is followed by many nations. Some countries use different nomenclature but the functions are similar to that of our proposed CDS like Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) of the USA, *Chef d'Etat-Major des Armees* (CEMA) of France, CDS of the UK *et al.*

**Pay and Allowances.** One of the major and repeated concerns raised by the armed forces is the continual degradation of the pay and allowances along with associated protocol and social status, they enjoyed at the time of Independence, through successive Central Pay Commissions (CPC). For instance, a Brigadier carried a higher salary than the Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of the Police until the 3rd CPC. Today, Brigadiers are equated to the DIG and, after the implementation of the 7th CPC, it is feared, may be relegated to a lower pay scale than DIGs. Such changes defy reason because only two per cent of military officers achieve such a rank that too after 12 more years of service than the designation of DIG.<sup>11</sup> The demands of the armed forces on NFU, equal time durations for promotions, equal allowances in same areas with other central government employees etc. must be discussed impartially and anomalies resolved in a transparent and time bound manner. There must be representation of the armed forces in the Pay Commissions as they form the largest pool of central government employees. A fair and pragmatic approach by the political class on these issues rather than just relying on the recommendations of Pay Commissions would be the single greatest enabler in bridging civil-military divide.

**Develop Strategic Think Tank.** There is need to develop a pool of civilian scholars, bureaucrats and uniformed personnel who are experts in strategic matters, and national security. They should be consulted by policy makers for weighing various pros and cons of a situation or directive. This requires an attitudinal shift towards national security. These scholars should be allowed access to archival material in the MoD, MEA, MHA and related institutions which must be declassified to the extent feasible. There is a need to focus on security studies in universities to inform, educate and create career streams in these subjects. This would enable a strategic culture where a well-informed dialogue on civil-military

relations, national security, political aspirations and military effectiveness can take place to further improve the system. Establishment of institutions like Indian National Defence University (INDU) is a step in the right direction.

### **Conclusion**

As India aspires to play a greater and stabilising role in the Indian Ocean Region, her rapid economic growth and rise as a military power are the two principal pre-requisites. The efficient conversion of military resources into military power is dependent upon the relationship between the state and the armed forces and amongst the people of these institutions. Over all these years, civil-military relations have focussed largely on ensuring civilian bureaucratic control over the armed forces and not on their effectiveness. This approach has left its negative impact on military modernisation, apart from reducing the sheen of the armed forces as a career for young Indians.

In modern democracies, civilian control of the military is fundamental to the very idea of democracy. However, the level of interaction and degree of control between these two has been a matter of debate and discussion. The civil-military relations in India have been striving for balance over the years. The established democratic setup and recognition of military as an instrument of state policy by the armed forces has kept things in a state of delicate equilibrium over the years. Instead of stabilising with experience, the relationship continues to deteriorate with little or no effort to learn from other democracies. There has been a rising concern amongst uniformed personnel of not being treated fairly by the Government both in decision making process on military matters as well as their status vis-à-vis civilian counterparts. The long pending issue of 'One Rank One Pension' proved to be a lost opportunity for the Government to address the deteriorating relations. The Government will need to transform the way it thinks of defence and dispel concerns of uniformed personnel with concrete actions rather than just rhetoric.

The fine act of rebalancing India's civil-military relations will require major institutional and attitudinal changes. The civil-military relations can prosper only in an atmosphere of trust. The need of the hour is mature, sagacious and pragmatic leadership on both

sides who understand the importance of professionalism and building trust. There is need for enhanced involvement of the armed forces in matters military. The importance of genuine public participation in everything from the security debate to military research and development needs no further emphasis. These measures can only succeed with political will, determination and leadership. If India continues to have weak institutions handling national security it cannot be attributed to bureaucrats and military officers alone. The most comforting thought is that there is general awareness through various committees formed by the Government from time to time as to what ails the system; hence, corrective measures should not pose too much of a problem. It is time to act.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Kathy Roth - Douquet et al, *AWOL: The Unexcused Absence of America's Upper Classes from Military Service and How It Hurts Our country*, (New York, Harper Collins, 2006), p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel P Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1957), p.83.

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<sup>5</sup> 'The Absent Dialogue', Anit Mukherjee, A paper presented during seminar on National security in Jul 2009 at New Delhi. [www.india-seminar.com](http://www.india-seminar.com). Accessed on 30 August 2016.

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<sup>8</sup> 'Military Modernization In India', Sunil Dasgupta & Stephen P Cohen, A paper presented during symposium on Civil - Military Relations in Asia in Jul 2010 at New Delhi. [www.india-seminar.com](http://www.india-seminar.com). Accessed on 30 Aug 16.

<sup>9</sup> Anit Mukherjee, op. cit.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

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# India's Higher Defence Organisational Structure Dilemma: The Way Forward

Rear Admiral AP Revi (Retd)<sup>®</sup>

## Introduction

The present Higher Defence Management (HDM) structure in India is a product of partial and half-hearted implementation of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) decision of 2002. The Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), a crucial element, remains unfulfilled, jointness/integration is a distant dream and the military vs. bureaucracy confrontation issue stands unaddressed.<sup>1</sup> This paper attempts to analyse the prevailing situation and suggests a way forward.

## Parameters for a Viable HDM

The parameters used in formulating the structure are as follows:-

- (a) The National Security Council (NSC) directive of 17 May 2000. Please see **Appendix**.<sup>2</sup>
- (b) The CCS approved Group of Ministers recommendations on HDM.
- (c) The system as it has evolved since the CCS decision of 2002.
- (d) Naresh Chandra Committee report.
- (e) CDS is essential but with following caveats:
  - (i) Prime Minister (PM) Nehru's commitment to Parliament, in 1953, in introducing a UK type Defence Council concept.

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(ii) The bait offered under the Naresh Chandra dispensation, of a toothless Permanent Chairman Chief of Staff Committee, is considered impracticable.

(iii) Premature introduction of CDS would be catastrophic and will lead to a false sense of complacency among the uniformed fraternity.

Further, it is important to ensure an enabling environment before creating the post of CDS. For this it is incumbent to pass an Act of Parliament, similar to the US Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1984 – so that the system is not open to manipulation by the political/bureaucratic/military leadership of the time. In addition, the following steps and actions need to be taken:-

- (a) Introduce the concept of a Defence Council (DC).
- (b) Eliminate all ambiguity over the chain of military command, over Strategic Force Command (SFC), vis-à-vis National Security Adviser (NSA).
- (c) Re-designate Defence Secretary as the Principal Civilian Adviser to Defence Minister without upgrading his status any further.
- (d) Revisit the Ministry of Defence Allocation/Transaction of Business Rules 1961 and remove obvious anomalies. The CDS / Chiefs of Staff must have a formal role and responsibility for defence of the Country.
- (e) The CDS ought to be the professional head of the Armed Forces and the Principal Military Adviser to the Defence Minister and the Government.

### **The UK Model 1986**

The Hastletine Reform (1986),<sup>3</sup> in the UK HDM system, has been used as a model. The system in vogue, at the time, is illustrated at **Figure 1**. The DC is chaired by the Secretary of State for Defence (Defence Minister) with the respective service Ministers (Ministers of State), CDS, Permanent Under-Secretary of State, Service Chiefs (COS), Vice Chief of Defence Staff (VCDS), Chief Scientific Officer, Chief Procurement Officer and the Second Permanent Under-Secretary of State, as members. The Admiralty/



Army/Air Force Boards were chaired by the Minister responsible for respective Service with the COSs and their Principal Staff Officers (PSO) as members. It became the responsibility of respective Executive Committees to manage the individual Service affairs and execute all the decisions of the DC and the Service Boards.

### **Proposed Indian Model**

The UK model has been used to suggest an HDM structure for India. Incidentally, it was also a term of reference in the NSC Directive of 17 May 2000 which is at the **Appendix**. The proposed HDM arrangement that has emerged in the process is illustrated at **Figure 2**. It would be observed that the existing system has been retained with a few changes. The main addition is the insertion of the DC and its associated Service Boards.

The core of the proposed HDM structure comprises the National Security Council (NSC) which is chaired by the PM with some of his cabinet colleagues and the CDS as its members. This needs to be institutionalised under an Act of Parliament. The NSC would be assisted by the following three institutions:-

- (a) **The NSC Secretariat** – will have the National Security Adviser (NSA) as its head. The Services and the bureaucracy are suitably represented herein. Like in the US system, the NSC secretariat would be required to prepare brief outline plans and coordinate development of National Security Policy and put up preferred options to the NSC. It closely follows up the progress of NSC recommendations through the CCS. It also monitors the implementation of the CCS decisions and regularly provides a feedback to NSC/CCS/PM's Office. The NSA is also the National Security Adviser to the PM/NSC and has the Intelligence Coordination Group under him.
- (b) **The Strategic Policy Group (SPG)** – with the Cabinet Secretary in the chair has among others the VCDS, Vice Chiefs of the three Services and various Secretaries of the Government of India as members.
- (c) **National Security Advisory Board (NSAB)** – is a rotating think tank with eminent scientists, academicians, economists, retired civil servants/defence officers and analysts etc. as members.

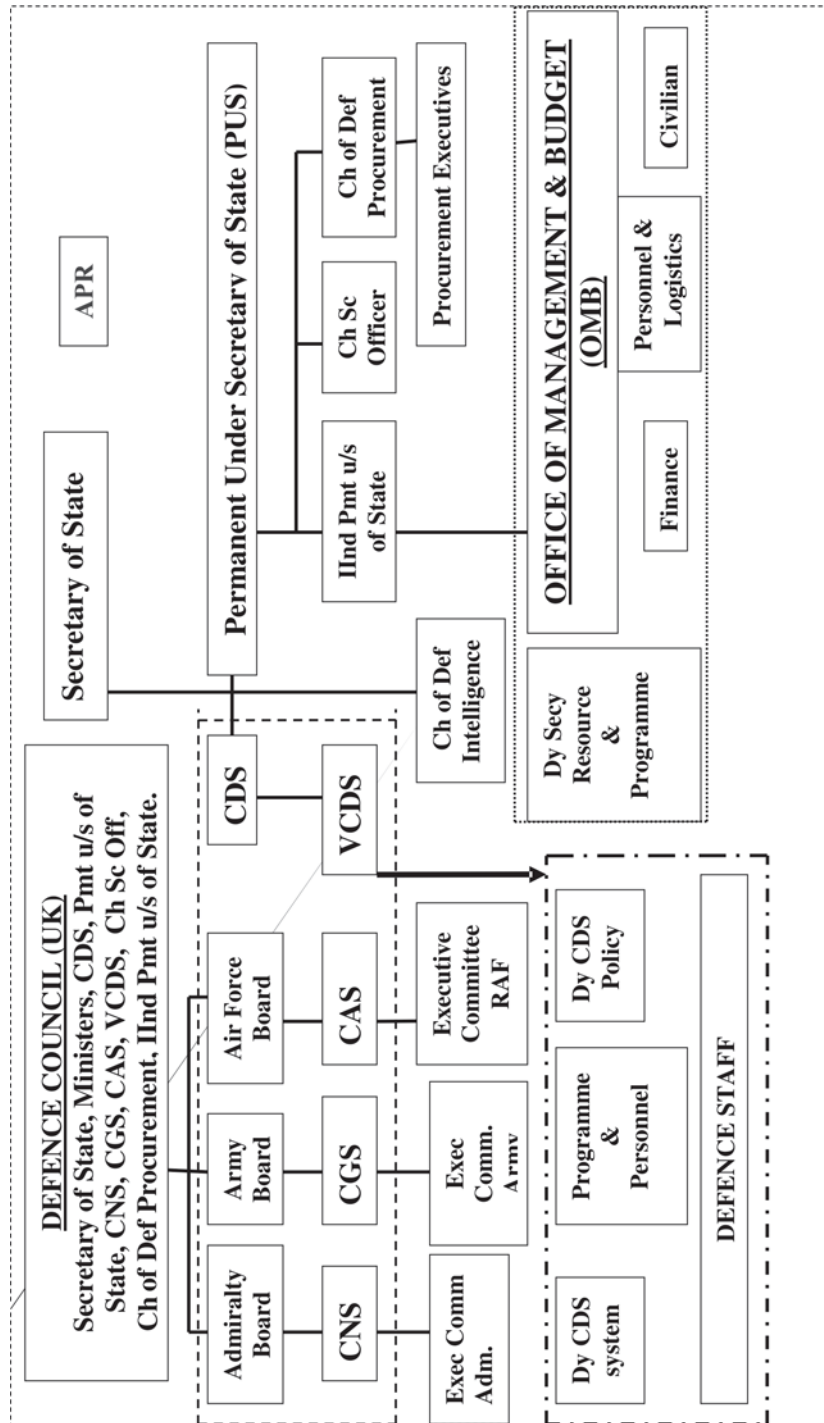
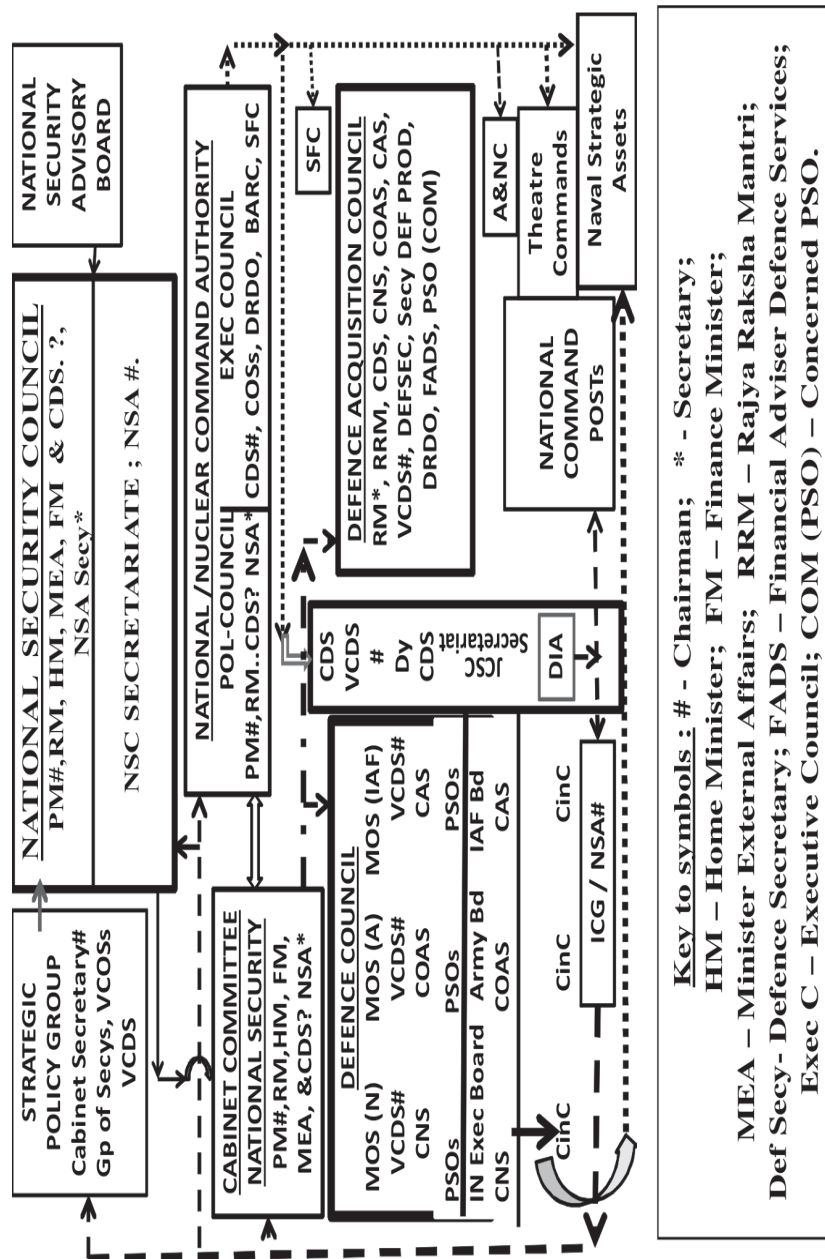


Figure 1 : Post Hastleline Review - 1986



Under the above scheme – the proposals along with NSC recommendations would be put up to the CCS for approval. The CCS is chaired by the PM – the CDS is available for consultation. The attendance of CDS is justified due to the inherent inadequacies in the Indian environment.<sup>4</sup> The CCS decisions are taken forward by the Raksha Mantri (RM)/National Command Authority (NCA)/DC/DAC, as appropriate. The Service Chiefs will continue to have direct access to the PM/RM and may be called upon to attend CCS and NSC meetings, when required.

The NCA with the PM in the chair is the sole entity empowered to authorise use of nuclear weapons. In the structure proposed here – the NCA comprises the Political Council and the Executive Council. The Executive Council carries forward the NCA decisions and is chaired by CDS. The COSs, SFC, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) are members of the Executive Council.<sup>5</sup>

In the existing system, the role of the NSA as the projected chairman of the Executive Council of the NCA has been a bone of contention with the military establishment from the very inception. On the issue, there was so much of hue and cry in the public domain that on 6 February 2005 a press clarification had to be issued.<sup>6</sup> Since then the issue had been lying dormant. It seems to have resurfaced in the context of INS Arihant (nuclear submarine).

In the above context, interestingly, late Shri Brajesh Mishra, the first NSA, is reported to have said that a powerful NSA, who is not accountable to Parliament, is not acceptable in the Indian system.<sup>7</sup> He further added that, at the time the NCA was formed, the government never envisaged the NCA Executive Council to be headed by the NSA.

The NCA Executive Council (EC) is meant to take forward the decisions of the Political Council. On the same rationale as for the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) and the proposed DC, where RM is the chairman - the EC of the NCA could also have been chaired by the RM. How an erstwhile bureaucrat nominee can be put in that position is not at all logical. The NSA has no constitutional position or legal authority to issue executive operational orders to the military/SFC. Under the present dispensation, in the absence of a CDS he seems to have assumed the role of the latter with attendant ramifications. The handling of

the crisis emerging from the terrorist attack on Pathankot Air Base is a case in point.

The institution of NSA was presumably born out of the US NSA concept. Though the US NSA is generally perceived as a very powerful entity – in fact the NSA does not figure anywhere in the US chain of command. Such an improvisation created to solve what is apparently a lacuna in the Indian political *DNA* – could result in generating fresh fault lines in the traditional military command and control arena. Under the umbrella of secrecy – we are likely to once again produce another monster that we may not be able to contain.

Half of the proposed overall HDM organisation is already serviced by the DAC subset and the linked Boards dedicated to Acquisition/Defence Production/Research and Development functions. To complete PM Nehru's commitment to the Parliament – what remains, is the commissioning of the DC. The DC chaired by RM and assisted by the respective Service Boards will be responsible for ensuring efficient functioning of the Armed Forces.

In the proposed structure considered here, a substantial portion of the Cabinet Committee decision of 2002 has been retained. Several checks and balances are embedded into the system. At one stage, the smaller Services had a genuine fear of losing their identity and their specialised skills – being subsumed under an overwhelming olive green culture. To safeguard this fear – the CDS is to be appointed on a rotational basis – as is done presently, in the case of the Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC). At the same time, to maintain a balance, the VCDS must have a minimum tenure of two years.

Also, in cases when the CDS is from the Navy or the Air Force, the VCDS necessarily has to be from the Army. The centrality of the VCDS in the system should also not be missed. To provide for continuity, VCDS is not only the Secretary to the COSC, he is also the head of the COSC/CDS secretariat and coordinates the working of the functional heads, for example Deputy CDSs (Policy, Planning and Force Development)/(Doctrine and Training)/ (Intelligence), etc. A Deputy CDS (Logistics) has been added here to facilitate implementation of the integration of logistics and the Revolution in Military Logistics (RML), which is a fundamental necessity. VCDS is also the secretary of DC and a

member of the respective Service Boards. This would maintain the inter-service equation in equilibrium and provide continuity in situations where the tenure of the CDS is inadequate, due to the rotating nature of the chair.

The tiered intelligence sharing arrangement with the National Command Post (NCP), CCS, SPG and NSC have been shown. The interactive process between the NSC, CCS, NCA, NCP, SPG, NSAB, the SFC and Theatre Commands etc. have also been illustrated.

It would be observed that the CDS is represented, at the apex level, in all the defence related decision making bodies. This is essential in the Indian environment.<sup>8</sup> All the COSs and VCDs are members of the DC, DAC and SPG. The Army's huge size and role differential (i.e. not expeditionary in nature compared to all major powers) has been factored in.

The reason for the DC model not seeing the light of day, so far, can be attributed to the then COSs not being in favour of such an arrangement. They were opposed to their Principal Staff Officers (PSOs) being directly exposed to the respective MOS, on a regular basis. To achieve military-cum-bureaucracy amity, such fears have to be shed.

The launching of the DC, therefore, should under no circumstances be delayed any further. In the absence of the CDS, as an interim measure, it is proposed that the Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (CIDS) be upgraded to a four star flag officer with two hats; one as the Secretary to the COSC and the other as the Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) with independent charge of SFC and other Unified/Specified/Special Forces/Andaman and Nicobar Commands etc.

Coordination of military's participation in National Disaster Management is part of CIDS's charter too. For the second function he would be directly responsible to the DC for staff and administrative roles and to the NCA through the Chairman COSC for operational matters. The elevation in rank of the CIDS and adopting an unorthodox dual cap solution has been necessitated by:-

- (a) Insufficient progress having been made, in implementing the CCS decision of 2002.

- (b) To meet the inter-service rivalry, turf war and overcome the infirmity of the Chairman COSC to intervene affirmatively, the DC would have to regularly review the progress and arbitrate, to resolve the priorities.
- (c) The compulsions arising out of delay in the appointment of a CDS.
- (d) In any case, the structure in its stabilised state would have VCDS in the rank of a four star flag rank. This is the prevailing practice even in the case of a small organisation, as in the UK.
- (e) The employment of one authority having to wear two hats, in such circumstances, is not an uncommon occurrence in other countries - with a high degree of success.

### **Way Forward**

The ultimate objective would be to adopt the universally accepted practice of further streamlining the HDM structure by embracing the concept of three functional divisions:-

- (a) Operations Division.
- (b) Staff Division.
- (c) Support Division.

The above is typically represented by the UK organisational structure of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>9</sup> Considerable improvements in efficiency and financial saving have been reported by all countries that have adopted similar dispensation.

### **Intra-Service Quandary**

Resistance to change is a natural phenomenon. Army's *Transformation Study Report* and Navy's *User Maintainer Concept* fell victim to parochial vested groups, from within. With minimal structural changes, the Navy's existing system can easily be tweaked to accommodate the changes to get to the ultimate solution.<sup>10</sup>

There is a misconception that interchange of personnel between the MoD and Service HQs per se is the ultimate solution. The dismal performance of the Directorate of Standardisation,



working as a part of the MoD for the last half a century and the non-productive results from the Service Technical Managers working under the Secretary Acquisition, are clear indications of what to expect from such a solution.

The really successful defence model of an integrated organisation is the Director General Advance Technology Vessel (DGATV) under the DRDO umbrella. The model has worked smoothly with a professional team, predominantly comprising of naval personnel, with integrated finance and commercial support. DGATV is also fully empowered and designated a *Secretary to the Government*. This is a model to be emulated. The success is also attributable to the embedded cross links with the top political leadership, NHQ, DAC, DRDO, BARC and its private sector partners

In context of those who consider using of alien role models as objectionable – one must not forget that the genesis of the present structure itself is of colonial inheritance. Use of the UK model, as a benchmark here only follows the NSC directive on the subject.

### Conclusion

The principal of overall structure has been outlined here and the first phase has been detailed. If implemented seriously, the first phase should lead to CDS being in the saddle in a couple of years. The political leadership has to bite the bullet and take the lead role same as done by all the major global players. In parallel, the intra-service reforms need to be pursued in earnest by the respective Services. In that context, a degree of integration between the Services is a *sine-qua-non* without which the desired degree of hard power synergy cannot be achieved. Army must take the requisite initiatives to set the ball rolling. Only then shall we be able to go forward.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>General NC Vij, *Twentieth Colonel Pyaralal Memorial Lecture*, USI 28 Sept 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Para 2 (a) of NSC directive C-180/1/2000-NSCS (CS) OF 17 May 2000

<sup>3</sup> Rear Admiral AP Revi, *Restructuring India's Military – Out of Box Option*, Chapter 2, pp. 96-120, Gyan Book Pvt. Ltd, June 2012, Global scenario on the phased development of HDM systems discussed in depth.

<sup>4</sup> AP Revi, *Fault lines in the Civil Military Framework in India & the Way Forward*, Defence Studies vol. 14 issue. 2, June 2014, p 136.

<sup>5</sup> Dr R Chidambram, 'Clarification on Role of NCA Executive Council', Pioneer newspaper, Delhi. (6 Feb 2005).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Brajesh Mishra, former NSA, <[www.dnaindia.com/india/1336787/report-scrap-nationalsecurity-advisor-s.post-brajesh-mishra](http://www.dnaindia.com/india/1336787/report-scrap-nationalsecurity-advisor-s.post-brajesh-mishra)>. Accessed 23 May 2013.

<sup>8</sup> Revi, *loc.cit.*, p 136.

<sup>9</sup> Rear Admiral Revi, *op.cit* Figure.2.20, p.106, 2012

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* Figure 6.46, p 234, 2012

There have been reports in the media that some reforms in the Defence Sector are under active consideration of the Government. One of these reports appearing in the Mail Today, New Delhi, December 28, 2016 said, ".....a position of similar stature (COAS) to be created soon, sources told Mail Today on Tuesday."

Though a speculation so far, it is quite possible that some such measure may be announced by the Government by the time this Issue of the Journal reaches the readers. In the event, the article "*India's Higher Defence Organisational Structure Dilemma : The Way Forward*" by Rear Admiral AP Revi (Retd) may appear dated. However, the above article analyses the logic and necessity for reforms in the Higher Defence Organisation which have become overdue; hence the article would still be relevant to the general discourse on this important issue which concerns national security.

**Editor**

**Appendix**

**No. C-180/1/2000-NSCS(CS)**  
**Cabinet Secretariat**  
**(National Security Council Secretariat)**

New Delhi, May 17, 2000

**Subject : Task Force for Review of the Management of Defence**

It has been decided with the approval of the Group of Ministers (GOM) constituted vide Cabinet Secretariat letter No.141/2/1/2000-TS dated April 17, 2000 to set up a task force to review the management of defence and, in particular, to consider the recommendations of the Kargil Review Committee in this regard and formulate specific proposals for GOM's consideration.

2. The terms of reference of the task force shall be as under:-

(a) To examine existing organisations and structures and recommend such changes, as considered necessary, for improving the management of the country's defence. Since accountability to Parliament constitutes the basic feature of Government of India, the task force, while making its recommendations, will examine the evolution and the changes in this respect that have taken place in other parliamentary democracies. In particular, the UK model should be studied closely.

(b) While considering (a) above, to also examine the changes required in the management structure in the emerging security scenario having regard to the nuclearised environment, revolution in military affairs, information revolution and other similar developments.

(c) In the context of (a) and (b) above, to examine the apex decision making structure and the interface between the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces Headquarters and recommend appropriate measures for redressing such deficiencies as may be identified; in this process the task force may also recommend measures for more efficient coordination between the political executive, the various departments of the Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces as also to examine the desirability, necessity and modalities of setting up an integrated command structure for the Armed Forces.

(d) To recommend such organisational and other changes as considered appropriate to bring about improvements in the procurement processes. While making its recommendations, the task force will also keep in view the imperative of ensuring accountability for proper expenditure of public funds, as also the need to have time bound decisions.

(e) To recommend measures for improving cost-effectiveness in management of defence.

(f) To examine impediments to modernisation and to recommend appropriate measures for their removal and in this context, to examine how a true partnership can be established between the Services and the DRDO so as to ensure that the latter gets full backing and funding from the Services and the former get the indented equipment they require without delay.

(g) To examine the issue of developing interface and synergy between the Civil and Defence, Research, Development and Production facilities.

(h) To consider measures for development of country/region specialisation along with language skills and to recommend steps for networking with think-tanks.

3. The composition of the task force will be as under:-

Shri Arun Singh	- Chairman
Vice Admiral (Retd) PS Das, PVSM, UYSM, VSM	- Member
Lt. Gen. SS Mehta, AVSM*, VSM	- Member
Air Marshal TJ Master, AVSM	- Member
Vice Admiral A. Prakash, AVSM, VrC, VSM	- Member
Shri Narendra Singh Sisodia	- Member
Shri Dharendra Singh - Member	Shri SK Misra - Member
Dr AS Bains	- Member
Shri G Prakash	- Member
Vice Admiral Madanjit Singh, AVSM	- Member
	Secretary

4. The task force may engage such consultants for its assistance as it may consider essential with the concurrence of the NSCS.
5. The task force should interact with key officials from all concerned Ministries/Organisations/Agencies, the other three task forces set up by the GOM and such experts as it may wish to consult. The task force may also review earlier reports on the subject commissioned by the Government, if considered relevant.
6. The task force will submit its report/reports within 3 months from the date of its constitution. The task force may also submit interim reports for urgent consideration of the GOM, if considered expedient.
7. The task force will be serviced by the National Security Council Secretariat which will also provide it requisite facilities and administrative/secretarial support.

Sd/-  
(Satish Chandra)  
Secretary, NSCS

## Fostering Strategic Maritime Partnership – Critical Analysis\*

Lieutenant General PK Singh, PVSM, AVSM (Retd)<sup>@</sup>

### The Oceans

Sitting strategically astride one of the busiest and most critical shipping lanes of the world, there is no place better than Galle in Sri Lanka, to brainstorm about the Oceans. There was a time when oceans were deemed barriers between land masses. That paradigm has shifted to view oceans as connectors of land masses. This has been made possible by maritime transportation offering economies of scale that far surpasses what is possible on continent; an edge that has only grown with passage of time.

The oceans not only serve as conduit for trade, but they also support economy through fishing and other oil and mineral extrusive economies. This is besides an ecosystem around them involving other industries such as tourism and power generation. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has brought out a recent report, it's first, defining the contours and trends of the Ocean Economy and it predicts that there will be a threefold growth in Ocean Economy by 2030. There is a symbiotic relationship between blue economy, sustainable development goals and security, and therefore, ocean governance has become a critical necessity.

The Indian Ocean straddles three continents and is home to some 50 states. It connects 38 littorals and an additional 12 land locked states in its hinterland. Together 40 per cent of world's population lives on its littorals. Interconnected global economies use Indian Ocean as a conduit. The centrality of the Indian Ocean to global trade and development is not something new. 90 per cent trade by volume traverses the ocean. Of which 60 per cent of oil,

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\*This is the text of a paper presented by Lieutenant General PK Singh, PVSM, AVSM (Retd) at the 'Galle Dialogue 2016 : International Maritime Conference' conducted by the Sri Lankan Navy at Colombo on 28 and 29 Nov 2016.

<sup>@</sup>Lieutenant General PK Singh, PVSM, AVSM was commissioned into 2 Field Regiment (Self Propelled) Artillery on 16 Dec 1967 and retired as General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, South Western Command on 31 Aug 2008. He is the Director of the United Service Institution of India since Jan 2009.

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50 per cent container, 30 per cent bulk traffic traverses the Indian Ocean. This share is only rising unlike trends in other regions, where trade is decreasing. Therefore, Indian Ocean occupies a central position in the global trade pattern. The energy and resource needs of Japan, South Korea, China and ASEAN nations, and South Asian, West Asian and African markets form significant constituent of this trade thus, making Indian Ocean critical for global economy.

### **The Indo-Pacific**

The Indian Ocean has strong linkages with the Pacific Ocean. Due to these enormous linkages, for any meaningful assessment or action one must consider Indian Ocean and parts of the Western Pacific as one system. This has been accepted as the Indo-Pacific strategic and economic system. Just as there are strategic power shifts there are also economic groupings taking shape. The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), Free Trade Area of Asia Pacific (FTAAP) were attempts to carve out large economic blocks that reflect the new order and realities. The Indo-Pacific is that strategic space where interests of several powers overlap, as indicated by the geographic envelopes of these aspirational blocks. Cooperation and competition will coexist in this region, where the stakeholders, who are eminently represented in this forum, will have to strive to manage friction below certain acceptable thresholds. These blocks are trans-oceanic and trans-continental in nature, where oceans will only become more important. The events in the Indo-Pacific will, therefore, continue to affect the globe, and will demand working out cooperative security structures for its management. We, at the USI of India have been hosting an international seminar every November looking at this issue in its entirety. These seminars have revealed the complexities and the vast scope of the problem.

The principle of Freedom of Navigation and rule of law, which is pivotal for global trade, therefore needs to be upheld across the oceans. As a responsible stakeholder in the Indo-Pacific, India supports freedom of navigation and overflights, and unimpeded commerce, based on the principles of international law, as reflected in United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Historically the world is on the cusp of a global power shift to Asia. The USA, the existing global power has declared its



intentions in Asia through its pivot, and the rising power of China has rolled out its geo-economic plans through the 'One Belt One Road' (OBOR) initiative, which also has strategic implications for the region. The power structure that emerges out of these shifts may not resemble the bipolar model. In all likelihood, the future power structures will be diffused, where regional nations will have to play a major role, than rely solely on extra regional hegemons.

### **Managing Oceans – A Perspective**

Such a precious network and ecosystem needs careful management. The scope of that management problem was evident in many recent episodes. First was the long drawn problem of piracy in the Western Indian Ocean. What began as illegal dumping of hazardous waste and illegal fishing off the Somali Coast robbed traditional Somali fishermen of their livelihood. This loss of livelihood and a weak political system ashore, brought the scourge of piracy alive in the oceans. It took patrols by 30 navies with hundreds of ships, costing US \$6 bn a year and a decade to push back the arc of operation of pirates. More recently, the loss and subsequent search for Malaysian Flight MH370 is awaiting closure. This indicates that oceans are still too large despite our advancement in technology! Oceans are also conduits for drug trafficking, human trafficking and terrorism. Terror through sea attained a different level first with attacks on Mumbai, and later it showed its terrifying possibilities when insiders almost hijacked a naval frigate of a nuclear nation of South Asia. Imagine the consequences, had that frigate been the one with tactical nuclear weapons on it!

The problem of good order at sea not only encompasses man made challenges but also covers natural calamities. Prime on the mind is a tsunami that swamped this part of the globe in 2004 killing 2,25,000 people. Indications are that climate change could accentuate the scope and frequency of other natural challenges. Rise of sea levels can alter coastal geographies, cause extreme weather phenomenon such as droughts and floods, decrease arable land and contaminate potable water. These will lead to demographic and migratory pressures. Resource conflicts may make rule based boundary delimitations important, where incidentally South Asia offers some positive case studies. Nations in the region cannot manage these myriad challenges alone.

The size and scope of the problem of ensuring safe oceans demands a cooperative structure. This has been recognised early, when the concept of the thousand ship navy (TSN) found traction. Admiral Mike Mullen, then Chief of Naval Operations of US Navy, was the progenitor of that concept who correctly recognised that no navy could **do it alone** in the future. He called for a Global Maritime Partnership to ensure good order at sea. Some principles of TSN continue to be relevant as far as regional maritime cooperation is concerned. It postulates that many of the problems that challenge good order at sea can be solved through cooperation and a shared interest.

With new global realities of diffused power structures the focus is on regional cooperation networks than dependence on any distant hegemon. The key requirement of such a regional network is strategic trust and a significant step in that direction is sharing of information. Together we have to make oceans more transparent by sharing information on commercial vessels at sea, popularly known as white shipping data which include details of vessels, cargo, position and destination. At any given time there are thousands of vessels at Sea. However, they have a pattern of movement. Sharing of white shipping data between nations through Accounting Information Systems (AIS) chains and coastal radar stations assists us to quickly recognise the odd man out of the pattern. India has taken its initiatives in this region involving several nations, towards this venture. Miscreants of good order always exploit gaps in surveillance and policing. It is these exact gaps that we need to plug.

### **Challenges to Ocean Management**

Security challenges in the Indian Ocean are addressed by different countries in different ways. While connectivity is important for economic growth and development, we cannot lose sight of the fact that connectivity also has strategic connotations. It is, therefore, important that transnational initiatives should evolve from broad based discussions. For the Indian Ocean region to grow, we need a more effective intra-regional cooperation as well as inter-regional cooperation that will contribute to the cooperative spirit of our region.

The challenges to such cooperative structures are manifold. They can be broadly classified as challenge of maritime consensus, and challenge of maritime capacities. Both are relevant to Indian

Ocean as gleaned from the remarks of Prime Minister Modi who stated, *“Our goal is to deepen our mutual understanding on maritime challenges and strengthen our collective ability to address them.”*<sup>1</sup>

The challenge of maritime consensus is essentially a political challenge to bring the stakeholders on the same page over matters maritime. Nations need to agree that safe oceans are for the benefit of all ensuring peaceful shipping and other economic activities. There is a rising awareness about benefit of peaceful oceans and their relevance to regional economy. However, the question of what constitutes a threat to peace and how to deal with that threat is the real challenge of consensus. This is more so in the Indian Ocean which is home to set of nations diverse in economy, race, religion and political outlook. They possess distinct political systems and world views. Some are well established democracies, whereas some are evolving politically. A wide diversity as seen in the region is a challenge to take that consensus to levels where we can act together. Dialogues such as Galle Dialogue, the Indian Ocean Dialogue, Indian Ocean Conference and USI's Annual Indo-Pacific Seminar serve to build this consensus. Similarly, exercises and exchanges lead to greater understanding between the armed forces. The recently held Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC), is one example and the MILAN exercise in the Bay of Bengal are such exercises that help build trust amongst large number of partner nations.

Since most nations in the IOR have under gone a colonial stage, sea has been viewed with suspicion in the past. They were not only seen as medium through which colonisers arrived, but also as geographic barriers that challenged connectivity. However, we seem to forget that colonial powers understood the maritime domain in its entirety to include trade, economic activities, military aspects and technological imperatives. State capitals are often located in hinterland with the seas out of sight. One significant challenge for nations is to ensure that sea, even if out of sight does not remain out of mind, and that there is a domestic oceanic constituency that influences policies. Domestic consensus across party lines about cooperative structures must precede a regional consensus; otherwise policy see-saws will hinder progress.

A subset of consensus is 'trust'. When broad political consensus is developed at a strategic level, there is a need for tactical trust for sharing data networks, and interoperability. Political and strategic consensus need to evolve into tactical trust on field. Only then would cooperation become real and meaningful. The Indian Navy which is eminently represented here is better suited to address the precise technical aspects of inter-operability and tactical trust building.

There is also a challenge of capacity which is equally daunting. Most Indian Ocean littorals are developing nations. Capacities involve economy and domain skills. The state of economy of several states does not permit large scale investments in navies and coast guards which are the fundamental building blocks of cooperative maritime security. Even the richer nations of the IOR have a capacity problem in terms of requisite human capital in the domain as money can only build hardware. The exploitation of resources requires high quality human capital which is time consuming to build. Ships and networks have become sophisticated over a period raising the bar for human capital. Hence, maritime capacity building has a material as well as human intellectual domain. Nations which are ahead on the growth curve within the region need to share and assist other nations to build capacities in these domains without leading to any sense of alienation. This sharing of capacities has to permeate across government agencies, navies and maritime industry to be effective.

### **Regional Initiatives**

Regionally there are organisations that have taken positive initiatives in management of the oceans, some of which need discussion. Most significant of them is the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) which is the only pan-ocean body. The rationale behind forming IORA was to unite littoral nations on the basis of the shared Indian Ocean identity for *socio-economic cooperation and other peaceful endeavours*.<sup>2</sup> The organisation was established in 1997 and has 21 members and 7 dialogue partners as of date, with more lined up for membership as a testimony of its rising relevance. The IORA is primarily an economic grouping just as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). West Asia, South Asia and East Coast of Africa have the highest growth rates between 5-8 per cent, is indicating a promising role for IORA. For

the institution to become a significant player, it is only appropriate that the IORA graduates to a summit level meeting. This will give it the attention it richly deserves.

Prime Minister of Sri Lanka has dwelt upon the IORA in the first inaugural address at Indian Ocean Conference. He has taken the idea of IORA one step further and called for an Indian Ocean Order which is consensual and rule based, which must uphold freedom of navigation. There are some other significant ideas that he raised.<sup>3</sup> His vision that only a consensual Indian Ocean Order can prevent competition from spilling over during a period of global power shift is astute and relevant. He has suggested an Indian Ocean Development Fund which can assist countries in the region address some capacity issues. An Indian Ocean Assembly, according to him can bring heads of state and a spectrum of experts together.

However, whether there should be a separate organisation or if IORA could expand its scope to include these changes is left open ended. It is my considered view that it is best to strengthen present grouping than to create a new grouping, since we cannot afford to dissipate our limited organisational energies in different directions.

The 16th Council of Ministers Meeting was held at Bali on 27 Oct 2016 with Indonesia in Chair. The focus aptly chosen by the Chair had been “Strengthening Maritime Cooperation in a Peaceful and Stable Indian Ocean”. IORA also conducts several ministerial meetings such as the one on sustained management of oceans blue economy, economy and business.

Ever since the Bengaluru meeting in 2011, IORA has dwelt on the significance of security. A study of its communiqué indicates that IORA has incrementally included security in its ambit of concerns.<sup>4</sup> The Indian Ocean Dialogue, held under the aegis of IORA has entered its third edition this year. Focus areas of that dialogue will indicate that there is need to strengthen rules-based regionalism. It also highlights cooperation against piracy, illicit trafficking, maritime terrorism and illegal fishing.

A need was felt to bring the Coast Guards and Navies of the region together to share ideas since they are the preventers and responders to a crisis. Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)

was, therefore, established in 2008 to increase maritime cooperation among navies of the IOR by providing an open and inclusive forum for discussion of regionally relevant maritime issues and develop common understanding for possible cooperative endeavours in future. IONS has 22 members and four observers.<sup>5</sup> IONS was inspired by the Western Pacific Naval Symposium, with which it shares nine members. As the economic heft and significance of IOR grows, there will be a need for deeper engagements on security front. Trade and race for resources after a certain threshold may also lead to competition and tension. Before the economic competition reaches that threshold level, trust and rule based regime needs to be built between instruments of maritime security. IONS serves that exact purpose. Meaningful maritime security requires a closer liaison between the two organisations which was articulated by the IORA Perth Communique of Nov 2013 seeking *information-sharing and other activities with both civilian and non-civilian dimensions*.<sup>6</sup> This requires to be taken forward. The Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) in Singapore, Piracy Reporting Centre (PRC) of the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) in Malaysia, the Information Fusion Centre in Singapore, Indian Navy's Maritime Shipping Information System(MSIS) are some of the information sharing initiatives that strive to make the oceans safer.

While large groups pose a wide spectrum posing greater challenge for consensus, smaller maritime security groupings such as the trilateral one between India, Sri Lanka and Maldives, may see Seychelles and Mauritius becoming its members. Such groupings contribute to maritime security in a critical maritime space.

At these maritime conferences it is but natural to focus on issues maritime. However, to forget or gloss over the challenges that issues such as trans-national terrorism, problems of unresolved borders and basing of foreign naval assets have on maritime security architecture would be short-sighted. After all, maritime strategy is a sub-set of national strategy.

### **Indian Approaches**

Prime Minister Modi clearly enunciated the Indian vision for Indian Ocean Region in March 2015 while visiting Mauritius. The vision

had four key pillars:-

- (a) To safeguard our mainland and islands, defend our interests; ensure a safe, secure and stable Indian Ocean, and make available our capabilities to others.
- (b) Deepen economic and security cooperation with our maritime neighbours and strengthen their capacities.
- (c) Envisage collective action and cooperation with our maritime neighbours and strengthen their capacities. This would promote peace and security and respond to emergencies
- (d) Seek a more integrated and cooperative future for the region that enhances sustainable development.

The Indian approach to regionalism is defined by the word SAGAR, which means ocean in most Indian languages and when expanded, reads Security and Growth for All in the Region. More than sixty per cent of India's external trade is with countries that are on the littorals of Indo-Pacific Region, besides 90 per cent of its global trade passing through it.<sup>7</sup>

India recognises that its own destiny is intertwined with other nations in the region. Identifying connectivity as the most important facet of development, Indian initiatives such as Trilateral Highway, Kaladan Multimodal Project, Chabahar Port project are aimed at improving regional connectivity. India has invested close to US \$25 bn in loans and grants in the region. On the domestic front the Sagarmala project is a US \$10 bn project aimed at better domestic port based network. This is aimed at triggering a new phase of growth. Being a large economy with a long coastline, this investment can also improve connectivity in the neighbourhood. The hinterland connectivity is also being improved by highway networks and industrial corridors. India has cultural projects of connectivity such as Mausam which uses the recall value of monsoon that created an Indian Ocean System of interaction since time immemorial. This is apart from its multilateral commitments.

## Conclusion

The essence of an Indian sense of responsibility to the oceans was aptly summed up by Prime Minister Modi in a recent speech in Mauritius, wherein he stated *"the blue chakra or wheel in India's*



*national flag represents the potential of Blue Revolution or the Ocean Economy. That is how central the Ocean Economy is to us.”* Peaceful oceans are essential for any economic activity to thrive. Regionally, nations need to cooperate more than ever for maintenance of peace. The process of political trust building regarding maritime affairs must be matched by cooperation between navies and other maritime constabulary arms such as the coast guards. It is such a two tier process that can ensure that ocean economies, and linked terrestrial economic systems of this region grow to its true potential. However, the challenges that may arise due to Naval presence of foreign navies in the Indian Ocean region need to be taken note of.

In conclusion, I would like to say that to foster a robust cooperative effective strategic maritime partnership, India stands ready to work with all nations to create a prosperous, secure and developed Indian Ocean Region. I also take this opportunity to congratulate the Sri Lankan Navy, for conducting such an annual conference which is a part of the strategist’s calendar across the region. Conferences such as these, serve the cause of maritime security most eminently by building trust among us all!

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> “Text of the PM’s Remarks on the Commissioning of Coast Ship Barracuda,” [Www.narendramodi.in](http://www.narendramodi.in), accessed October 28, 2016, <http://www.narendramodi.in/text-of-the-pms-remarks-on-the-commissioning-of-coast-ship-barracuda-2954>.

<sup>2</sup> “Background - IORA - Indian Ocean Rim Association,” accessed November 12, 2015, <http://www.iora.net/about-us/background.aspx>.

<sup>3</sup> India Foundation, H.E Mr Ranil Wickremesinghe at Indian Ocean Conference 2016.

<sup>4</sup> “Communiqué - IORA - Indian Ocean Rim Association,” accessed November 12, 2015, <http://www.iora.net/documents/communique.aspx>.

<sup>5</sup> “Member’s Country | Indian Ocean Naval Symposium,” accessed November 12, 2015, [http://ions.gov.in/member\\_country](http://ions.gov.in/member_country).

<sup>6</sup> “Communiqué - IORA - Indian Ocean Rim Association,” accessed November 4, 2015, <http://www.iora.net/documents/communique.aspx>.

<sup>7</sup> “India and the Indian Ocean Region: The New Geo-Economics,” accessed October 29, 2016, <http://www.indiafoundation.in/articles-and-papers/india-and-the-indian-ocean-region-the-new-geo-economics-by-sanjaya-baru.html>.

## Operation Cactus : Indian Intervention in Maldives – Nov 1988

**General VN Sharma, PVSM, AVSM (Retd)<sup>®</sup>**

It was 0815 hours, on a fine 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1988 morning. The RAX secret telephone was ringing urgently in my bedroom as I was about to leave Army House for my office at the South Block. It was Ronen Sen (later our ambassador to the USA), the young and friendly foreign-service officer at Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's office (the PMO). Our conversation went somewhat like this : -

*"There is an emergency at the Maldives Islands, Sir. The capital, Male Island, has been taken over last night by some 100-200 terrorists apparently from Sri Lanka; President Gayoom is in hiding in a civil home, his headquarters palace and the security services headquarters have been captured and a number of his ministers taken hostage. We have an SOS for immediate help, on a tenuous satellite phone from their tourism minister's house. We are trying to hustle the NSG (National Security Guard) for this task, but can the army help?"*

*"Of course we can help, Ronen. We will start working on it right away. You better hold onto that communication channel all day. When can we brief the PM at the Operations Room?" (ops room).*

He suggested 1100 hrs and I agreed. As I reached the first floor of South Block, Roddy (Lieutenant General Rodrigues – the Vice Chief of Army Staff, later the Chief of the Army Staff) was waiting at the lift door. He had been urgently called for discussion by Mr Deshmukh, the Cabinet Secretary. I said that could wait as I knew the problem and asked Roddy to come with me to my office for a few tasks he could order before meeting Deshmukh.

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As briefed, Roddy instructed the Director General Military Operations (DGMO), Lieutenant General VK Singh to begin operational planning and immediately, send maps of the Maldives to my office; to alert the Air Force and Navy staff and the Parachute (para) Brigade for operations. He also personally rang the Parachute Brigade at Agra to place the brigade tactical headquarters and one parachute battalion on two hours notice to move ex-country by air transport for urgent operations; the brief problem at Maldives was indicated with detailed plans to follow by the DGMO. Before leaving for the Cabinet Secretariat, Roddy came back to me to say he could not speak to the para brigade commander as he was out on a para-drop exercise with one of his battalions; a Major Bhatia (later Lieutenant General Vinod Bhatia, former DGMO) the Brigade Major (BM), was not accepting the 'two hours notice' as the brigade was in peace station, troops were on various out-station duties and leave; they must have three days' notice to collect and prepare a battalion before they could be given a two-hour notice for operations. I told Roddy the officer was correct and I would take that on.

Unfortunately, at that time India did not have any 'quick reaction' army units or formations prepared and ready to move for operations at short notice. There were no plans to raise such units or coordinate with the Air Force and Navy for immediate ex-country military operations for selected and pre-planned prospective targets. This was perhaps due to the lack of defence finances and political or military planning. Much of this rapidly changed only after the successful Maldives operations were over.

Commander Para Brigade was Brigadier Balsara who was an efficient and likable officer and had served under me in Sikkim, when I was commanding the division in 1980-82; he was then a lieutenant colonel commanding the 4th Battalion, The Parachute Regiment. I had found his battalion to be one of the very best, winning most of the inter-battalion competitions both at the division and corps levels. We knew each other well and were good friends. I instructed the DGMO to ask the BM at Agra to send a personal radio message from me to his brigade commander to request some 'bending' of standard procedures to meet this urgent operational situation, especially as we were dealing with terrorists and time was of the essence. We had to attain total surprise for air landings at the Maldives to ensure success which may not be

possible if the terrorists had occupied the airfield or captured the President; responsibility for any failure would be mine and not his. I got a positive response from Balsara and he called off his para-drop exercise and hastened back to Agra by helicopter to get his troops organised for the task by mixing certain available sub-units of various units to create the required force level under the Commanding Officer 6th Battalion, the Parachute Regiment (6 PARA); this is normally never done in operations.

Meanwhile I had used the RAX to request the Vice Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Gulu Hiranandani and the Vice Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal Nirmal Suri (later Chief of the Air Staff) to join me in my office to plan for an immediate operational task. The Chiefs of the Navy and Air Force were both on tour abroad. The Vice Chiefs were with me by 0845 hrs; both were close friends and gave me full cooperation, allowing frank discussion. The DGMO had not been able to raise any map of the Maldives so Gulu fetched naval charts from the navy operations room showing the various sea passages and islands of the Lakshadweep, Minicoy and Maldives. The islands were depicted in outline devoid of physical features. We were surprised to see that the capital Male Island was some two nautical miles distant from Hulule, the small coral airport island. The runway of the airport extended half its length into the ocean. Ronen was immediately contacted at the PMO and asked to enquire from the tourist minister at Male as to the location of all boats used to convey tourists and visitors from the airport to Male. The boats were found to be all at the Male docks as the international tourist flights had arrived that morning. Instructions were passed to discreetly move all available boats at Male back to Hulule without raising suspicion and for all boats to remain at the airport till further instructions. This would restrict movement of terrorists to Hulule.

We decided the brief outlines of the plan. We had to maintain complete surprise to permit landings at Hulule and move troops swiftly to Male by boats. Should the lead transport plane be met by hostile fire and difficulty in landing, the troops must parachute onto the airfield; this would be very dangerous in any case and perhaps impossible at night due to the small coral island and surrounding seas, hence landings must be attempted by daylight. Since the total flying distance was some 3000 Km, with about

2000 Km from Agra to our last airfield at Tiruvanthapuram in Kerala State and another 1000 Km across the ocean to Hulule in the Maldives Islands, the transport fleet would require refueling en route to allow for aircraft to return to Thiruvanthapuram, if landings were not possible. Nirmal also said that Hulule was a foreign airfield and his pilots would have to use international coordinates and air routes to locate it. In case daylight landings were not feasible then runway lights must be switched on just before the landings to maintain surprise. Gulu wanted a role for the navy. We decided he must have naval air surveillance established by first light next day and selected warships on stand-by for contingencies based on the way the situation developed. The crux of the plan was the successful landing of our aircraft at Hulule; we were confident our pilots would succeed.

The PM Rajiv Gandhi and his colleagues of the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs (CCPA) arrived at the army ops room at 1115 hours, with the cabinet secretary and secretaries of the concerned ministries. KC Pant, the Raksha Mantri (RM) - the defence minister and Arun Singh the Raj Raksha Mantri (RRM) - the deputy defence minister were present, as were the Navy and Air Force Vice Chiefs with their operations staff. Roddy and the DGMO briefed the meeting on the outline plans on the naval charts. I found the PM talking animatedly to Deshmukh while our proceedings got held up. I turned to Arun Singh to ascertain the problem, he whispered that it must be about the NSG. Apparently, the NSG team had been delayed moving to the Delhi airport and then some time had elapsed to get an aircraft for them; they had taken off for the Maldives but were untraceable, hence the PM's angst. I interceded with the PM suggesting that the military must have his political decision to go ahead very quickly for preparations to proceed; I also said that a positive political decision was the right course and must ensure open and public use of our military and not clandestine forces such as the NSG which may give a false view to the international community of our intentions in a foreign country which had sought our help.

We finished the briefing. The PM raised questions on our chances of success in restoring the situation in the Maldives, the time by which the parachute battalion would be ready to take off for the task and how many casualties were expected. I explained

that there was no delay from the Air Force as they had arranged for the expected load with a number of their heavy transport aircraft which would be positioned at Agra airfield shortly. I said there would be some delay with army troops as they were being reorganised in view of availabilities at their peace station and should be ready by early afternoon. I said we expected total success and complete surprise and perhaps no casualties at all; if things went wrong, there would be some casualties. The PM asked for the maximum casualties possible and I stated these could be from none up to a thousand if a para landing was enforced at night or some aircraft was shot down. He said that many casualties were politically unacceptable and would I, as the Army Chief, be prepared to take that risk. I said it is he who needs to take the political risk both for the consequences of mounting this operation and for all casualties that might ensue. We accept the military risk as we are determined to do this task with total success no matter what the cost; we also do believe, we must not be fearful and be confident of our capability. I reiterated that I expected no casualties at all. Rajiv smiled and gave us his assent. His colleagues never said a word. After they had all departed we got down to the nuts and bolts of the operation and various orders.

I left the headquarters at 1330 hrs for a quiet lunch and rest at home nearby, leaving instructions with my staff not to be disturbed for two hours. Nirmal rang up at about 1500 hrs to say all his aircraft were ready and positioned at the airfield at Agra but there were no signs of the Army. Roddy informed me that Brigadier Balsara insisted that he must carry his six 75/24 pack howitzers which required to be lashed on platforms for para-drop and would take some six hours more for preparation; despite being explained that he would be dealing with terrorists who were unlikely to have any mortars or guns. I suggested to Roddy to let Balsara go ahead but with only four guns to save time, as it was his responsibility to succeed in this operation and we did not really know what awaited us at the Maldives. Then the young Major at the ops room rang up that Defence Secretary Seshan was in the ops room chastising the DGMO and some staff officers for the delay in take off of troops as the Chief himself had assured the PM that troops would be ready and depart by early afternoon; this was delaying planning and procedures at the ops room. I told the Major to take two stalwart soldiers from the army guard of the ops

room and escort Seshan out, saying this was on my express orders and he should talk to me for any problems. This led to the RM ringing me up at home to question why our troops were delayed since the whole point was for speed to ensure surprise and no presence of hostiles at Hulule, also that the PM was frequently ringing him to confirm take off. I requested him to relax and let us get on with the job; that some unforeseen delay was likely but we were still going ahead even with an enforced night landing; that once the government had given us the go ahead nothing could stop us and we will take the delay in our stride. 'So what do I tell the PM?' he asked. 'Exactly what I just said, I will keep you updated', I replied.

I was back in my office by 1600 hrs and ready for the night. The staff was told to take rest by turn. There had been a call from the Foreign Ministry that their diplomatic representative at the Maldives was in Delhi and could he be of help. The DGMO had arranged for him to reach Agra by an Air Force aircraft to coordinate with Balsara. He flew in the lead aircraft with the Brigade Commander and was indeed of great help at the Maldives as he personally knew everyone there including the President and was our contact man for both governments. There had been a call from Bill Clark, the US ambassador who wished to see me. He came to my office at about 1630 hours and asked what India was doing about the Maldives SOS to all nations; obviously he had got wind of some activity by us. I said India is a poor third world incapable country and he should instead be telling me about what the great US super power was doing to save a poor small democratic country in our neighbourhood from nasty terrorists. He told me that they had already moved two warships each from Subic Bay in the Philippines and the Gulf; to this I said that in some three days when these ships arrived at the Maldives that poor country would be ruled by terrorists and all the US could do was to shell them to little effect. He was a friend and left after a hot cup of coffee and some humorous banter. Later next morning he was back for more coffee and deep compliments as a US maritime surveillance plane at dawn had observed our transport planes and activity on Hulule. That enhanced the close relations and respect between the two nations and indicated India's unique capability to ensure freedom of Indian Ocean Island countries and protect international sea routes against terrorist action.



The Para Brigade contingent was able to take off at about 1800 hrs; they staged through Thiruvanthapuram civil airport where the Air Force had taken over the air traffic control and established arrangements for refueling, maintenance and final briefing of air crew and troops. Information regularly came in to the ops room till the take off of the transport planes across the ocean to the island of Hulule. After some meticulous navigation and expert flying in a dark night the huge lead Il-76 transport piloted by Group Captain Anant Bewoor came in vicinity of Hulule. The pilot's request for switching on the runway lights was efficiently conveyed to the air control through the Maldives tourism minister. The landing shortly after midnight was efficiently executed with no ground opposition and the remaining aircraft of the transport stream flew in at regular intervals. The Para Battalion quickly secured the airfield and commandeered all available boats for crossing the sea to Male.

The terrorists at Male were in panic when they saw the landings of large transport planes at Hulule. They took immediate action to round up their armed personnel and board their merchant ship. They took all hostages, including about five ministers of the Maldives Government on board and made haste to sail away towards Sri Lanka. The Paratroops saw this and attempted to engage the ship with anti-tank recoilless guns across the sea from Hulule but with little effect. By the time our troops were able to reach Male Island, the ship was out of range. Gulu (VCNS) was tasked to intercept the hostile ship and he took on the problem with great enthusiasm having got a viable task for the Navy. At first light next morning the ship was located by maritime surveillance planes well out to sea sailing in the direction of southern Sri Lanka. Two frigates—the INS Betwa and INS Godavari were tasked for this job, one sailed from Kochi Naval Base and the other was returning from a ceremonial visit to West Australia and happened to be rounding the southern coast of Sri Lanka, sailing for Kochi. Both frigates closed in at full speed and were able to intercept the hostile ship. The terrorist captain initially refused to surrender and threatened killing the ministers and scuttling the ship. After some adroit handling of the situation by the Captains of our warships, including some effective firing which damaged the bridge and disabled the communication and control systems, the hostile ship surrendered. It was boarded and towed back to Male with the ministers and hostages safe and the terrorists in captivity. The

ship and all terrorists were handed over to the custody of Male authorities and hostages returned to their homes.

President Gayoom profusely thanked PM Rajiv Gandhi and requested that the Commanding Officer 6 PARA and essential troops be permitted to stay on in Male to train and reorganise his security forces for protection of his Country. This was agreed to and these troops were eventually returned to India a year after completing this task and making many friends amongst the Maldivians.

Operation Cactus was India's most successful tri-service military intervention across the ocean in a foreign country on its plea for help. It was executed brilliantly without a single mishap, with great speed and no casualties, with all military objectives efficiently achieved. The operation succeeded despite no forces or procedures existing for rapid deployment and execution of military tasks, no maps, no actionable intelligence and on a dark moonless night. It was made possible by the fact that there were very quick and firm political decisions and directions at the highest level, total cooperation between the defence and foreign ministries, the three armed services headquarters and all troops involved. Above all, good personal relations and humour between political leaders, the service chiefs, diplomats and concerned bureaucrats. There were tremendous 'guts', quick initiative and bold effective action among junior commanders and troops. Our success vaulted India into the ranks of great powers who could respond with speed against criminal acts against weak independent nations well beyond our borders. This achievement was politically and militarily adroit and backed by all powerful countries including the USA and the Soviet Union, who were unable to act themselves in support of democratic Maldives. There is no doubt that India can achieve any task with such cooperation amongst all stakeholders. Luck also favoured us as also the bold plan. As Napoleon said, "success in battle is 10 per cent hard work and sweat, and 90 per cent luck."

# Geopolitical Shift : Evolving Strategic Landscape

**Major General GG Dwivedi, SM, VSM and Bar, PhD (Retd)®**

## Introduction

In his book 'World Order' Henry Kissinger identifies four great world orders in history: European, Islamic, Chinese and American; each shaping the destiny of their nations, regions and the world at large as per respective agendas. While Europeans strived for bringing about balance in the international affairs; Islamic states pursued expansion; Chinese sought tributes to the Emperor; America perceived itself as the beacon to the world for universal values. While true world order has never existed, what prevailed over a period was devised at Westphalia almost four centuries back.<sup>1</sup>

From the ruins of the World War II, the international order that emerged was centred around the USA, the new superpower. For next four and half decades, globe stood trifurcated; the American-led West, Soviet-led Communist Block and the Third World – unrelated directly to the East-West rivalry. These camps were deeply divided from within and often chaotic. Hence, the concept of world order remained an illusion. The only notable achievement was avoidance of World War III. The dynamic process of geopolitical shift and resultant challenge to the *status quo* powers has invariably led to intense rivalry, contenders often falling prey to the Thucydides trap.<sup>2</sup>

## Geopolitical Shift – An Overview

Epochal events towards the last decade of 20<sup>th</sup> Century; namely the collapse of Berlin Wall, demise of Soviet Union and emergence of the USA as the sole superpower triggered a chain of events; with cascading effect. The erstwhile ideology-based structures cast in stone stood obliterated. With geoeconomics driving the

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dynamics of international relations, it was the 'balance of interest' that trumped 'balance of power' dynamics.

Brief era of America as the sole power was in for serious jolt in the event of 9/11. The non-state actors employing terrorism as an instrument to challenge the very idea of nation state has redefined the basic tenets of national and international security, blurring the lines between the two spectrums. The ability of non-state actors to establish a caliphate – Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has added new dimension to the proxy war. Given the complex international scenario, multi-alliances and partnerships are reshaping the global strategic architecture. The onset of new millennium also witnessed yet another wave of instability, wherein suppressed regional, national and ethnic aspirations came to the fore by way of Jasmine and 'Spring Movements' in West Asia, shaking up the authoritarian regimes in the region.

The phenomenon of globalisation which had created a complex web of interdependence between nations, corporations and interest groups paving for new alignments has come under stress; case in point being Britain's exit from the European Union. The nations today are increasingly engaging each other on a wide band; ranging from cooperation to competition and from containing to confrontation, in consonance with their national interests.

The global energy trade map is under makeover with the shift from traditional suppliers in Eurasia and Middle East, as the producers tap unconventional gas and oil resources from the waters of Australia, Brazil, Africa and the Mediterranean to the oil sands of Alberta.<sup>3</sup> Most West African oil now flows to Asia rather than the US, as the energy demand heartland is centred around China, Japan and India. The biggest game changer has been the development of technology by fracking for the production of shale gas from the rock formations in the USA. With its crude oil production growing by 50 per cent between 2008 and 2013, the US is expected to emerge as an energy superpower. According to the International Energy Agency estimate of 2014, it is poised to overtake Saudi Arabia as the top oil producer in the near future.<sup>4</sup> With steep fall in oil prices, all the nations relying on the hydro carbon revenues are facing a crisis situation. Reconfiguration of global oil and gas scene has resulted in diminishing the geopolitical leverages that some of the energy supplier group of nations wielded for decades, particularly in the Middle East.

While the West faced economic slowdown, there was a spurt of economic activity in Asia driven by China, India, ASEAN, Japan and South Korea. As a result, began the process of gradual shift in balance of power eastwards. Sequel to the strategic review undertaken by Thomas Donilon, former National Security Adviser to the US President, it became evident that there was a glaring imbalance in the American power projection posture which was biased towards to the West.<sup>5</sup> This paved the way for Obama's Doctrine of 'pivot to Asia'. The key factor behind the US new Asia Strategy was the growing influence of China in the Asia-Pacific. Besides, with the wars in the Middle East winding up and new economic and security architecture shaping up in the Indo-Pacific, American strategic interests were deemed to be inextricably linked to the developments in the arc extending from Western Pacific - East Asia into the Indian Ocean Region.

Russia although a declining power, still has the potential to seriously challenge the existing order in Europe and even beyond. Kremlin's aggressive policy against Ukraine has been resisted by the EU by way of sanctions. On the other hand, China's ascendance and its impact on the US led international order has resulted in escalation of tension between the two. The US actions of building new alliances and partnerships with the nations on the Chinese periphery is seen by Beijing as acts of containment. Convergence of interests between China and Russia is paving for new alignments. The stage has been set for a fierce inter-power rivalry, with far reaching consequences.

### **Great Powers Rivalry**

The three major current powers – the US, China and Russia are characterised by varying internal political dynamics and conflicting global aspirations. The US democratic system steered by two major political parties has intricate structure of checks and balances; based on the American values. In China, the Communist Party formally functions on the basis of authoritarian collective leadership. Russian system is highly personality oriented. The US strives to maintain *status quo* as the lone super power. Well aware of declining influence, America's policy now seeks greater involvement of allies and partners to pursue its national interests. Given its rapid rise, China on the other hand is all set to change the balance of power equations in favour of a bipolar model, thus posing a serious challenge to the American predominance. Russia

under Putin, whose delusional quest to regain the erstwhile super power status and Cold War strategic symmetry has upstaged the West; with a clear message, “bear may be down but is definitely not out”. Moscow, despite past differences with Beijing has gone out of its way to break fresh ground in pursuit of mutual interests. Besides the trio, the other emerging power centres like EU, Japan and India have the capacity to impact the strategic calculus in their respective regions.

However, it is the centrality of the US-China relationship which will be critical in shaping the future of Asia and the world at large. Given the complexities, the relations between the two competing powers have been on the roller coaster mode. While on the economic front the trajectory has been favourable, the geopolitical scene has been frosty. The key reason is the mutual distrust, arising out of clashing national interests.

America has always considered itself a Pacific Power. Post War II, it has maintained sizeable military presence in the Western Pacific, acting as a security guarantor to its allies. Deploying 60 per cent of naval assets in the Asia-Pacific region as a sequel to its revised strategy implies adopting a flexible military posture with both deterrence and punitive capability, in an event of crisis or conflict situation. Alongside, Washington has accorded priority to strengthening existing alliances and building new strategic partnerships. The ‘US-India Joint Vision for Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region’ issued in 2015, besides proposals like ‘US-Japan-India-Australia’ quadrilateral, are cases in point. The US core interests in the Asia-Pacific are to ensure regional stability, economic prosperity, unhindered access to the markets and freedom of navigation; while maintaining continued dominance through various regional initiatives.

As per Graham Alison, “The preeminent geostrategic challenge of this era is not violent Islamic extremists or resurgent Russia, it is the impact of China’s ascendancy”<sup>6</sup> Late Mr Lee Kuan Yew, former PM of Singapore had observed that sheer size of China’s displacement was such that the world had to find a new order. The Communist leadership grand strategy encompasses four cardinal goals: maintain internal stability, sustain high economic growth, acquire great power status and ensure peaceful-passive neighbourhood. With Xi Jinping’s emergence as a paramount

leader, there is visible shift in the policy of 'hide and bide' enunciated by Deng Xiao Ping. Xi in pursuit of 'prosperous and powerful China' believes in employing all instruments of statecraft, including geoeconomic intimidation and rewards.<sup>7</sup> Asia-Pacific is of vital strategic significance to China; perceived as its under belly. The crux of China's Asia policy is to prevent any competitor who could challenge its domination in the region. To this end, working towards diminution of American influence in the region, containing Japan, propagating concept of 'Asian Security by Asians' and gaining sovereign authority over South China Sea are Beijing's key objectives. China's new 'Periphery Policy' of extended neighbourhood and shift in maritime strategy from 'offshore water defence' to include 'open sea protection' is aligned to the attainment of the defined objectives.<sup>8</sup>

Due to shrinking economy coupled with aging population, Russia's geopolitical clout has waned significantly. Given its military power, Moscow still retains the capacity to pose credible threat to challenge the international order. Russia is very sensitive to the eastward expansion of NATO, right in its backyard. Its security strategy of defending the heartland by creating land buffers has a historical past. Even Catherine the Great had pursued the policy of defending the borders by extending them.<sup>9</sup> Intervention in Georgia in 2008 and annexation of Crimea, part of Ukraine in 2015 are manifestations of old legacy. With Russia and the US involved in a Proxy war in Ukraine, possibility of a scaled down Cold War in Europe are rife. Even in Syria, the two are competing to safeguard their interests. While Russia presently is more concerned with its immediate periphery, Moscow and Beijing actively collaborating in Asia-Pacific remains a viable option.

There are other regional players who are seen as emerging power centres. Japan is the third largest economy. After almost two decades of stagnation, its economy is on the path of recovery. Tokyo is deeply concerned about Beijing's rapidly growing military capability and increasing assertiveness. Prime Minister Abe is determined to restore Japan's primacy. The reviewed 'defence policy guidelines' seek to re-craft the national security policy. Removal of one per cent GDP cap on defence spending is aimed to accord priority to modernisation of 'Self Defence Forces'.<sup>10</sup> Besides being a US ally, Japan has taken pains to strengthen partnerships with nations of Asia-Pacific. It views strategic relations



with India in the larger framework of peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

Australia sees huge opportunity in the unfolding 'Asian Century' and actively supports the US strategy of 'balancing to Asia-Pacific'. It regards Indian and Pacific Oceans as one strategic arc. Alongside seeking trilateral partnership with the US, Japan and South Korea, Canberra takes cognisance of Delhi's growing stature and perceives India's special role in the Asia-Pacific. ASEAN has emerged as formidable economic block, with combined GDP of over US \$ 2 trillion. While maintaining centrality, these nations have enhanced relations with the US, besides India and Japan to cope with China's growing influence in the region.

India's potential as a growing regional power is beginning to be recognised by the global polity. It was glaringly obvious during the 'Senior Executives Programme' at Harvard where the author was one of the participants. In the US policy of rebalancing Asia, India is seen as a significant player in the evolving politico-economic and security architecture in the Indo-Pacific. India's 'Act East' policy alongside 'pivot to Japan' is indicative of its deepening engagement with the states of Asia-Pacific with a view to leverage its position. In the meanwhile, India has revamped its ties with Russia, restoring the imbalance. While building on existing partnerships in Europe, Africa and West Asia, Delhi has made efforts to carve out new architecture in the South Asia by giving fresh thrust to initiatives like the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC).

### **The Evolving Strategic Landscape**

Given the trends of on-going geopolitical shift and ensuing 'balance of power' game, global strategic environment is in a state of flux, marred with contradictions and ambiguities. Only certainty is that the pace of change is in for further acceleration. The recent outcome of the US Presidential elections coupled with the anointment of President Xi Jinping as the 'Core' (of Chinese leadership) are key factors that will significantly alter the course of future alignments.

With Mr Donald Trump soon to take over as the 45<sup>th</sup> American President, the US foreign and security policies are expected to witness a significant shift. 'America First' policy, the main plank of Trump's election campaign implies greater inward focus, while

curtailing its global outreach. The President elect in his statements has indicated that America will no more be the global policeman and a net security provider. This is matter of anxiety amongst the US alliance partners, both in Europe and Asia, on Washington commitments to post-war security arrangements. The allies will be required to pay more towards the cost of US troops deployed in the respective regions. Besides, these nations will strive to be self-reliant in their security stance, triggering a new arms race. Keeping in view Mr Trump's opposition to 12 nations Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP); in case the US aborts the trade pact, it will sound death knell to Obama's 'Rebalancing Asia' strategy. Mr Trump has characterised ISIS as an existential threat to the US. He has expressed firm resolve to destroy it through extraordinary means. Whether the terrorism emanating from Pakistan will be viewed through the same lens – only time will tell.

Beijing, under all powerful Xi Jinping seeks a unipolar Asia and Bipolar world. China today is a key player in shaping the future world order. It is to be seen whether the Communist leadership only tinkers with the existing international structures or tries to wreck these to build new ones. Anticipated Changes in the US policies as brought out above will suit China to pursue its expansionist designs. Russia's although weakened, can act as spoiler to counter American designs in various parts of the globe. In case there is change in Washington's policy of not to completely isolate Russia but seek collaboration on shared interests like proliferation, terrorism, Arctic or West Asia, it could help obviate a possible Cold War. However, this could exacerbate the situation given Russia's conventional military edge in Europe. It will also face stiff opposition from allies like Germany and split the West.

India's strategic relations with the US are expected to maintain a steady course as the fundamentals are strong and there are no major contentious issues between the two. The US support for India's quest to the membership to the Nuclear Supply Group and the UN Security Council will be crucial. Given India's good rapport both with the West and Asia-Pacific, it is expected to play a greater role as an emerging power centre. The real challenge will be to manage the relationship with China, given the prevailing trust deficit and Dragon's growing influence around Indian periphery. Besides, maintenance of rapid pace of economic growth is critical for India to realise its aspiration to make it to the top table.

Traditionally, it is the great powers that have set the course of geo political shifts. In the current scenario, the US mindful of its limitations is likely to scale down the global footprint. While Russia is on the decline, China is only a quasi-Super Power. Therefore, emerging power centres like Japan, India and other regional groups, willy-nilly, are poised to play significant role in the realignment of geostrategic gyro.

### Conclusion

Given the tectonic shift in the geopolitical plates that is underway, it is going to take time before the skyline of global strategic landscape begins to get defined. Going by the prevailing indicators, the design of future global architecture is in for a phenomenal makeover, major disruptions in Asia and Europe driving the process. The ensuing great power game is likely to play out on the unexpected lines, defying the past trends. With what legitimacy the key players employ power; which will be crucial in bending the curve of international order in the right direction, for a stable and prosperous world.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Henry Kissinger (2014), *'World Order'*, Penguin Press, New York, p2.

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<sup>3</sup>Robert D Blackwell and Meghan O' Sullivan (March-April 2014) *Americans Energy Edge-Geo Political Consequences of Shale Revolution* Foreign Affairs Issue.

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<sup>5</sup>Thomas Donilon Speech (November 15, 2012), *President Obamas Asia Policy*, Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Visit: Csis.org/files/attachments/12511-Donilon-statemens-Forum-TS.Pdf. Assessed 02/11/2016, Time 3:15 PM.

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<sup>7</sup>Robert D Blackwell and Henry Kissinger (20 May 2016), *Dealing with Xi Jinping and Rise of Chinese Power*, Presentation to Congress Staff, Washington DC.

<sup>8</sup>*White Paper China National Defence* 2015, Beijing.

<sup>9</sup>Stanly John (7 November 16), *Obama's Tricky Legacy*, Hindu.

<sup>10</sup><http://www.usa/today.com/story/news/world2016/03/29/japan-government-defence-budget-economic-recovery/82376314/> accessed 28.10.16 Time 11 am.

# Conflict Dynamics : An Ever Changing Paradigm in a Globalised World

Major General KK Pant®

## Introduction

Conflicts happen, leaving tangled stomachs, crumpled brows, shaky knees. They strain us and stretch us. To address conflicts constructively, we need intuition and imagination to navigate the shades of conflict. In this article, I wish to examine the dynamics of conflict process. Conflicts do not arise simply because of differences over issues or miscommunication. Some of the most difficult conflicts, we face today have well-defined issues and have been the subject of countless efforts at calm communications. In the words of Bo Kjellen, the Swedish negotiator to the Kyoto Protocol, "I only knew negotiations through my practical experience and started to read the theory only towards the end of my career. I think it would have helped me a lot had I known the theory earlier".<sup>1</sup>

## Conflict

"Conflict is the process of powers meeting and balancing" according to RJ Rummell in *Understanding Conflict and War*. Conflict is a process of interaction among two or more persons or groups. It is not a permanent state of being; however, it is fair to say that conflict is characteristic of social relationships and groups. Conflict is a situation in which two or more human beings desire goals which they perceive as being obtainable by one or the other but not both. Conflict is a natural and very typical phenomenon in every type of human relationships, at every level. We take action against another because our mind perceives an imbalance. Incompatible interests are not the only things at issue in more severe conflicts. Conflicts last longer and are more deeply rooted than disputes.

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**Conflict Structure**

Conflict has the following three components and distinctions can be drawn between them though they are inter-related:-

- (a) Conflict situation.
- (b) Conflict attitude and perceptions.
- (c) Conflict behaviour.

**Conflict Situation**

Initially, a situation of conflict will be defined as any situation in which two or more social entities or parties perceive that they possess mutually incompatible goals. Goals mean consciously desired future outcomes, conditions or end states, which often have intrinsic value for members of particular parties. Thus, the Palestinian goal of replacing Israel by a cantonal, secular Palestinian state is in conflict with the Israeli goal of the continued existence of an independent Israel.

**Conflict Attitudes**

The second major component of conflict consists of those psychological states or conditions that accompany conflict behaviour. The psychology of conflict is best regarded as an exacerbating factor, rather than a prime cause of the social and international disputes. In other words, an instrumental approach is adapted to the main question of the sources of conflict, and the assumptions made that conflicts are most usefully regarded as arising from a realistic pursuit of goals, no matter how oddly these goals appear to be selected. 'Wars begin in the minds of men'; a crucial sentiment of the opening sentences of the UNESCO Charter explains it amply.

**Conflict Behaviour**

Third major component of conflict consists of the actual behaviour of the opposing parties resulting from their possession of mutually incompatible goals and from their attempts to achieve those goals. Conflict behaviour may initially be defined as actions undertaken by one party in any situation of conflict aimed at the opposing party

with the intention of making that opponent abandon or modify its goals. It is quite possible that an action may be perceived by an adversely affected party as having the objective of forcing it to abandon a particular disputed objective, but that, in spite of such a perception this was not the underlying intention of the actor. The actions do not necessarily have to be violent to be counted as conflict behaviour, although they may be so.

### **Conflict Dynamics**

The triadic structure of conflict implies that one or two components can exist without the others, and also there may not be an ideal sequence in their development. This gives rise to the concepts of manifest and latent conflict. The former defined as conditions in which parties possess incompatible goals and pursue some overt strategy vis-à-vis their opponents to achieve those goals and the latter is the existence of a situation of conflict. But this is not sufficient to explain the absence of conflict despite goal incompatibility and why certain intense conflict situations do not indicate recognisable conflict behaviour. This might happen due to three conditions:-

- (a) A conflict situation is not recognised by one or both parties, but where their actual values and goals are mutually incompatible, so that if this were recognised, conflict behaviour would follow.
- (b) The conflict situation is recognised as such by both parties, but because too many other goals would be sacrificed, if the mutually incompatible goals were to be pursued, no conflict behaviour occurs.
- (c) The conflict situation is recognised, but actual conflict behaviour in pursuit of the party's goals is impossible, owing to the coercive power of potential opponents. Hence all appears 'peaceful', but only because the potential costs of pursuing the desired goals are perceived as being too high to justify the attempt. This could be termed suppressed or a latent conflict.

### **Causes of Conflict**

Some attribute conflict to structural phenomena while others say they are inevitable and ingrained in human primordial behaviour. While it is impossible to attribute most conflicts to a single factor, many elements are clearly decisive when it comes to a conflict's escalation. Michael E Brown writes that the literature identifies

main clusters of variables that “predispose” some places in the world to conflict, while not others.<sup>2</sup> They are :-

- (a) **Structural factors** (weak states; intra-state security concerns; ethnic geography).
- (b) **Political Factors** (Discriminatory political institutions; exclusionary national ideologies; inter-group politics; elite politics).
- (c) **Economic factors** (Economic problems; Discriminatory economic systems; modernisation).
- (d) **Cultural/Perceptual factors** (patterns of cultural discrimination; problematic group histories)

Various scholars classify the causes or sources of conflict in many different ways. What differentiates a conflict from political struggles or peaceful competition is that it involves the potential of destructive violence. Some major causes of conflict are enumerated in the subsequent paras.

**Classical Conflict.** Dispute over boundaries, rivalry for the possession of colonial territories and disagreement over rights to exploitation of resources were among the most common forms of conflict until the twentieth century. After the Second World War, there remained a number of them, largely as a result of decisions made during the war, e.g. division of Korea and Germany. Border disputes are likely to be a source of conflict until all boundaries are established and recognised in relation to the sovereignty of the governments concerned. Border disputes arising out of ideological and allegiance of small nations are likely to occur at least until independent sovereign states are well established and widely supported by their own people.

**Conflict Profiteers.** Conflict profiteers are people who benefit from the continuation of a conflict.<sup>3</sup> These benefits may be financial, political or social.

Those who profit from war range from single persons to whole companies and nations. Conflict profiteers include political leaders who gain their reputation and power, and military leaders whose reputation has been (or is being) earned by battle victories. In addition, young, uneducated men who have no other way of making a living may benefit from gaining employment as military personnel



or in support roles, such as labour corps. Another group that profits substantially from war consists of all the companies selling weapons and military technology. War generates opportunities to loot and to carry out illicit production and trade in drugs, diamonds, timber and other commodities. Passive war profiteers make profits from war but they do not influence the duration and outcome of a war or the way it is waged. Active war profiteers, on the other hand, are in a position to start and prolong a war in order to increase their own profits.

**Dehumanisation.** Dehumanisation is the psychological process of demonising the enemy, making them seem less than human and hence not worthy of humane treatment.<sup>4</sup> This can lead to increased violence, human rights violations, war crimes, and genocide. Jews in the eyes of Nazis and Tutsis in the eyes of Hutus (in the Rwandan genocide) are but two examples. The more severe the conflict, greater is the psychological distance between groups.

**Rich Poor Conflict.** An imbalance between rich and poor is the oldest and most basic cause of all conflicts. Power inequities have existed in almost all human societies. In the age of globalisation, the gap between high and low income countries is not only persisting, but in many cases it is widening, as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has shown in its study of Luxembourg. While the existence of such a divide is unquestionable, its origins, structure, and consequences are not.<sup>5</sup>

**External Supporters.** External supporters play a critical role in many conflicts.<sup>6</sup> They range from sympathisers to people with more selfish agendas. The “anti-apartheid movement” was a coalition that encompassed the world and consisted of international, regional, national and local bodies. America’s “strategic cooperation” with Israel centres around two types of military related assistance: Economic Support Funds and Foreign Military Financing. Some suggest that by arming Israel in preparation for further conflict, the US may be hindering the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. External support can be either constructive or destructive depending on the situation and how it is used. If external support equalises the power in the conflict, the parties may realise that neither can win without enormous costs and thus agree to negotiate a settlement.

**Extremists and Spoilers.** Extremists are people who take extreme views – those which are much stronger, and often more fixed than other people's views of the same situation and generally may advocate violent responses.<sup>7</sup> They narrowly define the agenda and often sabotage efforts by others (even in their own camp) to negotiate. Such hardliners typically refuse to accept any form of compromise and are unlikely to change their beliefs or behaviour. Often, they do not really wish to reach a solution.

**Globalisation.** Globalisation is the ongoing process of linking people around the world: economically, socially, and culturally.<sup>8</sup> In terms of conflict, globalisation has benefits and costs. Some people think it will reduce international conflicts by increasing interdependence, others see the inequities as a major cause of conflict. Globalisation is perhaps the central concept of our age. While most conceptions focus on different aspects of growing interdependence be it economic, cultural, technological, and the like, at a basic level globalisation refers to growing interconnectedness. There are many, however, who see globalisation as a genuine restructuring of social organisation. In short, globalisation is a highly complex interaction of forces producing integration and disintegration, cooperation and conflict, order and disorder.

**Uneven Distribution of Resources.** These are distributional conflicts that really matter over jobs, land etc.<sup>9</sup> If the stakes are high, the willingness to compromise or lose may be low, making resolution more difficult. Distributional conflicts are conflicts over who gets what and how much. The item to be distributed is usually tangible — money, land, better houses, better schools or better jobs. But the item to be distributed can be intangible as well. The conflict over Jerusalem is a live example – with its historical and religious significance – is immeasurably valuable.

**Human Needs.** Many conflicts are caused by the lack of provision of fundamental human needs. These include basic needs for food, water and shelter as well as more complex needs for safety, security, self-esteem and personal fulfillment. Poverty, environmental degradation, poor health care and lack of adequate housing often lead to the denial of their basic needs for dignity, safety and control over their lives. Likewise, conflicts that develop around issues of identity, ethnicity, religion or culture are often grounded in unfulfilled human needs. Because all individuals are

driven to fulfill these essential needs, they will fight indefinitely to achieve them and will not give up until their goal is attained. For example, the Palestinian conflict involves the unrealised aspirations of identity and security.

**Ideological Conflicts.** The revolt which led to World War II, a conflict described at the time as being between the “haves” and the “have nots” was not so much a revolution with a philosophy or a developed ideology as a revolution with a particular and immediately practical purpose. Germany, Italy and Japan set out to overcome particular and immediate problems in their economic lives. By contrast, in the forties and fifties, the Communist revolt against the established world order was primarily an ideological one. It did not seek to remedy any specific and immediate international situation of direct concern to the Soviets. It sought to consolidate within its own territories certain ideas and institutions.

**Moral or Value Conflicts.** Moral conflicts tend to arise when one group views the beliefs and actions of another group as being so fundamentally evil that they exceed the bounds of tolerance. Moral conflict also occurs when disputants are acting within different social worlds. Inter-racial or inter-religious marriages, for example, are seen by many as an outgrowth of exclusivity and tolerance. The freedom to marry anyone is a “right”. Traditionalists, however, would see it as an evil – harming their race or religion.

**Nationalism.** Nationalism is an extension of identity group conflicts in which feelings of identity coincide with loyalty to one’s nation-state or national group, even when a formal nation-state does not exist (as with the Palestinians).<sup>10</sup> Political scientists draw a sharp distinction between the concepts of *state* and *nation*. State refers to government and other institutions which run the country. Nation, by contrast, is a psychological characteristic, what individuals identify with. There are nation-states in which almost everyone accepts the state as theirs and makes it the primary home of their political identity and loyalty. That would certainly be true of most people in the US or France, but is less true in countries where people might think of themselves as Scots more than British, Quebecois more than Canadian or Walloon more than Belgian. One of the most tragic examples of nationalism-induced violence occurred when Yugoslavia disintegrated into now six separate states. Only Slovenia was anywhere near homogeneous, and most

ethnic minorities chafed under the nationalistic rule of the majority group's leaders.

**Revolt against Suppression.** Revolt against suppression has been another common source of conflict. Suppression has most frequently been inflicted upon people occupying an important strategic position, or upon a country possessing strategic resources. Suppression is usually of the subjects (of a state); but there are also independent nations, which consider themselves prejudiced by restraints imposed upon their activities by other nations. Freedom struggle in Baluchistan is a prime example that comes to mind.

**Revolt against Poverty or Underdevelopment.** Poor living conditions and underdevelopment are not necessarily due to current foreign restraints; there are in most cases reasons relating to history and to natural resources. Nevertheless, such conditions are not passively accepted, especially as the people concerned become aware of the higher income of others and the means by which their own incomes might be increased. Revolt is likely to be directed against the former colonial power, or against the feudal lord through whom the colonial power operated and to whom the condition of poverty is attributed. The demand for independence can arise out of a belief that independence is in itself a remedy for low living standards. Revolt, and if necessary armed revolt, is inevitable in the absence of acceptable minimum living standards. A common strategy of those working with conflict resolution in poor areas around the world has been the empowerment of the disadvantaged.<sup>11</sup> Nearer home, the Naxal movement may be attributable to neglect and underdevelopment of tribal areas.

**Arms as a Cause of Conflict.** The enormous growth of armaments in Europe, the sense of insecurity and fear caused by them made war inevitable. This, it seems, is the truest reading of history, and the lesson that the present should be learning from the past in the interest of future peace, the warning to be handed on to those who come after us.<sup>12</sup> One of the corollaries of the acceptance of war as an instrument of government is that peace may best be secured by preparedness for war. To be effective in defence, national armaments must be adequate, competitively. The competitive element and the danger of war through preparation for it leads to competitive arming and could in fact provoke war rather than preserve peace.

### **Consequences (Costs/Benefits)**

The costs of intractable conflict are well documented: death, destruction, humiliation, anger, fear, homelessness, famine... the list goes on and on. But conflicts do bring benefits. Sometimes those benefits only come to leaders, which may be why they continue the conflict even when others – ordinary citizens and/or outside observers consider this to be a folly. Sometimes those benefits come to groups as a whole, as they become more cohesive, more empowered and more effective in defending their own interests and rights. At another level, prolonged conflicts are also known to reinforce nationalism.

**Benefits of Constructive Conflict.** Conflicts are often so damaging that the benefits are overlooked. But without conflict, there would be much less social learning, more injustice, less constructive change. Conflict is often driven by a sense of grievance, be it scarcity, inequality, cultural or moral differences, or the distribution of power. Thus, engaging in a conflict provides one means of addressing these concerns – either affirming a position of advantage or overcoming perceived shortcomings. Whether they are dealt with constructively or destructively depends on how the conflict is handled. Spoiler and Conflict profiteers also gain from conflict by gaining money or power, but those gains are also widely viewed as illegitimate. Legitimate benefits of conflict accrue to much wider groupings. While certainly not exhaustive, some of the most significant benefits of conflict are social, psychological and material.<sup>13</sup>

**Conflict Costs.** It goes without saying that conflict has many costs. The loss of human life is the most obvious one. After all, the twentieth century was the deadliest in all of human history. With some 8 million Jews executed in the Holocaust and nearly a million Rwandans in a 100-day period in 1994, it truly earned the moniker “the age of genocide”. This is to say nothing of the two world wars and the decolonisation struggles and civil wars that have marred the latter half of the twentieth century in particular. The new century has already witnessed some of the most horrific acts of terrorism in history. Not to diminish the loss of life, but casualty figures merely scratch the surface of the true cost of conflict. Survivors bear the physical and emotional scars of terror, torture and rape. Conflict also often has dire consequences for economic and human development as well as the environment.

**Sense of Victimhood.** In the early 1930s, millions of Ukrainians died under Stalin's violent policy of forced collectivisation. The depths of pain, fear and hatred that continued to characterise the Ukrainian attitude toward Russians in the 1990s is typical of all victimised people and groups. The same could be said of the relationship between Muslims, Serbs and Croats in the former Yugoslavian state, between Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda and between Palestinians and Israelis in the Middle East. Due to the enormous psychological impact of conflict on people who live with ongoing violence or who have experienced major trauma in their past, the issue of victimhood is critical to any attempt at conflict resolution or peace building.<sup>14</sup>

### **Conclusion**

In this article, I have dealt with nature of conflict, enumerating various causes and predisposing factors responsible for it. This way of conceptualising and understanding of conflict assumes special significance as in majority of cases the focus is on precipitating factors leading to conflict, which in actual terms is just like the tip of an iceberg. These factors eventually result in actual appearance of conflict that was otherwise dormant and muted. The latent part of conflict which may prolong the period of subjugation of masses, unnoticed sufferings, unheard grievances, unequal distribution of resources, intolerable hardships and relentless pressure impeding humans to grow and flourish (materially, politically, socially, intellectually and spiritually) needs to be appreciated fully and pin pointed to precision for efficacious conflict resolution. Historical account of conflict, understanding of cultural imperatives of the involved parties, socio-cultural sensitivity, reflection on repressed motivation, political and economic affordance, role of mass media, leadership style and pattern of leader-members exchanges, rift creators, stake of opportunists and presence of external manoeuvre and their interests; all these need to be dwelt on deliberately so as to come to any justifiable conclusion about a conflict and subsequently for resolution.

### **Endnotes**

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- <sup>14</sup> Burgess, Heidi. "Damaged or Destroyed Relationships." Beyond Intractability. Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. Posted: September 2003, [http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/damaged\\_relationships](http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/damaged_relationships).



# Linking The PLA's Military Region Reorganisation with Chinese Military Writings

Brigadier Iqbal Singh Samyal®

## Introduction

Encapsulated by the phrase “*junwei guanzong, zhanqu zhuzhan, junzhong zhujian*” (overall management by the Central Military Commission (CMC), operational focus by theatres and force building by service headquarters), the recent PLA organisational reforms have been more ambitious than anticipated. Broadly covering higher defence reorganisation, tighter Party and CMC control, downsizing and joint operation requirements, the reforms have also led to the reorganisation of the seven Military Regions (MRs) to five theatre commands. This article links the PLA theoretical military writings to the reorganisation of the theatre commands to understand the rationale for the reorganisation. The article primarily uses PLA Academy of Military Science publications, *The Science of Military Strategy 2005* (hereafter referred to as SOS 2005) available in English and the *Zhanlue Xue* 2013 (hereafter referred to as ZX 2013), available as of now in Chinese.<sup>1</sup>

An *a priori* analysis would suggest that the theatre reorganisation was solely based on joint operations command structure requirements. However, it also reflects Chinese reappraisal of the strategic environment and the strategic outlook. The connotations of the MR have changed with time and a historical perspective would facilitate in understanding the Chinese outlook.

## Historical Perspective

Prior to the Civil War, the Red Army divided the area of operations based on Base Areas or Battle Fronts and/or the Field Armies/

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Corps. The concept of MR (*junqu*)<sup>2</sup> commenced in 1948, and as indicated in **Table 1**, the number of MRs has varied considerably. After the establishment of the PRC in 1949, the MRs were divided based on the strategic direction (*zhanlue fangxiang*) which was dependent on the anticipated security threats, the requirements of military building, the then prevalent military doctrine of 'People's War', the requirement of consolidating control over the country and frontier stability in the provinces of Inner Mongolia, Tibet and Xinjiang, geographic and economic considerations. The military strategy was based on the premise of a large scale war or invasion by a strong enemy. As a corollary to this strategy, the planning of operations was essentially unified and central even if the individual strategic direction of the MRs differed.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 1 : Major Changes in MRs**

1948	1955	1985	2016
Central Plains, East China, North West, North East, North China (South West incorporating Tibet was formed in 1950).	Shenyang, Beijing, Jinan, Nanjing, Guangzhou, Wuhan, Chengdu, Kunming, Lanzhou, Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, Tibet (By 1969 Tibet and Inner Mongolia were merged in Chengdu and Beijing MR).	Shenyang, Beijing, Lanzhou, Nanjing, Guangzhou, Chengdu, Jinan.	<u>MRs to Theatre Commands</u> Eastern, Southern, Western, Northern, Central.

(Collated from data given in *The PLA as an Organisation v1.0<sup>4</sup>*)

Deng Xiaoping reviewed the doctrine of a large scale war in the 1980s. The change in doctrine from fighting a 'large scale war' to fighting a 'local war' was accompanied by a massive downsizing and reduction of one million personnel. Twenty four combined arms Group Armies were formed from the thirty five Field Armies and the MRs were reduced to seven in 1985.<sup>5</sup> The basic point (*jidian*) of preparation for military struggle, in the new military strategic guideline (*junshi zhanlue fangzhen*), was reviewed to fighting 'local wars under high technology conditions' in 1993 and subsequently to fighting 'local wars under conditions of informationisation' in 2004.<sup>6</sup> This also implied that each theatre could now have an independent theatre strategy in tune with its strategic direction. Blasko (2012) assesses the strategic direction of the Shenyang MR as being oriented towards both Soviet Union and Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK); the Beijing MR towards the

North; the Lanzhou MR defended Western China from the Soviet Union; the Nanjing MR looked at Taiwan and the East; the Guangzhou MR was oriented towards South and Vietnam as well as Taiwan; Chengdu MR at Tibet and India and Jinan MR forces were a strategic reserve.<sup>7</sup>

### **Theoretical Writings and Theatre Commands**

Prior to the recent reorganisation, the terms *junqu* (MR, also called military area command) and *zhanqu* (frequently translated as war zone, battle zone or theatre of war) were often used interchangeably because the peace time MR organisation structure could assume the role of 'theatre of war or *zhanqu*' during operations, as mentioned in the SOS 2005.<sup>8</sup> While the *zhanqu* was established in war and drew on the MR organisation for its command structure, it did not need to share the same boundaries as it was based on operational requirements and the level of the campaign.<sup>9</sup> The PLA *Military Terms* 2011 translates *zhanqu* as 'theatre of war'.<sup>10</sup> However, after the recent reorganisation, though the term *zhanqu* has been adopted in place of *junqu*, it is being translated as 'theatre command' in the official Chinese media. The usage of *zhanqu* in this article is 'theatre of war' or 'theatre command', depending on its reference prior to or after the 2016 reorganisation, with its wartime connotations. The term *junqu* or MR refers to the peace time organisation prior to the reorganisation.

Placing the theatre strategy in context, The ZX 2013 states that, although still not fully implemented, the country's strategic structure can be commonly understood to have three levels and five categories : national strategy, military strategy and at the third level, service strategy (*junzhong zhanlue*), theatre strategy (*zhanqu zhanlue*) and major security domains strategy (*zhongda anquan lingyu zhanlue*) comprising nuclear, space and network domains.<sup>11</sup> Theatre strategy is defined as being subordinate to military strategy and is the guidance and planning for modernisation (building) and employment of armed forces in a theatre of war.<sup>12</sup>

The SOS 2005 states : "the theatre of war is an integrated regional entity composed of elements of military, political, economy and geography .....(it) is a level of command between the supreme and strategic operational army group.... (it) should be large in space for offensive and defence .... to accomplish the strategic task independently".<sup>13</sup> The ZX 2013 reiterates these points and

goes a step further by highlighting that the orientation of the theatres previously was defensive looking at territorial defence, while the present century demands an external orientation looking outwards due to growing national interests. The ZX 2013 espouses a broadening of vision from frontier defence to an even vaster expanse or region to protect developing national interests. It emphasises that this change will "...bring to prominence the characteristic of 'expansion of every strategic direction' as the related military actions support frontier and coastal defence, influence outside the borders and radiate in the common space".<sup>14</sup> A sentiment reflected in an interview given by the Eastern Theatre Commander indicating that the strategic direction for the Theatre Command is Taiwan Straits, East China Sea and the Western Pacific Ocean.<sup>15</sup>

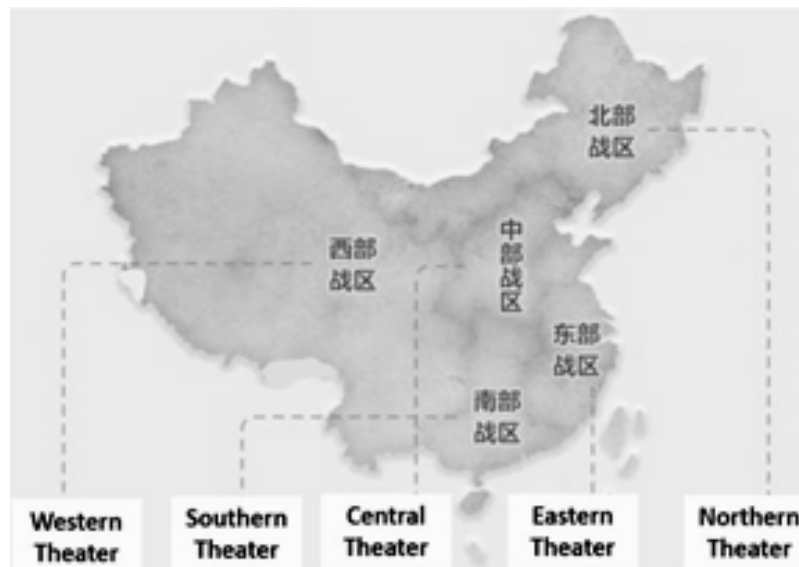
The primary basis for division of the theatres of war is the strategic direction.<sup>16</sup> Within the 'Applied Theory of Strategy' given in the SOS 2005, the steps for 'strategic formulation' include strategic judgement, decision making and planning.<sup>17</sup> The decision making stage includes deciding the strategic guideline which, among other important outcomes, gives the main strategic direction in any period. In the 1950s, it was the South Eastern coastal area due to the US threat, while in the 1960s and 70s, it was the "three northern regions" due to the threat from the Soviet Union.<sup>18</sup> While its present orientation is not openly articulated, it can be judged from the 'likely conflict scenarios facing China' as visualised in the ZX 2013.

### **Likely Future Conflict Scenarios**

Looking at the likely future conflict scenarios for China, the ZX 2013 analyses them into four categories.<sup>19</sup> Firstly, a large scale, high intensity defensive war, precipitated by a crisis and initiated by a 'hegemonic power' intent on curbing China's rise. Secondly, a comparatively large scale, high intensity anti-breakup (*fan fenlie*) conflict alluding to 'Taiwan independence'. The former is deemed to have a low probability and the latter a high probability of occurrence. The third kind of conflict is middle to small scale, mid-level intensity 'self-defence counterattack' due to maritime disputes, border disputes or political instability in a neighbouring country.<sup>20</sup> This is judged to have a mid-level probability though it is appreciated to be showing an upward trend. The fourth category is a small scale, low intensity conflict linked to internal stability or military operations other than war (MOOTW).

The ZX 2013 assesses a multi-dimensional and high technology surprise attack (short of invasion) by a 'strong enemy' to be the most dangerous, a limited maritime conflict to be the most probable and the conflict requiring the highest level of preparation to be a comparatively large scale, high intensity local maritime war in a nuclear backdrop.<sup>21</sup> It is obvious that the maritime domain in the Asia-Pacific is the main strategic direction. This is further reinforced in the ZX 2013: "Perhaps the main direction of the confrontation war is the Eastern and Southern Sea direction, in which the real and potential operations are most prominent, threat is the most..."<sup>22</sup>

### Current Reorganisation



**Map I: Initial Theatre Boundaries as indicated on Chinese Website  
(Adapted from Sina *Xinlang Xinwen*<sup>23</sup>)**

A version of the new theatre command boundaries given in the official Chinese media is shown in **Map I**. However later interpretations and media reports indicate changes, for example the Yunnan and Guizhou province of the erstwhile Chengdu MR are now in the Southern Theatre Command.<sup>24</sup> Based on the likely conflict scenarios mentioned above and the orientation of the current main strategic direction, the orientation of the MRs, other than the Western Theatre, is obvious.

The Western Theatre covers most of the region under the erstwhile Chengdu MR and Lanzhou MR. The erstwhile Lanzhou MR was oriented towards the Soviet Union with local units of Xinjiang Military District located North and South of the Taklamakan desert and in the Dzungaria plains in North Xinjiang, while the two Group Armies were positioned well to the West in the Gansu or Hexi corridor.<sup>25</sup> With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rationale for this deployment no longer being valid, it would be more accurate to say that the most of the Lanzhou MR has been merged into the Chengdu MR rather than saying that both have been merged. The strategic direction of the Western Theatre is Tibet and India and this has been underlined by the recent upgradation of the status of Tibet Military District.<sup>26</sup> Recent changes have placed all military districts, which were under erstwhile MR headquarters, directly under the National Defence Mobilisation Department of the CMC, but the operational command status of Tibet Military District required a different dispensation.

The PLA's involvement in Tibet can be gauged from the fact that for the first five years (1950-55), Tibet was practically administered by the Tibet Military Commission.<sup>27</sup> Even though Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) was a military district level command, its commander was a Lieutenant General unlike other military districts which were a corps grade appointment held by a Major General. Many a PLA general, including current Western Theatre Commander Zhao Zongqi<sup>28</sup> and current Tibet Military District Commander Xu Yong<sup>29</sup>, have trodden the career path of commanding 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> Combined Corps in Chengdu MR, before or after a staff or command appointment in Tibet Military District Commander and subsequently moving to a higher grade appointment. Therefore, the current upgradation of Tibet Military District to Deputy MR Leader grade is not surprising and underscores the operational nature of Tibet Military District.<sup>30</sup>

During peace time, the erstwhile MR Headquarters command structure was composed of the Headquarters Department, Political Department, Joint Logistics Department and Armament Department which mirrored the General Staff Department, General Political Department, General Logistics Department and the General Armament Department respectively.<sup>31</sup> However, the requirements of command structure in the theatre during operations varied from the peace time MR organisation. As an illustration, we can look at

the National Defence University's *Zhanyi Xue* 2006 (*The Science of Campaigns*) which states that depending on the campaign level during war, the Joint Campaign Command Structure could comprise operations centre, intelligence centre, communications centre, support (safeguards/logistics) centre, and other specialist structures like comprehensive firepower coordination centre, information operations centre etc.<sup>32</sup> Commenting on the variation in peace and war command structure, the ZX 2013 makes repeated references to the unsuitability of the erstwhile MR organisation structure, specifically for military modernisation and the requirements of joint operations command. It underlined the need to have a common peace and war time joint command structure (*pingzhan yizhi de lianhe zhizhi jigou*) in every strategic direction.<sup>33</sup> The current reorganisation eradicates the distinction between the peace and war structure and current Chinese writings use the phrase 'integrated peace war' (*pingzhan yiti*) to describe the theatre command (*zhanqu*) organisation structure.<sup>34</sup> This is highlighted in an interview given by the Central Theatre Commander in which he differentiates between *junqu* and *zhanqu* in terms of organisation structure, function, task, jurisdiction, requirements, command and training.<sup>35</sup> In essence the *junqu* MR structure was predominantly Army with a dual purpose of building (*jian*; military modernisation) and war (*zhan*) tasks while the *zhanqu* theatre command structure is joint and focussed only on war requirements. The military media is accentuating the difference between the two terms to sensitise the rank and file to the new orientation, as reflected in an article titled "Theatre Command is not an upscaling of grade of MR; rather is a reorganisation and rebirth of revolutionary character" in the PLA Daily.<sup>36</sup>

Though the reorganisation of the MRs has been driven by changes in strategic perceptions and military doctrine, the actual changes have generally been implemented only when other major organisational or structural changes have been made. In the 1980s, it was the downsizing and restructuring of the PLA which led to seven MRs being formed from the erstwhile eleven. In the present instance though the rationale has been visible for at least a decade, the catalyst has been the current major military reforms.

### Conclusion

Chinese military writings usually presage major changes in the PLA. Doctrinal changes are often not perceptible due to slow



change, unless theoretical writings are compared over a period of time. While both the ZX 2013<sup>37</sup> and SOS 2005<sup>38</sup> clearly mention that MRs will be created or merged as required, the actual implementation has generally occurred when there is a strong leadership and is accompanied by major reforms.

The adoption of *zhanqu* or theatre command structure reflects the joint operations requirements, while the distribution of the theatre commands reflects the strategic outlook. The rationale of distribution based on strategic assessment and concept of strategic direction is apt in a country, like China, with multiple neighbours. The conflict scenarios, assessed main strategic direction and contemporary outward orientation of the Chinese strategic outlook highlight the geopolitical game in the Asia Pacific region. The rationale also explains the creation of a Western Theatre covering practically half the country. More than the other reforms, which have garnered much attention; the new theatre commands reflect the strategic outlook of the country.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> *The Science of Military Strategy or Zhanlue Xue* is an authoritative PLA publication of the PLA's Academy of Military Science published periodically since 1987. The SOS 2005 is an English translation of the *Zhanlue Xue* 2001, when the strategic guidance was fighting 'local wars under high tech conditions'. The ZX 2013 is contemporary, written with the strategic guidance of fighting 'local wars under conditions of informationisation'.

<sup>2</sup> The PLA term *junqu* literally means "military region/area". The PLA uses the term *da junqu* (large or big *junqu*) for Military Region but is usually shortened to *junqu*. Since the *junqu* term can also be used for provincial military area/region, for example *Yunan junqu*, it can create confusion. In this article *junqu* indicates Military Region.

<sup>3</sup> Shou Xiaosong, ed., *Zhanlue Xue (The Science of Military Strategy)*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Academy of Military Science of the People's Liberation Army, Military Science Publishing House, Beijing, 2013, p. 238.

<sup>4</sup> James C Mulvenon & Andrew ND Yang, eds., *The People's Liberation Army as Organisation: Reference Volume v1.0*, RAND, 2002, pp.17-21.

<sup>5</sup> Paul HB Godwin, *From Continent to Periphery : PLA Doctrine, Strategy and Capabilities Towards 2000*, in David Shambaugh & Richard H Yang, eds., *China's Military in Transition*, Oxford University, Oxford, 1997, pp.200-223.

<sup>6</sup> Information Office of the State Council of The People's Republic of China. *China's Military Strategy 2015 (Defence White Paper)*. Accessed at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-05/content\\_20820628.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-05/content_20820628.htm) on 28 Oct 2016.

<sup>7</sup> Dennis J Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today: Tradition and Transformation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Routledge, New York, 2012, pp.87-100.

<sup>8</sup> Peng Guangqian & Yao Youzhi, eds., *The Science of Military Strategy*, Academy of Military Science of the People's Liberation Army, Military Science Publishing House, Beijing, 2005, p.190.

<sup>9</sup> The PLA has three types of joint campaign based on the scale: *Zhanqu* (war zone or theater level) joint campaign or large scale, *Zhanqu fangxiang* (war zone/theatre direction) joint campaign or middle level and *jituanjunji* (combined arms group army) joint campaign or small scale. *PLA Military Terms*, Military Science Publishing House, Beijing, 2011, pp.121-122.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* p.77.

<sup>11</sup> Shou Xiaosong, *op cit*, p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> *Military Terms* 2011, *op.cit*, p.51.

<sup>13</sup> Peng Guangqian, et al., *op cit*, p.189.

<sup>14</sup> Shou Xiaosong, *op cit*, p. 239.

<sup>15</sup> Zhongguo Junwang, "dongbu zhanqu silingyuan toulou zhuyao gongzuo: zai taihai donghai zhunbei zhihui dazhang", Accessed at [http://news.china.com.cn/2016-03/16/content\\_38041096.htm](http://news.china.com.cn/2016-03/16/content_38041096.htm) on 14 Oct 2016.

<sup>16</sup> Shou Xiaosong, *op cit*, p.240.

<sup>17</sup> Peng Guangqian, et al, *op cit*, p.36.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid*, p.233.

<sup>19</sup> Shou Xiaosong, *op cit*, p.99.

<sup>20</sup> Few types of border operations listed for the PLA Army are "border blockade and control (*bianjing fengkong*), resolute defence (*jianshou fangyu*), firepower strikes (*huoli daji*), deep thrust (*zongshen chuancha*), assault fortifications and attack reinforcements (*gongjian dayuan*), occupy and control a part (*zhanling kongju*) etc ".*Ibid*, p.199.

<sup>21</sup> Multi-dimensional in current Chinese military writings implies land, sea, air, space and network domains.

<sup>22</sup> Shou Xiaosong, *op cit*, pp.101.

<sup>23</sup> Xinlang Xinwen, "xin sixiang, xin shijian: huigu jundui gaige xin chengjiu", Accessed at <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/nd/2016-06-12/doc-ifxszkzy5145468.shtml> on 20 Sep 2016.

<sup>24</sup> Zhongguo wang, “*jiefangjun wu dazhanqu siling xiangqi fasheng: jiajin beizhan zhunbei dazhang (5/5)*”, 16 March 2016, Accessed at [http://www.china.com.cn/txt/2016-03/16/content\\_38041141\\_5.htm](http://www.china.com.cn/txt/2016-03/16/content_38041141_5.htm) on 14 Oct 2016.

<sup>25</sup> Dennis J Blasko, *op.cit*, pp.92-93.

<sup>26</sup> All organisations in the PLA have a grade which normally is reflected as the grade of the Commander. There are 15 grades from platoon to CMC Vice Chairman.

<sup>27</sup> Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet since 1947*, Vintage Digital, 2012, Kindle Edition, Chapter 4.

<sup>28</sup> Zhongguo Junwang, “*xibu zhanqu silingyuan Zhao Zongqi chushen zhenchabing duoci canzhan*”, 16 March 2016, Accessed at <http://www.chinanews.com/mil/2016/03-16/7799320.shtml> on 20 Sep 2016.

<sup>29</sup> Huanqiu Shibao, “*Xizang junqu shenge weifu junquji danwei huagui lujun lingdao*”, 13 May 2016, Accessed at <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2016-05-13/doc-ixsehvu8839773.shtml> on 23 Sep 2016.

<sup>30</sup> Global Times, “*China raises Tibet Military Command's power rank*”, 13 May 2016, Accessed at <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/982843.shtml> on 20 Sep 2016.

<sup>31</sup> Information Office of the State Council of The People's Republic of China. *China's National Defence in 2006 (Defence White Paper)*. Accessed at [http://eng.mod.gov.cn/ Database/ White Papers/2006.htm](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/Database/White%20Papers/2006.htm) on 28 Oct 2016.

<sup>32</sup> Zhang Yuliang, ed., *Zhanyi Xue* (The Science of Campaigns), PLA National Defence University, National Defence University Publishing House, Beijing, 2006, pp.282-283.

<sup>33</sup> Shou Xiaosong, *op cit*, p.201.

<sup>34</sup> Zhongguo Junwang, “*guofangbu tan wudajunqu jibie, gui shui lingdao*”, 02 February 2016, Accessed at [http://jz.chinamil.com.cn/n2014/tp/content\\_6884500.htm](http://jz.chinamil.com.cn/n2014/tp/content_6884500.htm) on 14 Oct 2016.

<sup>35</sup> Zhongguo Junwang, “*xiangjie 'zhanqu zhuzhan' jiyu dajunqu de 7 ge butong*”, 16 March 2016, Accessed at [http://www.china.com.cn/2016-03/16/content\\_38040990.htm](http://www.china.com.cn/2016-03/16/content_38040990.htm) on 14 Oct 2016.

<sup>36</sup> Zhongguo Guofangbao, “*zhanqu bushi junqu de shengji ban, ershi geming xing de chongzu he xinsheng*”, 29 September 2016, Accessed at [http://www.81.cn/jwzl/2016-09/29/content\\_7285040.htm](http://www.81.cn/jwzl/2016-09/29/content_7285040.htm) on 14 Oct 2016.

<sup>37</sup> Shou Xiaosong, *op cit*, p.240.

<sup>38</sup> Peng Guangqian, et al. *op cit*, p.190.

# Murree and Poonch Mountain Batteries in the 1918 Palestine Campaign

Colonel PK Gautam (Retd)<sup>®</sup>



(Source: *The History of the Indian Mountain Artillery* by Brigadier-General C.A.L. Graham, D.S.O., O.B.E., D.L., p.s.c., Aldershot: Gale & Polden Ltd, 1957)

## Introduction to Mountain Batteries

**M**ountain artillery batteries are a fascinating study of the Indian Army during the colonial period. Even in English literature, mountain gunners or the pack artillery has been eulogised in the

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famous poem 'Screw-Guns' by Rudyard Kipling:

*"Smokin' my pipe on the mountings, snifin' the mornin' cool,  
I walks in my old brown gaiters along o' my old brown mule...."*

Regular artillery companies had been approved by the East India Company in 1748 for the three Presidency Armies of Bengal, Madras and Bombay. Before the First War of Independence (called Great Indian Mutiny of 1857 by the British or the rebellion), "the Company's artillery consisted of mountain units, the horse artillery and the somewhat curiously termed 'foot' artillery (field gunners). The last two were made of British and Indians, but the new mountain trains consisted of Indians only under a British commanding officer.<sup>1</sup> The First War of Independence or the rebellion 'saw almost the entire Bengal native artillery rise in arms except the newly raised mountain trains and the horse field batteries employed on the frontier.'<sup>2</sup> Post 1857 till outbreak of the war, only 12 mountain pack batteries were entrusted to Indian units for action in the tribal belt against insurgents in the northwest of India.

### **Murree and Poonch Batteries**

On 01 March 1898, 9<sup>th</sup> (Native) Mountain Battery was raised at Abbottabad. Later in 1907 another battery – 'Poonch' was raised. The lineage and services from 1914-1918 of the two batteries is at **Appendix A**. Batteries always operated together in most of their history under command of a regimental HQ. Both batteries (26 Murree and 27 Poonch) are now a part of 24 Field Regiment. The troop composition was based on sections of Jat Sikhs and Punjabi Musalmans (PMs). In September 1944, the PMs were to be transferred to 21<sup>st</sup> Indian Light Mountain Regiment, which may now be the 1<sup>st</sup> Mountain Regiment with Pakistan Artillery, consisting of 1<sup>st</sup> (Jacob's), 2<sup>nd</sup> (Kohat) and 4<sup>th</sup> (Lahore) Mountain Batteries.<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, due to shortage of military labour market of so called 'martial races', Ahirs were also enrolled during the war.

### **Animals, Equipment and Men**

To the old pack mountain gunners it was the rustic charm of animals, equipment and men or soldering was an equation of animal, equipment and man management. 9<sup>th</sup> (Murree) Mountain battery

was raised with 2.5" howitzer (Screw Gun), which had to be transported or moved on mules. On raising, the battery had 4 ponies and 76 mules. Later in 1903 the guns were the 10 lb B/L (Breach Loading) and in 1918, 2.75" B/L. The Mule Artillery (MA) or 'Khachar' is a cross between a donkey stallion and a pony mare. It inherits its hind portion from the horse and the fore portion from a donkey. This inheritance makes it very tough, sturdy and sure-footed animal. Unless you love the animal and take care of it, it will let you down (or kick, buck or bite you).<sup>4</sup> Like all animals trained for warfare, it had also to be trained and disciplined and at times it required some tough handling and nuanced 'animal-management'. The heady mixture of mountains, howitzers and mules with the characteristic smell (aroma may be a better word) more overpowering than the smell of cordite was one reason for the cohesion of man and animal. Therefore, the stoic mountain gunner with his mule had an élan of his own.<sup>5</sup>

### Source Material and Manuscript Battery Histories

Unlike the 25 volume Official History of the Indian Armed Forces in the Second World War, there is no official history of the Indian Armed Forces in the First World War. Secondary sources like *The History of the Indian Artillery* for the Palestine campaign is extremely brief: "The 29th and 32nd proceeded to Palestine in 1918, and took part in the closing phases of the battle of Meggido and Nablus."<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, the story purely from an artillery perspective is available in a seminal book *The History of the Indian Mountain Artillery* (1957) by Brigadier-General CAL Graham.<sup>7</sup> This book is perhaps the only secondary source to trace the raising, numbering, renumbering, deployment and employment of mountain artillery.

Fortunately, the mountain batteries had a tradition of recording in manuscript form the diary or the battery history.<sup>8</sup> Although not comprehensive about the entire action and operations, the entries do give a sense of what was happening at a particular period in time in the life of the battery. The extracts from battery history books during the Palestine Campaign is given at **Appendix B** which gives a good idea of the kind of activities that the batteries were carrying out during the Campaign.

### The Palestine Campaign (see Map for Area of Operations)



(Source: Harry Fecitt (authored), Rana TS Chhina (Ed.), *Indian Army and the Great War - Egypt and Palestine*, USI of India and XPD Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2015.)

**Operations in Brief Outline.** To quote Harry Fecitt, “The Suez Canal was the lifeline of the British Empire and its safety was crucial to the Allied war effort in Europe. With Turkey entering the war as an ally of Germany, the defence of the Suez Canal became the focus of the campaign in Egypt. As the war progressed, the Egyptian Expeditionary Force with its very significant Indian element, under command of General Edmund Allenby, advanced up through Palestine all the way to Damascus in Syria till Turkish Forces surrendered in October 1918.”<sup>9</sup>

#### Micro Picture of the Mountain Artillery

The history of Murree and Poonch batteries in a way begins at the fag end of the war in 1917. To recapitulate:

On 14<sup>th</sup> November, 1915, the Sultan of Turkey proclaimed a jihad on all those making war on Turkey or her allies...The advance was dependent on the speed with which the railway



and a 12-inch water pipe were pushed forward, and it continued until, on 19th April, 1917, the army was checked on the line Beersheba- Gaza, and reinforcements became necessary.

By June, 1917, when General Sir Edmund Allenby took over command of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF), it had grown to three cavalry and four infantry divisions, with two more infantry divisions in the process of forming. Our own and the enemy troops were facing each other in trenches in Gaza, and Allenby's instructions were to drive the Turks out of Palestine....

Beersheba, Jaffa, Jerusalem and Jericho fell to Allenby's victorious army by the spring of 1918, when our set-back on the Western Front led to weakening of the EEF by withdrawal of reinforcements to France. In exchange 3rd (Lahore) and 7th (Meerut) Divisions came over from Mesopotamia, and India sent the 10th Indian Mountain Artillery (IMA) Brigade ... consisting of 9th (Murree), 12th (Poonch) and 19th (Myanmo) Mountain Batteries.<sup>10</sup> ... The Brigade concentrated in June, 1918, at Kantara , where it drew armament – four 2.75-inch B/L guns for each battery – and mules, good but untrained.<sup>11</sup>

To get an idea of the strength of a battery, The 9th (Murree) was mobilised at the strength of : 6 British Officers, 4 Indian officers, 99 gunners, 16 drivers, 23 public followers and 3 private followers.<sup>12</sup>

### **The Chaytor's Force**

Graham records:

'Brigade Headquarters with the 9th (Murree) and 12th (Poonch) Batteries joined General Chaytor's mounted force which was guarding the right flank of the pivot of the operations. Both batteries were in the right sector covering the bridgehead at the Wadi Aujah up to Z day, and carried out harassing fire. On 21st September the 9th (Murree) Battery moved at night with the New Zealand Mounted Brigade to Damiye to cut off an enemy column retreating from Nablus, and the British column bumped into a considerable Turkish column in the dark. The situation was not adjusted until daylight, when the 1st Light Horse Brigade arrived and a

number of Turks were captured. The battery fired 121 rounds that morning, and the next day received orders to march to *Es Salt* with the New Zealand Mounted Brigade. Chaytor's Force was now in hot pursuit with four columns in the hills on a fifteen-mile front. *Es Salt* was outflanked and surrendered that afternoon with 500 prisoners.

During the night (23rd/24th September) General Chaytor received orders to continue the pressure and to cut off the enemy's retreat from Amman. There was a delay owing to the non-arrival of rations, but at 6 a.m. on the 25th two columns, each of a brigade of the Australian and New Zealand Mounted divisions, supported by an Indian mountain battery, advanced on Amman. The Turks put up a fight at first, but the result was that prisoners numbering 2,500 and ten guns were captured. A number of enemy troops had evacuated by train, but the Arabs were making breaches in the railway farther North, so they must have been forced to detrain in haste. The 12th (Poonch) Battery had some shooting on trenches from a covered position, and the Forward Observation Officer (FOO) knocked out some machine guns, but the affair was soon over.

This was the end of the campaign for mountain batteries: three cavalry divisions of the Desert Mounted Corps were pursuing the Turks through Damascus to Aleppo as fast as their horses could go, and there was no employment for pack guns.....

Jemadar Kifayat Ullah and Lance Naik Sham Singh were awarded the Indian Distinguished Service Medal. The 12th (Poonch) Mountain Battery remained in Palestine until December, 1920, when it was sent to Jutogh. The 9th (Murree) Mountain Battery returned to Dehradun in January, 1922. The three batteries, 9th (Murree), 12th (Poonch), and 19th (Maymyo), were granted the right to bear on their Colours and appointments:

*The Great War* - "Palestine 1918", "Megiddo", "Nablus".<sup>13</sup>

It needs to be noted that post-Independence battle honours were categorised as being repugnant and non-repugnant. In general most overseas campaigns and operations were included in the

non - repugnant list till the Second World War and those where military force was applied for internal security or coercion were graded as repugnant. The Palestine Campaign is in 'non- repugnant' list.<sup>14</sup>

### Conclusion

This short article is meant to generate interest and assist the scholars in recording and locating original source documents for further research in the history of Mountain Artillery of that era. Indian soldiers had made a great contribution to the outcome of the Great War 1914-18 and the batteries of Mountain Artillery played an important part in many of the campaigns. They fought in almost all the theatres of the Great War. It is, therefore, important for Indian voices to be recorded for posterity.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> John Gaylor, *Sons of John Company : The Indian and Pakistan Armies 1903-1991*, New Delhi: Lancer International, 1993, pp.106-107.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p.107.

<sup>3</sup> Brigadier-General CAL Graham, DSO, OBE, DL, psc, *The History of the Indian Mountain Artillery*, Aldershot : Gale & Polden Ltd, 1957, p.424.

<sup>4</sup> More than 30 registers were maintained for each animal. They were routinely inspected to be 'fit' or 'unfit' for war by the fearsome veterinary doctors from the Remount and Veterinary Corps (RVC).

<sup>5</sup> The Mule Artillery has been transferred to the Army Service Corps (ASC). Now it is only a pack animal for mortar batteries loaned on need basis. Pack mountain regiments were converted as 'towed' in the 1970s, including one unit of pack camel artillery which shed the animals for mechanical transport and the camels were transferred to the Border Security Force (BSF).

<sup>6</sup> *History of the Regiment of Artillery: Indian Army*, Dehradun: Palit & Dutt Publishers, (Published under the authority of the Director of Artillery, Army Headquarters, New Delhi), 1971, p.39.

<sup>7</sup> CAL Graham, op cit, pp. 193-197.

<sup>8</sup> For the second World War, the stories of some mountain gunners are available in CH. MacFetridge and JP Warren (eds.), *Tales of the Mountain Gunners: An Anthology, compiled by those who served with them*, Edinburg : William Blackwood, 1973. See AB Howard, '12 (Poonch) Indian Mountain Battery in World War II', pp.132-141.

<sup>9</sup> Harry Fecitt (authored) , Rana TS Chhina (Ed.), *Indian Army and the Great War - Egypt and Palestine*, USI of India and XPD Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2015, summary in back-cover.

<sup>10</sup> At this time designated 29<sup>th</sup>, 32<sup>nd</sup> and 39<sup>th</sup> Mountain Batteries respectively.

<sup>11</sup> CAL Graham, op cit, pp.193-194.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p.194.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, pp.196-197.

<sup>14</sup> Sam Manekshaw, 'Foreword', in Maj Sarbans Singh, *Battle Honours of the Indian Army : 1757- 1971*, New Delhi, Bombay : Vision Books, 1993, pp.9-10.

<sup>15</sup> Based on 24 Field Regiment demi- official letter no. 308703/03/A of 29 July 2013 from the Adjutant Capt Angad Poundarik to me. I am grateful to the then Commanding Officer Col Ranjit Gill in making this possible.

**Appendix A****Battery Lineage as provided by the Centre for Armed Forces Historical Research, USI of India****Murree Battery**

- 1899 9<sup>th</sup> Native Mountain Bty
- 1901 Murree Mountain Bty
- 1903 29<sup>th</sup> Mountain Bty
- 1920 29<sup>th</sup> Pack Bty
- 1921 109<sup>th</sup> [Murree] Pack Bty
- 1927 9<sup>th</sup> [Murree] Indian Mountain Bty RA1928 9<sup>th</sup> [Murree] Mountain Bty RA
- 1942 9<sup>th</sup> [Murree] Indian Mtn Bty IA [1]

**Poonch Battery**

- 1907 2<sup>nd</sup> Mountain Bty
- 1920 32<sup>nd</sup> Pack Bty
- 1921 112<sup>th</sup> [Poonch] Pack Bty
- 1927 12<sup>th</sup> [Poonch] Indian Mtn Bty RA
- 1928 12<sup>th</sup> [Poonch] Mountain Bty RA
- 1942 12<sup>th</sup> [Poonch] Indian Mtn Bty IA[1]

Note [1]: During 1942-3 designated Light Mountain Btys.

**Service Rendered : 1914 - 1918****29<sup>th</sup> (Murree) Mountain Battery**

August 1914: Rawalpindi, 2<sup>nd</sup> Rawalpindi Division. Transferred January 1915 to Miranshah, Bannu Brigade, North West Frontier. June 1918 moved to Egypt. November 1918: Palestine, attached to Chaytor's Force.

**32<sup>nd</sup> (Poonch) Mountain Battery**

August 1914: Dera Ismail Khan, Derajat Brigade, North West Frontier. By January 1916 at Tank, Derajat Brigade. Transferred December 1916 to Maymyo, Burma Division. June 1918 moved to Corps Troops in Egypt. November 1918: Palestine, Chaytor's Force.

**Appendix B<sup>15</sup>****Extracts from Battery History Book of  
Murree Battery (1917-1919)**

05 February 1917	Capt J.W. English joined on appointment
03 March 1917	Capt R.E. Wilson joined on appointment as Commandant vice Major C.R. Crowdy transferred
04 March 1917	2/Lt J.O. Day left on transfer to new mountain battery
15 March 1917	Capt R.E. Wilson left on transfer new mountain battery
27 March 1917	Capt J.B. Somerville joined on appointment as Commandant vice Capt Wilson
03 March 1918	Bty left Bannu by special troop active train at 7:30 AM for active service in Egyptian Expeditionary Force
10-17 September 1918	Harassing fire ( 50 rounds on enemy ... are fired daily). Subsection moved to new position during night 10/11, registered targets on 11 September and withdrawn during night 11/12 September
17 September 1918	Fired 66 rounds on BAQHALAT HILLS between 0415 and 0425 hrs
21- 22 September 1918	Battery shelled western approaches of DAMIEH Bridge at ranges from 4000 to 3300. Fired 126 rounds, 11 AM fire stopped
25 September 1918	Battery was detailed to cover advance of Auckland MR on our left. No.1 Section fired on enemy mountain guns at 2300 and silenced them and then on various targets, trenches and machine guns from 1000 to 4500 ranges
March 1919	4x 3.7 Q.F. Howitzers and equipment arrived from 9 th Brigade under Lt Morrison and were taken over by battery

**Extracts from Battery History Book of Poonch Battery  
(1918-1920)**

18 April 1918	Battery moved for service in Indian Egyptian Expeditionary Force
08 May 1918	Mobilization of battery completed
07 June 1918	Battery embarked on "Royal George" which left Bombay for Aden till Suez. Battery served in the Indian Cavalry 'Base Depot'
12 August 1918	Reached Jerusalem
14 August 1918	Arrived Meshrab
15 August 1918	Left Meshrab for Jericho
18 August 1918	Accident occurred. While washing mules, few mules were swept away and Hav Baj Singh hurt severely
21 August 1918	Enemy have not dropped a shell into the bridge head since our arrival
26 August 1918	Left section fired 55 rounds on upper JORDAN near UMM-ES-SNART returning at 2000hrs. No notice was taken by the enemy
29 August 1918	Australian patrol met with rifle fire, one man got wounded. Battery fired 04 rounds over dead horse ridge 0500 hrs.
10-17 September 1918	Harassing fire in the MELLAHAN in the position previously taken up for the purpose fired 100 rounds a day till 16th instant
19 September 1918	Ration party came under fire and our logistics wagon team was hit. One Egyptian driver, one horse and one mule killed. L/Nk Shan Singh riding the lead mule gallantly cut out the horses which were wounded.
25 September 1918	At 0730 hrs battery fired 10 rounds on the enemy's outpost direction 2 or 3 miles east of AIN-ES-SIR



Palestine	Fired 30 rounds on Turkish rear position near AMMAN citadel at 1100 hrs. Battery came into action fired 50 rounds on the last manned trenches
26 September 1918	Battery covered right flank of advance of 7 <sup>th</sup> Regiment upto last moment. 1500h Lt Barrett cleared one sniper with 10 rounds on eastside of Wadi Amman
26-30 September 1918	Jemadar Kifayat Ullah and No. 491 L/ Nk Sham Singh were awarded Indian Distinguished Service Medal
December 1920	Battery returned to SUEZ, handed over guns, equipment, mules etc to 41 Mountain Battery (newly raised)

## **Projects : India and the Great War 1914-18 Centenary Commemoration and India Remembers – An Update**

**Squadron Leader Rana TS Chhina, MBE (Retd)<sup>®</sup>**

**D**uring the period under review (October- December), a number of activities were undertaken by the Centre for Armed Forces Historical Research (CAFHR), as part of its two main projects: The Joint USI-MEA 'India and the Great War Centenary Commemoration' Project, which began in 2014 and the 'India Remembers' Project which was launched on 14th July 2016.

On 19th October, a one-day symposium titled 'Meeting of the Minds II' was held in London, UK. The symposium was jointly organised by the USI-CAFHR, the Imperial War Museum (IWM), the Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton & Hove and the Golden Tours Foundation (GTF).

The above event was second in a series of programmes organised with the aim of remembering the contribution of Indian soldiers in the two world wars. It was built on the similarly organised discussions held earlier in May 2016 in Brighton, UK. The event brought together a steering group of like-minded individuals and organisations to discuss, collaborate and create a collective remembrance of the contribution of Indian soldiers in World War I and World War II. The panel of speakers at the symposium came from a wide spectrum with varied interests and backgrounds. It included academicians, curators, archivists and individuals who develop and deliver historical projects for public participation.

At the symposium, Squadron Leader Rana TS Chhina (Retd), Secretary and Editor, CAFHR, Ms Bhanushali Gahlot, the 'India Remembers' Project Manager shared the aims, objectives and rationale behind the 'India Remembers' project and discussed the possibility of developing a similar project for communities in the UK. Dr Glyn Pryor, Chief Historian, Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) spoke about the efforts of the CWGC and

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<sup>®</sup>**Squadron Leader Rana TS Chhina, MBE (Retd)** is Secretary and Editor of the Centre for Armed Forces Historical Research (CAFHR) at USI.

the USI to work together on the Basra Memorial Project that seeks to highlight the sacrifice of the thousands of personnel of the Indian Armed Forces who died in Mesopotamia and are commemorated there. The symposium concluded with a reception organised at the House of Commons where the group shared the outcome of the day's discussion with Members of Parliament.

As part of 'India and the Great War Centenary Commemoration' Project, a number of lectures and talks were delivered in an attempt to engage with a varied audience in order to educate them about India's participation in the Great War. These included a lecture delivered by Squadron Leader Chhina to cadets at the National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla, detailing India's contribution to the Great War. A talk by Dr Graham R Winton, PhD, F.R.G.S, Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, UK, titled "The Equine Forces and Services of the Indian Army prior to and during First World War, 1914-1919", was held at the USI on 26th October. It was chaired by Lieutenant General AJ Singh, VSM, Director General Remount and Veterinary Services. In addition Squadron Leader Chhina chaired a talk titled "Coolie, Convict and Colonies: Indian Labour in Mesopotamia 1916-1921" by Professor Radhika Singha. The talk was held on 28th November at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

Subsequently, the Project's latest publication titled "*Les Hindous: Indian Army on the Western Front: 1914 – 1919*" was launched at the Embassy of France, New Delhi, on 22nd November jointly by Mr Alexandre Ziegler and Mr Jan Luykx, the French and Belgian Ambassadors to India respectively. Speaking on the occasion, Mr Zeigler said that the book illustrated and underlined the close historic ties between France, India and Belgium. In his remarks he said:

*"I would like to seize this occasion to renew, in the name of France, our immense and eternal gratitude, to those who fought – and for those who died- on our land for the sake of our freedom. France paid tribute to those Indian soldiers when it inaugurated the Neuve-Chapelle memorial, in 1927. And, I would like to recall the promise made at that moment by **Maréchal Foch: 'we will watch over their graves with the same devotion that deserve our dead.'**....."*

*The book we are launching today is substantial contribution to keeping this memory alive. And the date we have chosen for*

*this evening is not a coincidence: this week, we are celebrating the century's anniversary of the end of the Battle of Somme, which took place between the 1st July and 18th November 1916. The battle was intended to hasten a victory for the Allies and was the largest battle of the First World War on the Western Front. More than one million men were wounded or killed, making it one of the bloodiest battles in human history.....*

*Rana Chhina's book highlights the role played by Indian soldiers and aviators on the Western Front during the First World War. Despite terrible climate conditions, which they were not prepared to face, these men were instrumental in halting the German advance towards the channel ports in October/November 1914.....*

*This book touches upon the many facets of the Indian experience in Europe in 1914-1919, through the medium of visual imagery, including many rare photographs."*



**L-R: HE Mr Alexandre Ziegler, Ambassador of France to India, Maj Gen PJS Sandhu, Deputy Director & Editor, USI, HE Mr Jan Luykx, Ambassador of Belgium to India, Dr Samuel Berthet, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, Shiv Nadar University and Sqn Ldr Rana TS Chhina, Secretary & Editor, USI-CAFHR at the launch of the book Les Hindous: Indian Army on the Western Front: 1914 – 1919" held at the Embassy of France, New Delhi on 28th November 2016.**

### **India Remembers Project**

The pilot of the 'India Remembers' Project, which was launched on 14th July 2016 at the USI, culminated on 7th December, the Armed Forces Flag Day. In an attempt to inculcate a culture of remembrance in the country, the project, through the course of six months, has engaged with diverse community groups from across the country, including schools, NGOs, etc. Using a specially designed resource pack and online resources, the project team has encouraged participating groups to undertake various commemorative activities according to their means and organisational capability.

While the proposal for institutionalising a National Day of Remembrance in the country is under consideration, the participating community groups through the course of the project chose existing significant dates to undertake commemorative activities to honour and remember Indian defence personnel who have served and died in various military operations since 1914 till date.

One of those significant dates is 11th November and the first Sunday that follows it. These are observed in the United Kingdom and Commonwealth Nations as Remembrance Day and Remembrance Sunday, respectively. 'India Remembers' community groups observed Remembrance Sunday (13th November) by participating in Remembrance ceremonies and visiting their local war memorials.

On that day in Delhi, three community groups namely; Bright Futures, an NGO that works towards the empowerment of children of Gazipur Village in East Delhi, Ahlcon International School, Mayur Vihar and war veterans of Bhondsi Village, Harayana participated in the remembrance service that was organised at the CWGC Delhi War Cemetery by the British High Commission. In Imphal, Manipur, members of 'Imphal Campaign WW2 foundation', an organisation working towards highlighting the regional contribution of Manipur in the two World Wars, visited the CWGC Imphal War Cemetery to pay homage to India's war dead. In Pune, Maharashtra, members of the History Club of the College of Engineering under the supervision of 'India Remembers' community group, Pedal Power Foundation, went on a tour of local war memorials. They visited four war memorials in Pune: the CWGC Kirkee War Cemetery, Seamen War Memorial in Bund Garden, National War

Memorial, Southern Command (Pune Cantonment) and Maratha War Memorial in Pune Cantonment. They also participated in the film screening held at the National War Memorial, Southern Command that focussed on the role and contribution of Indian Armed Forces' personnel in military operations since World War I till date.

Lastly, on the same day, St Paul's School, Darjeeling, West Bengal, held a Remembrance Mass at the school chapel and also felicitated local veterans.

To mark the culmination of the project on 7th December, participating groups from Kalimpong and Darjeeling in West Bengal, Bengaluru in Karnataka, New Delhi, Kohima in Nagaland, Surat in Gujrat and Jaipur in Rajasthan organised commemorative events to raise awareness about the project and to highlight the importance of remembrance amongst the local communities. At most commemorative events held on the day, war widows, descendants of fallen soldiers, veterans, serving and retired defence personnel from the respective regions were felicitated. The groups also visited local war memorials in an effort to explore their regional military heritage.



**India Remembers commemorative event held at the CWGC Kohima War Cemetery on 7th December. The event was organised by the project community groups, Youthnet and Path Finders; organisations that work towards the empowerment of youth of Nagaland. Display boards highlighting the contribution of servicemen and women, from the region, who served and died in the two World Wars were exhibited at the event.**





**India Remembers commemorative event held at a local town hall in Kalimpong, West Bengal. The event was organised by the project community group, Rotary Club of Kalimpong. Local war veterans as well as serving and retired defence personnel from the region were felicitated at the event. Rifleman Kharga Bahadur Limbu, WW2 Veteran can be seen walking in front with a marigold flower pinned to his lapel. He served with 2/4 Gurkha Rifles in the Italian Campaign during the Second World War.**

The pilot project had its last event on 11th December in Pune; a commemorative cycle rally, which was organised by 'India Remembers' community group, Pedal Power Foundation with Giant Starkenn, a cycle manufacturing company. The rally began with a wreath laying ceremony at the CWGC Kirkee War Cemetery.

About 30 cyclists from Pune participated in the rally. Among them, 10 came from the Bombay Engineer Group (or the Bombay Sappers as they are informally known, are a regiment of the Corps of Engineers of the Indian Army). While the youngest cyclist was Daanish Mundroina, a 14 year old boy from Pune, the oldest was Lieutenant General Surinder Nath, PVSM, AVSM\*\*, SM, VSM (Retd), former Chief of Staff, Southern Command, Pune.

The rally was flagged off at the CWGC Kirkee War Cemetery by Lieutenant General RJ Noronha AVSM\*\*, SM, Chief of Staff, Southern Command, Pune. Lieutenant General Noronha delivered a short speech in which the joint initiatives of the USI and the



CWGC, and the endeavours of the India Remembers project were acknowledged.

The cyclists rode their way through Pune and Satara to Apshinge Military Village in Maharashtra, a village with a rich military heritage, covering a distance of 130 km. The village has a long legacy of men serving in the Indian Army. As many as three generations from a single family in the village have served in Indian Armed Forces since World War One. The rally came to an end with a grand reception followed by a cultural programme at the village.



**'India Remembers' Project team with some of the cyclists after their arrival at Apshinge Military Village, Satara, Maharashtra.**

While the pilot has come to an end, allowing the project team and the external evaluator who has been commissioned for the Project to assess its impact, the Centre's endeavours to inculcate a culture of remembrance for its soldiers, sailors and airmen in the Country will continue.

## **The Battle of Hydaspes\***

**Commander Sarat Menon®**

### **Introduction**

Alexander became the ruler of Macedon in 336 BC taking over from his father Philip the Second. Immediately after taking over, he conquered all of Greece. His greed for wealth, power and recognition took him to the Kingdom of Persia where he engaged the mighty Persians in three major battles. The brilliant strategist and ferocious commander that Alexander was, he was knocking on the doors of India by 326 BC.

In his quest to conquer India, Alexander stumbled upon the fiercest of resistance from King Porus of the Kingdom of Pauravas located east of the river Hydaspes (present Jhelum) in 326 BC. The battle pitched two armies with completely different fighting techniques and skills against each other ending in a decisive victory for Alexander. Hydaspes resulted in a paradigm shift in the Indian military theory and practice since the battle taught the Indians that only a standing army composed of professionals supported by the State could stop an invader.<sup>1</sup>

### **Aim**

The aim of this paper is to describe the Battle of Hydaspes fought in 326 BC between the Macedonian army led by Alexander and the army of Paurvas led by King Porus and to draw some lessons which may be relevant even today.

### **Background**

In 326 BC, the northern part of the Indian Subcontinent consisting of the present day Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Bihar was ruled by the Nanda Empire and the fertile land of Punjab was ruled by several kings fighting amongst themselves. In order to enter India, Alexander had to cross two major rivers of Indus

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\*This is a slightly edited version of the essay which was the winner of First Prize in Lieutenant General SL Menezes Memorial USI Essay Competition 2016, instituted in 2015 on a subject related to the Armed Forces Historical Research.

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and Hydaspes. The Kingdom of Eastern Gandhara located between these two major rivers was ruled by King Ambhi. **Figure 1** refers.



**Figure 1 : Map depicting Hydaspes (Jhelum)**

When Alexander challenged Ambhi, the latter had two options; he could fight and see his city annihilated by the stronger army of Alexander who were well prepared for crossing Indus or not oppose Alexander and save his city from death and destruction. Alexander was known to execute vanquished rulers in a gory manner to send a stern message across to others who were contemplating opposition. King Ambhi thus avoided confrontation and did not offer any kind of resistance to Alexander.

Alexander crossed Indus with ease and commandeered Ambhi's kingdom making it his base of operations for mounting further attacks East of Hydaspes. After two months of marching, Alexander's army reached the western banks of river Hydaspes and was confronted by the massive army of King Porus on the other bank. Porus was a tough warrior and refused to surrender. Instead, he challenged Alexander to fight.

### **Analysis of the Order of Battle (ORBAT)**

#### **Army of Alexander.**

- (a) **Strength.** Though historical accounts on the strength of Alexander's army vary, it is estimated that he reached the Western bank of Hydaspes with 30,000 infantry and 6,000 cavalry.
- (b) **Cavalry.** The 6000 strong cavalry of Alexander comprised the strong Companion Cavalry and the Scythian Horse

Archers. The characteristics of the cavalry are given below:-

(i) **The Companion Cavalry.** The Companion Cavalry were the elite cavalry of the Macedonian Army. A cavalry man carried a *xyston* (spear/javelin), wore body armour, shoulder guards and helmets, but bore no shield. A curved sword was carried in addition for close combat. **Figure 2** refers. The Companion Cavalry was categorised as heavy cavalry.



**Figure 2 : Companion Cavalry**

(ii) **The Scythian Horse Archers.** The Scythian horse archers were inducted into the Macedonian Army post campaign in Bactria and Sogdiana. These archers wore no armour and were not suited for frontal attack like the Companion Cavalry. Instead they shot arrows from the horseback while the horse was moving at high speed and were effective in engaging enemy flanks and rear thus harassing the enemy. **Figure 3** refers. These horse archers were categorised as light cavalry.

(c) **Infantry.** The Macedonian Infantry operated in a rectangular military formation called Phalanx. Each infantry man of the Phalanx carried a *sarissa* (double pointed pike of over six metres long) and a curved sword for close combat. The soldiers wore light armour and carried a wooden shield tipped with bronze. The Phalanx maintained a tight formation and was almost invincible in frontal attacks. The Phalanx could easily move forward and rear, however, its flanks were vulnerable. **Figure 4** refers.



**Figure 3 : Scythian Horse Archers**



**Figure 4 : Macedonian Phalanx**

**(d) River Crossing.** The Macedonians were experts in river crossing. They crossed the Nile and Euphrates on a bridge of boats, forded Tigris, Oxus and Jaxartes on a pathway made of skin bags filled with straw and Indus by a boat



bridge<sup>2</sup>. The extent of river Hydaspes was not a matter of concern for the Macedonians.

(e) **Leadership.** Alexander was a formidable military leader, strategist and a professional warrior with incomparable experience in fighting battles against the best armies in the world. He had the phenomenal ability to quickly read the battlefield and formulate a strategy to gain advantage. When faced with opponents who used unfamiliar fighting techniques, Alexander would adapt his forces to match his opponent's fighting style which helped him to win battles even in situations where his forces were outnumbered.

### The Army of Porus.

(a) **Strength.** King Porus had assembled a *Chaturanga Sena* comprising approximately 30,000 infantry, 4,000 cavalry, 300 Chariots and 200 Elephants.<sup>3</sup> These forces occupied the river bank at all the main fording points in the immediate area.

(b) **Chariots.** The Chariots brought mobility to the battle field. The chariots either charged at the enemy or encircled them. The chariots offered three distinct advantages over regular foot soldiers. Firstly, the warrior on the chariot could carry more weapons than a foot soldier. Secondly, the charioteer being at an elevated position than the foot soldier enjoyed greater physical and psychological advantage. Thirdly, the soldiers on chariots were fatigue free unlike foot soldiers.<sup>4</sup> The Indian Charioteers unlike the Persians fired arrows from the chariots. However, the chariots had a major disadvantage in that, they were ineffective on soft ground as their wheels would get stuck in the ground making them ineffective.

(c) **Elephants.** The war elephant was a highly developed instrument of combat in the Indian subcontinent. The elephants were trained over a period of about 10 years and were specifically used for fighting battles. They responded to name calls, whistles and fought like any other soldier in the army. These elephants were heavily armoured and were strapped on with a castle like structure on their back which carried the archers and javelin throwers. **Figure 5** refers.



**Figure 5 : War Elephants**

(d) **Archers.** The archers were equipped with a bow, the length of which was comparable to height of a man. To extend it fully, the archer was required to anchor the bow on the ground and steady it with his foot. The size of the bow gave it more force and distance than the Macedonian's bow. Requirement of a firm ground was mandatory to anchor the bow and it was ineffective if used in soft or soggy ground.

(e) **Leadership.** The Pauravas were led by King Porus who was well built and a great warrior. He refused to surrender to Alexander without offering a fight knowing fully well that he had defeated the mighty army of Persians. However, the army of King Porus was not so well equipped and also not so battle hardened as that of Alexander.

### **The Battle**

#### **Prelude to Battle**

Post building up his army along the western bank of river Hydaspes, Alexander first attempted conquest by diplomacy. He sent his messenger to Porus, exhorting him to surrender, pay tribute and give up his throne peacefully. However, Porus refused to surrender and challenged Alexander to meet him in the battlefield.

Alexander was faced with the daunting challenge of crossing



Hydaspes to confront the army of Porus whilst maintaining the element of surprise. The river Hydaspes had swollen up and was in full flow due to the rains. Crossing the river in front of the army of Porus could have been suicidal since the archers of Porus would have engaged Alexander's army even before the battle was joined. Alexander therefore needed to devise a tactical plan to cross the river without Porus coming to know of it.

As part of deception, Alexander brought in a large amount of supplies and gave Porus the impression that he would wait until winter when the river would recede. Secondly, he stationed small units all along the river and kept moving soldiers back and forth to confuse Porus as to the actual crossing site. His most effective ploy was to make night marches with his cavalry and sound the battle cry, causing Porus to react and move his army opposite the false cry. Alexander thus, successfully conditioned the army of Porus to noises along the river bank. He achieved a tactical advantage of moving his army on his side of the river bank without provoking a major tactical response from the enemy. In effect, he lowered the anxiety and attention level of the army of Porus on the other bank. The army of Porus over a period of time got lax and lowered their surveillance of Alexander's forces.

Finally, after a period of about two months, Alexander led a contingent of army away from the camp under the cover of darkness. The army of Porus hardly noticed this because of the manner in which they were conditioned by Alexander's deceptive movements. Alexander moved an army of about 10,000 infantry soldiers, 6,000 cavalry and 1,000 horse archers about 27 km upstream along the Hydaspes river in midst of heavy rains. He chose a point along the river where there was a cape, behind which was located a valley in which Alexander was able to hide his troops from the enemy.<sup>5</sup> In addition, opposite this cape was a large wooded island on the river. This island further concealed the movement of his forces. Alexander's army crossed the river at night amidst heavy rains and thunderstorms and completed the river crossing overnight.

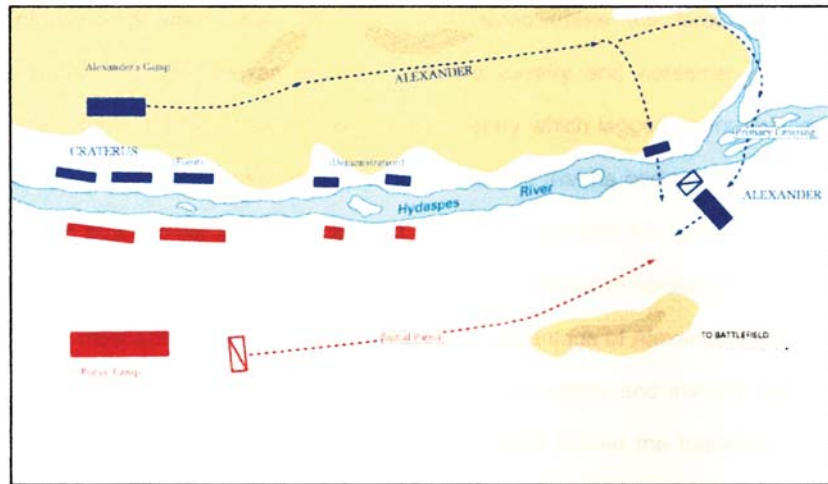
As dawn broke, the scouts of Porus brought news to the king that the army of Alexander had crossed the river. To deceive Porus, Alexander had left in the camp (which was pitched just opposite Paurava's camp on the other side of the river), servants

and support staff who were dressed like Macedonian soldiers.<sup>6</sup> He also deliberately left all the tents of his camp spread out. As a result, Porus was not sure whether the force that had crossed the river was merely a reconnaissance team or the Macedonian main attack force.

Porus fell for Alexander's trap and presumed that the main Macedonian Army was waiting in the camp to cross at an opportune moment and a reconnaissance team had crossed the river. To confirm this, he sent a small contingent of army comprising 2,000 cavalry and 200 chariots under the command of his own son, also named Porus. Post crossing the river, Alexander's army marched downstream towards the camp of Porus and met the contingent led by the son of Porus midway.

### **The Initial Contact**

Please refer to **Figure 6**. After crossing the river, Alexander formed up his infantry into a phalanx and ordered them to follow in formation. He then led his heavy Companion Cavalry followed by the horsemen. As soon as Alexander saw the heavy cavalry and chariots led by the son of Porus, he reconfigured his troops. Alexander withdrew his heavy cavalry since he realised that pitting his heavy cavalry against the heavy cavalry and chariots of Porus may not give him desired results. He, therefore, sent his Scythian Horse Archers (light cavalry) forward to engage the heavy cavalry and chariots of Porus. The Horse Archers showered the incoming force of young Porus with a volley of arrows. Alexander's Horse Archers stopped the army of young Porus restricting their mobility. Alexander, thereafter, committed his heavy Companion Cavalry against the opposing force. The chariots showered Alexander's cavalry with arrows, however due their restricted mobility in the soft and soggy ground (due to the rains the previous night) the chariots became sitting ducks for Alexander's cavalry. The army of young Porus found themselves outnumbered and outmanoeuvred. In the encounter, the Macedonian heavy cavalry killed the son of Porus along with 400 Indian cavalry. All the chariots were lost in the battle and the remaining 1,600 cavalry returned back to Porus informing him about the incoming raid.



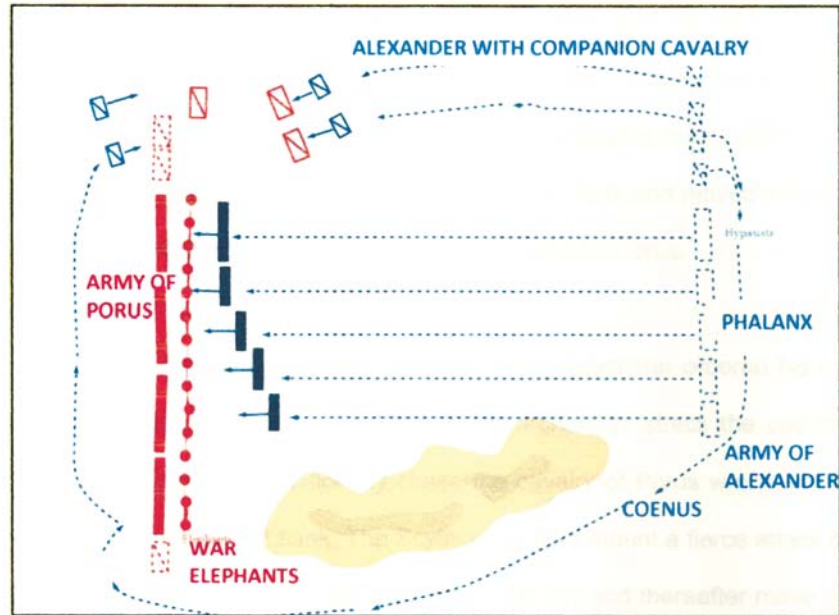
**Figure 6 : Alexander crossing river**

### The Main Battle

After learning about the death of his son and defeat of his contingent, Porus realised that the Macedonian contingent across the river was a deceptive arrangement and Alexander was indeed leading the main force and was approaching downstream. It was still early in the morning and the rain had stopped. Porus took charge of his force and advanced upstream leaving behind a contingent of his force to guard his camp fearing a Macedonian landing at the rear. Porus stopped at a site where he found a relatively firm ground and formed up his army. He required the firm ground to ensure effectiveness of his chariots and archers against Alexander's forces.

On the night when Alexander crossed Hydaspes, he positioned a force midway between the main camp and the crossing point. This force crossed the river and joined Alexander's forces during his south bound approach. The reinforcements were fresh and were well rested unlike the force which was accompanying him. Alexander along with his cavalry and horsemen reached the position taken up by Porus well before his infantry which lagged hours behind. On seeing the army of Porus ahead, Alexander realised that he had to delay the battle allowing time for his infantry to join up. He, therefore, threw his horsemen archers ahead making them move along his front shooting arrows to screen his force.

This was the most apt time for Porus to attack taking advantage of Alexander's dispersed force. However, Porus refrained from mounting an attack and instead waited for Alexander to take the initiative. Alexander's infantry joined the battlefield in due course of time and he got sufficient time to form up his army for the battle. For disposition of the opposing forces please see **Figure 7**.



**Figure 7**

#### **Line-Up for the Battle.**

**Army of Porus.** The army of Porus was deployed with 200 elephants lined up in the front, 50 feet apart followed by 20,000 infantry men flanked by 1,000 cavalry on either side screened by 150 chariots.

**Army of Alexander.** Alexander deployed his 6,000 heavy infantry arranged in a phalanx in the centre. The phalanx was backed up with 2,000 foot archers and 1,000 javelin throwers. About 1,000 Scythian Horse Archers (light cavalry) were stationed on the left flank of the phalanx and the right flank of the phalanx was guarded by 4,000 Companion Cavalry (heavy cavalry).<sup>7</sup>

### **Progress of the battle**

Alexander's infantry was outnumbered 3:1; however his cavalry was numerically superior to that of Porus. He, therefore, wanted to turn this into a cavalry centric battle. However, the presence of war elephants in the army of Porus added to his problems. The Macedonians had not confronted such large strength of war elephants in a battle. Although the individual fighters were not scared of the elephants, the same was not the case with the horses of the cavalry. The horses were not accustomed to the sound and smell of these elephants and panicked standing ahead of the army of Porus. Alexander had to revise his tactics to ensure effectiveness of his strong cavalry against the army of Porus.

**Phase I.** Alexander commenced the offensive and moved 4,000 of his cavalry to the left flank of Porus comprising 1,000 cavalry. Considering the overwhelming strength of Alexander's cavalry approaching his outnumbered cavalry on the left flank, Porus pulled out his cavalry from right flank and moved it behind his lines to reinforce his left flank. This mistake proved fatal for Porus.

**Phase II.** Taking advantage of the situation, Alexander ordered his cavalry commander Coenus to take the Scythian Horse Archers to attack the undefended right flank of Porus and to additionally chase the cavalry of Porus which was in the process of shifting to the left flank. The Scythian Archers mounted a fierce attack on the undefended right flank of Porus inflicting heavy casualties and thereafter moved behind Porus's lines towards the left flank.

**Phase III.** Porus launched his chariots against Alexander's 4,000 strong cavalry. However, the arrows fired by the Chariots did not prove to be very effective due to armour plates covering both troopers and the horses. Further, the horseback was a more suited mobile platform than the chariots since the terrain was not appropriate for the chariots to manoeuvre with their wheels getting frequently stuck in the muddy banks of Hydaspes. The archers in the chariots became sitting ducks for the cavalry of Alexander with their inability to manoeuvre effectively on the battlefield.

**Phase IV.** After dealing with the chariots, Alexander led a part of his Companion Cavalry westwards to give an impression to Porus that he was attempting to envelop. Porus responded by moving his left flank comprising 2,000 cavalry further outwards to prevent

envelopment. As Porus's cavalry opened out further to left, Alexander's cavalry changed direction and instead of sweeping Porus's left flank, he suddenly, turned inwards and cut off the cavalry of Porus from his main army. As this happened, Coenus also arrived at the scene from behind Porus's lines and slammed into the left flank of the Porus's army from the rear. The result was that the cavalry of Porus was suddenly fighting enemy cavalry in the front and rear. Faced with encirclement, the cavalry of Porus attempted to retreat towards their own lines. Additionally, Porus ordered his army to shift to left so that the main army of Porus could come to the rescue of the encircled cavalry.

**Phase V.** Alexander ordered his phalanx consisting of infantrymen against the main Indian line. The crucial point in the battle had been reached where much depended on how Alexander's army handled the Indian elephants. The Macedonian phalanx, which seemed to present a wall bristling with over six metres long spear, marched in unison towards the charging infantry of Porus. The Indian archers were not very effective against the incoming Macedonian attack due to the soft nature of the ground which prevented them from firmly anchoring their long bows. The infantry of Porus had a phenomenal numerical superiority over the Macedonian Phalanx. But the weakest link of the '*Chaturanga Sena*' was the poorly trained infantry. In contrast, the Macedonians drilled their infantry with the aid of drums so that the soldiers marched in unison during combat. Drill and discipline enabled the Macedonian infantry to operate as a concentrated body of massed pikemen capable of pushing and thrusting without stumbling over each other in the chaos of the battlefield. As the phalanx collided with the chaotic infantry of Porus, discipline proved to be the deciding factor towards the outcome.

**Phase VI.** The war elephants of Porus charged and crashed against sections of the phalanx. However, Alexander's infantry displayed great discipline in standing their ground against the elephants. The phalanx would open its ranks and allow a charging elephant to pass through while attacking the elephant's flanks, eyes and also the *Mahout*. A large number of Macedonian soldiers from the phalanx were also lifted from the ground by the elephants before being trampled to death under their feet. The Macedonian cavalry after pursuing the retreating cavalry of Porus came back to the battlefield to finish the enemy. While the phalanx attacked from front, the

cavalry attacked from rear. The coordinated efforts by the phalanx and the cavalry resulted in the elephants being encircled and pushed to a smaller pocket. Inside this pocket, the elephants lacked room to manoeuvre. During this, the Scythian Horsemen targeted the *Mahouts* from far leaving the elephants without anyone to guide.

**Phase VII.** Within seven hours of commencement of the battle, the army of Porus was almost annihilated. However, Porus was still fighting and in turn, was severely wounded. The Macedonian cavalry surrounded the King's elephant, killed his mahout and captured Porus. Seeing their king captured, small pockets of soldiers who were fighting, turned back and fled the battlefield. As dusk fell the battle ended.

### **Result**

Nearly 20,000 infantry and cavalry of Porus lay dead on the battlefield. All the chariots were destroyed and elephants were either killed or captured. Porus was brought in front of Alexander. When the two kings met, Alexander asked Porus what to do with him. Porus is said to have replied, "treat me as a king would treat another king".<sup>8</sup> Alexander was so impressed by the dignity and composure of Porus that he let Porus keep his territory and his subjects.

### **Analysis**

**Alexander's Leadership.** The key to Alexander's success had been his own tactical ingenuity in the command of a professional, well trained combined arms army that coordinated its operations effectively in the face of imminent danger. Alexander's performance at Hydaspes is particularly noteworthy for the fact that he neutralised the enemy capability even before he delivered the main blow.<sup>9</sup> Alexander could always manage to make his opponents react in the way he wanted which gave him the upper hand in a battle. He could identify the weak spots of the enemy in no time and then would use his own strength against enemy weakness. He never panicked during the battle in the face of grimmest of the situations and played war like an orchestra with movements of different arms coordinated to achieve victory.

**Deception.** In the battle of Hydaspes, Alexander used deception and psychological operations with tremendous success. During the initial run-up to the battle, Alexander gave sleepless nights to



Porus by moving his army along the rivers keeping Porus guessing as to the location along the river which Alexander would use for crossing. During the battle, he executed a brilliant turning movement and with the tactics of attacking enemy's flanks forced the enemy to shift his entire defensive posture and confused the enemy.

**Use of a Lean and Trained Force.** Alexander had an army which was much smaller in comparison to that of Porus in strength. He, however, ensured that all arms of his force were well trained unlike that of Porus. The Macedonian phalanx was much stronger and effective than the foot soldiers of Porus who were poorly trained and were not as effective in close combat. The Battle of Hydaspes was taken as a lesson by Chanakya who understood that a trained force was required to win a battle and later ensured that Mauryans were well trained before going into any battle.

**Overcoming Own Weakness.** Alexander knew that his army had not faced such a massive number of war elephants in any battle prior to the battle of Hydaspes. Though, Persians also used elephants against the army of Alexander in the Battle of Gaugamela in 331 BC, the number of elephants fielded was far less in comparison to that by Porus. Additionally, Alexander's cavalry horses were not confident in front of the war elephants and therefore, he used his cavalry to envelop the army of Porus and thus avoided a frontal assault by elephants which formed the first line of the *Chaturanga Sena*. Though, during the course of the battle, elephants were able to achieve some success, the battle was taken away from Porus by the brilliant turning movement displayed by Alexander's cavalry.

**Applying Lessons Learned.** Alexander was a keen observer and used to incorporate the lessons learned from the previous battles into the new ones. He had seen the efficacy of using Scythian Horse Archers as light cavalry during his battles in Bactria and Sogdiana of Central Asia. These horse warriors could harass the enemy with their accurate launch of arrows and their swift movement on the battlefield made it very difficult for an opposing force to target them. These horse archers were very effective in harassing the army of Porus and pinned them down effectively.

**Utilising Correct Military Assets.** Alexander assessed his opponent on the battlefield thoroughly and fielded the most suited

arm to fight the attacking force. Whilst moving south along Hydaspes to meet Porus, when Alexander was confronted by a contingent led by the son of Porus, Alexander's army was formed up with his Companion Heavy Cavalry in the lead followed by the Scythian Horse Archers. However, seeing the heavy cavalry and chariots of Porus, Alexander quickly withdrew his heavy cavalry and used his Scythian Horse Archers to attack the heavy cavalry and chariots, pinning them down. Alexander thereafter, used his Companion Cavalry to move in for the assault. The unique ability of identifying and deploying the most suited asset for an engagement contributed no less towards his victory at Hydaspes.

**Evolving Fighting Techniques.** The Macedonian Army was a battle hardened force and their experience in fighting varied battles won the war for Alexander. The phalanx was a far superior formation compared to the scattered untrained infantry used by Porus. The Macedonian Army evolved over a period of time and with each and every battle, new techniques and necessary modifications to weapons were undertaken resulting in improvement in fighting techniques and weaponry. However, on the other hand, fighting techniques, tactics and weapons of the *Chaturanga Sena* had not comparatively evolved resulting in Porus paying a heavy price.

### Conclusion

The battle of Hydaspes may be considered as one of the earliest documented history of war between a European army and an army from the Indian subcontinent. The striking blow in the battle by Alexander was not by attrition warfare; instead it was achieved by combined use of manoeuvre and flexibility in switching forces in the face of a developing battle situation. He seized initiative right at the outset and retained it throughout the battle. Hydaspes resulted in a paradigm shift in Indian military theory and practice. Chanakya took lessons from Battle of Hydaspes and emphasised the importance of training for war and incorporated these whilst forming up the mighty army of Mauryan empire which ruled the subcontinent for more than a century after the battle of Hydaspes.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Kaushik Roy, *India's Historic Battles: From Alexander the great to Kargil* (2004). p 30.

<sup>2</sup> Gohar Ayub Khan (Former speaker and foreign minister of Pakistan). *Alexander's the great Indian Campaign Battle of the Hydaspes against Raja Porus*. p 2

<sup>3</sup> David J Lonsdale. *Alexander the great, lessons in strategy* (2007 Routledge) p 87.

<sup>4</sup> Daniel Coetzee and Lee W. Eysturid. *Philosophers of War: The Evolution of History's Greatest Military Thinkers* (Praeger 2013). p 363.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. P 88

<sup>6</sup> Roy. *India's Historic Battles*. p 17.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. P 18.

<sup>8</sup> Guy Rogers. *Alexander: The Ambiguity of Greatness*. (Random house 2004). p 200

<sup>9</sup> Lonsdale. *Alexander the great*. p 90.

## Letter to the Editor

### Book Release by the Marshal of the Air Force

Dear Sir,

1. I must congratulate you for organising an excellent function for the release of the book '*In Memoriam: The Fallen Air Warriors*' authored by Air Marshal Bharat Kumar, PVSM, AVSM and proudly released by the Marshal of the Air Force, Arjan Singh, DFC, himself a highly decorated Air Warrior.
2. The venue of the function was thoughtfully planned in the outside lawn, keeping in view the winter season. The Podium was aptly given an Air Force blue colour. Adequate media coverage was given without disturbing the august gathering. High tea served; and a good occasion to meet senior officers.
3. Listening to the Air Marshal, one could realise the daunting task of collecting the material for printing such a book, probably a first one of its kind by an Air veteran; though the book attracted only the Air Force Organisations, for obvious reasons.
4. To be frank, I was not sure if the Marshal of the Air Force, nearing his 100th birthday, would be able to address the audience but lo, how clearly and with lots of wits he entertained the audience with apt anecdotes. How gracefully and with humility he said goodbye to the audience. Surely, the old soldiers have their own style of doing things.
5. However, I was disappointed to observe the thin audience for such an occasion, where a memorable book was released by the Marshal of the Air Force and expected a big gathering in attendance from the Air Force units, located a little distance away from the venue.
6. But a very good effort by the USI and credit for it goes to Gen PK Singh and his able team.

Jai Hind

Yours Sincerely,  
Group Captain SS Puri (Retd)

## Short Reviews of Recent Books

**The Battlefields of Imphal.** By Hemant Singh Katoch, (New Delhi, Routledge, 2016), pp 182, Price Rs 765, ISBN 9781138203549.

The decisive battles of Imphal and Kohima during the Second World War have been voted the greatest battles fought in the history of the British Army in a contest organised by the National Army Museum in England. The contest was held in April 2013. The book comprehensively describes the Battles in Imphal which in some ways were the battles for defence of India and bring out the finest fighting qualities of the Indian soldier.

The book has five Chapters. Chapter One deals with North East India, the canvas to the Second World War; Chapter Two deals with Manipur on the Front Lines; Chapter Three deals with Imphal 1944, clash between the 14<sup>th</sup> Army of Britain and the 15<sup>th</sup> Army of Japan; Chapter Four describes the battlefields along the hubs and spokes and finally, Chapter Five gives details on Battlefield Tourism. The Conclusion aptly terms it as the Greatest Battle fought between March to July 1944.

This book goes into the nuances of the battles and the views of a large number of locals and other experts. Apart from describing the actions of the British and the Japanese, the book covers the actions undertaken by the First Division of Subhas Chandra Bose's Indian National Army. Geographically, Imphal lay as the Gateway to India. Japan's overall aim was to reach Dimapur which was the rail head connecting it to the rest of India. The book stresses on the role of leadership, firepower, ingenuity and use of airpower. Imphal had six airfields during the battle. As a matter of fact the turning point was the airlift of Indian 5 Infantry Division from Arakans to Imphal. This along with regular flow of supplies ensured that the 14<sup>th</sup> Army of Britain was able to win the logistics battle which paved the way for eventual victory.

The author rightly devotes a chapter on Battlefield Tourism of Imphal. After reading the realistic accounts one is tempted to visit important locations on which the battles were fought. With India's 'Act East policy and the development of the Imphal - Moreh – Tamu – Kalewa road, it would be possible to drive down to Myanmar while seeing these battle locations. The book possibly could have covered the impact of Subash Chandra Bose in forming the

Japanese strategy for the Manipur offensive. It was at his insistence that the offensive was launched by the Japanese.

A well written book which makes a good reading for soldiers and civilians alike.

*Major General PK Chakravorty, VSM (Retd)*

**Gorkha Hat and Maroon Berret.** By Lieutenant General Chandra Shekhar, (New Delhi : Ambi Knowledge Resources Pvt Ltd.), 2016, 244p, ISBN: 978-81-903591-6-0.

This autobiography takes the reader through the fascinating journey of a second generation army officer, from the mountains of Kumaon to donning the Gorkha Hat as a young officer and after holding many coveted command and staff appointments, finally retiring as the Vice Chief of Army Staff.

The narration is simple and succinctly put interspersed with anecdotes of a thoroughly professional soldier endowed with great physical, moral and intellectual prowess, spanning experiences of varied nature to include : exercises and operations, counter-insurgency, airborne, snow warfare, mountains, plains, deserts, amphibious, instructional appointment at Defence Services Staff College and through various courses including two in the US. His reflections include the ethos and training in the army and its contribution to society at large including 'Operation Sadbhavna' in J&K, and above all the 'camaraderie' that is the hallmark of the Indian Army.

He laments misplaced emphasis on diplomacy rather than military power in 1962 and gives insights into J&K militancy of early 1990's: involvement of Pakistani, Afghan, Arab terrorists; subversion in J&K Police; disarming a battalion of J&K Armed Police; the hostage crisis of Home Secretary and Director General Police of J&K requiring deployment of Infantry Combat Vehicles (ICVs) to secure their release. He attributes lack of surveillance, intelligence, Higher Defence Management and unresponsive defence procurement apparatus as the limiting factors during the Kargil Conflict.

The General highlights that vital defence related issues, institutional reforms and modernisation are all suffering due lack of political resolve. Military strategy cannot be planned in a political

vacuum. He also draws attention to many problems affecting the Army: declining values of society, dilution in high standards of physical and moral values that were rules rather than exceptions and dilution in personal discipline leading to avoidable corruption; and above all Government's apathy to sustained downgradation of the military in terms of pay and allowances, pensions and their status vis-à-vis civilian counterparts. The absence of a national war memorial even after 70 years of Independence also finds a mention in the narrative.

This remarkable book will keep the reader engrossed with its simplicity and clarity of thought. It is recommended to be read by everyone, by soldiers and civilians alike.

*Lieutenant General PC Katoch, PVSM,  
UYSM, AVSM, SC (Retd)*

**The Men who Served Jammu & Kashmir.** By Dr Sudhir Bloeria, (Vij books India Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi, 2016), pp..244, Price 750.00, ISBN 978-93-85563-27-0

Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) has for long been a disturbed border State with 70 km of Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL), 750 km of Line of Control (LC) and 210 km of International Border (IB), persistent militancy, insurgency, cross-border terrorism and externally fostered internal security threats blended with separatists' mindset. With protracted low intensity conflict, the basket is full of turmoil, struggle, crises and unpredictable arson, violence and unrest in the State. Under these circumstances addressing the problems of common man, providing essential services, restoring peace and normalcy is an extremely difficult task and poses challenges for civilian bureaucracy at all levels for performance and evolving a delivery mechanism.

The book provides a splendid observation by a celebrated bureaucrat about weak statecraft and fragile governance in the State from 1990-2010. Thanks to a painful provocation on October 10, 1996, the book offers a glimpse of professional competence, integrity and moral standing of 'brothers in arms' in a troubled State. It was not an easy task to bring the State back from the brink of disaster. They were a committed band of civil servants with zeal to restore the semblance of normalcy to revive a moribund and collapsed civil administration and State police.



It is very difficult to collect micro and macro data and relevant information pertaining to issues and concerns of J&K administration of two decades. Yet, the author has demonstrated the courage and conviction to embark upon this gigantic task, which is largely memory based. Hence, the book offers an excellent primary source to the researchers. The author has brilliantly brought out the chemistry between the Army and other security forces with its civilian counterpart that is essentially a unique role model for modern governance.

Restoration of peace and normalcy in J&K has often been attributed to security forces. The role of Army and other security forces is certainly commendable for their supreme sacrifices and significant contribution. But one should also understand that no insurgency or internal disturbances can possibly be handled successfully by security forces alone. Security forces can aspire to create secure and conducive atmosphere for political establishment; however, it is for the civil administrative structure to perform their legitimate functions and duties. It is a saga of blood, sweat and tears, also of constant danger to life and limb which is ongoing. Needless to say, all the actors – the civil servants and the police forces of J&K, Central Armed Police Forces and the Army deserve a salutation.

*Professor Gopalji Malviya*

**Soldier Mountaineer : The Colonel who got Siachen Glacier for India.** *By Colonel N Kumar with Colonel NN Bhatia, (Vij Books India Pvt Ltd., New Delhi, 2016), pp.254, Price 850.00, ISBN : 978-93-85563-55-3)*

Colonel Narinder Kumar, commonly known as 'Bull' to all those who know him, is a legend. Bull Kumar himself has written a number of books and, a number of books and articles have been written about him, his expeditions and exploits. Soldier Mountaineer is a biography of Bull compiled and written by Colonel NN Bhatia. Never before this book has a comprehensive biography of Bull Kumar been written encompassing his whole personality and character.

Starting from his birth in Rawalpindi, his life as a boy scout, his commissioning as an officer in the Kumaon Regiment, rising to be a mountaineer of repute and as an adventure specialist; the

book covers as to how he was lured to the mountains and was member of the first All Indian Expedition to Mt Everest in 1960. Bull was always the centre figure in all expeditions he took part in. He was the leader of nine out of 13 expeditions over 24,000 feet in which he took part. In his efforts to launch river rafting in India, he made the first descent of River Indus in Ladakh and the Teesta in Sikkim.

Soldier Mountaineer is the story of the exploits of the major expeditions of which Bull Kumar was a part. These expeditions have been covered in all essential details including some anecdotes and make a very interesting reading.

Bull Kumar is the most decorated soldier mountaineer. His decorations and awards include Param Vishisht Seva Medal (PVSM), Kirti Chakra, Ati Vishisht Seva Medal (AVSM), Padma Shri, Arjuna Award and the IMF Gold Medal by the Indian Mountaineering Foundation. On 25 June 2010, Bull Kumar was honoured with the MacGregor Medal, awarded by the United Service Institution of India for the best military reconnaissance conducted by him on the Siachen Glacier 30 years back.

In 1961, very early in his mountaineering career, Bull Kumar got frostbite during the Nilkantha Expedition which adversely affected his toes for life and he was medically advised not to ever go beyond 7,000 feet. He never lost heart. Because of his indomitable will and dogged determination Bull Kumar was back again in the mountaineering field in 1964 as the Leader of the Nanda Devi Expedition. Most of his climbs to fame are after 1964. This book is a story of all these years and much more.

People in military and civilian life will equally find this book an interesting reading. In particular, I recommend this book to the youth. For them it is a lesson in courage and determination to accomplish so called impossible tasks.

*Brigadier DK Khanna, VSM (Retd)*

**Gorkha Society and Politics.** By CS Thapa (Ghaziabad: DPS Publishing House Centre for Reforms Development and Justice, 2016), pp.228 Price Rs 675, ISBN 9788182749191

The book is a sequel to 'Gorkha: In search of an identity' written by the author in 2013. The author, born and brought up in Dehradun, a fifth generation soldier, has taken up the cause of the Indian

Gorkha distinct from the Nepali; the latter, a resident of Nepal, who is in India to earn a living, as a soldier, a labour or pursuing any other vocation, as a consequence of the Indo-Nepal Treaty of 1950.

The book has 14 chapters and 2 appendices. The initial eight chapters deal with aspects related to the identity of the Indian Gorkha and history which highlights Gorkha's presence in different states for more than a century; and his tribulations at not being able to get his dues, be it related to identity, social acceptance, permanence of abode or support of the central/state government in fulfilling his aspirations, despite having contributed to the nation's security in an admirable manner over the years. Subsequent chapters dwell upon the Indo- Nepal Treaty, situation in Nepal and its impact on the Indian Gorkha as also India's relations with Nepal and China and demand for Gorkhaland.

It is a fact that a large number of Gorkha's have been residents in India for about 200 years. Generations of them have been born in India and thus fulfil all conditions of being citizens of India; but are not accepted as such by people in some states and instead are considered to be migrants from Nepal. The author has painstakingly established this distinction and put forth his arguments forcefully to seek empowerment of the Gorkha. After concerted efforts by various Gorkha groups they eventually succeeded in having the Nepali language included in the 8<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Constitution on 22 Aug 1992. The author laments the fact that Gorkha's are concentrated only in Darjeeling, Sikkim, some areas in the North Eastern states, Dehradun and Dharamsala and also a large number are in isolated small pockets in J&K, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and other states, which does not allow them to form a cohesive group which can become a 'vote bank', thus denying them political clout. He also highlights the fact that the small groups allow themselves to fall prey to the wiles of leaders of big political parties for short term local gains.

The book is a useful reference material and fills a void in the existing literature about the Indian Gorkhas who form a small but an important part of the Indian ethnic mosaic. However, the 'omnipresent printers devil', poor editing, non-conventional formatting of pages which is distracting, are deductibles which could have been avoided.

*Lieutenant General Arvind Sharma, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd)*

**Saudi Arabia in a Multipolar World : Changing Dynamics.** By Zakir Hussain (New Delhi, Routledge (Taylor and Francis Group), 2016), pp..266, Price Rs. 895.00, ISBN- 9781138217812

Zakir Hussain has structured this analytical study about Saudi Arabia in six chapters. In Chapter I, the challenges currently encountered by the Kingdom are analysed. Here, the author examines the internal dynamics of Saudi Arabia influenced by the recent Arab Awakening. In Chapter II, the author describes how Abdulaziz Ibn Saud, the founder, created a unique mix of the temporal (oil) with the incorporeal (Islam) and used it shrewdly to legitimise strength and expand a monarchical regime well into the eyes of Muslim world as well as internationally. In this quest for power, Al Saud was supported by Muhammed Ibn Abdl Wahhab and Wahhabism.

In the next three chapters the Kingdom's foreign relations are discussed with special reference to the triad of the US, China and India; the omission of Pakistan is curious. Although Saudi Arabia has mediated in Pakistan's internal political matters and invested heavily in Pakistan's economic well being too, Pakistan has not shown any enthusiasm to get embroiled in Saudi operations against Yemen. Saudi relationship with China has burgeoned rapidly in recent years mainly because of Chinese farsightedness. Today, Saudi Arabia is the largest energy supplier to China. China is their largest trading partner that includes defence (missile deal 1988) and civilian-nuclear agreement.

In Chapter V, the author elaborates on the need for India-Saudi Arabia to establish a robust relationship. Issues of common concern like Afghanistan, Palestine-Israel conflict, energy, migration and terrorism are covered at length. Incidentally, India is the only nation in the world that heavily subsidises Muslims going for Hajj which is correctly mentioned by the author is a sop to gain political mileage. With the implementation of *nitaqat* (policy to reduce expatriate workers in private sector) over 70,000 Indian workers are likely to be retrenched. Saudi Government remains wary of its Shia minority. Its traditional carrot-and-stick policy of distributing billions of *dinars* and stifling dissent with National Guards along with '*mutauwa*' (religious police) is not wholly effective. The modernising force of social media (48 per cent of the population use internet) seems to favour a democratic regime in the long run

Overall an interesting book that provides many a useful insight into Saudi Arabia.

*Major General Ashok Joshi, VSM (Retd)*

**India's Armed Forces : Tempering the Steel.** By Lt Gen Ravi Dastane, AVSM, VSM (Retd), (Continental Prakashan, Pune-411030, 2016), pp. 115, ISBN: 978-81-7421-199-6

This slim volume is not an autobiography but a treatise on important military matters based on General's reflections during 44 years (counting NDA and IMA) that he spent in uniform. The book consists of five chapters, each dealing with a subject of great import and then there are six appendices which support the contents of the main chapters. Let me touch upon a few important issues that the book deals with.

The First Chapter highlights the basics of a Service career that an officer goes through, the importance of 'Operation Art' for a military commander and more importantly, various aspects of professional military education; hence the title : Tempering the Steel.

The Second and the Third Chapters are really the heart of the book. They deal with inadequacies of our 'National Security Apparatus' and 'Organisational Reforms' for the Indian Armed Forces. The author has made some very perceptive suggestions which are worth a serious consideration by the powers that be.

The Fourth Chapter 'The Making of an Officer and a Military Leader' is again no less important as it brings to fore with great candidness – that great moral force which sets apart the profession of arms from all other professions. The role of senior officers in restoring the pride and self-esteem across the board has been highlighted. The last Chapter ends with a kind of a prayer for India to realise its full potential with the Armed Forces fully integrated into the instruments of 'National Power'.

An interesting suggestion by the author merits a mention even in this short review. It is the need for 'The Chakravyuh' (a defence city on the lines of Pentagon) which would house all the offices of the MoD, the three Services, the DRDO and other allied departments. The requirement for such a complex is so obvious;

yet not even a brick has been laid in this direction over the last 70 years.

The book has been written in a very concise and clear language and would be of great value for all those who are concerned with national security.

*Major General PJS Sandhu (Retd)*

**Geopolitics, Security and Bilateral Relations : Perspectives from India and South Korea.** *Edited by Maj Gen BK Sharma (Retd) & Cdr MH Rajesh, (New Delhi : Vij Books, 2016) pp..146, Price Rs. 695/-, ISBN 978-93-85563-83-6*

This book, a collaborative research project between the United Service Institution of India (USI) and the Research Institute for National Security Affairs (RINSA) could not have been better timed. What makes this work really special is its format which attempts to bring to the discerning reader, perspectives from both New Delhi as well as Seoul on four very interesting themes; namely – Geopolitics of the Regions, Security Cooperation, Nuclear Issues and India-South Korea Bilateral Relations.

The book is laid out in four main parts, each devoted to the four chosen themes. Each part has two chapters, authored by an expert from each country, explaining the Indian and Korean viewpoint. Part I is devoted to the shifting regional geo-politics. Threat perceptions of both nations are cogently covered, logically deduced from noticeable trends and actions of active players, both regional as well as extra-regional. While an incisive cause-effect analysis of most recent developments finds mention, a little crystal gazing into possible Korean re-unification would have added value. The two chapters in Part II focus on security cooperation between Seoul and New Delhi. The Korean author makes a case for cooperative governance on security issues citing the European model. The Indian author traces the trajectory of Indian establishment's understanding of security. The book makes an interesting reading and brings out how the world is beginning to come to terms with the much more realist idea of mutual security based on multifarious needs.

In Part III, the opportunities and challenges on Nuclear Security are discussed. There is significant commonality of

concerns as the nuclear programmes of both Pakistan and North Korea are believed to be, not only surviving, but also growing with Chinese help. Important developments, trends, prognosis and way ahead are logically covered.

The final part is devoted to bilateral cooperation. Both authors, in their informative articles bring out the history, fruition and the future trajectory of the entire canvas of cultural, political, economic and security cooperation between the two nations.

This book would be useful, not only for students of geopolitics and strategic security, but also those interested in India's historical ties with the Far-East. This being a first-of-a-kind initiative, it is hoped, would act as a precursor for further collaboration and research among scholars and think tanks in both countries.

*Colonel IS Panjra, SM*

**Developments in Central Asia: India-Kyrgyzstan Relations.**

*Edited by Bal Krishan Sharma and Nivedita Das Kundu, (New Delhi, Pentagon Press, 2016), pp.107, Price Rs 695, ISBN 978-81-8274-929-0*

A slim volume which is an outcome of joint research conducted by the scholars from Centre for Strategic Studies and Simulation(CS3), United Service Institution of India (USI) and International Ataturk Alatau University (IAAU), Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. The book aims at bringing forth the Indian and Kyrgyz perspectives in one collection; with chapters narrating various viewpoints, opportunities and challenges faced by Central Asian Republics in general and Kyrgyzstan in particular.

The book has six chapters; primarily compilation of essays by various authors. These authors have done well in highlighting aspects related to nation building and national identity in Post-Soviet Central Asia; role of external and great powers in Central Asia, Afghanistan factor and its influence on regional security and India- Kyrgyzstan relations.

The book is especially relevant in the present geopolitical environment. It highlights the fact that Central Asian Republics are endowed with an immense amount of natural resources and are located in the very centre of Eurasia, acting as the vital fulcrum between the dynamism of South and East Asia and the wealth and



technology in Western Europe. India may not be a key player in the region as of now due to lack of direct access; however, in the times to come, it will be able to connect to the region through the North-South Corridor and Chabahar-Zeranj-Delaram route. This will facilitate India's increased political and economic linkages with the Central Asian Republics. The authors have brought out that institutionalised linkages like the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation of which India is now a member shall provide India with opportunities to be more active in the region. An emerging India has to strive to maintain its strategic space in the region amidst increasing geostrategic and geo-economic interests by extra regional players.

The book makes an interesting read for students of international relations, especially India and Central Asian Republics. It has relevant recommendations for the policy makers as well.

*Colonel Zubin Bhatnagar*

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3	Air Mshl VK Bhatia, PVSM, AVSM, VrC** (Retd)
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