

Editorial

1. This year is the 150th Anniversary of the United Service Institution of India. The quarterly USI journal has been printed without a break from 1872 onwards with some special issues in between. This is its 620th issue. We believe that the selected topics in this issue are particularly relevant for the year at hand and will have an enduring relevance as they cover potentially growing threats, important issues and policy challenges. This issue has 10 researched articles and one personal narrative. The articles are grouped in five specific areas. As in previous editions, we invited some experts to write articles analysing emerging or evolving trends in conflict. Other articles were selected from those sent to us by military writers who want to air a view point on subjects on which they have expertise.

4. The first two articles are about India's neighbourhood. They are 'Afghanistan: Déjà vu or a New Beginning' by Shri Amar Sinha, IFS (Retd) and Dr Geeta Kochhar, of the Jawaharlal Nehru University, who has written an article titled 'Kalapani-Lipulekh Row: Rift between India and China Serves Nepal'. Shri Sinha goes into the Afghan peace accord and the problems it faces in implementation. He concludes that India must retain a presence in Afghanistan in its national interest. Dr Kochhar writes about an issue which is presently straining Indo-Nepal relations. She writes that unless the Indian government settles the issue, the irritants will become a major factor used by Nepal to impact India's role in the region.

5. The next two articles are about new ways of war. Air Mshl Anil Khosla, PVSM, AVSM, VM (Retd) writes on 'Offensive Use of Air Power in No War No Peace Situation'. He brings out that in this scenario, the intelligence driven counter-terror strike against a terror camp in Pakistan last year highlighted the flexibility of air power to be used in a No War No Peace situation. He brings out that in this presently predominant way of war, a potent aerospace force has to be ready to deliver decisive blows at very short notice with precision and minimal collateral damage. The second article, 'Suicide Terrorism — The Divine Grey Zone Weapon' by Lt Gen Dushyant Singh,

PVSM, AVSM (Retd) delves into deterring terrorist organisations especially those which undertake suicide terrorism. He argues that such terrorists can be deterred by building a perception of invincibility through the twin strategies of deterrence by denial and punishment as also certain environmental factors.

6. The next three articles are about organisation and structuring of the armed forces. Maj Gen Harsha Kakkar (Retd) writes on 'Creating Theatre Command to Meet Our Specific Conditions'. He states that there is no escaping the fact that Integrated Theatre Commands will be established. However, Indian conditions and requirements are at variance from other countries and, hence, require a considered solution, therefore, we need to move with caution and not make rushed judgements leading to subsequent changes. Maj Gen RS Yadav, VSM (Retd) writes on 'Re-structuring, Staffing and Equipping of the Indian Armed Forces'. He brings out that the Indian Armed Forces ought to be structured, manned and equipped on threat basis and not on short term considerations of revenue availability, though this factor must be kept in mind. Lastly, Brig Narendra Kumar, SM, VSM (Retd) writes on 'Hybrid Warfare Division: An Urgent Operational Requirement for India'. He argues that India needs to develop asymmetric edge and build capabilities to fight ambiguous and amorphous adversaries through synergised application of intelligence, information, cyber, electronic, conventional and unconventional means. For this, India requires a new organisation for Hybrid War

7. The next two articles are in the realm of history as well as its application to current issues. 'Historicity of the Non-Expansionist Indian Strategic Culture' by Col PK Gautam (Retd) gives a rare look into the reasons why it is not considered righteous to undertake colonial conquest in Indian strategic culture from ancient times. He states that this continues to be the underlying principle and ethics of Indian foreign policy behaviour. An article like this can help the world understand our strategic choices and our benign intentions. In the article 'Evolution of Veteran Medical Care Support System in India', Maj Gen Ashok Kumar, VSM covers the evolution of the

veteran healthcare of the Indian Armed Forces post-independence until the start of the Ex-servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) in 2003. He brings out the challenges faced and the efforts made to surmount them. An article like this, besides adding to the history of the evolution of veteran healthcare, also helps veterans understand the systems' strengths and constraints better.

8. The last article is on an important internal security issue. In the article 'Neighbours Yet Strangers: A Critical Analysis of Naga Peace Accord', Maj Gen VS Ranade writes that the signing of the 'Framework Agreement' between the Government of India and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isaac-Muivah), on 03 August 2015, has far reaching consequences not only for Nagaland but also for other North East states. The author brings out that the potentiality of the 'Framework Agreement' to restore peace in Nagaland needs to be examined by a critical scrutiny.

9. **This issue also has a Personal Narrative.** *The USI Journal will carry only one Personal Narrative per issue. Submissions should not exceed 2500 words, preferably be in the first person, and written in a narrative style without self-aggrandisement. The subject should fall in the genre of history.* This issue carries a personal narrative which was a WhatsApp post by the author, Col Bhupinder Shahi (Retd), and the same was converted into an article with the author's permission. Titled, 'Seven Days without Fire!', it is an account of how the inability to have the means to light a stove can spell disaster in an environment like the Siachen Glacier.

10. **The issue also carries four short book reviews of the following books:**

- (a) Missing in Action: The Prisoners Who Never Came Back.
By Chander Suta Dogra.
Reviewed by Maj Gen BK Sharma, AVSM, SM & bar (Retd)

- (b) Allahu Akbar: Understanding the Great Mughal in Today's India.
By Manimugdha Sharma.
Reviewed by Sqn Ldr Rana TS Chhina, MBE (Retd).
- (c) Kashmir: Beyond Article 370.
By Bashir Assad.
Reviewed by Maj Gen Ashok Joshi, VSM (Retd).
- (d) The Fragility of Order: Essays in Honour of KPS Gill.
Ed. Ajay Sahni.
Reviewed by Lt Gen PC Katoch, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SC (Retd).

11. As I sign off, I place on record the USI of India's appreciation for Maj Gen YK Gera (Retd) from whom I have taken over the reins of Chief Editor. Gen Gera has edited the USI Journal for two spells, from 1997 to 2007 and 2018 to March 2020. We wish Maj Gen YK Gera (Retd) all the best. We also wish good health and 'stay safe' wishes in these extraordinary Covid pandemic times to all our readers.

Lt Gen Ghanshyam Singh Katoch, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd)

Afghanistan: Déjà vu or a New Beginning

Shri Amar Sinha, IFS (Retd)[@]

Abstract

The long-negotiated agreement to bring peace to Afghanistan appears to be floundering. While the political standoff between the two leading contenders to Presidency has since defused, and a modus vivendi based on power sharing arrived at, commencement of the much awaited intra- Afghan negotiations are delayed. A successful outcome of Afghan reconciliation will bring to naught decades of support to Taliban from some quarters, which successfully chipped away the international resolve to oppose all terrorist activities in, and emanating from, Afghanistan. But this does not suit some parties. This creates a delicate situation that can easily slip out of control due to continuing gruesome violence even when claimed by other extremist groups operating under new flags and symbols. India has been steadfast in its support to the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Despite the adverse security situation, India has continued with its developmental projects. India's future policy needs to be based on certain realities which the article brings out.

Introduction

The long-negotiated agreement to bring peace to Afghanistan, erroneously called 'Afghan Peace Agreement', signed between the USA and the Taliban appears to have resemblance to a still born baby as it refuses to kick and show

signs of life. Most analysts see this as an unbalanced agreement that gives away more than it obtains. For the Afghans, it provides nothing except the hope of endless intra-Afghan talks — if they start at all — that may lead to cessation of hostilities, ceasefire and a stop to violence leading to eventual reintegration of the Taliban in the Afghan body politic. In the meantime, the Taliban remains committed to attacking every fibre of the Afghan society. In short, Afghan society and the Republic of Afghanistan are being told that they are on their own while the international forces, led by the USA, hasten their withdrawal on the basis of assurances provided in the US–Taliban Agreement of 29 February 2020.

The Enablers and the Spoilers

While the political standoff between the two leading contenders to Presidency has since defused and a modus vivendi based on power sharing arrived at, commencement of the much-awaited intra-Afghan negotiations are delayed. New timelines are being sought; while the Taliban is insisting that all the 5000 prisoners in Afghan jails be released as a pre-condition for any talks. Government of Afghanistan finds it difficult to oblige in the face of relentless violence against Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and innocent civilians. Three days of ceasefire, agreed to by Taliban, during the Eid was the only concession Taliban could muster as an indication of their goodwill. The customary Eid greeting from the Taliban leader also was missing, leading to speculation that he may have fallen victim to COVID 19. Both sides remain wary of giving away their negotiating chips even before the talks begin. This creates a delicate situation that can easily slip out of control due to continuing gruesome violence, even when claimed by other extremist groups operating under new flags and symbols.

Additionally, the ability of the spoilers to derail the peace negotiations cannot be underestimated. Disgruntled elements within Taliban may not wish to lose their influence and access to resources, which will inevitably happen once the intra Afghan negotiations succeed. Equally, a successful outcome of Afghan reconciliation will bring to naught decades of support to Taliban,

from some quarters, which successfully chipped away the international resolve to oppose all terrorist activities in, and emanating from, Afghanistan. A stable Afghanistan does not serve the strategic purposes of these backers of Taliban. Nor does a reformed Taliban; one that is willing to settle for an equitable power sharing arrangement after eschewing violence and weapons. It is, thus, reasonable to assume that they would keep pushing Taliban to stick to its maximalist demands even if that leads to a break down in the intra-Afghan talks. No outcome is better from their perspective than a reasonable and good outcome that Afghanistan yearns for.

It is, thus, *déjà vu* at different levels. This looks like a replay of a super power withdrawing some 40 years ago, after leaving a government it installed to its own devices. Even then, countries that supported the forces opposed to the USSR did not bring finality to the war by ending all overt and covert support to opposing groups in Afghanistan which was then hurled in a prolonged civil war, paving the way for emergence of the Taliban in the first place. Once again, USA has decided to withdraw, relying only on the promises given by the Taliban, without ensuring that the safe havens and sanctuaries that made Taliban such a lethal force are actually closed down. If lessons from history are not taken, history has a bad habit of repeating itself.

Recent Developments

Over the last 18 months or so, while the USA engaged the Taliban in Doha, a number of initiatives were taken to bring the Taliban face to face with a spectrum of Afghan leadership. While the Taliban delegation flew from one capital to the other, surprisingly the duly elected government in Kabul was side lined and some of these interactions saw no official representation from the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. However, the ice was broken. Given such diplomatic attention, refusal to engage with the Afghan government came naturally to the Taliban, who derisively called the Kabul regime a 'puppet regime'. The irony of a violent force, acting more as a proxy itself for over 18 years, calling an elected government 'a puppet'

was not lost on long time watchers of the Afghan scene. The Taliban started to behave as a government in exile rather prematurely.

No doubt, the Afghan population is tired of the endless war, and is willing to accept the Taliban back in the fold as fellow nationals, but the fear and fatigue that Taliban has generated is no measure of its acceptability as an ideology. Afghan aspiration is to reintegrate them back in the society, go through a healing process, but that should not be interpreted as endorsement of the form of government they once administered. The pain of the last years has not diluted the memory of the Taliban 1.0 regime. The Afghan willingness to embrace the erstwhile hardliners was underlined by the return of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, which stands as a successful model. In addition, over the years several members of Taliban, weary of endless massacre of their own people and saddened by the systematic destruction of their native land, have chosen to give up arms and reintegrate in the society, and are actively contributing to the process of reconciliation.

While all regional countries have sworn by the formulaic mantra of an 'Afghan owned and Afghan led' peace process, their actions have diverged from this guiding principle. In several quarters, a nuanced interpretation has been forwarded that denies the Afghan government ownership of this process. To add insult to injury, the US's agreement, signed with Taliban, only enjoins it to engage in intra-Afghan talks with the Afghan sides. Even this has stalled on the issue of the release of up to 5000 prisoners, since the Taliban is seemingly not satisfied with close to 3000 of their comrades and associates already freed. The initial roadblocks due to the disputed elections are now out of the way and it is clear that the Taliban is being worked upon to relent for their demand and start the process.

India's Position

India has been steadfast in its support to the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and has maintained cordial and transparent relations with all the democratic and republican political actors in Afghanistan. It has also reached out to the

larger Afghan population, in all provinces, through a variety of means including its substantive development partnership programme. India's role in rebuilding of Afghan infrastructure and human resources is widely acknowledged, even by the Taliban. In a statement to an Indian TV channel — WION — the Taliban spokesman assured that Indian projects, such as Chabahar and others, would be supported by them. India has been a voice of reason and reconciliation in this war-torn country and has supported an inclusive intra-Afghan dialogue. India has also respected Afghan sovereignty and independence and worked closely with South Asian partners to integrate it fully in the region. Despite the adverse security situation, India has continued with its developmental projects.

India is mindful of the Afghan desire to bring a negotiated end to this fratricidal war and accepts that there is no military solution. It also acknowledges that the members of the Taliban are an integral part of the Afghan society and need to be reintegrated peacefully. India is supportive of the legitimate Afghan desire to preserve the social and political gains of the last 19 years. It is unlikely that any nation supporting the peace process would want the entire system to be jettisoned and begin all over again. Nor will the Afghans accept starting from square one.

A day before the Khalilzad-Baradar pact was signed, Prime Minister Modi in a letter hand delivered by the Foreign Secretary wrote, "... we also remain committed to our principled position of support for an inclusive Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled peace and reconciliation process".¹ India seeks an end to the violence. India also wants Afghanistan's evolution as a state that contributes to regional and global peace and, importantly, as a well governed space that leaves no room for any terrorist outfit that threatens any nation. India's stand on this issue has been uncompromising and this resonates well in Afghanistan. If the Taliban's commitments to the US are serious, they should also be comfortable with this objective. Accordingly, India remains wary of any regime change through force as this would not only destabilise Afghanistan, but, most likely, spill over into neighbouring

countries. These considerations have guided India's wish for an orderly withdrawal of foreign troops, which also leaves behind strong counter insurgency and counter terrorism capabilities with the Afghan forces. The gaps in ANSF, especially in terms of mobility and air support, need to be filled urgently.

Given India's historical relations, and her standing with the entire political leadership, the current move towards Afghan rapprochement offers her an opening to play an active and constructive role, even if it remains in the background. It can effectively counsel and nudge all sides to find a mutually acceptable solution that is inclusive. No doubt, this requires that India has channels of communication open to all political actors in Afghanistan. Having been home to a sizeable Afghan population, mainly the youth pursuing their higher studies in India who wish to utilise their knowledge and expertise in reconstruction of their nations, it is important that India stands with these hitherto marginalised constituencies: youth and women. The new Afghanistan is shaped by them.

The Way Ahead

India's future policy needs to be based on the foregoing and a hard-nosed assessment of what the Afghan society and the Taliban want. The following needs consideration:

- While the Taliban has not been particularly forthcoming in articulating its vision of the future, there are some indications through statements made to the media. The statement by the Taliban spokesman, Suhail Shaheen, on 30 January 2020 appears to be unusually conciliatory and was apparently aimed at easing concerns among Afghan leaders opposed to any peace deal, that includes the insurgent group. This was reported by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) on its website.² Shaheen, in an audio message to AP, said the Taliban wanted to live alongside their countrymen 'in an inclusive Afghan world'.
- The deputy Leader of the Taliban, Sirajuddin Haqqani (leader of the proscribed Haqqani network), in a signed

opinion piece in the NYT on 20 February 2020³, (most believe it as handiwork of some ghost writer), struck a reasonable tone allaying fears about Taliban when he stated, “we acknowledge the importance of maintaining friendly relations with all countries and take their concerns seriously. Afghanistan cannot afford to live in isolation. The new Afghanistan will be a responsible member of the international community”. Simultaneously, the domestic audience was reassured that they would like an ‘inclusive society’ where the “rights of the women that are granted by Islam — from the right to education to the right to work — are protected, and where merit is the basis for equal opportunity”. Published a week before the Doha Agreement was signed, this was music to the ears of the international audiences. It appeared as the clearest indication that Taliban had changed.

- Despite this article by the deputy leader of Taliban starting with a noble statement of personal belief — “I am convinced that the killing and the maiming must stop” — the situation on ground has a different story to tell. This was a proof the Taliban could have provided instantly but except for a 7-day reduction of violence (RIV) conceded to the American for facilitating troop withdrawal, and a three-day cease fire during Eid celebrations in May, they have continued with their gruesome violence. There are reports that suggest that the cease fire was actually only a reduction in violence which continued around the country.
- One of the leading experts on the region and Professor Emeritus at the Middle East Institute, Marvin G Weinbaum wrote, “Some clarity over the Taliban strategy was achieved with a statement this past week by Sirajuddin Haqqani, the group’s deputy leader. While asserting that negotiating for peace is a core component of the Taliban’s philosophy, he expressed the group’s unwillingness to abandon the path of jihad. His mixed message was delivered along with film footage showing the training of suicide bombers in an undisclosed location. The Taliban’s pursuit of peaceful diplomacy alongside

military power is understandable. Through using political means, the Taliban has acquired a once unimagined international legitimacy, negotiated the departure of foreign forces, and secured the release of many battle-hardened Taliban fighters — all without having to seriously compromise”.⁴

- Weinbaum's conclusions that, “The Taliban’s military and diplomatic strategies are intended to work in tandem, one leveraging the other. Each has as its ultimate goal, the Taliban’s recovery of an emirate lost in 2001. Adversaries can pretend otherwise, but they do so at their peril”⁵, are worrying. They cannot be overlooked easily, especially as a near chorus has started in India, as if on cue, urging the government to review its policy on engagement with the Taliban.

- Former Indian Ambassador to Afghanistan, Rakesh Sood, states succinctly, that in general it could be said that India’s aim should be to continue to have the ability to be represented in Afghanistan for a long time to come. A ‘degree of stability and security’ allowing ‘us [India] to be engaged’ in Afghanistan.⁶ His recommendation that India needs to be ‘actively involved’ and, equally important, ‘to be seen to be actively involved’ in a wider set of international and national conversations is an approach strongly supported by this author as well.

Conclusion

In a 1904 book, ‘The Defence of Duffers Drift’ the protagonist ‘Lieutenant Backsight Forethought (BF)’ has a series of six dreams about the defence of a river crossing in the Boer War.⁷ The infantry tactics in the early dreams are disastrous. Each dream ends with BF being defeated, but each time BF learns something about what he should not have done until in the final defence he is successful. The author agrees that in a fast-evolving situation in Afghanistan, we need to be learning from our experiences and, importantly be ready to take our own path. We may not be successful every time, but like BF — if we learn

from our missteps — eventually we will be successful. India does not have the option of exiting from South Asia.

Endnotes

¹ Elizabeth Roche, “India Committed to Unified, Democratic and Peaceful Afghanistan,” *LiveMint*, February 29, 2020, <https://www.livemint.com/news/world/india-committed-to-unified-democratic-and-peaceful-afghanistan-11582949699491.html>.

² RFE/RL, “Taliban Says Not Looking For ‘Monopoly on Power’ In Afghanistan,” *RFE/RL*, Jan 31, 2019. Accessed Jun 11, 2020 from Taliban Says Not Looking For ‘Monopoly on Power’ In Afghanistan

³ Sirajuddin Haqqani, “What we, the Taliban Want”, *The New York Times*, Feb 20, 2020. Accessed Jun 11, 2020 from <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/20/opinion/taliban-afghanistan-war-haqqani.html>

⁴ Marvin, G. Weinbaum, “The Taliban’s Two-Track Strategy”, Middle East Institute, Jun 08, 2020. Accessed Jun 10, 2020 from <https://www.mei.edu/blog/talibans-two-track-strategy>

⁵ Marvin, G. Weinbaum, Facebook post, Jun 09, 2020.

⁶ Rudra Chaudhari and Shreyas Shende, “Dealing With the Taliban: India’s Strategy in Afghanistan After U.S. Withdrawal”, Carnegie India, Jun 02, 2020. Accessed Jun 11, 2020 from <https://carnegieindia.org/2020/06/02/dealing-with-taliban-india-s-strategy-in-afghanistan-after-u.s.-withdrawal-pub-81951>

⁷ The Defence of Duffers Drift by Capt Ernest Dunlop Swinton (London, W Clowes & Sons Ltd: 1904).

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Kalapani-Lipulekh Row: Rift between India and China Serves Nepal

Dr Geeta Kochhar®

Abstract

Recently Nepal is in uproar against India and anti-India sentiments are rising. This will eventually have lasting effect on bilateral relations. The main causes of this are both, internal political turmoil and the external factors. However, the crucial aspect also lies in Nepal using the 'China card' all along in its diplomacy that is now being threatened due to cooperation between India and China. As the closeness between India and China will rise, the insecurity of Nepalese leaders and the related evoking of nationalist sentiments will become a major obstacle for India to deal in its relations with Nepal. The historical issue of Kalapani-Lipulekh, border dispute, will be a major factor used by Nepalese politicians as a tool to create India-China rift due to the fact that Nepal knows the vulnerabilities of India, and the border tensions with China. Unless, the Indian government settles these critical issues with Nepal, the irritants will become a major factor used by Nepal to impact India's role in the region as well as dent its international image. Nepal will surely use hard bargaining to gain benefits from both neighbours.

Introduction

Since the news of Indian Defense Minister, Rajnath Singh, inaugurating a road link from Dharchula to Lipulekh, also

known as Kailash Mansarovar Yatra Route, was made public, Nepal has been up in arms. There have been massive protests and uproar in Nepal, to the extent that Nepal had established a 25 member armed police border force near Kalapani at Chhangru, for which promptly spending NPR 11 crore was committed. This post is 18 km from the Lipulekh Pass.¹ The issue is a sequence of protests, in November 2019, whereby Nepal objected on the Kalapani land dispute after the Indian government published a new map following Ladakh being made an independent Union Territory. The issue of Kalapani has been raised as India's encroachment of Nepal's territory and infringement upon its sovereignty.

Although India clearly stated that the road has been in construction for years and the land area is a part of Indian territory, Nepal pressed to immediately hold foreign secretary level talks. There is already a Nepal-India Joint Technical Committee, formed in 1981, to resolve all issues relating to border points; 76 out of the 78 border points have already been resolved.² Yet, Nepal is vigorously pushing for an immediate solution, demanding that India recognise Kalapani and Lipulekh as Nepal's territory, though there is an intense internal debate for decades over lacking any concrete political map of Nepal showing Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura as Nepali territory.

Power Plays and Geopolitical Gambits

The critical issues that need to be looked are: Why Nepal is protesting over this barren land which was controlled and managed by India for decades? When India has already agreed to hold talks, and there is a mechanism in place to deal with border issues, why does Nepal have an urgency to hold foreign secretary level talks? Why is it that the foreign secretary of Nepal is meeting with the Chinese Ambassador to apprise her of the Kalapani and Lipulekh area as a contentious issue, when the armies of both countries and bureaucracies enjoy exceptional relationship? Is it just the nationalist sentiments of the Nepalese that are on a high or there are more political motives behind? What are the reasons for heightened anti-India

narrative propagated in Nepal? The issue of anti-India statements and invoking nationalist sentiments on border demarcation between India and Nepal does not seem to stem from the mere unhappiness over 35 km of land. In fact, there are greater domestic political power plays and geopolitical changes that evolve the complexity in bilateral relations. It is imperative to understand the internal political tussle between the ruling Nepal Communist Party and the main opposition, Nepali Congress Party, along with other parties, while figuring out the regional as well as global dynamics of geo-economics that plays a role in the development of Nepal. It is essential to point out here that Nepal was pursuing an equidistance policy before Prime Minister Oli came to power, after which he advocated 'equi-proximity' in foreign policy to engage with both northern and southern neighbours to seek overall development of Nepal.

Understanding the Lipulekh and Kalapani Issue

After the announcement of road construction at Lipulekh, there were strong reactions on social media pointing to the Nepal government's failure to resolve the border issue with India. On 09 May, 2020, Nepal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a press release that, "The government of Nepal has learnt with regret about the 'inauguration' yesterday by India of 'Link Road' connecting to Lipulekh (Nepal), which passes through Nepali territory. The government of Nepal has consistently maintained that as per the Sugauli Treaty (signed between the British Raj and the then ruler King of Nepal in 1816), all the territories east of Kali (or Mahakali) River, including Limpiyadhura, Kalapani and Lipulekh, belong to Nepal".³

Lipulekh is a strip of land on the northwestern edge of Nepal between India, Nepal and China (Tibet region). While some call it a tri-junction between these three countries, Nepal has been claiming the southern part of the pass and has refused to recognise it as a tri-junction. Most of the Nepalese claim that the tri-junction is Limpiyadhura and not Lipulekh. The pass is a far western point near Kalapani. Both India and Nepal claim the stretch of 35 sq km of land area of Kalapani as a part

of their territory. India claims Kalapani as a part of Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh district while Nepal claims it as a district of Dharchula. Nepal also claims that the entire area from Lipu Gad, the tributary of Kali River, up to the source of Kali River in the east of Lipulekh pass is Nepal's territory, though there have been various conflicting versions of Nepal over the source and tributary of Kali River. Nepal adds that during the 1962 India-China conflict, Nepal allowed Indian troops to occupy certain posts for defence purposes, from where the troops moved out later except from the Kalapani area. In Nepal, the blame of this action is placed on late Nepalese King Mahendra who had handed the territory to India in 1962.

The Indian side, however, claims that the administrative and revenue records of British Raj of 1830s available with the Uttar Pradesh (UP) state government reveal that the area was governed by the Pithoragarh district and the map of 1879 shows Kalapani as part of British-Indian territory. The UP state police was in place since 1956 and after 1979 Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) is in control of the surveillance operations. Further, as per the Article 5 of the Sugauli Treaty, Nepal has renounced all claims to the areas west of Kali River. However, the area has been in controversy only after 1996, when the Treaty of Mahakali was ratified by Nepal.

Mahakali Agreement and the Dispute

In January 1996, Pranab Mukherjee, the then Indian External Affairs Minister, and Prakash Chandra Lohani, then Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nepal, had signed an agreement for integrated development of the Mahakali River, including Sarada barrage, Tanakpur barrage, and Pancheshwar project, which is commonly called as the Mahakali Treaty. The Treaty was further ratified by the then Nepalese Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, National Congress leader, during his visit to India in February although it had become a political subject within Nepal, especially because the Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist Leninist) (CPN (UML)) had begun the draft negotiations while being in minority ruling position and the Maoist faction had opposed with armed struggle. The bone of

contention for the Mahakali River was that it was ratified without resolving the issue on the origin of Kali River for which there were multiple understanding of the tributaries: one, the stream coming from Limpiyadhura; two, the stream from Lipulekh; and three, the stream from Kalapani Lake. India claims that the river begins in Kalapani, while Nepal claims that it begins from Lipulekh pass and, therefore, claims all areas east of the Lipu Gad.

The other, greater, internal political dynamics is the opposition of Communist Party of Nepal (UML) blaming the Nepali Congress for enforcing an unequal treaty, while the Maoist faction used it as a political tool to criticise the successive governments. Now that Khadga Prasad Oli from the former CPN (UML), who was also the coordinator to the Mahakali Treaty, is the Prime Minister with a majority and head of the Nepal Communist Party (a unified party of former UML and Maoists), the opposition parties are raising the issues to resolve the Kali River dispute. Interestingly, among the former UML members as well, there were some against the draft proposal like Bambdev Gautam (who is promoted by PM Oli as future PM), C P Mainali, R. K Mainali, Sahana Pradhan, Amrit Vohara, Tulsilal Amatya, Trilochan Dhakal, Yuvraj Gyanwali, Siddhilal Singh, Vinshnu Poudel, Prem Singh Dhabhi, Keshavlal Shresth, Vachaspati Devkota, Kamal Chilagai, Ashok Rai, Kiran Gurung and Gopal Shakya. Hence, now when the inner-Party rift within Nepal Communist Party (NCP) is high, the issue of Kali River has gained greater significance.

The India-China Trade Route Factor

The year 2015 marked a year of heightened turmoil and rise of anti-India sentiments in Nepal. On an oft reported parameter, it is the 2015 blockade after the massive earthquake in Nepal that restricted the movement of essential goods to Nepal and created greater sufferings for the Nepalese. The suffering of the ordinary people of Nepal, a humanitarian crisis, is now a common narrative of anti-India sentiments. However, it is worth noting that soon after the massive earthquake in Nepal on 25 April 2015, India was the first country to respond with Operation

'Maitri' and was the largest donor with USD one billion aid in cash apart from other non-monetary reliefs.⁴ Yet, by September 2015, India was blamed for a blockade in which India denied official complicity.⁵ Consequently, anti-India slogans reigned high in Nepal. There is internal and external context to the scenarios evolving in 2015 that needs to be understood.

First, and foremost, is the internal context that the stoppage of transportation of goods was a result of the internal chaos that followed the promulgation of the new constitution on September 20, 2015. Soon after the new constitution was passed, many *Madhesi*⁶ parties carried out huge protests with clashes resulting in the deaths of many. This was the constant internal turmoil where Madhesh based parties have been protesting for equal rights and citizenship to be incorporated in the constitution. This was the third wave of such protests by Madhesh-based parties as many leaders felt betrayed by the promises made in the draft resolutions.

The second important external context is rooted in May 2015, when China had proposed constructing an economic corridor to India through Nepal to link the three countries with road and rail connectivity. The press release of Nepal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued on 09 May, 2020 states that, "It may be recalled that the government of Nepal had expressed its disagreement in 2015 through separate diplomatic notes addressed to the governments of both India and China when the two sides agreed to include Lipulekh Pass as a bilateral trade route without Nepal's consent". This makes it clear that the root of the discontent lies in the India-China agreement of opening a trade route.

The initiative of opening a trade route was first proposed by the Chinese President Xi Jinping when he met with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Xi'an on 14 May 2015. Later, the proposal was again discussed with the then Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj in June end during a meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Kathmandu on the sidelines of a meeting on Nepal's reconstruction following the earthquake.⁷ The proposal was under the grand vision of Belt

and Road Initiative (BRI) of China. Earlier, India was hesitant in building connectivity with China though Nepal, however, Prime Minister Modi had shown positive attitude towards all kinds of linkages that help the countries and improve the living standards of the people.

Road Connectivity

India inaugurated 80 km link road from Dharchula to Lipulekh (China border) to shorten the duration of the journey for the pilgrims going to Kailash Mansarovar from three weeks to one week. The road originates at Ghatiabagarh and ends at Lipulekh pass, which is the entry point to Kailash Mansarovar that is 90 km away from that point. According to the Indian Ministry of Defence, China is building extensive infrastructure in its territory to connect Lipulekh to the western Tibet and has constructed a four-lane road from Taklakot to Lipulekh. The Indian Border Roads Organisation (BRO) is constructing the Tawaghat-Ghatiabagrah-Lipulekh road. The construction of the road began in 2008 and was scheduled to be completed in 2013, but got delayed due to tough terrain in the portion between Nazang to Bundi village.⁸ Although the decision was made in May 2015 between India and China to open an international trade route through Lipulekh Bhanjyang in Dharchula district, Nepal was not a party to the decision.⁹ This is the first point of contention of the Nepalese. However, the Indian Army had built a bridge over the Lipulekh River, 12 km from the Nepal-China-Tibet trilateral point, three years ago but there was no noise in Nepal. The Nepalese say that such an issue was raised with India with no outcome.

India-China Cooperation Evokes a Small State's Insecurity

Although Nepal is a sovereign state but it is a small power between the two giants. For decades, it has worked to make space for itself with lot of insecurities over its existence and sustenance. A threat to its existence looms large in all discourses for the role big powers can play in its politics, economy, culture as well as on its social setup. With this skepticism, Nepal has always worked to create space away from other powers while reaping benefits, though it has

remained as a hot cake for many powers, including western powers, due to its strategic location. Nepal never wants India and China to be close enough as that threatens its own existence. Nepal has always used 'China card' against India to reap benefits from both the big powers. The tricky balance maintained was more to reap double benefits, which was shaped in its 'equidistance' foreign policy objectives.

The Indian Army Chief, General MM Naravane, while answering questions during a webinar organised by Manohar Parrikar Institute of Defense Studies and Analysis on 15 May 2020 stated, "The area east of Kali River belongs to them (Nepal). The road that we built is on the west of the river. There was no dispute. I don't know what they are agitating about. There has never been any problem in the past. There is reason to believe that they might have raised the issues at the behest of someone else and that is very much a possibility".¹⁰ The media was suddenly flooded with interpretation of 'China hand' as the point of inference for 'behest of someone else', considering that the Chinese Ambassador recently had a series of meetings with the Nepalese President and the NCP leaders at the height of inner-party (NCP) crisis.

One would argue that if the Army Chief did not name any country, why did no one think of US, considering US-China trade war is intense and Nepal is potential state for proxy war, whereby, US wants to protect human rights of Tibetans in Nepal. On the other hand, China wants to curb all kinds of separatist activities, especially of the Dalai Lama supporters. Nepal is also having intense debate of ratifying the US Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC — an independent bilateral foreign aid agency) compact, which will provide US\$ 500 million in grants, while Nepal would put in \$130 million for the project focusing on energy and roadways. The compact is largely seen as a part of the Indo-Pacific strategy led by US and a counter to China's BRI projects in South Asia. Largely, the Nepali Congress has been supporting the compact, while some of NCP leaders have been opposing.

The statement could have been linked to even Pakistan that is rapidly spreading its wings in Nepal; especially the terrorist groups like the Indian Mujahideen of Pakistan are expanding the areas of operation in Nepal.¹¹ However, the fact that the Nepalese media immediately spread the narrative of India against China and India looking at China as a threat implies that Nepal is more worried about closer India-China ties.

Most Nepali politicians understand that people in Nepal are not very pro-India even though the cultural and historical ties are deep rooted. There are layers of dissatisfaction that look at Indians from the perspective of superiors, exploiters and rulers or even a hegemonic power. These sentiments have been encashed by the Nepali politicians over the years to create friction among its own populace. Hence, there are pro-India and anti-India segments being created among the masses which help Nepali politicians to play the game of nationalist sentiments and evoke support for successive elections.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the historical bilateral issues of Kalapani-Lipulekh have been used by Nepali politicians as a major tool to create rift between India-China due to the fact that Nepal knows the vulnerabilities of India and the border tensions with China. Nepal is also well aware of the strategic significance of the land area for India. Unless the Indian government settles these critical issues with Nepal, the irritants will become a major factor used by Nepal to impact India's role in the region as well as dent its international image. Nepal will surely use the hard power bargain to gain the benefits from both neighbours — India and China. Hence, a cautious approach to manage the sentiments of the Nepalese and rooting out future probabilities of tensions is the need of the hour.

The Nepali government is trying its best on coaxing China to join the talks though, at the official level, Chinese government has refused to be a party to bilateral border issues. As the real value of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has declined, Nepal is pushing its way into China led Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). It believes that

SCO entry can help Nepal find co-partners, including Pakistan, to leverage ties with India. Many voices in Nepal have started to demand wired border and International Court of Justice to pursue the case of Kalapani and Lipulekh though it is well aware it lacks substantial evidences to prove any case. Hence, it looks at alternative alliance partners to re-negotiate with India and rope in China to acknowledge Nepal's position and in the process gaining strategic recognition in the area. As Kalapani is a strategic point for both India and China, there is every reason to believe that Nepal will continue to play this card to gain strategic benefits. The passage of a Constitution amendment Bill to change the country's political map on 09 Jun 2020 by the Nepal House of Representatives is a clear indication of this game play.¹²

End Notes

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Offensive Use of Air Power in No War No Peace Situation

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The absence of war is not peace.

- Harry S Truman

Abstract

In Feb 2019, post a devastating suicide car bombing attack on an armed police convoy in the Kashmir Valley, India selected the Indian Air Force to hit back at terrorist training camp at Balakot in Pakistan. India used air power as a strategic signalling tool — in a less than war scenario — crossing the Line of Control (LoC) on an offensive attack mission inside Pakistan for the first time since the 1971 Indo-Pak war. This intelligence driven counter-terror strike against a terror camp highlighted the flexibility of air power to be used in a No War No Peace situation. In future a potent aerospace force has to be ready to deliver decisive blows at very short notice with precision and minimal collateral. In such a scenario, Artificial Intelligence, high-speed weapons (hypersonic) and space-based sensors and network tools will have a significant impact. Besides imbibing new technologies, innovation in use of existing capability and training needs reorientation.

There are no absolute rules of conduct, either in peace or war. Everything depends on circumstances.

- Leon Trotsky

Introduction

War is defined as a state of usually open and declared armed

hostile conflict between states or nations with the aim of achieving an objective through the use of force. In olden days, war was straightforward with the opposing forces in contact, facing each other and battling it out. Historically, over the years the nature of warfare has undergone a lot of change. Even conventional wars are no longer fought in the classic old way. Over the years, terms like sub conventional warfare, Low intensity Conflict Operations (LICO), Military Response Short of War (MRSOW), Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW), hybrid warfare and irregular war have been coined to define prevailing hostile conditions. Each of these terms, while defining the state and degree of hostility, encompass specific set of actions by the inimical states, nations or groups. No War No Peace (NWNP) is another term describing some of the prevailing hostile conditions across the globe.

History is replete with instances where Air Power has been used in non-conventional hostile situations categorised above. Internationally, use of air power by the British in Malaysia in 1948-60, French in Algeria in 1954-62, Russia in Chechnya in 1994-96, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in Kosovo in 1998 and Israel on Hezbollah are some such examples. Closer home, India also used air power in operation Cactus in Maldives and Op Pawan in Sri Lanka. The Kargil conflict is another example where the air power, in spite of entering the fray late and fighting with one hand tied behind the back due to self-imposed restrictions, had a decisive effect on the outcome. Air power in these operations was used in varying roles and tasks. In recent times, trend of offensive use of air power in NWNP scenario is increasing. The US drone attack on the Commanding General of Iran's Elite Quds Force, General Qasem Soliemani, in Baghdad and air strikes by Indian Air Force on terrorist training camp at Balakot are some of the recent examples of offensive use of air power in NWNP situation.

NWNP and Air Power

NWNP. Character of war, over a period of time, has changed in myriad and confusing ways.¹ Components of different forms of warfare, like conventional warfare, irregular warfare, cyber warfare and subversion etc., have blended. This has blurred the formal distinction between war and peace. Peace does not mean a lack of conflict and war does not imply a full-fledged struggle.² All it means is that there is no continuous, long term, direct conflict or engagement. There are a range of activities which do not fall in the purview of state of war or peace. These activities are above the level of peaceful co-existence and below the threshold of war. They are generally characterised by constraints of weaponry, tactics and a certain level of acceptable violence. At times, devious means are adopted with open option for deniability or ownership. This type of strategy is adopted generally by weaker nations, often employing non-state actors with covert or overt support from the sponsoring nation / states. Terrorism and terrorist attacks have elements of both, Proxy war (armed conflict between two states or non-state actors acting on the instigation and/or behalf of other party) and Asymmetric warfare (between belligerents whose relative military power and tactics differs significantly) — embedded in them. NWNP situation is prevalent in many parts of the world. Dealing with these situations throws up variety of challenges depending upon circumstances. In our context, our westerly neighbour Pakistan has adopted the policy of 'Bleed India through thousand cuts'. India would be in a 'NWNP' scenario for the foreseeable future.

Air Power. Even in NWNP situations the nation states have to utilise all possible resources at their disposal to deal with developing situations. Air power resources are an effective tool for deterrence, coercion and ultimately war fighting. Air power, being a military tool of statecraft, is best suited for offensive action characterised by flexibility, lethality, reach, rapid response and creation of shock and awe by effect-based ops. Air power is dynamic in its application and its effects can be switched on or off at ease. Air forces can easily and rapidly concentrate forces to meet the objectives even in a NWNP

environment. It can be used to attack depth targets beyond the reach of surface forces, like in-depth terrorist training camps. In dealing with hostile situations in NWNP scenario, decision makers are generally faced with the dilemma of how much force to apply and availability of options. Air power can provide large number of options with 'rap on the knuckle' on one end to 'slap on the face or punch on the nose' on the other end of the scale. The shades of available options would depend on selection of type of targets, their numbers, area of application of force (disputed or multiple sectors) and weight of attack. Offensive employment of air power in NWNP environment is a highly preferred option. Delivery of armament from a fighter aircraft is not the only option for offensive application of air power. There are numerous other offensive applications of air power. Offensive or kinetic use of air power could be defined as 'any air operation that directly or indirectly leads to force application on to the adversary'.

Balakot. On 14 Feb 2019, 40 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) soldiers were martyred in a terror strike at Pulwama. Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) took the ownership of this terror act. In retaliation, India selected the Indian Air Force to hit back at terrorist training camp at Balakot in Pakistan. India used air power as a strategic signalling tool — in a less than war scenario — crossing the Line of Control (LoC) on an offensive attack mission inside Pakistan for the first time since the 1971 Indo-Pak War.³ Air power was used in an offensive manner in NWNP environment. The air strike was labelled as intelligence driven counter-terror strike against a terror camp and conveyed the basic message that terrorist attacks on India's soil will not be acceptable and would be responded to appropriately. Speaking at a seminar, India's Defence Minister conveyed that India had been seen as a country that did not respond adequately to terrorism despite grave provocations.⁴ Balakot air strikes changed that perception. These air strikes were not only resolute military strikes against terrorism, and terror supporting elements, but also conveyed a strong and unequivocal message and reflected India's approach against employment of terrorism as a low-cost option. It also indicated that terrorists, terrorist infra-structure and terrorist training facilities in areas

beyond LoC and International Border (IB), when employed against India, will no longer be safe havens.

Offensive Use of Air Power in NWNP

There are various aspects related to offensive use of air power. These have been elaborated in the succeeding paragraphs.

Political Decision and Will. Option of offensive use of air power always exists however, it is a political decision. The decision needs to be backed by political will to give a free hand to its use. Imposing limitations make the task more difficult. Self-imposed rule of not crossing the LoC during Kargil ops is one such example. While deciding on its offensive use, the message to be conveyed and extent of punitive action to be taken also needs to be spelt out. Subsequent planning depends upon these two factors. During Balakot strike, it was clearly directed that the action is to be against terrorism and message to be conveyed must also be clear that, in future, acts of terrorism will not be tolerated and will be responded appropriately.

Legitimacy / Acceptability. Offensive action should have a high degree of legitimacy and acceptability in the world. There are several factors related to this aspect. The air action would be invariably in response to a trigger event. The response should be within a reasonable time and, to some extent, within reasonable proportion. Diplomatic efforts to shape the world opinion are necessary. Proof of involvement of state and non-state actors needs to be presented with valid evidence. Air action by India after the Pulwama incident had a high degree of acceptability in the world. It was mainly because the strike was labelled as terror preventive strike on terrorist camp. Further, the target was carefully selected as an isolated terror camp with no chance of collateral damage.

Post-Strike Readiness. One of the very important aspects related to planning of air action is readiness for subsequent response by the target state. The readiness has to be for the worst case scenario i.e. for a full-fledged war. The sister services also need to be fully prepared. The challenge is

to be ready without any tell-tale visible action which could result in loss of tactical surprise. The guard needs to go up immediately after the attack. The readiness has to be in multi domain including even cyber domain. Further, the air action needs to be followed up with diplomatic efforts.

Escalation Control. The employment of air power is often perceived as being escalatory with uncontrolled consequences. This perception is generally prevalent in our context. Historically, there has been no record of escalation and elsewhere in the world, air action is often resorted to, but ground action is considered as an act of invasion and hence escalatory. Escalation attached to air power is overstated and control is possible by subsequent actions and narrations. In a seminar on the subject, Chief of the Air Staff (CAS), IAF brought out that Balakot demonstrated that there exists a space below the conventional conflict boundaries where air power can be utilised with due escalation control.⁵ In this case the message was delivered and de-escalation achieved. Addressing a seminar, Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) endorsed that, “Balakot demonstrated that if you play the escalatory game with skill, military ascendancy can be established in short cycles of conduct that do not necessarily lead to war”.⁶ The Balakot air strikes, according to him, were an example of playing the “escalatory game” with skill.

Follow-up. Any air action would be followed by a prolonged period of tension and hostility. The degree of hostility would keep varying with both sides posturing and sort of shadow boxing. The enemy may retaliate and in case that happens, the aim should be to inflict maximum damage. To do that, it is important to maintain technological asymmetry in terms of platforms with better Airborne Interception (AI) radars, Beyond Visual Range (BVR) missiles and electronic systems. If it does escalate into a war, it would be characterised as short, limited, swift, intense and lethal with no decisive outcome and no measure of success. Like a boxing match with no knock out but outcome depending on points. In such a scenario, aim should be to inflict max damage while protecting own assets with more emphasis on air defence and strategic strikes.

Nuclear Sabre Rattling. The fear that use of air power in a nuclear overhang would amount to brinkmanship is a myth often proven wrong. Even in our context, our westerly neighbour often resorts to nuclear sabre rattling. Balakot strike has proven that space does exist for air action even in nuclear environment. However, a good assessment of nuclear threshold is required. Factors that need consideration in this respect would be stated nuclear policy, nuclear red lines, and prevailing domestic, regional and global circumstances.

Media Effect. In olden days when modern technology tools and AI were not available, it was said that winning air combat was not enough without winning the combat debrief. Similarly, in this information age, any air action, however successful, has to be 'won' in the media as well. Call it a perception war or any other name but it is very important aspect. The COAS, speaking at a seminar, expressed that that, "Balakot air strike, was a short, intense, escalatory cycles of military activity, in *full media glare, where sophisticated information narratives played an equally important role*".⁷ Even for the air action at Balakot, which was considered as a bold and a very well executed plan, the question remains, did we lose the perception war?⁸ It is essential not only for countering enemy propaganda but also for providing legitimacy to the actions. Regular and timely narratives need to be provided in the form of official briefs conducted by a team of all stake holders. The narratives need to be backed by proof of evidence.

Tactical Aspects. Some of the tactical aspects are very essential for the success of offensive air power missions. First of all is the element of surprise. The IAF strikes at Balakot completely surprised the Pakistani military establishment.⁹ Tactical surprise can be achieved in spite of enemy being ready and expecting some action. This is possible by secrecy and need to know basis information flow and continuing with normal activities and business as usual. Second, the most important aspect is actionable intelligence. Air power and intelligence are opposite sides of the same coin.¹⁰ If the latter fails, the former is likely to fail also. For that reason, accurate, timely, and comprehensive information about an enemy and his military

assets is a crucial enabler for allowing air power to produce pivotal results. Intelligence is very important for planning of the mission. Information regarding target system, its location, layout and surroundings is vital. Post attack damage assessment is equally important. In case of taking on a dynamic target of opportunity, like US drone attack on General Soleimani, live intelligence is required which can be provided by surveillance capability to track and monitor in real time. Standoff capability with precision is another vital aspect. This would add to the surprise and increase the survivability of the attacking platforms. The weapon systems need to be fire and forget type with smart and multiple guidance systems to give them a high success rate. Precision is important to avoid collateral damage. Force application and weight of attack also do need consideration. These aspects would depend upon the effect desired and the message to be conveyed. Based on these decisions, the number of platforms, number of weapons and the size of warheads can be planned. Desired platform to be used would depend upon the mission objectives. It is not necessary that a fighter aircraft be used every time. Actually drones, like unmanned combat aerial vehicle (UCAV), with smart standoff weapons would be a highly preferred option. Special operations capable aircraft like C-130 or appropriate Attack / Armed helicopter can also be used in an offensive role. These missions need support of combat support elements like Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) and In-flight refuelling (IFR) aircraft. On board survival systems are absolute must. These combined with appropriate tactics would enhance the success rate manifold.

Lessons / Capability Enhancement

Worldwide air power is being used very often in NWNP environment. India is likely to be in NWNP situation for a long time in future. Precedence has been set for offensive use of air power in such environment. The aerospace power will invariably be the weapon of choice.¹¹ Capability enhancement is required for it to deliver and succeed in future. All weather day and night capability in a networked environment is essential. A potent aerospace force has to be ready to deliver decisive blows at

very short notice, with precision and minimal collateral damage. In such a scenario, artificial intelligence, high-speed weapons (hypersonic), and space-based sensors and tools will have a significant impact. Besides imbibing new technologies, innovation in use of existing capability would be the need of the hour. The training needs reorientation to meet the challenges that this type of warfare has brought.

These type of missions need to be planned beforehand and not after the occurrence of a trigger event. The planning process needs to include all the stake holders and elements of national security. The plans need to generate and provide various options to the decision maker. These plans need to be reviewed and refined periodically with changes in circumstances and fresh intelligence inputs. Coordination between sister services and various stake holders is absolutely vital.

The focus areas for aerospace power, in the coming decades, ought to be to enhance battle space transparency by keeping greater area under multiple sensor surveillance with better resolution. Aerial vehicles, surface movements, maritime domain, communications and electronic signals need monitoring and all inputs amalgamated to produce a comprehensive battle space picture. Intelligence and surveillance capabilities need to be enhanced across the spectrum starting from human intelligence (humint) to space based surveillance. Artificial intelligence needs to be embedded in the analysis systems. Real time monitoring may be required to take on dynamic targets of opportunity.

Standoff and precision capability enhancement is a continuous process. Greater the standoff better it is. Weapons need to be smart, fire and forget type, with multiple guidance systems. Capability to take on multiple targets within a target system is also desirable. Variety in type and extent of warhead provides more options in terms of effect generated. Delivery platform is also important. UCAV capability is most suitable and essential. Role of other platforms need to be earmarked and defined so as for them to be suitably equipped and trained.

Media engagement plan and organisational structure needs to be in place for perception management and giving out the narrative. While creating structures individually to provide the information in desired format, all stake holders need to work collectively in sync with each other.

Conclusion

India will be in NWNP situation for a long time. NWNP is not a tension free scenario. It requires a constant sense of readiness. Offensive use of airpower in NWNP is feasible even under a nuclear overhang. Mind-set about its use needs a change. There is going to be a shift in the characteristics of utilisation of forces in general and air power in particular. The Services and Air Force must be prepared to tackle any surprise and unpredictability, besides inflicting the same on the adversary. Extensive and elaborate planning and refinement of plans is essential and so is focussed capability building and training.

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Suicide Terrorism: The Divine Grey Zone Weapon

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Abstract

Terrorism is the preferred means of waging proxy war. Over a period of time, states have evolved effective ways and means to deal with traditional means of terrorist attacks. However, suicide attacks by terrorist organisations help enhance the terror quotient of an attack manifold due to its lethality and helplessness of the target state to deter it. Professionals and military experts have been struggling with the motivation and deterrence paradigm of a suicide attack. A multi-causal reasoning of motivation pitched at individual, organisational and environmental levels appears to be the best explanation put forth by social and psychological scientists. Conclusions drawn from discussions on the causality of suicide attacks make it amply clear that it is nearly impossible to deter individuals from undertaking suicide attacks. But at the organisational levels we do have the space to deter such attacks. Terrorist organisations can be deterred by building a perception of invincibility through the twin strategies of deterrence by denial and punishment. The aim of deterrence by denial essentially involves making a potential target extremely difficult to access. Deterrence by punishment involves focused targeting of terror leadership and the resources used to mount such attacks by an organisation. Using these two strategies, India too can deter terrorist organisations from launching suicide attacks. An important aspect, without which we cannot conduct deterrence operations, is the

need for sound intelligence. Finally, environmental factors such as addressing the socio-economic conditions, searching for political solutions and countering the terror ideology also help in deterring suicide attacks.

Historical Perspective

Suicide bombing is an age-old phenomenon. Japanese Kamikazes, Chinese 'Dare to Die Corps' and German suicide aerial missions are a few examples. In recent times, suicide bombings started with the bombing of US Marine Corps barracks in Lebanon by the Shiite groups in 1983.¹ Later, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) exploited it. In the eighties, various factions in the Lebanon civil war carried out suicide bombings. Since then, the phenomenon has spread like wild fire to other parts of the world. Many countries are victims of suicide attacks. Middle East (ME), West Asia, Afghanistan and Pakistan are most affected by suicide terrorism.² The 9/11 suicide attacks changed the entire complexion of a suicide attack in the world. Suicide attacks have not spared India too. 26/11 still remains etched in our memories. Recently, a Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) terrorist, Adi Ahmad Dar, carried out the Pulwama attack. In the video released by JeM, Dar showed no remorse. Dar remarked that by the time the video was released he would be in Jannat (heaven).³ What moves such people to self-destruction? The article attempts to answer this question and recommend solutions to deter such attacks.

Theoretical Construct

Definition. There are many definitions in the academic world. This article will highlight the most acceptable definition in the author's perception. Terrorism experts suggest two approaches to define suicide attacks, narrow and the broad. In the narrow definition, death of the perpetrator is essential for the act to cause the damage. Some examples are suicide belt bombers or ramming of explosive laden vehicle/plane. In the broad definition, death of the perpetrator is almost certain. But the damage to the target is not entirely dependent on his death. Fedayeen attacks would fall into such a category. Scholars such as Assaf Moghadam and Robert Pape are the main proponents of such an approach.⁴ As per Pape, "In the narrow definition attacker kills himself. In the broad definition an attacker fully expects to be killed by others during an attack".⁵

Motivators of Suicide Attacks. Almost all experts reject the theory of mentally deranged people as suicide attackers. Various scholars attribute different reasons as a cause of motivation. Some of the causes are discussed as follows. Professor of Security Affairs at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, Muhammad Hafez says in respect of Palestinian bombers that religious and nationalist appeals that equate self-sacrifice with martyrdom and national salvations are instrumental in producing volunteers for suicide attacks.⁶ Political scientist Sheehy-Skeffington suggests shared sense of injustice by the entire community as a possible cause.⁷ The Canadian academic Mia Bloom gives spiritual rewards in afterlife, responsibility with God for the attackers' families, celebrity status and even cash bonuses as some reasons.⁸ She goes on to quote another American terrorism scholar, Jessica Stern, that people indulge in suicide attacks driven by a sense of humiliations or injustice. Pape has also proposed a cocktail of reasons like politics, humiliation, revenge, retaliation and altruism.⁹ Moghadam has taken this idea further and suggested a multi-causal framework of motivation. He has divided the framework into three levels, individual, organisational and environmental.¹⁰

At individual level, for Arab suicide bombers he suggests combination of seeking of revenge, posthumous benefits in heaven, material or immaterial benefits. He has also described personality types that are prone to commit suicide attacks like the exploited suicide bomber and tribal mentality. Exploited suicide bombers emerge due to traumatising life experience and humiliating treatment meted to their community or family by the security forces. Tribal mentality of avenging defeat to the bitter end also motivates some to commit suicide attacks. These factors have created a culture of martyrdom against the current regimes in ME and West Asia. US support to them further aggravates the hatred against them.

Organisational level motivators are socio-cultural environment that honours those who sacrifice themselves in the name of larger collective.¹¹ Outbidding competitors, for example, are Hamas versus Fateh in Palestine, Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) versus Al-Qaeda (AQ) in ME and Taliban versus other groups in Afghanistan. Bloom suggests political power

and strategic signalling to the target audience and the state as a possible reason.¹² Tactical advantages such as accuracy, lethality, cost efficiency and irrelevance of planning an escape route also act as strong motivators at the organisational level.¹³ Finally, there are environmental factors that motivate individuals and organisation to undertake such a deadly option of causing damage through self-destruction. Territory perceived to be under foreign occupation, poverty, and government repression contributes to environment prone to emergence of suicide terrorism. Likewise, religious, ethnic and nationalist public figures may also encourage the culture of martyrdom. Australian academic, Riaz Hassan has quoted Pape, stating that suicide attacks follow a strategic logic specifically designed to coerce modern liberal democracies to make significant political and territorial concessions.¹⁴ Foregoing discussion suggests that most effective way to deter suicide terrorism is at the organisational level.

Current Dimensions of Suicide Terrorism

Force Multiplier of Proxy War. Terrorism has been the strategy of non-state actors. But state actors are also using terror groups to undertake proxy wars. The table below highlights the popularity of this form of warfare. Some very responsible state actors like US, Iran and Russia are indulging in it. Deniability and victory without using conventional forces are major advantages of proxy war. Even the cost of waging a proxy war is very low, with high strategic gains. The state also clubs information operations and propaganda with terrorism and exploits socio-cultural differences and economic fault lines to wage information operations. These steps help the proxy non-state actor to build its terror base.

The primary tool of proxy war is terrorism. Its success depends upon the effectiveness of terrorism in the target country. Three per cent of all terrorist incidents from 1980 to 2003 were suicide attacks. But suicide attacks account for 48 per cent of all the fatalities. Even after discounting 9/11, average suicide attacks are twelve times deadlier than other forms of terrorism.¹⁶ Ninety per cent of suicide attacks have occurred in Afghanistan, Iraq, Israel, the Palestinian territories, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.¹⁷ Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS), Tel Aviv University, Israel

suggests decline in suicide attacks over the past few years. Major findings of its report are¹⁸:

- (a) In 2019, around 149 suicide bombings took place worldwide whereas in 2018, there were 293 suicide attacks – a decline of around 49 per cent.
- (b) For the second consecutive year, the most active area was Asia. Total 68 suicide bombings took place here. The focal point was Afghanistan – accounting for 45.5 per cent.
- (c) ME saw around 47 suicide bombings in 2019. Accounting for around 31.5 per cent of all suicide bombings.
- (d) In Africa, around 33 attacks have taken place in 2019. Accounting for around 22 per cent of attacks during the year.

Table 1 : Countries Involved in Proxy War¹⁵

Principal	Proxy	Conflict	Theatre	Date
USA	Mjd	Soviet – Afghan	Afghanistan	1979 -89
Iran	Hezbollah	Multiple	ME	1980s to date
USA	Iraq Security Forces	Op Inherent Resolve	Iraq	Oct 2014 – May 2018
Russia	Syrian Regime Forces	Syrian Civil War	Syria	2014 to date
Iran	Shia militia groups	OP Inherent Resolve	Iraq	2014 to date
Iran	Houthi rebels	Yemeni Civil War	Yemen	2015 to date
USA	Philippines def forces	Defeat ISIS campaign	The Philippines	2016
Russia	Separatists	Russo – Ukrainian war	Donbas region of Ukraine	2014 to daate
Pakistan*	Various terror gps	J & K conflict	UT of J & K	1990 to date
China*	Pakistan	NWNP	J & K	1990 to date

**Data on Pakistan and China is based on common knowledge and assessment of the author.*

- (e) According to data collected in 2019, out of the 236 suicide bombers, 22 were women. These suicide bombings killed 1,850 people and wounded 3,660. The study however predicts continued use of this tactics, particularly by the global jihadi groups ISIS and Al Qaeda due to their allure to divine path.

Concentration in Islamic Radicalism. One of the reasons for the decline is that earlier people belonging to all faiths have undertaken suicide attacks in the past. But radical Islamic *Jihadists* are now more active in conducting suicide attacks. Among the radical Islamic groups, Salafi *Jihadists* are predominant group that indulge in suicide attacks. Most of them are from fundamentalist groups that see the current rulers of Islamic world straying away from the path of Islam. They justify waging war on the ground that current rulers push people into *jahaliyat*. Divinity and martyrdom in the name of Allah are strong motivators. It propels people to take extreme actions.

How to Deter a Human Being Driven by Divine Faith

The sheer complexity of suicide terrorism increases the difficulty of deterring such a threat. These attacks are like a force multiplier in terrorism. Terrorists operate in a force asymmetric environment and find it a convenient tactic. It is a weapon with a one way ticket to heaven, easy to launch, self-guided, fire and forget system. It also helps in hastening the achievement of their political goals. It is a seventh-generation human weapon platform. The Answer to deterring suicide attacks lies in its definition and causality. Definition negates the possibility of deterrence at the individual level. How do we convince a person who has decided to become a martyr and proceed to heaven? Thus, the strategy to deter must focus at the organisational and environmental levels. If we deter the organisation the bedrock of suicide terrorism will get eliminated. Actions at the environmental level should target the socio-economic conditions, terrorist ideology and search for political solutions. Radical Islamic *jihadists* are the major perpetrators of suicide terror. We must, therefore, counter their radical religious (*salafi*), political and cultural extremism.¹⁹

Strategies to Achieve Deterrence

An organisation or a group of people in a society can be deterred if they are seen to be losing the battle with the state. If we build a victory bank of foiling terror attacks on a regular basis, a perception of invincibility gets created. This has the potential to deter terror groups from undertaking suicide attacks.²⁰ But, we must ensure effective protective measures on possible suicide attack targets. Many experts suggest prompt retaliation on an attacking group to achieve deterrence. Recent case of Balakot bombings by India is an example of

such an approach. But the state must keep demonstrating such intent for any meaningful impact. The twin retaliatory attacks post Uri and Pulwama may have achieved temporary deterrence. Almog has cited similar examples by Israel as the probable cause for reduction in suicide attacks on Israel by Palestinian suicide bombers. What we can arrive at is a two-pronged strategy of deterrence by denial and deterrence by punishment. Both have to go hand in hand to deter suicide terrorism.

Deterrence by Denial. Denial would include measures such as hardening of possible targets, especially high value. The endeavour in this strategy is to make it extremely difficult for a suicide attacker to access the potential target. The means could be establishment of effective protection measures, gainful utilisation of Special Forces, effective intelligence and surveillance measures for both offensive and defensive actions and collaborative approach to cut off financial and other resources to the terror group. International alliances and working in close cooperation with international agencies will help. If the intelligence machinery becomes weak and passive then strategies become difficult to put in place. Hence, we must consistently work towards seeking intelligence for better preventive measures.

Deterrence by Punishment. Kinetic action against the terrorist leadership, bomb makers, weapon sources, financiers, trainers, over ground workers and political supporters forms the corner stone of such a strategy. State should take steps to deny resources such as explosives, arms and munitions. Targeting training camps, operating bases and launching pads are few other actions. Another way to deter by punishment is to induce a terror group to harbour an ambition of transforming into a state. Bar says, "The more a terrorist organisation takes on the attributes of a state, the more susceptible it becomes to deterrence. A threat of punishment of unknown proportions looms darker than a punishment meted out on a regular basis."²¹ A classic example is inducing terror groups to seek control of territory and start indulging in state functions such as tax collection and business. This is exactly what happened to ISIS and it met its doom in Syria. Taliban is also forced to negotiate because it has ambitions of forming a nation state. The only caution here is that it is a dangerous step. Sometimes in attempting such a strategy, the state may end up losing to the terror group. It is probably due

to this reason that Afghan government is dragging its feet on implementation of the recently signed peace agreement between USA and Taliban.

Recommendations

India has been consistent victim of proxy war waged by our western adversary. It has been periodically subjected to suicide attacks. Groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) are hyper active against India. From Mumbai to Pulwama it has suffered loss of human lives and had earned an image of soft state. However, by a combination of denial and punishment we can create an image of hard power and invincibility. We need to make it difficult for a suicide bomber to reach his target through sound intelligence, interceptions and neutralisation. The State must raise specialised counter terror Special Forces/security forces for this purpose. The National Security Guard (NSG) in its current format is not optimally effective. Unless it adopts the structure and methodology followed by international Special Forces, such as GSG 9 of Germany, GIGN of France and Sayeret Matkal of Israel, it is unlikely to achieve desired results. The country must also inflict an unacceptable punishment to the sponsors of proxies. But it must also be prepared to deal with any misadventure. The space provided by revoking of Article 370, 35-A and the delineation of the state into two Union Territories must be used to eliminate terrorist leaders in the Valley. India must also cut off the resource base, to include weapons, ammunition, explosives, funding and over ground workers support, to various radical groups in J&K.

Environmental factors must focus on counter ideological framing that debunks the divinity out of such attacks through concerted information operations. Suggested themes are, firstly, undermining the Pakistani idea of Kashmir; secondly, promoting the less extremist interpretation of Islam against radicalism; thirdly, encouraging alternate and moderate Islamic voices; fourthly promoting the just-cause strategy; fifthly, educating against us-versus-them discourse; lastly, delegitimising and dis-empowering the terrorist leadership by exposing their misdeeds. These steps have the potential to demotivate the support base of terror group which may also then discourage people from taking the divine path to self-destruction.

Conclusion

Proxy war through state sponsored terrorism, involving non-state actors, under the overall rubric of grey zone warfare is becoming a preferred strategy of many states for reasons such as deniability, excessive cost of war and avoiding their own nations' cost in terms of resources and human lives. One of our adversaries on the western border is a past master in such warfare. Terrorist leaders, to gain recognition, often resort to suicide attacks when traditional methods of inflicting terror fail. We have seen that such a tactic often has strategic impact on the target nation. As highlighted, such attacks can only be deterred if the organisations or their proxies are made to realise the futility of suicide attacks. Relentless targeting of the support base of suicide terrorists is a must. Measures to deter would generally fall under the broad typology of deterrence by denial and deterrence by punishment. Finally, in any deterrence strategy importance of intelligence will remain paramount.

Endnotes

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Creating Theatre Command to Meet Our Specific Conditions

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Abstract

In India while nature and range of threats from China and Pakistan have changed, the structure of the forces to counter these threats has remained constant. Each Service views its strategic and operational role in isolation. Jointness and integration in operations come secondary to individual service assumed roles and goals. This has led to lack of synergy in operations. Apart from being a manpower intensive armed force, there is lack of interoperability between the forces with neither commonality of equipment nor economies of scale. Shortcomings in the current structure also impact force application. Besides this, the current sectoral area of responsibility and existing allocation of forces make force application predictable. The armed forces within themselves have seventeen individual service commands, most of which are neither co-located nor co-purposed. There are seven single service commands facing China as compared to a single Chinese Western Command deployed across. The existing shortcomings mandate that the system be rehailed to bring about better synergy in every aspect spread from training, capability development to operations.

Introduction

On 15th Aug 2019, the Prime Minister, in his annual Red Fort

address to the nation, announced a major decision: India would have a Chief of Defence Staff (CDS). Reforms which were overdue for decades became a reality. In end December 2019, General Bipin Rawat, who was retiring as the Army Chief, was appointed the first CDS. Soon after assuming the appointment he stated that the integrated commands will be set up in three years' time.¹

Emerging National Security Threats

In the immediate neighbourhood, China will continue to assert itself, seeking to establish dominance in states surrounding India and in the Indian Ocean. Military operations initiated by China would initially be non-contact, non-kinetic and then become kinetic conventional operations. Due to existing topography, Chinese forces possess the advantage of interior lines of communication, while Indian forces are largely dependent on exterior lines.

In any India-China conflict, Pakistan may attempt to take advantage of the scenario. Post the announcement of the 'Cold Start Doctrine', Pakistan conducted a series of wargames, and exercises, and announced a counter concept termed as 'New Concept of War Fighting'. This envisages induction of tactical nuclear weapons and faster mobilisation to beat the Indian schedules of Cold Start. Simultaneously, it seeks closer cooperation between their army and air force to counter Indian offensive plans.

Operations if launched by Pakistan would initially be non-linear and hybrid, while seeking to influence internal strife and employing proxy forces in depth areas, operating in conjunction with military forces, all under a nuclear umbrella. The availability of nuclear weapons is aimed at restricting the employment of strong conventional Indian military forces operating in depth for a prolonged period.

In such a scenario, India may seek destruction of the enemy's military combat potential rather than capture of territory. Hence, it is essential to plan employment of maximum combat potential at the point of decision. Pakistan remains the only nuclear-powered nation which considers nuclear weapons as 'weapons of war' rather than 'weapons of war deterrence'.

Maritime requirements include protection of Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs), supporting Indian Ocean Region (IOR) states, controlling crime and maintaining a friendly littoral. This implies ensuring supremacy in surface and sub-surface marine operations. Emphasis will need to shift to sea denial. Our island territories and offshore assets would need monitoring and protection.

In the aerospace domain, while existing threats would increase with growing capabilities of our adversaries, especially with enhanced concentration on employment of long-range missiles with greater accuracy and larger standoff ranges of weapons, the mass availability of drones, including swarms of drones, to break through even the most modern air defence systems, and remotely piloted vehicles (RPVs) have added a new dimension. Demands on airpower would be intense as would be the requirement of ensuring air defence security to the nation and its strategic assets.

Shortcomings in Current Force Structuring

While nature and range of threats have changed, the structure of the forces to counter these threats has remained constant. Each Service views its strategic and operational role in isolation. Joint-ness and integration in operations come secondary to individual service assumed roles and goals. Trust between Services has, hence, reduced at the macro and micro levels. This has led to lack of synergy in operations. Apart from being a manpower intensive armed force, there is lack of interoperability between the forces, neither commonality of equipment nor economies of scale.

Planning, procurement and processing of capabilities is only a compilation of individual service requirements not based

on a common threat profile. Even added structures adopted by a Service are kept away from the others till the final announcement. Joint Service coordination for cyber, space, Information Warfare (IW), Psychological Operations (PSYOPs), training and logistics is non-existent. Individual service logistics chains imply duplicity in demanding, repairing, warehousing and transportation.

Shortcomings in the current structure also impact force application. Inter-service coordination is only possible at Service HQ level. Current sectoral area of responsibility and existing allocation of forces make force application predictable. The air force representatives at army command and corps level are responsible to their own service chain of command rather than the army. This implies that availability of force would depend on air force priorities instead of army's operational requirements.

The armed forces within themselves have seventeen individual service commands, most of which are neither co-located nor co-purposed. There are seven single service commands facing China as compared to a single Chinese Western Command deployed across.

The existing shortcomings mandate that the system be rehailed to bring about better synergy in every aspect spread from training, capability development to operations.

Integrated Commands

United States (US) was the first to contemplate creating theatre commands. Its commands are based on a mix of the geographical and functional models. It presently possesses six geographical and four functional commands. Each has requisite force levels and integral Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) capabilities. Geographical Commands are under a single commander and can seek assistance from functional commands when needed. Russia began its restructuring in 2008. It has now created four theatre commands and removed divisions keeping brigades as the basic fighting formation. Its concentration has been on non-contact warfare as it continues

to rely on the Gerasimov Doctrine, which advocates 70 per cent non-military means versus 30 per cent military means, as was evident in its successful occupation of Crimea and the subsequent civil war in Ukraine.



Fig 1

Chinese Theatre Commands

The Chinese theatre command model (Fig 1) largely copies the US model. They have created five peacetime geographical commands. The reasons for China adopting the theatre command model is to develop an integrated joint operations capability, promote joint training and enhance familiarity between services while providing for a rapid transition from peace to war.

The Chinese Western Theatre Command (WTC) is responsible for operations against India. Apart from operations against India, its additional responsibilities include maintaining 'internal stability' in Tibet and Xinjiang. Externally it could also be deployed in case of instability in Central Asian nations. It has integral to it, adequate force levels, including special and airborne forces, needed for operations against India. However, naval operations against India do not fall within the

responsibility of this command and would need coordination with its Southern Naval Command.

The Chinese Southern Theatre Command was raised specifically for 'safeguarding sovereignty and interests in the South China Sea'. It is in this region that China would deploy its SSBNs. It is also responsible for the borders with Myanmar and Vietnam. This command is also responsible for naval operations in the Indian Ocean and has the largest naval fleet of China.

Unlike the US, China had not prepared its cadre for this change. Since the Chinese forces have not been involved in any conflict since the creation of these commands, their jointness remains questionable. Armed forces and civilian agencies are integrated to ensure that logistics support is localised and not central.

The fact remains that the concept of theatre commands has been successful to the level that every nation, despite varying nature of threats, has adopted this model with subtle variations based on their threat perceptions. India should not be an exception.

Establishing Theatre Commands

Considering the current scenario, growing variety of threats and existing shortcomings, India needs to reconsider its current organisational structures. In addition, India needs to evolve a 'whole of government' approach to manage threats. As threats flow from beyond our immediate neighbourhood, India must look over its immediate regional sphere and seek a continental role for the current, with a global role in the future.

Present Status

The study for establishing an Air Defence (AD) Command is underway and another for establishing a Peninsula Command is likely to be ordered shortly. The AD Command envisages amalgamating all air defence resources of the three Services, except those of the army's strike corps and navy's ship-based AD resources, under the air force.

The Peninsula Command involves placing all resources of Western and Eastern Naval Command, few air force resources currently based in South India, and some army formations/units into a single integrated command under the navy. It may face resistance as all naval resources under one command could limit the role, tasking and employment of the navy. This service is seeking to enhance its current holding, hence would not be willing to limit its role and capabilities from the outset.

Studies to establish land-based theatre commands are only likely to commence by the end of the year. For other functional commands, including an integrated logistics command, Information Warfare and Psychological Operations Command and integrated training command, no firm schedule has yet been announced.

The Andaman and Nicobar Command, Strategic Forces Command, Cyber Agency, Defence Space Agency and Armed Forces Special Operations Division, all of which have been established, would remain in their present form.

Options for Land-Based Theatre Commands

Integrated land-based commands could either be threat oriented or geographical or a mix of both. When considering them from the geographical option then there would be just two commands, Northern, catering to China and Western, catering towards Pakistan and beyond. In the threat-based option, J and K, which faces a major threat from both Pakistan and China, could remain a separate command while the other two could be re-termed as Eastern, looking towards China and Western towards Pakistan. An analysis of each is given in subsequent paragraphs.

Geographical Commands (Fig 2)

The Western Theatre Command (Bi-service) would stretch from Siachen to the Rann of Kutch. It would also be responsible for counter-insurgency operations in Kashmir. The Northern Theatre Command (Bi-service) would be responsible for the border from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh and would also be responsible for counter-insurgency in the North East. Thus,

India could be divided into two integrated theatre commands (Fig 2).



Fig 2. Integrated Theatre Commands: Geographical Approach

Advantages/Disadvantages. This option implies, one threat, one nation and for which one command is responsible. It would lead to coordinated operations depending on the nature of threat. It would make planning, deployment and synchronisation of operations easy. Each command will have multiple roles including insurgency. In J and K, where a collusive threat from both Pakistan and China exists, coordinated operations and sharing of resources may prove difficult.

Threat-based Theatre Commands

In this case, the broad sanctity of existing Northern and Eastern Commands would be maintained. The major change would be that the Northern Command would be responsible for complete J and K up to its border with Punjab as also Uttarakhand and Sugar Sector of the current Western Command. The balance border with China would be with Eastern Command. The Western Command would handle the plains, semi-desert and desert sectors, implying regions currently under the Western, South Western and Southern Commands (Fig 3).

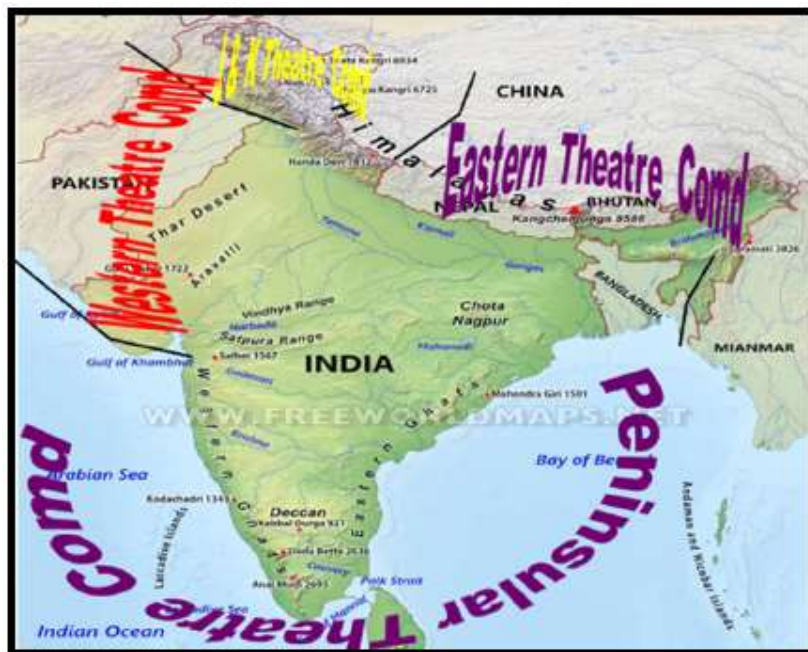


Fig 3. Integrated Theatre Commands: Threat Approach

There is an option of creating an additional integrated command (Integrated Central Command) to handle the Indo-Tibet border, extending from Himachal and Uttarakhand to Sikkim, including the responsibility of Chicken's Neck. It implies handling disjointed sectors on both sides of Nepal. However, considering that the current responsibility of Eastern Command includes Sikkim, creating an additional command for two disjointed sectors is impractical. It would also lead to three

commands facing China, implying lack of coordination in operations.

Advantages/Disadvantages. In this option, sanctity of two crucial commands is maintained. Importance of J and K as a flashpoint is catered for and the region is considered as a separate theatre of war. All strike and pivot corps are under one commander, providing him multiple options for an offensive. Airpower in J and K can be effectively employed. The major disadvantage is that there would be no synchronisation of operations against China as the Ladakh and North East sectors are under different commands.

Theatre Command Structures

Ideally, existing operational commands should remain under the theatre commands and structures below should be similar. However, in the Indian context, the intention is to reduce HQs, hence either Command or Corps HQs would remain. Considering the need for maintaining stability in operations, it is opined that once theatre commands are established and take over their responsibility, current command HQs could be closed and Corps HQs to function directly under them. This will also result in minimum destabilisation. Hence, the following is recommended, considering both the above options.

Geographical Command Structures. The Western Theatre Command could be built up on the existing Western Command. Current operational commands at Udhampur, Jaipur and Pune continue as hitherto fore. No change in functioning of Corps HQs and below. Existing Northern Command to be minus 14 Corps, which would sidestep to the newly created Northern Theatre Command which could be located on the premises of the current Central Command at Lucknow. 14 Corps would also be responsible for Sugar Sector, while Uttar Bharat (UB) area could be upgraded to an independent Division or Corps to handle the Uttarakhand sector. Eastern Command would continue in its present location. Once theatre commands are raised and functional, existing operational commands could wind up and Corps operate directly under theatre commands.

Threat-based Theatre Commands. In this case, Northern and Eastern Commands continue as at present, with added responsibility of Sugar Sector to Northern and Uttarakhand with UB Area (converted to Division) under Eastern Command. The newly raised Western Theatre Command be located at Lucknow, while existing operational commands at Chandimandir, Jaipur and Pune remain in place till the theatre command stabilises and subsequently disbanded.

Recommended Option

Considering minimum turbulence, it is recommended that the threat-based option is adopted. This would imply that while the Northern and Eastern Commands remain as at present, the others close when theatre commands are operational. Corps HQs and below should remain in place. In addition, two functional commands, not yet under consideration, need to be created. These are Integrated Logistics Command and Integrated Training Command.

Integration within Tri-Service and Bi-Service Commands

Till now, there has been lip service on joint-ness, integrated operations and handling other services. For India to achieve the level of proficiency would take at least a decade, provided an Integrated Training Command is created and commences altering scope of training, enhancing joint-ness and integrated operations. Till then, service specific officers would be required in every branch of tri-service commands for handling service matters, whether operational, logistics or administration. Their working together would bring about joint-ness and integration. The senior service officer in the respective HQs would remain his service advisor.

Land-based Bi-service Commands (Involves the Army and Air Force). Air force representatives already exist at operational command and corps levels. However, they follow their own chain of command and allocate resources as desired by their air command HQs. In the context of Integrated Theatre Commands, they would continue, however, function through their respective Integrated Theatre Commander and not the air

force chain of command. Resources already allocated to the theatre command would be their responsibility as also coordinating additional resources from any functional air force command which may be created. The strength of air force staff in integrated HQs would be enhanced, and rank structure upgraded as they would form part of every branch of the HQ as also command resources allocated to the theatre. The above would remain the norm despite whichever service officer commands the theatre.

Chain of Command

Vulnerability increases during periods of transition. Hence, Service Chiefs would remain in command of their specific Integrated Commands during this phase. Once Integrated Theatre Commands stabilise then their chain of command flowing through the CDS to the Defence Minister should be implemented.

Recommended Stages for Establishing Theatre Commands

Theatre commands cannot be created in a rushed manner. Nor can there be any error in its structuring. Further, apart from force restructuring, there is a need to consider the hygiene factors involved in the process. Ideally, theatre commands should be raised in a sequential manner. A recommended option is given below:

Phase 1. Appoint a CDS with mandated tasks and role. This has already been achieved. He would, alongside his staff, evolve a long-term plan for ultimate integration. This phase would also involve nomination of study groups for assessing different aspects of creating Integrated Theatre Commands. (This is currently in progress).

Phase 2. Finalise study group reports. These reports would be studied at relevant levels and finally approved by the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS). Timelines are essential to be followed.

Phase 3. The CCS on approval would push through laws for providing legitimacy to theatre commands including assigning roles, tasks and chain of command.

Phase 4. The concept should be put through a test bed, including wargames at relevant level, and one adhoc structure tested through exercises to confirm validity and determine shortfalls, if any.

Phase 5. The theatre command tested should be raised and its operational control assigned by the CCS.

Phase 6. Raising of integrated Training Command and Logistics Command, including amending the training curricula.

Phase 7. Raising of balance theatre commands and assigning their chain of command.

Phase 8. Promulgation of integrated personal policies, common military laws, rules and instructions.

Conclusion

There is no escaping the fact that Integrated Theatre Commands will be established. Simultaneously, Indian conditions and requirements for theatre commands are at variance from other countries and hence require a unique solution. Indian defence investments are also low, which must be factored in. Resources, especially airpower, would always remain at a premium. Hence, India would need to move with caution and not make rushed judgements leading to subsequent changes. Sequential movement incorporating hygiene factors, joint logistics and joint training would make the transition smoother.

Endnotes

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Re-structuring, Staffing and Equipping of the Indian Armed Forces

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Abstract

India faces a Two and a Half Front active and ever increasing threat viz. China, Pakistan and Internal Terrorism & Insurgency, which definitely places the nation in a high threat category and, therefore, the Indian Armed Forces ought to be structured, manned and equipped on threat basis and not on short term considerations of revenue availability (though this may be an important guiding factor). The Indian soldier has always fought the wars more with personal valour and spirit, as state of the art equipment was mostly not available, so like it was on the icy hills of 1962, or while assaulting on the suicidal cliffs of Kargil or while facing the terrorist bullets in J&K with large deficiency of bullet proof jackets for quite a period. The fighter pilots too have never wavered to fly the ageing jets, and nor have the helicopter pilots ever held back from flying their machines much beyond their endurance and ceilings to support their comrades, and similarly the navy also has been making do with retro-fitted and kitted vessels. Lately, swayed by budget considerations, an impression has been created that the Armed Forces can make do with weapons and equipment of lower specifications. While this too is a subject for debate, one thing is clear that if the soldiers get a feeling that they might be equipped with comparatively inferior weapon systems than their adversaries, it could severely impact the morale. This article outlines

in brief the problems and the suggested solutions.

Introduction

The Indian Armed Forces are tasked with the solemn responsibility of defending the territorial integrity of the nation against external threats in order to provide a secure environment for the nation and its people to blossom within. In times of need, the Armed Forces also happen to be the last bastion of the government against any internal disturbance or crisis. With two major active challenges, Pakistan on the western front and China on the northern front, and both becoming more aggressive with each passing day, India is already faced with a serious and difficult situation on its land borders and sea front today. And, if militancy and terrorism linked to the proxy war by Pakistan, residual/latent insurgencies in the North East (NE) and Naxalism in the heartland are taken into account, then India possibly may figure at number one in the security threat matrix of the world. Despite these looming threats challenging our very territorial integrity, and consequently our dream of emerging as a reckonable power in the regional or world arena, there seems to be a big mismatch in the plans and preparations to face these challenges.

The Failings

In the view of the author, the following are the problems:

- (a) **Lack of Consistency and Continuity in Plans of Force Development.** In the absence of a National Security Strategy (NSS), the three Services have been growing independently in their respective domains. Each change in hierarchy through superannuation, promotion or rotation, changes their priorities as per individual perceptions, which upsets the complete chain of the plans of Force Development. Many times, there is re-invention of the wheel with attendant penalties on economy and synergy.

(b) Wavering Assessments of Enemy Capabilities.

Despite the continuing streak of machinations of Pakistan, we failed to anticipate Kargil. Similarly, despite emergence of China as a reckonable power with rising aspirations, its continuing border infrastructure development and heavy defence budgetary allocations, we have possibly again failed to anticipate its futuristic coercive designs like the ever-aggressive border transgressions since 2013. Rather, own plan slippages and failings viz. non-completion of strategic border roads and stalling of the raising of the Mountain Strike Corps, have been intriguing.

(c) Lack of Synergy of Forces. The much publicised 'Cold Start Doctrine', drafted post the missed opportunity of 2002¹, has not been implementable in letter and spirit with varying perception of it in the three Services.² While limited scope operations, viz. Surgical Strikes of 2016 and Balakot Airstrikes of 2019, have definitely exhibited our national resolve for aggressive action but without synergy amongst three services, these standalone actions cannot be presumed to deter the adversaries in all-out conventional war situations.

The Threat

India's security aspects are deeply inter-twined with Pakistan and China, as India has boundary issues with both, and the situation has become more complex as our territories are held by them, some has been ceded by Pakistan to China, and now China has built the BRI Super Highway Project on these illegally occupied territories, and has also signed an agreement to construct a Dam on Jhelum at Kohala in PoK³. Because of this tenuous situation, India has live and un-demarcated borders in the form of Line of Control (LoC) and Line of Actual Control (LAC) with Pakistan and China respectively, which are prone to continued hostilities. Also, the LoC and LAC pass through one of the most hostile weather and terrain conditions, where even the capability of modern technology fails or is drastically reduced, thereby making human backup essential. Moreover, the Indian shorelines, which were earlier threatened only by

Pakistan, are now equally threatened by China with the enhanced blue water capability of PLA Navy and numerous support bases which China has secured around India. The futuristic trends could be summarised as under:

- (a) **Pakistan.** With already diluted force parity ratios on the western front and acquisition of nuclear capability, Pakistan may continue to facilitate increasing Chinese presence in the occupied territories to indirectly make China a partner, and deter India from taking any precipitative action.
- (b) **China.** While China may have little reason to launch a full-scale war on India in the near future, but it's ever increasing aggressive transgressions could soon transform into 'nibbling actions' along the LAC to gradually take control of strategic locations of disputed territories. This may be to settle the boundary dispute later from a position of strength. At the same time, it may continue with attempts to wean away our neighbours.

Re-Structuring of the Armed Forces

Re-structuring of the Armed Forces has been a long felt operational need and the government has very thoughtfully paved the way by creating the post of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS). This will also result in good optimisations all across, resulting in savings of precious revenue. However, since changes are always resisted in any organisation, letting the implementation to be open-ended, spread over years, could spell disaster due to creation of flux in the whole system in this high threat period. As such, following need to be considered:

- (a) The overall macro plan of creation of all the Theatre Commands needs to be war-gamed at the apex levels with participation of all stakeholders for concurrent implementation. The following should be important considerations:
 - (i) Principle of 'Unity of Task' is essential, meaning 'One Job to One Outfit'. Therefore, the Theatre Commands, as envisaged, should be restricted to

only three, viz. Northern Command (for China), Western Command (for Pakistan) and Maritime Command (for Shoreline & Islands), duly supported by Strategic Command (Missiles, Cyber, Space, AI and Special Forces), Air Defence Command (Air & AD), Training Command and Maintenance and Logistics Command.

(ii) Retaining 'Operational Responsibility' with the respective Chiefs and giving charge of force structuring and acquisitions to the CDS has brought in an unwanted duality in the system. Before the proposed 'Theaterisation' is put into effect, the CDS will need to be empowered with overall control, with adequate staff to man the National War Centre, and the charter of the Service Chiefs may have to be modified to remove the internal schism in the system once for all.

(b) All Organisations, when generally left to themselves to plan their own growth and structure, will tend to favour themselves discreetly leading to creation of unwanted appendages or practices. And, the Controlling Ministries/HQs too generally tend to go by their recommendations and plans. It is, therefore, time that we give the Indian Think Tanks their due, and guide their efforts to desired topics, lest the Services continue favouring their own agendas without caring for creation of duplicities and the factor of synergy. This article recommends that a sub-committee be formed under the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), which should issue a Calendar of Topics / Issues to the experts, think tanks and concerned organisations for a monthly/quarterly debate so we can use an integrated national expertise to get unbiased best solutions in the field of national security — including in a major part — the armed forces.

(c) The strength of the Armed Forces is 13-14 lakhs and the strength of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) is much larger. Except for the conventional war, which is

the prime domain of the regular armed forces, both are trained for the generic security duties and logically both should be used in tandem, wherever feasible, to conserve national assets and revenue. But possibly based on the US concept (post 9/11) of a separate Homeland Security⁴, we too have tried to keep the CAPFs under the control of Home Ministry. However, this, over a period of time, has led to duality of effort not only along the borders (LoC & LAC), but also in terrorism affected areas. It needs to be understood that India has active borders where Armed Forces are operationally responsible and, therefore, placing the CAPFs under operational control in such areas will not only result in optimisation of effort but over a period of time improve upon the efficiency of the CAPFs. Same should hold good for CAPFs deployed in terror affected areas of J&K and other places. The CAPFs deployed in IB Sectors or in the hinterland could continue under the Home Ministry. Such an arrangement would result in reduction of overall force levels requirements, and lead to sizeable revenue savings, and overall improvement in security management at national level.

Staffing Aspects

The Decision Makers should be doubly careful against bringing in revenue driven changes in manning policies and procedures which could directly, and seriously, impact the efficiency levels. Certain proposals or ideas which have been/are possibly under consideration and debate are analysed below along with possible solutions (largely related to Indian Army):

(a) **Tour of Duty (TOD)**⁵. The TOD proposal has been mooted as a way to reduce military expenditure. Beyond the stringent selection process and rigorous training, follows a strong regimentation process. It normally takes 3 to 5 years to graduate a Young Soldier to a Trained Soldier category to facilitate gradual but strong bonding, blooding and excellence. And, it is for all such reasons that the performance of regular Armed Forces in proactive operations has always been better than the CAPFs. While

the capabilities of a 'civil volunteer' are not under doubt, no novice can ever attain the combat proficiency of a trained officer or soldier, or imbibe the organisational ethos in such proposed short tenures. Therefore, such inductees will either have to be protected during operations or kept in sheltered appointments, which not only will defeat the very purpose of this exercise, but will become an additional burden on regular soldiers. Moreover, any injury or death could result in larger expenses for the government. Such experimentation, if necessary, could initially be done with CAPFs, which would also adequately satisfy the feelings of national fervour and adrenaline gush of the youth. The avenue of Territorial Army is already available for those who wish to serve the nation in OG uniform for shorter/intermittent periods.

(b) **Enhancing Age of Superannuation⁶.** Another proposal for reducing defence expenditure is enhancing age of superannuation. The logic is that retaining trained manpower for a longer duration will automatically defer pension related revenue expenditures in the interim. Post Kargil, a considered decision was made to improve upon the age profile of the junior leaders so that they could shoulder the physical challenges of war, especially in forbidding terrain where all our disputed borders lie. Therefore, it would be prudent not to tinker with the physical and efficiency levels of the Armed Forces for reasons validated by battle.

(c) **Increase the Support Cadre of Officers, and reduce Permanent Cadre.** Earlier, the majority of Short Service Commission (SSC) officers used to remain fully motivated to get their Permanent Regular Commission (PRC), or they used to leave after 5 years, so one hardly came across a de-motivated officer. So if now it is being contemplated to have a larger Support Cadre of officers who will be eased off without pension benefits, it is likely that their risk-taking willingness will be much lesser. The time-tested system of SSC may be good to follow with no extensions beyond 5 years if not granted PRC. Retention

of SSC officers beyond five years to enable them to resettle is a humane approach but then the organisation is made to carry dead weight, and actually such officers find it much difficult to settle later as Corporates look for young entrants.

(d) Compulsory Armed Forces Service for those seeking Govt Employment in Officers Category.

Forcing candidates, already selected for other government services, to first serve a tenure in the Armed Forces will be fraught with danger, as except for a few adventurous ones, the balance will preserve themselves for safer and better days ahead, thus seriously impacting performance of the Armed Forces. If such a scheme is considered for implementation then it will be better to ask all aspirants for government jobs to first join the Armed Forces through existing UPSC Examination System. Then, towards completion of the tenure fixed (3 or 5 years), as decided by the government, desirous officers with unblemished records could appear for another modified UPSC exam to qualify for Civil Services. This would ensure that the best material comes to the Armed Forces, and a further selected lot joins the Civil Services.

Equipping Aspects

The hardware inventories have a service life of 20 to 30 years. Therefore, one wrong or delayed decision can seriously impact the profile of the Armed Forces for decades. In present day context, the following merit attention:

(a) The Defence Industry and its related R&D in India remains at a very nascent stage. There is little point in debating the reasons for this state of affairs but the following few examples will best illustrate the ground reality:

(i) The indigenous INSAS rifle was found to be far from satisfactory and despite years of efforts, the problems could not be rectified. Therefore, all the elite outfits viz. National Security Guard (NSG), Police Commandos, Special Forces have preferred imported

weapons and even the RR Units in J&K prefer the old but tested AK 47 rifles. And now, having failed even to produce basic personal weapons, a plant to manufacture AK 203 series of weapons has been set up, with Russian collaboration, to meet the urgent needs of the Armed Forces.

(ii) Despite the dire need and our problematic dependence on imported A Vehicles, we have now produced the Arjun tank which runs on an imported engine⁷. And, its heavy weight and large size seriously impinge upon its utility and strategic mobility.

(iii) As regards IAF, while the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) made indigenous Tejas Mark 1 has just started coming in to meet the initial requirements, the Mark 1A and Mark 2 versions are years away from the production stage. And again, the major points to note are that Tejas too uses an imported engine as the indigenous engine project is making no headway since 1990⁸, and Tejas variants would only meet a particular requirement of the IAF which would still require heavier Multi Role Combat Aircrafts akin to Rafael class, for which there is yet no indigenous plan or capability.

(b) In today's world no country wants to share technology, especially in the field of weapons and equipment. China, during the height of Cold War, went almost underground to silently build up its industry and Armed Forces. It is an open secret that it even resorted to stealing aircraft designs, and possibly poached a lot of weapon experts on the disintegration of the erstwhile USSR. Similarly, India, too, will have to possibly tread this path to self-reliance in defence technology on its own, and 10 to 15 years may be the minimum time frame.

(c) Globalisation is crumbling and nationalistic fervours are now gaining strength. Therefore, being, or seen to be being, part of any formal or informal alliance (like Quad venture of US, India, Japan and Australia against China) could create challenges to attainment of self-reliance as

even the seemingly friendly countries may cooperate only within limits of their own national interests.

So, while boost to self-reliance in defence sector is a much desired requirement, rather an imperative, the following aspects will need due attention:

(a) Since Indian Defence Industry is not prepared at the moment to meet the current requirements of its Armed Forces, a sudden stoppage of imports can be disastrous. Hence, a well deliberated fresh procurement plan for next 10 to 15 years should be drawn up, in consonance with our threat perceptions and capital availability, and the Forces need to be kept fully equipped to face any eventuality. This plan could be continuously modified as the indigenous products get fully developed and tested for induction.

(b) While certain current General Staff Qualitative Requirements (GSQRs) may seem to be inflated, and possibly need corrections, but the new GSQRs ought to be of a level sufficient to counter the weaponry and equipment to be held by our adversaries, and cannot be diluted to a level suiting the indigenous capability.

(c) While the government has recently announced that the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) and Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) will be corporatized to improve upon their accountability and efficiency but little improvement may be possible till these are placed in open competition with private industry, to ensure the distance to self-reliance is covered in a faster timeframe.

(d) The recent announcement to enhance the FDI in Defence Industry to 74% will possibly attract some foreign players. However, technically the aim of self-reliance will not be achieved by 'Make in India' (as in it, India will generate jobs and revenue, but will continue to remain dependent) but by 'Made by India' (where we get or develop the technology). Every deal would need to be well

negotiated for a complete transfer of technology, including all aspects for the complete life span of the equipment.

Conclusion

The decision makers ought to collectively deliberate and implement the re-structuring at the earliest and ensure that the current operational needs of the Armed Forces are met to maintain the operational preparedness at all times. The Chinese transgressions into Galwan Valley and Pangong Tso area may just be the beginning of a larger threat in the offing. Similarly, there appears to be no indication that our Western neighbours' belligerence will ever wear off. There is little doubt that any experimentation with the time tested staffing policies of the Armed Forces need a larger debate incorporating all stakeholders, think tanks and especially the serving soldiers to gauge their reactions and acceptability. Victory in war is the result of a collective endeavour of an integrated homogeneous team and not of a heterogeneous force put together for fiscal savings.

Endnotes

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Hybrid Warfare Division: An Urgent Operational Requirement for India

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Abstract

Hybrid and asymmetric warfare are an everyday war that developing countries are facing in a military and economic competitive environment. It is difficult to categorise hybrid war as military or quasi military challenge but it has elements of military and non-military domains. This article examines why Hybrid Warfare is a necessity for India and therefore development of hybrid warfare capabilities is imperative because, the state may be under attack but unaware of who is attacking, what is he attacking and how is he attacking. To react to such a threat, where lines of peace and war are blurred, India must build hybrid warfare capabilities for dynamic response to ambiguous and alternative wars. The threat may be kinetic, non-kinetic, political, cyber, transnational organised crime, global terrorism, asymmetric conflict, threat to resources, to diaspora and to key infrastructure. Hybrid war cannot be fought in silos; it requires integration of all elements of hybrid war for offensive and defensive operations. Therefore, India needs to develop asymmetric edge and build capabilities to fight ambiguous and amorphous adversaries by synergised application of intelligence, information, cyber, electronic, conventional and unconventional means. For this India requires a new organisation for Hybrid War, a Hybrid Warfare Division, the article brings out similar models in some countries which have gone in for it and thereafter gives a suggested organisation

and capability development framework for this division.

Introduction

Lieutenant General Ivan Jones of British Army said that, “The character of warfare continues to change as the boundaries between conventional and unconventional warfare become increasingly blurred”.¹ Hybrid and asymmetric warfare is an everyday war that developing countries are facing in a military and economic competitive environment. A recent RAND Corporation funded study states that while the term hybrid warfare has no consistent definition, it generally refers to “deniable and covert actions, supported by the threat or use of conventional and/or nuclear forces, to influence the domestic politics of target countries”.² Another definition says, hybrid warfare is broadly characterised by “a wide range of overt and covert military, paramilitary, and civilian measures employed in a highly integrated design”.³ It is difficult to categorise hybrid war as military or quasi military challenge but it has elements of military and non-military domains. In fact, hybrid warfare is not a tactical or strategic challenge; it is a political issue.⁴ It threatens political stability of the state and creates fault-lines among the institutions of governance and the people that can be exploited by the adversaries. Therefore, it is not only important to defend physical frontiers but also cyber, cognitive and political frontiers.

Hybrid Warfare Capabilities: A Necessity for India

In the current milieu, development of hybrid warfare capabilities is imperative because, the state may be under attack but unaware of who is attacking, what is he attacking and how is he attacking. To react to such a threat, where lines of peace and war are blurred, India must build hybrid warfare capabilities for dynamic response to ambiguous and alternative wars. The threat may be kinetic, non-kinetic, political, cyber, transnational organised crime, global terrorism, asymmetric conflict, threat to resources, diaspora and key infrastructure. India’s core

interests are now spread across many continents and their security cannot be outsourced entirely to the host nations. There are state and non-state actors that are seen to be colluding with inimical forces to compromise and harm the interests of India globally, regionally and internally. The possibilities of certain states and non-state actors colluding to conduct operations against India are far higher today than it was a decade earlier. Direct involvement of military to protect national interests, and its diaspora, in a foreign country is neither plausible nor a good idea to pursue, thus hybrid warfare capability development assumes significance. Hybrid warfare capabilities are essential to create options to deal with unforeseen and adverse events that may threaten vital national interests within or beyond territorial boundaries of India. These capabilities may be required to create conditions to secure diaspora and even assist in release of hostages in a conflict or a situation like Syria and Iraq where Indian citizens were held hostage and later killed. Targeting of inimical forces to deter non-state actors is also one of the capabilities that India must possess. Moreover, it provides deniability and allows a state to maintain their presence in the target country covertly.

The conflict in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) is slowly assuming the proportion of hybrid war; however, India's response has been by and large conventional in nature. Merging Pakistan Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (POJK) with India appears militarily impractical since operations in the mountains are prolonged and attrition is too high to sustain. The only possibility to liberate POJK and merge it with India is through hybrid warfare capabilities, to soften up the opposition and create conditions to employ conventional capabilities at a later stage if situation so warrants. The war for integration of POJK has to be fought from across the Line of Control (LOC) and Kashmir valley. There is a lesson for India from Russia's Crimea operation that is not outright conventional military operation but a typical hybrid or irregular war that ultimately led to securing Russian interests in the Black Sea.

Hybrid war cannot be fought in silos; it requires integration of all elements of hybrid war for offensive and defensive

operations. Therefore, India needs to develop an asymmetric edge and build capabilities to fight ambiguous and amorphous adversaries by synergised application of intelligence, information, cyber, electronic, conventional and unconventional means.

Hybrid Warfare Division for Deep Operational Capabilities

Hybrid War is a non-standard, fluid and complex warfare where multiple domains are applied in a synergised and non-linear manner. Hybrid Warfare (HW) is a military strategy that blends conventional warfare, irregular warfare, cyber warfare and subversion, and blurs the formal distinction between war and peace.⁵ Such a complex warfare requires a compact military structure to develop ethos, dogma, discipline, secrecy and military routine to develop skills and a credo to execute this new form of “alternative war”. Confidentiality of such operations is paramount since it can create diplomatic, strategic and political complications for a nation. The entire operation can get compromised if security is breached. Thus, it is high time India creates hybrid warfare division to begin with, and later the scope can be enlarged to develop a hybrid war corps.

There are numerous models that have been adopted by various countries across the globe. China’s information and three warfare’s are the main pillars of unrestricted warfare controlled by Peoples Liberation Army’s (PLA) Strategic Support Force (SSF). SSF appears to be a unique organisation responsible for joint mission of supporting all services with its space, cyber, and electronic warfare capabilities.⁶ Though Russian military structure is ambiguous and unclear about command and control of hybrid war; however, it is under direct control of Russian Defence Ministry under political supervision of the President. Similarly, now United Kingdom is in the process of creating hybrid warfare division under the military for controlled response. It needs to be understood that hybrid war is a prolonged conflict that undermines institutions and could escalate into conventional war as well. The domains of hybrid war can spill over to kinetic and non-kinetic, traditional and non-traditional and contact and non-contact war. This is the reason why most countries have placed hybrid warfare capabilities

under military control with political supervision. Moreover, since it deals with external adversaries, it falls in the ambit of military engagement for offensive and defensive operations.

India lacks deep operations capabilities and Pakistan has taken the advantage of this void to continuously engage India in cross border terrorism. Had Pakistan been made to pay the cost of this irregular war, it would not have indulged in cross border terrorism against India. In the absence of hybrid warfare capabilities, India is targeting only the arrows and not the archer. The capability to target the archer will only come if India develops deep operations capabilities to engage with state, society and infrastructure simultaneously. Hybrid war requires fusion of civilian and military components of hybrid war under one structure for synergised application. The fragmented approach is primarily due to the fact that there is no formal structure of merging the civilian sphere with the military.⁷ Therefore, this void can be filled by a hybrid warfare division.

Government of India (GoI) has created the Defence Cyber Agency (DCA), the Defence Space Agency (DSA), and the Armed Forces Special Operations Division (AFSOD). The question is, will the AFSOD, DSA and DCA meet the challenge of fighting lethal hybrid war with the current structure? The answer is that wars are not fought in silos; wars are fought by integrating capabilities for a holistic response under single operational command authority. Democratic distribution may be a good idea to give equal representation to all stake holders but wars are fought and won by military ethos, discipline and hierarchical structures and not by agencies, departments or corporations. Ultimately, the real potential of these agencies can be optimally exploited when these agencies are integrated and employed in a synergised manner. The agencies can make policies; coordinate activities of respective constituents; but employment of holistic capabilities to fight a war requires a formal military structure.

The current structures created by the government may be a good beginning but certainly fall short to fight hybrid, grey zone and asymmetric wars. The structures must be so designed that they can plug and play during conventional or sub-

conventional conflicts. Moreover, engagement of military in the next decade appears to be more in hybrid domain than conventional domain. Can war be fought by agencies, especially hybrid war, where all elements are so intimately integrated at execution level, where conventional and unconventional means operate at the same level, and in the same battle space, with diverse objectives? At what level the three agencies come together to fight hybrid threat and who will be the task force commander to fight this everyday war remains unanswered because India is yet to develop doctrine, concept of operations and structure of hybrid war? Will the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) or Deputy CDS act as force commander and inter-agency coordinator for every-day operations, where the adversary is skilled to employ cyber, space and irregular forces through an integrated military command and control structure? Therefore, hybrid warfare division could possibly be a platform under which elements of these agencies can be employed in any future conflict. The mandate of fighting external adversaries, traditional and non-traditional, rests with the armed forces and it must be applied even to cyber, information and irregular warfare. Indian military must develop this capability before it becomes too late to catch up.

The pre-requisite for multi domain and cross domain operations is a structure where various components of hybrid warfare can plug and play. It is essential because each of the components is required to have adequate operational understanding, interoperability and established protocols for integrated operations. This can only be achieved when these elements train together under a single commander to execute operational plans. Creation of military structures to fight hybrid wars assume greater significance especially when 'Hybrid Warfare campaigns' tend to be long term, reflecting that states are living in a period of persistent competition, confrontation and sometimes conflict.⁸

Role of Hybrid Warfare Division

The hybrid warfare division should be operating "above and below the threshold of conventional conflict".⁹ The focus of hybrid warfare division should be on cyber, counter-

propaganda, intelligence gathering and electronic warfare to meet the needs in an arena where hostile states and transnational and local terror groups have been engaged in highly damaging asymmetric campaigns, often with the use of social media¹⁰ and radicalisation. In addition, hybrid warfare division should also act as vanguard for expeditionary forces for out of area contingency operations to protect diaspora, national interests beyond territorial boundaries, and disaster relief operations. Hybrid warfare division should be able to employ cyber, electronic warfare, information operations and unconventional warfare to secure vital national interests. It should also develop capabilities for hostage rescue, joint operations with foreign armed forces against state sponsored non-state actors in third country and to create safe havens till process of evacuation of Indian diaspora trapped in a conflict zone commences. This is also a platform where no-contact war, political war and information dominance operations can be executed to either weaken and demoralise an adversary to create controlled chaos¹¹ or create conditions for uprising against rogue state/agencies.

India's Options

Fighting a hybrid war requires research, information, communications, and integration of resources under a defined military authority. If such complex warfare lacks direction, control and focus, it can be chaotic and if not dealt professionally, it can become a major challenge to the national security. This form of combat requires some degree of politico-military coordination because such warfare can break out unexpectedly during ostensibly peaceful circumstances.¹² There is also a persistent danger of some elements (irregular) suddenly shifting alliances to obtain respective goals. Therefore, "Alternative Wars and Linear Conflicts" require a very robust command and control structures and well defined limit of operations to avoid over exposure and compromise of national interests. Thus, deniability and confidentiality is imperative to ensure effectiveness.

Pakistan has achieved greater degree of expertise and success in waging asymmetric/hybrid war against India and

Indian response to this 'Alternative War' has been, by and large, conventional in nature. Clausewitz had said, "Every age has its own kind of war, its own limiting conditions, and its own peculiar preconceptions". Therefore, each form of warfare requires different set of strategy and structure. Employment of conventional forces to fight hybrid war is the absence of strategy, uneconomic and unimaginative use of force. In view of the foregoing, there is a need for India to create a Hybrid War or Alternative War Division.

To begin with, the division should possess both offensive and defensive capabilities. The elements of the division should be able to operate covertly in areas where vital national interests are consistently threatened. The division should have three brigades, two for offensive and defensive operations consisting of cyber, electronic, information, space, communication, Special Forces elements, psychological warfare cell, intelligence and surveillance elements along with air, naval and logistic components. The deployment of these assets would require expertise on terrain, culture, language and history, thus, 'one for all and all for one' will not succeed. Hence, these brigades should be region specific. The third brigade should be responsible for "operational research and support". The operational research and support brigade should be working out psychological war themes, intelligence collection on culture, fault-lines in target areas, cyber loop holes to generate attack on adversaries and be an Artificial Intelligence (AI) hub and the custodian of operational data. In addition, it should also be responsible for impact assessment of operations, operational research and net assessment of future areas of operations. The entire structure should be confidential in nature and should be tasked by politico-military authority. The structure should be agile and adaptive enough to undertake offensive and defensive hybrid war operations during peace and war. The organisation should be resilient enough to ensure plug and play by merging the civilian spheres with the military components.

Command and Control

There is no doubt that the entire operations must have politico-military oversight. However, operations would require clear distinction between the strategic and tactical levels of control. At the strategic level, actions would be largely formulation of strategy and plans. The agencies of space, cyber, Special Forces Division and Alternative War Cell at the CDS office should be responsible for formulation of policies, strategies and operational plans. The tactical level, i.e. running hybrid war and counter-hybrid war campaigns and operations on a daily basis, should be the task that needs to be delegated to the divisional commander. In fact, all the three newly created agencies (cyber, space and Special Forces Division) and hybrid warfare division should be placed under a three star military commander who could be designated as a Commander in Chief (C-in-C). This Force Headquarter could be designated as "Information and Dynamic Support Force". The C-in-C, in turn, should report to the CDS/Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee.

Conclusion

It is undeniable that hybrid threat is here to stay, and it will become more lethal in the ensuing future. India is already delayed in building capabilities to fight and counter hybrid war. It is high time a formal structure in the form of Hybrid Warfare Division is put in place to counter hybrid and asymmetric threat from China and Pakistan. The urgency is to formalise strategy, doctrine, structure, training needs and human resource from the three Services and experts from the fields of space, cyber and intelligence agencies. Experts from strategic communications and counter-propaganda should also be part of this organisation, both at strategic and at tactical level. This vital war waging capability cannot be delayed or deferred further. It will have serious consequences if such a capability is not put in place by India in the immediate future.

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Historicity of the Non-Expansionist Indian Strategic Culture

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Abstract

In their history, Indians have never undertaken conquest of foreign lands. Even the spread of Hindu kingdoms to Indonesia and Indochina was a consequence of merchant associations spreading influence through trade. The Chola punitive expeditions against Hindu states in South East Asia were more to keep trade routes safe. Why Indian states limited foreign conquests is an important idea to probe today. In contrast, India is the origin of war elephants. It has also contributed to a high-quality literature on statecraft, warcraft and strategy. But the crowning glory is contribution and export of Indian intellectual traditions on scientific and cultural matters. The article deliberates on these enduring values and concepts.

Introduction

This article examines the underlying reason as to why Indian

kings and rulers never resorted to out of area conquests in its history. The need for it, apparently, never arose as the Indian subcontinent was endowed with vast productive geographic area rich in natural and mineral resources. This fact got internalised and institutionalised in thinking and actions over the ages. Yet, India never lacked behind in the hardware or software of statecraft and warcraft. The sections that follow to expand on this topic are given as Chakravartikshetra; the Greek Accounts; export of War Elephants and a few soldiers to foreign countries; Indian Export of 'Hardware' and 'Software' and lastly, Cultural Spread.

***Chakravartikshetra*: Political Unification**

Historians such as P.C. Chakravarti shed light on the underlying idea behind *Chakravartikshetra*: “From very early times in India, men longed to set up a common political organisation for the whole country. The aim was to unify a culturally cohesive but a politically fragmented India. This longing gave birth to the concept of *chakravartin* or *sarvabhauma* (paramount sovereign)”.¹ This idea has over 2,000 years of history in the 4th century BCE text of Kautilya’s Arthashastra. It is a consolidated manual on statecraft with this normative end-state or aim of political unification. The geographic area of this region is well defined in the text. The *vijigishu* (would-be-conqueror) in the text is expected to ‘conquer the world’, which implies the conquest of the whole of India, designated as *chakravartikshetra*. The passages or sutras in support of this aim are found in Book Nine ‘The Activity of the King About to March’ at 9.1.17-18: “In that, the region of the sovereign ruler extends northwards between the Himavat and the sea, one thousand *yojanas* in extent across”.² The great Sanskritist and historian Prof RP Kangle in his explanatory notes converts one thousand *yojanas* as a little more than nine thousand miles which defines broadly the region from the sea in the south to the Himalayas in the north and between the eastern and the western ocean. Further Kangle notes that, “The *chakravartiksetra* does not seem to intend to include regions beyond the borders of India”.⁴

The continuity is best captured by Chakravarti who argues that, “Whether they consciously believed it or not, most of the great war lords of ancient India seem to have acted in pursuance of this ideal of a *chakravartiksetra*. The motive force behind the endless campaigns and expeditions of the *Mauryas* and the *Guptas*, of *Gurjara-Pratiharas*, the *Palas* and the *Rastrakutas* does not seem to have been mere ambition, a passion for conquest for the sake of conquering, but a conscious or unconscious urge to bring the whole country under one single hegemony”⁵ This provides sufficient evidence as to why India has never projected power abroad beyond this specified region.

The Greek Accounts

Even the Greeks noticed this Indian behaviour more than 2,000 years ago. Upinder Singh in her *Political Violence in Ancient India* states:

*“The Greeks refer to certain peculiarities of India’s military history. Strabo reports that the Indians had never sent an army outside, and no army from outside had ever succeeding in conquering them, except for the Greek gods Dionysus and Herakles, and more recently Alexander. Arrian reports that Indians never went outside their homeland in order to wage wars on account of their laws. The Greeks must have been surprised by this stay- at-home policy of Indian kings, which contrasted their own far-flung military adventures, and perhaps could explain it only as the result of laws and prohibitions”.*⁵

The arguments for India’s behaviour are:

*“The clearly demarcated geographical circumscription of the subcontinent and, the fact, that it offered a vast sphere of military and political expansion as well as abundant economic resources of various kinds may have been responsible for this. Another intriguing aspect of Indian warfare is that in spite of the long coastline and history of maritime trade, Indian rulers rarely made incursions across the sea. The only exceptions are Samudragupta’s claim in the Allahabad prasasti to have subdued the island dwellers. In later times, there was conflict between the southern kingdoms and those of Sri Lanka and the Chola expeditions against Srivijaya. But generally, Indian imperial fantasies and campaigns remained land-locked”.*⁶

Export of War Elephants and Soldiers to Foreign Countries

There was no colonial expedition for conquest mounted by India but a related and interesting aspect is about export of the institution of war

elephants and trained and skilled elephant drivers (mahouts) and infantry soldiers fighting outside the country for foreign powers. After encounters of Chandragupta Maurya with Seleucus, in the treaty Seleucus acquired 500 elephants and ceded his eastern satrapies to the Mauryas⁷. The American historian Thomas Roger Trautmann has, through painstaking research, shown that that during the time of Bindusar (son of Chandragupta Maurya and father of Ashoka) or more possibly Ashoka, Ptolemy II Philadelphus, in conflict with Seleucids, who had Indian war elephants, was cut off from overland access to the elephants of India. As an alternative to catch up in the arms race, he planned to acquire and train African elephants with Indian expertise. Ptolemy II Philadelphos deputed Dionysus as an ambassador to India who sought hunters and trainers from India “much as Alexander in India had taken on Indian elephant hunters to round up the wandering elephants of Assakenoi”.⁸ Later, in the post-Alexander period in West Asia, North Africa or Europe, ‘The Indian’ became a regular term for mahouts indicating employment of Indians’ in combat role. Even locals trained as mahouts later carried the name Indians.⁹ As to Indian soldiers fighting outside the country, Herodotus records a detachment of Indians against the Greeks in the Persian army at Plataea. A hundred years later, the army of Darius, the Persian king had a small Indian contingent from west of the Indus, with fifteen elephants against Alexander in the battle of Gaugamela.¹¹ In the middle ages, “fierce mercenaries of Kerala (Malabar) and Karnata (Mysore) found ready employment in the armies of many Indian and Sinhalese kings”.¹²

Indian Export of ‘Hardware’ and ‘Software’

This export of few mercenaries was an exception. But export of war elephants and its conception and underlying logistics of its use was no exception. It was rather a signal contribution from India. However, the larger issue of the absence of the urge for colonial expansion

outside the Indian subcontinent does not mean absence of military science and strategic statecraft. Rather, as we shall see, India exported both, the 'hardware' and 'software'. In other words, India did export both, intellectual work on statecraft, diplomacy and warcraft as also 'hardware' such as war elephants — an original copyright contribution or gift of India to the entire ancient world, like the battle tank of 20th and 21st centuries. Trautmann in his painstaking and rigorous research has shown that there was an Indian model of kingship within which, elephant capture and use were essential components. This model spread to the Southeast Asian kingdoms that are called 'Indianised', and it influenced the military practice of ancient peoples to the west, including the Persians, the Hellenistic kingdoms of Syria and Egypt, and Greeks, Carthaginians, Numidians, and Romans. Over thousands of years, from about 1000 BCE to the nineteenth century, this development took the Indian idea of war elephant as far as Spain and Java.¹²

In the intellectual domain or 'software', to the West and elsewhere, India exported Panchatantra, a condensed and simplified version of concepts and vocabulary of the Arthashastra, as a text book of statecraft and diplomacy.¹³ This text in its journey of transmission mutated into many languages with regional variations like the Kalila wa Dimna. In this regard, Amartya Sen writes:

"George Ifrah quotes a medieval Arab poet from Baghdad called al-Sabhadi, who said that there were "three things on which Indian nation prided itself: its method of reckoning, the game of chess, and the book titled Kalila wa Dimna [a collection of legends and fables]".¹⁴

Likewise, "Al-Adil of Baghdad, in his treatise on chess, praised the Indians for three original contributions to the word: the game of chess, the animal fables of the Kalia wa Dimna collection (from the

Sanskrit collections called Pancatantra), and the place-notation of numbers using zero as place-holder".¹⁵

Nitishastra of Kamandaka is a Gupta period successor text derived from the Arthashastra. Its transmission to south east is recorded as: "In the Sanskrit literature of Bali, it appears that the most popular work in the Island on polity is Kamandakiya Nitishastra, and all the Sanskrit books there extant are acknowledged to be the counterparts of purely Indian origin".¹⁶

Cultural Spread

Notwithstanding the export of the institution of war elephants and political cum strategic texts, what India did indeed achieve was an enduring spread to its east and west with cultural and philosophical ideas. Besides the Jataka tales of Buddha's life, India also transmitted algebra, zero, mathematics and astronomy. Further, Sheldon Pollock has coined the term 'Sanskrit cosmopolis' referring to the enormous geographic sweep of Indic culture for centuries spreading not as movement of conquerors, but as 'dharmic power' (the closest English equivalent may be the popular slang 'soft power'). Sheldon Pollock shows how ancient ideas in Sanskrit from India influenced regions beyond the subcontinental boundaries, but not by conquest.¹⁷

Thus, one can notice that there was no desire for conquest outside of India. Yet, Indian culture spread far and wide. This was not the case for the Europeans. Tagore and Aurobindo had mentioned this difference in their work. Tagore had warned India not to imitate the West. Tagore argued:

"We have to remember that in Europe, where peoples had their racial unity from the beginning and where natural resources were insufficient for the inhabitants, the civilisation has naturally taken the character of political and commercial

*aggressiveness. In former days, they organised and plundered, in the present age the same spirit continues — and they organise and exploit the whole world”.*¹⁸

Likewise, Aurobindo Ghose wrote:

*“At no time does India seem to have moved towards an aggressive military and political expansion beyond her own borders; no epic of world dominion, no great tale of far-borne invasion or expanding colonial empire has ever been written in the tale of Indian achievements. The sole great endeavour of expansion, of conquest, of invasion she attempted was the expansion of her culture, the invasion and conquest of the Eastern world by the Buddhistic idea and the penetration of her spirituality, art, and thought-force. And this was an invasion of peace... The idea of empire and even of world empire was not absent from the Indian mind, but its world was the Indian world and the object, the foundation of the imperial unity of its people”.*¹⁹

Conclusion

It is clear that in Indian history there was no need and desire for colonial expansion either for resources or to settle excess population. This could be called the dharmic tradition of India. This is one main reason as to why in Indian strategic culture today, ‘out of area operations’ are not the norm, except for humanitarian reasons like evacuation of Indian citizens or disaster relief or short military intervention in a troubled neighbourhood like liberation of Bangladesh in 1971 or intervention in Sri Lanka in 1987-1990. The Indian state has consciously chosen to send its military in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions. It ensures, through maritime cooperation and diplomacy, that the oceans and passages are free for use as a common heritage of mankind as per international law.

However, this does not mean that India punches below its weight or finds 'power and strategy hard to handle' or 'uses power merely as one means to demonstrate status rather than a tool to pursue interests' as some Western scholars seem to suggest as a veiled advice to behave like them.²⁰ Bhikhu Parekh in an article in the Indian Express of 10 January 2015, titled "Bapu and the Pravasi", argues, in the living spirit and tradition of MK Gandhi, that Indians living abroad tend to ignore the reality of India and only want India to mimic the West.²¹ Importantly, "India has its own rhythm, its own way of thinking and doing things. While it should learn from the advanced countries of the West, it cannot and should not mimic them. You should not try to shape it in the image of the country in which you are settled, a temptation Indian Americans sometimes find particularly difficult to resist [...] long-distance nationalism is a dangerous sentiment".²² The message is that let us build up and improve upon the rich Indic traditions.

It was not considered righteous to undertake colonial conquest. This continues to be the underlying principle and ethics of Indian foreign policy behaviour. In a globalised world, with rapid advances in world consciousness and institutions, technology and conventional, nuclear, chemical, biological weapons, and disruptive technologies, wars, especially wars for conquest, are futile institutions of the past. It is, thus, that the future of the world is best served by the contribution of historically and culturally derived Indian dharmic strategic culture.

Endnotes

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Evolution of Veteran Medical Care Support System in India

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Abstract

The article gives out the evolution of the veteran healthcare of the Indian armed forces post-independence till the start of the Ex-servicemen (ESM) Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) in 2003. Post-retirement benefits are part of terms of engagement of all militaries and are an incentive, as well as reward, for serving the country in difficult circumstances risking one's own life. In India post-independence, from almost no medical care except for disabled category, that too for selected few disabilities, the veteran medical care has passed through various stages like authorisation of medical treatment in service hospitals, Army Group Insurance (AGI) Medical Benefit Scheme covering high cost treatment not available in service hospitals and finally to ECHS which is a cashless and capless scheme and is one of the largest and efficient healthcare system for veterans in the in world.

Introduction

Post-retirement benefits are part of terms of engagement of all

militaries and are an incentive, as well as reward, for serving the country in difficult circumstances risking one's own life. Post 1962 Indo-China war, there was large-scale expansion of the army and the limited service hospitals were inadequate to provide medical care to veterans in addition to the expanded service clientele. Moreover, most of the service hospitals had few specialists and major costly treatment had to be undertaken

at private hospitals at very high cost. Case for introduction of special healthcare scheme for veterans was taken up repeatedly by the armed forces and veteran organisations. Various Committees were constituted by the government to examine the availability of medical facilities to veterans. However, it was not until 2003 that a viable and satisfactory Health Scheme (ECHS) was introduced for the Veterans.¹

The Evolution of Veteran Health Care

The major stages in the evolution of veteran medical care support system in India are given below. These stages were not distinct and stand alone as some of them merged into the next stage.

- (a) Medical Care through Public Health System (1947-1966).
- (b) Medical Care through Service Hospitals (1966-2003).
- (c) Army Group Insurance Medical Benefit Scheme (1991-2003).
- (d) ESM contributory Health Scheme (since 2003).

Medical Care through Public Health System

In pre-independence India, the government took full responsibility for medical care of disabled veterans and also of their rehabilitation. Disabilities were categorised as follows:

- (a) Loss of limb.
- (b) General medical and surgical disability.
- (c) Loss of speech.
- (d) Deafness.
- (e) Blindness and natural impairment of vision.
- (f) Pulmonary tuberculosis.
- (g) Mental diseases.

Post-independence, some of the above facilities were curtailed. No treatment was authorised for serious diseases, like pulmonary tuberculosis, leprosy and mental illness even if such diseases were attributable to military service if such treatment was not available from service sources. Veterans were to depend on public health system for medical care. The public health care system post-independence was at a nascent stage.

Considering the above data, veterans had virtually no medical care available. Moreover, it is to be borne in mind that most of the veterans were from rural areas and access to the very few existing public health facilities was very limited. Prevalence of communicable disease was very high at that time. Largely, there were no specific medical care facilities for veterans till 1966, when service medical facilities were made available to veterans with certain restrictions.

Medical Care through Service Hospitals (1966-2003)

In 1966, government liberalised the concessions towards veterans and their spouse for treatment from service hospitals.² Under these provisions, veterans and families, and families of deceased person drawing pension from defence estimates could avail free outpatient department (OPD) treatment and medicines from service hospitals. Sanction was also accorded for inpatient treatment subject to the following conditions:

- (a) That the disease is not incurable.
- (b) That the hospital accommodation could be made available from within the authorised number of beds and without detriment to the needs of serving personnel.
- (c) That the treatment will be limited to the facilities locally available.
- (d) No conveyance will be provided for journeys from the residence to the hospital and back.
- (e) No special nursing would be admissible.

(f) It is specifically laid down that the above concessions will not include treatment for pulmonary tuberculosis, leprosy, mental diseases, malignant diseases or any other disease for which treatment is not ordinarily available from the local military sources.

Veterans were dependent on the public health system for medical care except in limited cases as under:

- (a) Free medical treatment for specific disabilities in respect of ESM in receipt of disability pension.
- (b) Other Armed Forces pensioners could be admitted to Service hospitals only if accommodation was available and the Officer Commanding Station/Administrative Authority sanctioned admission. Specified hospital stoppages were to be paid. No out-door treatment was available to such pensioners.
- (c) Families of ESM were not entitled to any treatment out-door or indoor from service hospitals.

In 1983, Regulations for the Medical Services of the Armed Forces were framed superseding the Regulations for the Medical Services of the Armed Forces, 1962. Para 296 of the Regulation provides for 'Entitlement to Medical Attendance'. Relevant aspects of the entitlements are given below:

- (a) Ex-service personnel in receipt of a disability pension and ESM of the Indian State Forces in receipt of a disability pension from the Defence Services Estimates for a disability accepted as attributable to or aggravated by service with the Indian Armed Forces are entitled treatment as out-patient or in-patient in service hospitals.³ Treatment is authorised only for the disabilities for which pension has been granted excluding cases of pulmonary tuberculosis, leprosy and mental diseases and patients requiring any special treatment not ordinarily available from service sources, such as radiotherapy. Admission may be authorised for the purpose of observation to enable the medical authorities to arrive at a correct assessment of the degree of disability.

(b) Ex-service personnel invalidated out of service on account of pulmonary tuberculosis (TB) which has been accepted as attributable to/aggravated by service, and for which disability pension has been granted' may be admitted in Military Hospital (Cardio Thoracic Centre), Pune, if surgical intervention is required, on the recommendation of OC of an armed forces hospital, if a bed out of the ten TB beds reserved for this category of personnel were available.

Ex-service pensioners and the families of deceased service personnel drawing pension from defence estimates are entitled to free outpatient treatment in the nearest Armed Forces Hospital including the supply of medicine necessary for their treatment. In-patient treatment in Armed Forces Hospital being subject to the following conditions:

- (a) That the disease is not incurable.
- (b) The hospital accommodation could be made available within the authorised number of beds and without detriment to the needs of service personnel.
- (c) That the treatment will be limited to the facilities available locally.
- (d) No conveyance will be provided for journeys from the residence to the hospital and back.
- (e) No special nursing would be admissible.
- (f) For inpatient treatment, hospital stoppages as laid down will be paid.
- (g) The scope of the above concessions will not include treatment for pulmonary tuberculosis, leprosy, mental disease, malignant disease or any other disease for which treatment is not ordinarily available from local military sources.
- (h) These concessions will not be admissible to the service pensioners who are re-employed in Government/Semi-Government departments or other

public or private sector undertaking which provides medical facilities to their employees.

(i) For this purpose, family includes wife and unmarried children/step children/adopted children under 18 years of age who are dependent on the pensioners.⁴

In 1966, there were around 31 service hospitals all of which were located in the garrisons. The numbers of service hospitals have now increased to more than 100. There are various types of service hospitals depending on the dependency of the establishment. Various types of service hospitals are:

(a) **Section Hospitals.** Bed strength varying between 10 beds and 24 beds.

(b) **Peripheral Hospitals.** Bed strength varying between 25 and 99 beds calculated as 0.8% of the Garrison strength, generally without specialist facilities.

(c) **Mid Zone Hospitals.** Military Hospitals with a few basic specialties. Bed strength varies from 100 - 200 calculated as 1.5% of the Garrison strength plus 0.3% of the strength of dependent peripheral and mid zonal stations to cater for specialist beds.

(d) **Zonal Hospital.** At selected stations with Garrison strength of about 10,000 and above where specialist in the certain broad discipline such as Eye, ENT, Dermatology and Paediatric may also be available. The bed strength in such cases is generally upwards of 300 calculated as 1.5% of the Garrison strength as per KLP of the station plus 0.3% of the strength of dependent peripheral and mid zonal stations to cater for specialist beds.

(e) **Command Hospitals.** A Command Hospital, in addition to catering to the needs of local garrison, provides facilities for treatment in all the allied discipline such as Cardiology, Neurology and Nephrology. The bed strength of the hospital is calculated as 1.5% of the Garrison strength as per KLP of the station plus 0.2% of the

strength of all garrisons in the AOR of Command to provide for the specialist beds in all disciplines.

(f) **Army Hospital.** There is one Army Hospital which is meant for Research and Referral. In this kind of a hospital, in addition to the facilities available to Command hospital, a number of super specialists are also available.

Army Group Insurance Medical Benefit Scheme (1991-2003)

As given above, veterans were eligible for medical care from service hospitals since 1966. Though the scheme was meant to benefit all, only a few could avail the facility as service hospitals were very few and located in garrisons. In addition, a number of high cost medical treatment were not available in service hospitals and veterans had to spend a large amount of money which was usually unaffordable. There was an urgent need to cater for such high cost treatment. Some distress grant was available on case-to-case basis by AGI Fund (AGIF) and Kendriya Sainik Board (KSB) to cater for certain cases. But these funds were available only for few cases and re-imbursement was cumbersome, and often delayed, and wherein re-imbursement was granted, it was limited to a fraction of the actual expenditure. Though the case was being taken up regularly with the Government, there was no progress.

In order to address this dire need, the AGIF conceived a medical care scheme called Army Group Insurance Medical Benefit Scheme [AGI (MBS)]. In the absence of any progress to introduce healthcare scheme for veterans by the government, Army introduced AGI (MBS) in 1991. This scheme was contributory in nature and covered high cost treatment up to a specified amount at approved hospitals.

Third party insurers like General Insurance Corporation (GIC) were approached to work out a tailor-made scheme for the AGI members, but no one was willing to take up such a scheme without any experience. The Consulting Actuary also expressed their reservations on the scheme without any past experience or data. The pattern of anticipated payouts could not be clearly estimated due to far too many variables involved

in the operation without significant experience and data. A number of existing similar scheme run by various organisations like GIC, CGHS, Apollo Health Scheme, SAIL, Railways and Cancer Society were studied and incorporating best suitable practices, AGI (MBS) was formalised. The scheme was to be implemented with effect from 01 April 1991.

The following diseases involving high cost treatment/surgery were covered under scheme:

- (a) Cardiology Treatment including Angiography, Angioplasty, By-pass surgery, Valve Surgery/replacement, Insertion of Pace Maker.
- (b) Cancer Treatment including investigative procedure leading to definitive diagnosis and treatment, Chemotherapy, Radiotherapy, Surgery, Combination of any of the above.
- (c) Kidney Transplant, including such preliminary treatment procedure to make the patient fit to undergo transplantation. Donor was to be arranged by recipient.

The MBS covered all service pensioners retiring after 01 April 1991 and their spouse. All members who were retiring with service pension only were made eligible to join the scheme. The scheme did not apply to retiring personnel of DSC and TA.

The members were entitled for the following maximum benefits for both member and spouse under the scheme:

- (a) Heart Disease - Rs 75,000/-
- (b) Cancer - Rs 50,000/-
- (c) Kidney Transplant - Rs 1,00,000/-
- (d) Maximum benefit available together for member and spouse during the entire period of validity was Rs 1 lakh.

The member was entitled to avail the benefit of the Scheme for a period of 15 years from the date of retirement or up to the age of 70 years whichever was earlier. Should a member die during the period of validity, the spouse would

continue to be entitled to draw the benefits of the scheme till the period of validity of the member as shown in the Identity Card. The major portion of the cost of surgery/treatment as laid by AGIF was borne by the AGIF; a small percentage of cost is to be borne by the member as under:

	AGIF	Member or Spouse
(a) Officers	85%	15%
(b) JCOs	90%	10%
(c) OR	95%	5%

Amount given below was recovered by AGIF as one-time non-refundable subscription from the members from their maturity benefits at the time of retirement:

(a) Officers	-	Rs 3,000/-
(b) JCOs/OR	-	Rs 1,500/-

The existing medical facilities being provided in the Service Hospitals were to be continued for ESM as the scheme was catering for high cost surgery/treatment in Heart, Cancer and Renal diseases only and that too for service pensioners retiring after 01 Apr 91.

ESM Contributory Health Scheme (2003 Onwards)

The government sanctioned ESM Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) in 2003, a capless and cashless scheme meeting long time aspirations of veteran community and providing improved health care facilities.⁵

All the Committees and Commissions appointed to study the medical care of veterans brought out in their findings and recommendations that the medical care situation of veterans was grossly inadequate and recommended immediate improvement. Meanwhile, a number of ESM associations jointly knocked the doors of Supreme Court of India (WP No 210 of 1999) seeking direction to the government to provide full medical care to the veterans on the grounds of its being a fundamental right and also on the basis of the legally recognised doctrine of 'Legitimate Expectation' since they were

holistically cared for while in service and suddenly could not be deprived of such a facility without any viable alternative.

The Hon'ble Supreme Court held that the veterans did deserve a privileged treatment due to the nature of service that had been rendered by them. Extract of the ruling is reproduced below:

“[...] The petitioners have rightly stated that they have served in the Army, Air Force and Navy of the Union of India during cream period of youth, putting their lives to high risks and improbabilities. As a mark of respect and gratitude, therefore, they must be provided medical services after retirement. It is indeed true that men and women in uniform are the pride of the nation and protectors of the country. It is because of their eternal vigil those ordinary citizens are able to sleep peacefully every night. For it is these men and women guarding the frontiers of our nation that makes our interiors safe. They, therefore, are entitled to privileged treatment [...].”

After detailed deliberation, proposal for a contributory health scheme was placed before the cabinet. The scheme was to make maximum use of the existing resources of the armed forces including land and infrastructure. Medical care was to be provided to veterans, spouse and dependants. Each member was to pay a fixed one-time contribution. The proposal was referred by the cabinet to a Group of Ministers (GOM) comprising of Min of Defence (MoD), Finance, Health and External affairs. The summary of recommendations by GOM was as under:

(a) GOM gave 'In Principle Approval' to provide medical care to ESM, their widows and next of kin of deceased soldiers. It also accepted the requirement of providing medical care facilities to the rural interiors where there is a sizable concentration of ESM. The GOM accepted the necessity and desired quick implementation of the ECHS at stations, to be decided by Army HQ, be made at the earliest.

(b) 120 Polyclinics/MI Rooms/ Authorised Medical Attendant (AMA) station wise were approved to be established ranging from Type "A" to "E" based on population of ESM. These were further increased later.

(c) The GOM stressed that stations where there are no medical facilities or negligible medical facilities be established on priority.

(d) It was proposed that a review be carried out by MoD two years after the successful implementation of the scheme as planned, for further expansion of the scheme in remaining stations and to carry out modification if found necessary.

(e) Central organisation be established at Army HQ and Regional organisation be created to function with the existing Static Headquarters in various stations to monitor the scheme.

(f) Civil medical facilities/Hospitals be empanelled for treatment of patients beyond the treatment capacity of polyclinics.

(g) Reimbursement of cost of investigation, diagnostics, medicines, hospitalisation incurred by patients referred by polyclinics.

(h) ECHS to be implemented by a project organisation, which will function under the MoD.

(i) Maximum possible use of existing resources including infrastructure and land and MoD be empowered to give such sanctions.

(j) ECHS will be contributory scheme and members would not be authorized Fixed Medical Allowance (FMA).

The cabinet approval to the recommendations of GOM was accorded in Oct 2001 and the Scheme came into being through a detailed Government Order. The salient aspects of the Government Order are given below⁶ :

(a) The term beneficiaries included all ESM in receipt of pension, family pension, their dependents i.e. spouse, legitimate children and wholly dependent parents. Sons with permanent disability of any kind would also be eligible for lifelong medical treatment.

(b) ECHS is a "Contributory" scheme. The scheme is voluntary for the pensioners who retired before 31 Mar 2003 and compulsory for those who would retire on or after 01 Apr 2003. Payment was envisaged as a onetime contribution. (For old retirees, provision of payment in the form of three installments was catered for). Retired personnel joining the scheme would cease to draw the FMA of Rs.100/- after joining the scheme.

(c) Medical care to be provided by way of setting up of New Polyclinics and Augmented Armed Forces Clinics at 227 stations in a phased manner.

(d) Subject to load of the authorised personnel, it was made mandatory that all available facilities in Services Hospital in the same station, nearest or any other station should be utilised. After exhausting the spare capacity of the Service Hospitals outsourcing to empanelled private/government facilities was to have been resorted to.

(e) Reimbursement will be admissible either directly to patients or to the facilities contracted for cost of medicine, Diagnostic Tests, consultation, hospitalisation.

(f) Emergency treatment can also be taken in any empanelled facility directly even without a referral from ECHS. The cost of such treatment will be fully reimbursed by the government to the concerned facility. In extreme emergency like accidental trauma etc. the patient could go to any facility which may/may not be empanelled. Ex post facto sanction of the same will be accorded by Central Organisation in New Delhi.

(g) The scheme is implemented by a project organisation comprising of a Central Organisation at Delhi and Regional

Organisation created out of existing resources of Army, Navy and Air Force at other pre-designated locations.

Fixed Medical Allowance

Fifth pay commission recommended a FMA of Rs 100 per month. The recommendation was accepted and veterans were given FMA of Rs 100/- per month w.e.f. 01 Jan 96.⁷ With the introduction of ECHS in 2003, the FMA was stopped for ECHS members.⁹ FMA has been reintroduced for ECHS members w.e.f. 01 Nov 18.⁸ Members who do not have any ECHS polyclinic/Service Hospital/ Upgraded MI Room for treatment in their district will be eligible for opting for FMA. Once a member opts for drawing FMA, he will not be eligible for OPD treatment in polyclinics/ service hospitals/ MI Rooms. However, he will be eligible for IPD treatment. FMA has been increased to Rs 1000/- per month.⁹

Conclusion

Medical care for India's veterans evolved over the years to one of the largest and efficient healthcare system for veterans in the world. From almost no medical care except for disabled category, that too for selected few disabilities, the veteran medical care has passed through various stages like authorisation of medical treatment in service hospitals, AGI Medical Benefit Scheme covering high cost treatment not available in service hospitals and finally to ECHS which is a cashless and capless scheme providing medical care to approximately 52 lakh veterans and their dependents; through a network of 30 Regional Centres, 427 Poly Clinics and more than 2000 empaneled medical facilities throughout the country besides the service hospitals. Persistent and continuous efforts have been made to improve and streamline ECHS by enhancement of capabilities and functionalities of the scheme by policy initiatives and infusion of technologies backed by sound budgetary support.

Endnotes

¹ Government of India Ministry of Defence letter No 22(1)/01/US(WE)/D(Res) dt 30 Dec 2002.

² Government of India Ministry of Defence letter No 16307/DGAFMS/DG-3A/D(AG-II) dt 14 Oct 1966.

³ Regulations for Medical Services in the Armed Forces (RMSAF)-1983, Page 64, Para 296 (O).

⁴ Regulations for Medical Services in the Armed Forces (RMSAF)-1983, Page 64, Para 296 (O) (C) (iii).

⁵ Government of India Ministry of Defence letter No 22(1)/01/US(WE)/D(Res) dt 30 Dec 2002.

⁶ Government Order No 22(1)/01/US(WE)/D (Res) dated 30 Dec 2002.

⁷ Government of India Ministry of letter No 22(1)/01/ US (WE)/D(Res) dt 30 Dec 2002.

⁸ Government of India Ministry of letter No 22 (01)/2011/WE/D (Res 1) dt 01 Nov 18.

⁹ Government of India Ministry of letter No 1 (01)/2009-D (Pen/Policy) dt 29 Aug 2018.

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Neighbours Yet Strangers: A Critical Analysis of Naga Peace Accord

Major General VS Ranade®

Abstract

The signing of the 'Framework Agreement' between the Government of India (GOI) and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isaac-Muivah) (NSCN-IM) on 03 August 2015, that pledges to restore 'pride and prestige' of the Nagas, took place after more than six-and-a-half-decades of violence and militarisation of the Naga society. The Agreement has been signed at a moment when the Naga society is marked by enormous fragmentation from within. The recent Accord, which has remained silent on those issues, however, has shifted the Naga national discourse from exclusive sovereignty of the Nagas in Nagaland to that of shared sovereignty of the Nagas within the Union of India. Two aspects of the Agreement have become public. It appears that the Indian Government has accepted the 'uniqueness of Naga history and culture' and the NSCN-IM has accepted the primacy of the Indian Constitution. The NSCN-IM had submitted a 20-point Charter of Demand in which it had suggested that relationship between India and Nagalim would be based on the concept of shared sovereignty and the principle of 'asymmetric federalism'. The

accord has far reaching consequences not only for Nagaland but also for other North East (NE) states. The potentiality of the 'Framework Agreement' to restore peace in Nagaland needs to be examined by a critical scrutiny.

The Origin

The Naga tribes are reported to have migrated to their present

places from further east a few thousand years ago. The Naga settlements in the region are mentioned in the Royal Chronicles of Manipur and also in the Ahom Buranjies.¹ The British who were acquainted with Nagas since in the early 19th century (1832) studied the different tribes of Naga people. The Nagas are different in many aspects from other tribes in Northeast India² and are found in Nagaland, four districts in Manipur, one district in Assam and two districts in Arunachal Pradesh. In addition to this, many Nagas inhabit Western parts of Myanmar (Burma). In Myanmar, Nagas are concentrated in the Somrah Tract bordering India, which comes under Kachin state and Saging Sub-division. SR Tohring lists 66 Naga tribes. The 1991 census of India listed 35 Naga groups as Scheduled Tribes: 17 in Nagaland, 15 in Manipur and 3 in Arunachal Pradesh.³

There are a number of theories of Naga scholars that state that their origin was either indigenous or that they came from Burma or Thailand. In these theories they were called 'Nok', 'Na Ka' (Burmese "pierced Ear") or 'Nakari'. The British anglicised their name into Naga. These theories have created more confusion to the whole problem. The Naga struggle for the independence started well before the independence in 1947 and in some form still continues. The present canvas is somewhat different than what it was when it started. A lot of

water has flown down the river Kohima and the environment has also changed. The Naga struggle, however, maintains the original concept but with altered or watered-down narrative.

Framework Agreement: 2015

The Framework Agreement was signed by the government and the Naga leaders in 2015, making it a landmark agreement which is likely to pave way for permanent solution to the age-old Naga problem. Signing of the 'Framework Agreement' between GOI and NSCN-IM, on 03 August 2015, is perceived as a step towards restoration of peace in Nagaland in India.⁴ The present Framework Agreement is in continuation of the series of peace accords over a period of time but will it succeed or will it fail again like other (Nine Point Agreement in 1947; Sixteen Point Agreement in 1960 and Shillong Accord in 1975) agreements?

The idea of a "Framework Agreement" is not new. In fact, during the talks held in Bangkok, in December 2006, both the GOI and the NSCN-IM had agreed on a broad framework to define a relationship that could end Naga insurgency. Among the basic principles that were proposed included recognising the uniqueness of Naga history and culture. The NSCN-IM had submitted a 20-point Charter of Demand in which it had suggested that relationship between India and Nagalim would be based on the concept of shared sovereignty⁵ and the principle of 'asymmetric federalism'.⁶ It also asked for a separate Naga Constitution within the framework of the Constitution of India. The NSCN-IM had recommended that the separate constitution of Nagalim should be included 'in a separate chapter' of the Indian Constitution. The NSCN-IM also wanted the Agreement to set out the division of competencies between the Union of India and Nagaland, the details of which was to be incorporated in the Constitutions of both India and Nagaland.⁷

On shared sovereignty, NSCN (I-M) general secretary Thuingaleng Muivah said, “Both negotiating sides, however, agreed to share the competencies by respecting people’s wishes on “sharing sovereign power” as defined in the competencies where both sides agreed on a peaceful co-existence. Under the devolution in UK constitution, Scotland has a separate parliament, supreme court and greater autonomy and Hong Kong and Taiwan have separate flags and constitutions. The idea of shared sovereignty is not new, however, the Naga groups have to analyse the consequences of this special arrangement because Nagas need Indian help in many spheres.

Two aspects of the Framework Agreement have become public. It appears that the Indian Government has accepted the ‘uniqueness of Naga history and culture’ and the NSCN–IM has accepted the primacy of the Indian Constitution.⁹ Confusion persists on the two critical issues of Naga sovereignty and integration of the Naga ancestral domain. On the issue of sovereignty, it appears that NSCN-IM has moved away from their earlier declared position that, “We cannot accept the Indian constitution”. To be fair, Muivah had also said that, “We are not totally opposed to having some important sections of the Indian constitution incorporated in the Naga constitution”.

The final Accord will spell out permanent resident status for the Nagas, like in Jammu and Kashmir. Only permanent residents will have the right to vote and acquire land in Naga territory. The union government will create an autonomous district council with financial autonomy, on the lines of the Bodoland Territorial Council, for the four hill districts of Manipur (Senapati, Tamenglong, Chandel and Ukhrul). Whether it will be done under 6th Schedule of the Constitution or a state is yet to be discussed.⁹

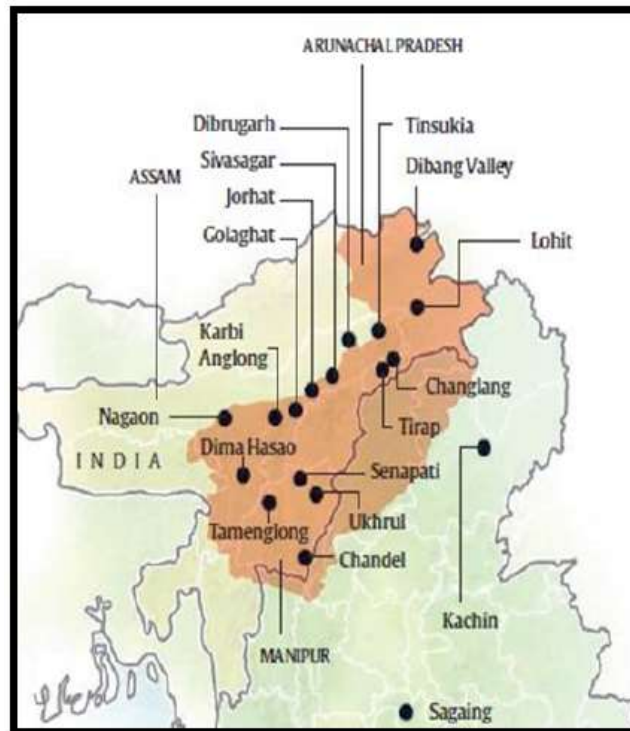
The Peace Accord was to be signed by 31 October 2019 but has got delayed. The GOI and the Naga representatives have agreed to have a separate flag which may be allowed for non-government purposes and both sides have agreed to drop the Naga constitution for the time being.¹⁰

The exact details of the Framework Agreement have not yet been made public but there is much excitement on the final outcome as the aspirations and territorial integrity of Naga settled areas of states neighbouring Nagaland is at stake.

Analysis

The Accord has far reaching consequences not only for Nagaland but also for other North Eastern (NE)¹¹ states where it would pave the way for lasting peace. Few issues need ironing out and the most important is aspirations of the people, especially Naga population in different states other than Nagaland and about autonomy/shared sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The Naga leadership, over a period of time, has toned down their demands on various issues, like sovereignty/constitution/separate flag/autonomy etc., clearly indicating their intention of resolving the issue and restoring peace to this age-old insurgency termed as 'mother of all insurgencies'. Speaking at the 69th Independence Day of the Nagas in Dimapur, Muivah did not address the issue of integration directly. Muivah has said that the Framework Agreement would pave the way for the final accord. While promising that 'Nagas will have their rights' he added that, "We should also respect the rights of the neighboring states".¹²



Greater Nagalim, as Originally Sought by NSCN(IM)¹³

Presently, the environment and the thinking have changed and even the old guard has understood the change in mind set of their rank and file, and second rung leadership. The splitting of the mother organisation, i.e. NSCN¹⁴, is weaning the charisma of the yesteryear's leaders and probably is the reason for the watered-down demands in a bid to come to a deal. The NSCN (KK), a breakaway group from NSCN (K) in 2011, has a ceasefire agreement with the Centre.¹⁵ The charismatic authority of Isak Swu and Thuingaleng Muivah is waning, especially with the youth. They are too old and may not be in sync with the aspirations of the present generation. They realise the futility of growing less charismatic and their authority does

not diffuse a positive energy with regard to bringing about social solidarity among the Naga tribes.¹⁶

Strategic Dimension

During the last five years, the government at the centre has laid more focus into 'Look East' policy and modified it to 'Act East' in order to bolster the economic status of the NE states. This policy should give impetus to other initiatives like the economic corridors and connectivity projects mooted by forums such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC); the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Forum; and so on. These, along with the special accelerated road development programmes for NE India, frontier highways in Arunachal Pradesh and the development of trilateral highways¹⁷, promise development in the region. Delay in the finalisation of the accord may affect these initiatives. Any local protest or agitation against the Accord by the constituents of other states i.e., Arunachal/Manipur/Assam/Nagaland, who fear losing territory, may jeopardise the 'Act East' venture. The launch pad i.e. 'North Eastern States' or 'the fulcrum' – 'Manipur' have strategic bearing on the engagements with Myanmar and other Southeast Asian countries on infrastructure development and security related subjects. The NE Region in general and Manipur in particular have the potential in the matrix of Look East/Make in East concept. To ensure the policy takes off, there is an urgent need to bring the East closer home geographically and attitudinally.

The solutions are not easy to come but we need to make a start to get all warring factions and the political parties on board to end this strife. Once the Naga integration is handled to an acceptable level in time bound frame work, the rest of the dominoes will fall in place.

Regional Security Equation

The North Eastern states are vulnerable due to the ongoing issues affecting the state and the overall security equation of the region. The non-state actors, outside players and the warring disgruntled factions within the region make it unstable and vulnerable to outside interventions. The strategy in the region should be to address all the factions simultaneously and come to some acceptable solutions and continue discussions on the contentious issues in the background of peace. The government interlocutors have reportedly developed a consensus for discussing this further with the state governments of Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh.

A Naga Peace Accord has far reaching security implications for the entire Northeast. It is being seen as the game changer in ensuring everlasting peace and paving way for the future development of the region. The government has a path well set where it got Bodoland Peace Accord signed, thereby inspiring other leaders to follow suit. The government would be contemplating to approach the non-talk faction of Paresh Baruah's United Liberation Front of Asom-Independent (ULFA (I)) in Assam and Meitei insurgent leader RK Meghan in Manipur to come forward while the Suspension of Operations (SoO) in Manipur with Kukis is already in force. The abolition of Article 370 and introduction of citizens' amendment bill is likely to have some repercussions. The Union Home Minister Mr Amit Shah addressing the 68th Plenary Session of North Eastern Council, at Administrative Staff College in Guwahati on 08 Sept 2019, had said that, "Article 370 was clearly temporary in nature but Article 371¹⁸ is about special provisions in the North East and there is a vast difference between the two. Shah further said that, "I have clarified in Parliament that this is not going to happen and I am saying it again today in the presence of eight chief ministers of North East that Narendra Modi government will not tamper with Article 371 in North Eastern states as the Opposition tried to project".¹⁹

The government is very clear in its aim to reach out to NE states to resolve all the issues amicably and set in an attitudinal

change and bring them closer. The region is porous and open to interference from non-state actors with external influences and with such vulnerable issues pending it has a security angle to it. North Eastern states together form a launch pad to Southeast Asian region and are a major player in Act East policy. Therefore, a holistic approach has been set in motion to bring home, ULFA (I) and Meitei groups in Manipur along with Naga integration after signing the Bodo Accord. All these are interconnected to Naga integration issue and overall security of the region.

Conclusion and Way Ahead

The Naga peace process is the major initiative in the NE. If seen critically, it has an all-round effect on the lives of all the states and promises peace and security. Naga movement within its ranks is the “clash of ideologies” between old guard and young Turks. Therefore, even the leadership wants to come to consensus within all Naga people, organisations and all factions of Naga society and actors in the play. The only other insurgency in the NE, in Manipur, has become more of an industry rather than any ideology backed focus. However, Manipur has ethnic issues more than any insurgent issues which need to be handled at a different plane and level. The Naga peace process will have effect on the region as well as our engagements with Myanmar in particular. The following issues merit serious consideration in order to address the issue:

- Implementable Confidence Building Agreement—a prelude to Final Naga Peace Agreement—with all states and actors included to the process to bring to rest the concerns of the states.
- Time bound plan to implement certain non-contentious and implementable issues. The Accord should not be derailed or delayed for want of decision on few issues while others can be implemented.

- Inclusive approach and consensus to be arrived at for all contentious issues in a time bound manner.
- Maintain territorial integrity of the states.
- Simultaneous handling and commencement of talks with players in Assam and Manipur to arrive at convergence point to bring peace in the NE region.
- Special Economic Package to the entire region for infrastructure development and kick start the Act East Policy.²⁰

The Naga Peace Accord is the main issue which is being seen as turning point in the troubled history of the NE. The NE region plays an important role in the Look East and Act East Policy. Much of India's Look East Policy involves Southeast Asian countries through Myanmar, which is the only Southeast Asian country that shares a border with India and is seen as India's gateway to Southeast Asia. This is the opportunity which must be seized by both GOI and the leaders to 'ink' the deal as fast as possible. It has not only regional but strategic implications.

Endnotes

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³ U. A. Shimray Naga population and integration movement. (Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2007), pp. 25–33.

⁴ Prof Akhil Ranjan Dutta, "The Naga National Struggle, 'Framework Agreement' and the Peace Prospects", Space and Culture, India, Volume 3, Number 2.2 (2015): p 6.

⁵ Shared and pooled. Just as the office of head of state can be vested jointly in several persons within a state, the sovereign jurisdiction over a single political territory can be shared jointly by two or more consenting powers, notably in the form of a condominium. The idea of “shared sovereignty” is relatively new in political theory. It envisages a federal set up where sovereignty is shared between the Centre and federating units and the federal government has limited powers over the internal affairs of the federating unit. It also considers granting of dual citizenship. Under the Indian constitution the states do not enjoy internal sovereignty. It does not grant dual citizenship.

⁶ Asymmetric federalism or asymmetrical federalism is found in a federation or confederation in which different constituent states possess different powers: one or more of the substates has considerably more autonomy than the other substates, although they have the same constitutional status.

⁷ Tapan Kumar Bose, “Indo-Naga Framework Agreement: The Apprehensions and Expectations” Catch News November 24, 2015, p 2.

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⁹ Namrata Biji Ahuja, “The Secret Deal”, The Week, April 23, 2017. <https://www.theweek.in/theweek/cover/the-secret-deal.html>

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¹¹ The Abbreviation NE is used both for ‘North-Eastern’ or North East.

¹² Anurabh Saikia, op sit.

¹³ Accessed Jun 08, 2020 from <https://www.studyiq.com/blog/naga-peace-talk-burning-issues-free-pdf/>

¹⁴ The Mother organisation NSCN over the years have split into the factions as follows: NSCN (IM) – Isak Muivah; NSCN (K) – Khaplang, split from IM; NSCN(KK) – Khole Kitovi split from K, Khole; Konyak & Kitovi Zhimoni; NSCN (NK) – Neopao – Kitovi ; NSCN(R) – Reformation; NSCN(K)(YA) – original

Khaplang(K) and now (YA) – Yung Aung. After Khango Konyak was sacked from Khaplang group.

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¹⁷ Raile Rocky Ziipao “Look/Act East Policy, Roads and Market Infrastructure in North-East India”, *Strategic Analysis*, 42:5 (2018), 476-489.

¹⁸ Article 371, falls under PART XXI titled ‘Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions’ of the Indian Constitution. It extends to 11 states — Maharashtra, Gujarat, Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, Andhra Pradesh, Sikkim, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Goa and Karnataka. It outlines the special provisions in place for them. Six are from the Northeast where the provisions aim to preserve tribal culture. (<https://www.deccanherald.com/national/after-jks-art-370-focus-on-art-371-special-states-753986.html>)- 13 Aug 2019.

¹⁹ “Centre will not touch Article 371, says Amit Shah in Assam”, *Indian Express*, Sep 08, 2019. Accessed Jun 07, 2020 from <https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2019/sep/08/centre-will-not-touch-article-371-says-amit-shah-in-assam-2030690.html>

²⁰ Maj Gen VS Ranade, “Manipur a Pivot in Look East - Act East Policy: Challenges and way ahead”, *Issue Brief No 196, Nov 2019, CLAWS*. The author outlines the steps required to be taken in North East to make Act East policy work and the economic & developmental package which is required. The resolution of Naga Peace Process will have direct bearing on this policy.

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Seven Days Without Fire!

Colonel Bhupinder Shahi (Retd)[@]

Abstract

This personal narrative is about the author's experience in a super high altitude area, akin to the Siachen Glacier, while serving with the Ladakh Scouts. It brings out how in such areas even a seemingly minor issue like the inability to light a stove becomes life-threatening. To the extent that as in this case, superhuman efforts have to be made — to provide fire!

The other day I read a story of the Ladakh Scout 'Nunnus'

surviving on milk powder and will power in the Siachen Glacier². This reminded me of another six Indian Army soldiers who held a post in the Siachen Glacier in a similar situation. It made me nostalgic. I could not help but share my reminiscence of those days, remember those gallant warriors, and an episode where for them it was, seven days without fire.

This happened in Sub Sector *Hanifuddin* (SSH), post the Kargil War. During 'Op Vijay' I was serving with Ladakh Scouts. At that time, Ladakh Scouts had two wings, called Karakoram and Indus Wings. I was posted with Karakoram Wing and we were all sent to *Turtuk* to relieve 11 Rajputana Rifles which had just recaptured some features there. We had a huge responsibility of holding the SSH in *Turtuk*. SSH was named after Major Hanifuddin of 11 Rajputana Rifles, who attained martyrdom evicting Pakistan Army from this sector. SSH was as tough as the Siachen Glacier. We ourselves had done some hard fighting and recaptured major peaks in the *Batalik* sector.

I had previous experience of serving in Siachen Glacier way back in 1992-93 with 20 Jammu & Kashmir Rifles. Due to shortage of officers, I was not only Company Commander but also Post Commander of a satellite post, at an altitude of 18500

ft, called *Saddle* captured from 3 Northern Light Infantry of the Pakistan Army.

In winters, movement becomes very difficult here. Move from Company Headquarters to platoon and section posts was on glaciers full of ice and crevasses. Blizzards and avalanches were frequent. It was so cold that limbs refused to work and frostbite was very common in spite of taking all precautions. All one saw was white, whether by day or night. The only noise one heard was of firing and wind. No amount of training can prepare you for this. It is sheer will power which pulls you through and one has to see it to believe it. No one had occupied these defences before, so we were using Pakistani bunkers to live in. This was the Indian Army's first winter in this sector and that is why the Karakoram Wing of Ladakh Scouts was inducted. Ladakhi troops were best suited for such a demanding and challenging role.

By the end of September 1999, the first sign of the incoming winter was obvious. The Karakoram Wing was frantically building tracks and dumping loads of food and equipment. As winter intensified, the area became even more prone to avalanches. I had seven super high-altitude posts under me and means of communication were very poor because of difficult terrain. Winter had set in early but we were prepared. We had stocked adequate ration, ammunition and other necessary stores. We also had enough captured weapons and ammunition of Pakistan, which we were using against them. The routine on these remote, inaccessible posts was to dominate the Line of Control (LoC) and keep the enemy suppressed. Living on top of a cliff is full of dangers and challenges. Everyone had a personal stove that was used to melt snow to provide water for all purposes including for morning ablutions. Open latrines were perched on a steep cliff. A fellow soldier always used to stand guard so that the person occupying the hot seat did not slip to his death. Eatables included items like cake, biscuit and chocolates, which were rock hard. To drink juice we had to spend much fuel, time and energy to melt it, as it was always frozen.

As Pakistan had held this post so the enemy artillery fire was always accurate. It turned the once beautiful white sheet of ice to black potholes and craters of different sizes. Shelling was a regular phenomenon. Whenever we heard the loud whistle of the first shell coming in, we used to rush and take shelter in ice caves. Shelling did little damage as often shells flew wide of their target and got buried in thick, soft snow. We were used to shelling as it happened every day.

There was a post called 'Rockfall' under my command, which was at higher altitude. It was commanded by a Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO), Naib Subedar (Nb Sub) Tsering Angchuk from Shey village in Ladakh. This post was isolated and got totally cut off during winters. Communication was through radio, which also got through with great difficulty. One day I got a message from Nb Sub Tsering that the post was without FIRE. They literally had no source to light up fire as one of the enemy shells had destroyed the reserve stores. An oil lamp, which was always kept lighted up, also smoked out. No matchbox or lighter was left. They had been without fire for the last two days. I informed my Commanding Officer (CO), Colonel Dinesh Naikwade, a Kargil war hero, about it. He assured me that he will do something about it by sending a helicopter and will get the required stores dropped.

In the evening report, I informed my post commander through radio that we were on the job and would do the needful in a day or so. On the third day, an army helicopter did make an effort to fly close to the post but was fired upon by the Pakistanis. The pilot had to return back without dropping the stores. Now we were in a precarious situation. I spoke to my CO and suggested to send a patrol as we had highly qualified mountaineers amongst us. We also had the best of the equipment.

Three days had passed and another few days were required to open the foot route to Rockfall. On the fourth day, a go ahead was given to us. I came down to the Company HQs, which was a five hours walk from my post. A fully trained team was already waiting. The CO had also reached there. We

hugged and exchanged our notes. A quick briefing was conducted. A team of seven qualified Ladakh Scouts *Jawans* was ready, fully geared up and equipped with all emergency items. On the fifth day (without fire), we left at three in the morning as it was a safe time and chances of avalanches were minimal. We set up on the scree with long line of men all roped up. We had sleeping mats, two-man tents, ice axes, ropes and crampons and survival rations. Thus, we started our long arduous journey carrying match boxes, lighters and some veggies for our buddies who were without fire at an isolated cut off post.

The climb was steep from the moment we started the ascent towards Rockfall post. We were climbing almost vertically, gaining in height with each step we took. There was no route as the existing one was buried deep inside the snow and pink markers were not visible. Our steps were slow as the leading scout had to find the route in dark, and beat the snow for the rest of us to follow. I was walking at the fourth place. The moment the scout was tired, the last man used to take his place. The going was slow but it got progressively worse. At one point, I realised that we were climbing virtually on the shoulder of the glacier. Rocks of the size of small huts were covered with snow and were not visible to us. Many of us slipped into these ice holes and were pulled out by others. Our move was further delayed as we had orders to camp the moment we got day-lighted. We were scared of avalanches as the complete route was avalanche prone. The moment we used to put weight on the snow, the ice under us used to crack and make ominous noises. We literally crawled up on our hands and knees. This way the weight of the body got divided and chances of triggering an avalanche was reduced. This was the safest way to move as taught by our *Ladakhi* troops. Thankfully, we had no wind that day. We set up our camp at the base of a cliff and this place provided marginal protection against the wind. We took all safety precautions and I informed my CO. We all were exhausted and we immediately crawled into our sleeping bags, to rest in our two man tents.

The next night, we started at the same time. We had prior information from the CO that the post had been contacted and they had been informed that a patrol, with the company commander, is on its way. Traversing through snow, and gaining altitude, we took almost three hours to reach the base of Rockfall post. This was also the half link. The link where patrols from both the posts used to meet, exchanged stores and returned back. We halted and created space for all of us to rest. We had our breakfast and one of the soldiers melted ice for making tea. We could see the crest on which was the 'post without fire'. The climb would take another two hours as we had to fix ropes. Alternatively, to save time we looked for the previously fixed ropes which were buried deep inside the snow. We had no luck in locating the ropes. New ropes were fixed to climb the ice wall. The moment we finished climbing the ice wall, we saw post commander Tsering Angchuk standing with his four men. He had descended down to receive all of us. We hugged and rested, exchanged all the stores which we had brought up for the post. The '*Nunus*' all looked fine. He gave me a report that all the men on the Rockfall post were in good shape and morale was very high, some of them just wanted some leave.

I inquired from Nb Sub Tsering Angchuk as to how did he manage the post without FIRE and how they survived? He said that they ate raw Maggie noodles, tinned food, biscuits, almonds and nuts. They also ate ice / snow as they couldn't melt it to drink water. They mixed snow with milk powder to get some taste and ate snow balls. They avoided eating tinned meat and egg powder. Frankly, they did not miss much because they hardly felt hungry and preferred to satisfy themselves with all the other options. I made the post commander speak to my CO on radio set. The patrol was to return back to base, so without wasting much time, I just hugged all the five soldiers and with the battle cry of "*Ki Ki so so Lahar gyalo*"³ I said goodbye to the troops. I told them to preserve the radio set batteries which I had got along with me. We moved back to Company HQs after giving an 'all ok' report to my CO over the radio set.

All appreciated the way the post commander kept his cool, managed his men and did not have any casualty in such a hostile place without 'Fire'. The descent to the HQs was fast and easy. We had the route marked and we made it back in one day. We were exhausted, tired and frozen but extremely satisfied.

Sadly, three of the six later perished in an avalanche on 13 Jan 2000 on way down for leave.

Self and Sub Angchuk still meet whenever I am in Leh.

Endnotes

¹ In Bodhi language means 'younger brother' and in Ladakh Scouts the term used to address soldiers.

² AVM Arjun Subramaniam (Retd), "Surviving on milk powder and willpower, six Indian soldiers held a peak on Siachen for half a year", The Print, Apr 13. 2018. <https://theprint.in/opinion/surviving-on-milk-powder-and-willpower-six-indian-soldiers-held-a-peak-on-siachen-for-half-a-year/49282/>

³ This is a war cry of the Ladakh Scouts which can be translated as "victory to the gods".

@Colonel Buphinder Singh Shahi retired after 27 years of service with 15 & 20 Jammu & Kashmir Rifles, Ladakh Scouts and the National Security Guard. He is presently a Senior General Manager with Cox & Kings, a job which enables him to continue his passion of travelling to forbidding areas.

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Short Reviews of Recent Books

The Fragility of Order: Essays in Honour of KPS Gill. *Edited by Ajai Sahni, (New Delhi: Institute of Conflict Management, 2019), Pages 345, Price – Rs. 2500/-, ISBN 9789387809734*

This exhaustively researched book is a tribute to KPS Gill spanning his baptism to violence as a 12-year old in Lahore during Partition, his career in police, sterling role in defeating Khalistani terrorism in Punjab, founding the Institute of Conflict Management, contributions towards counter-terrorism, exploitation of human rights legislation environment, facing government paralysis afflicted by obdurate bureaucracy, and multiple crises and conflicts around the world.

The book has contributions from globally acclaimed scholars and specialists with first and last chapters authored by Ajay Sahni, Executive Director of the Institute of Conflict Management. The book highlights the power of unfettered information to subvert or 'weaken' democracies; exploiting grievances and inequities, plus denial of services and dishonesty of governments. Governments need to restore public confidence through authoritative, unimpeachable, credible and timely information to retain legitimacy, also admitting mistakes with speedy corrective action. This requires experts in government.

Counterinsurgency (CI) doctrines of Russia, US and India have been examined in context of 'enemy-centric' or population-centric approaches and balance required between the two. India's CI doctrine contains three pillars of security, political and economic factors, resting on information and bound together by control. Indian doctrine is not flawless, with some insurgencies dragging on but no CI campaign has been lost.

Post-conflict, governments remain central to security but are increasingly seen sharing authority with non-state actors. Weak governments can trigger anarchy where armed non-state actors (ANSA) have sway. This required special focus in security sector reforms and handling ANSA through various

strategies; negotiating political settlement, socialisation, bribery, amnesty, containment and marginalisation, enforcing splits and internal rivalry, coercion and the like. Coercion through the military as the only action could be counter-productive.

Counter terrorism (CT) must address 'method' and 'logic' of terrorists through different approaches; one, terror used in support of larger armed political campaign of counter-state building, and; two, countering logic that has made terror the ends, ways and means. America's war on terror has absence of unity of command or execution resulting in fragmentation and dilution of key components. At the grand strategic level, America has confused national security and fighting terrorism. Iraq is quoted as an example with US confusing CI-CT with politics. This is compared with how successfully KPS Gill restored democratic order in Punjab.

Global reach of the Islamic State (IS)/Daesh and its ideological appeal remains largely undiminished despite military setbacks. The prominent threat remains from new wave of foreign fighters. The demise of IS is not the end of global war on terror or beginning of the end against Islamic extremism, rather it is just an end of the beginning. The Sunni-Shia conflict in Lebanon, *jihadi* networks of each side, fallout of the war in Syria, continuing strife and the challenges have been covered.

The book brings out that the declining Maoists movement in India requires exposing Maoist misdeeds, taking up intensive development and coordinated operations.

Use of internet by *jihadis* has been covered from 1990s to the present as also communications, radicalisation/spreading ideology, funding and bitcoin campaign, disseminating manuals, and operational use—both offensive and defensive. The author also brings out the dilemma and complexities in erasing total *jihadi* accounts and contents from internet is problematic due adaptive approaches of *jihadis*.

Prevention of extremism through community development programs is well covered so is need for early detection and stymieing the radicalisation processes through requisite

intervention strategies and approaches. Examples and models have been discussed, including lack of their application to Muslim extremism. However, focus of West only on what is termed 'violent extremism', ignoring spread of radicalisation, has been missed out.

KPS Gill's dexterity in handling *Khalistani* terrorism in Punjab, including complexities and magnitude of the problem, is explained well; as also CIA's covert plan in conjunction with the ISI post 1971 to encourage separatism in Punjab. ISI's support to militancy in Punjab and Kashmir, and the enemy within (files from PMO taken to Pakistan) find mention. Amidst the most virulent *Khalistani* campaign, ill-advised efforts to seek 'political solution' undermined CT operations. KPS Gill's success in combating terrorism in Punjab led to comprehensive approach in CT covering the philosophical, psychological, political, and operational aspects in dealing with future threats.

The book covers the nationalist insurgency in Balochistan and serious human rights violations by Pakistani security forces because of which the insurgency is unlikely to end. Pakistan's increasing religious radicalisation, rapid population growth, sectarian strife, poverty and unemployment are recipe for greater turmoil. Chapter 14 discusses politicisation of the Indian Army, also narrating that though the BJP government projects a pro-Services image, actual policies, practices and ground realities are contrary, exposing India to multiple threats.

The chapter on hybrid warfare describes hypocrisy of nations sponsoring and supporting terrorists. The main discussion is on Russian actions in Crimea-Ukraine but mention has also been made of hybrid warfare in South Asia - British East India Company in India, Indian intervention in East Pakistan (1971) and Pakistan's hybrid war. Two subsequent chapters discuss Hezbollah's military engagement in Syria and Sri Lanka's CI strategy against the LTTE.

The concluding chapter talks of China's demonstrated "intent and will" to use force to secure dominance. Terrorism, proxy wars and diverse patterns of conflict, including weaponization of ideas, are here to stay. For India, prevailing

political-administrative dysfunction must be addressed for reconstructing our capacities and capabilities.

This book is an excellent tribute to KPS Gill and a must read by all, especially those interested in the spread of jihadism, terrorism, countering radicalisation, CI-CT, and hybrid warfare with its sub-conventional content, and need for India to reverse politicisation in the military and establish credible deterrence to sub-conventional threats.

Lt Gen PC Katoch, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SC (Retd)

Missing in Action: The Prisoners Who Never Came Back.

By Chander Suta Dogra, (New Delhi HarperCollins India, 13 January 2020), Hardcover Page 392, Price Rs. 468/-, ISBN-13: 978-9353572853

After a long hiatus we have a book on the issue of India's soldiers Missing in Action (MIA). The Indian government believes that 83 Indian soldiers are still in Pakistan's captivity, mostly since 1965 and 1971 wars. The book is a masterpiece of investigative journalism based on the primary source material such as WikiLeaks, de-classified records, minutes of high level meetings, interviews with senior officers who dealt with the issue and families and colleagues of the MIA. Being a military daughter and spouse of a soldier, Chander Suta Dogra has narrated the stories of the MIAs in a touching manner; she deals with circumstances related to their disappearance, the sadness, struggle, hope and frustration of their loved ones.

Dogra's examination offers startling insights into the geopolitical game and acts of omission and commission on part of political leadership, diplomats and military hierarchy. India returned 93000 odd prisoners of war (POWs) after the 1971 war, without ensuring return of all Indian POWs. Ironically, the matter of MIA was neither discussed during the Shimla dialogue nor did any military officer participate in the negotiations. Many of those who were believed to be in captivity of Pakistan were subsequently categorised as Killed in Action (KIA) by the Indian government, for the sake of administrative need mandatory for disbursing pensionary and other benefits to the Next of Kin

(NOK). These procedural lacunae caused deep emotional scars in the hearts and minds of the NOK.

Her investigation establishes that some KIA designated personnel were alive in Pakistan's detention centres. One such evidence is two hand-written notes by Major AK Suri, of 5 Assam Regiment, written from Karachi in 1974 and 1975. Once the government verified the handwriting to be that of Major Suri in 1976, it finally informed the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) that the officer was erroneously declared as KIA whereas he should be treated as MIA. Dogra's book is studded with similar heartrending stories of soldiers wrongly presumed dead when there was credible proof that they are in Pakistan or moved to Islamic nations in Gulf.

The book captures the emotional trauma faced by the families of the MIA as some of them were forced to accept 'posthumous' bravery awards and see the names of their loved ones on war memorials as martyrs. The author brings out that Pakistan held MIAs as bargaining chips to prevent India from handing over 195 Pakistani POWs to Bangladesh for war crimes trials. India relented by handing over 195 POW's to Pakistan without doing enough to get back its own MIA. The author opines, "Their poor mental and physical condition, possibly as a result of years of torture and injuries, made it difficult for Pakistan to admit their presence and return them". Dogra asserts that the soldiers were likely 'sacrificed at the shrine of bilateralism'. The government of India eschewed from approaching United Nations (UN) or the International Court of Justice (ICJ), maintaining that bilateral dialogue and not third party intervention should be exercised. This allowed Pakistan off the hook of any international pressure. Pakistan cunningly held back some of the MIA by designating them as Indian spies that enabled Pakistan to circumvent the provisions of the Geneva Conventions.

The book also addresses the uncomfortable question about how many of our soldiers are actually in Pakistan's custody; there are 54 names on the list of soldiers missing from 1965 and 1971 wars; the remaining 29 are of those who went

missing afterwards while operating on the Line of Control (LoC) or the international border (IB). She points out that some of the names on the government held list should perhaps not be there as there is conclusive evidence of their martyrdom in action. Her observation stands vindicated as the government also admitted to the Gujarat High Court that at least 15 names on the list are 'confirmed dead'. This shows the sordid manner in which the government agencies investigated the matter and maintained records. In this remarkably well written book, she makes a fundamental observation, "POWs war is a war behind the scenes, a war that is not constrained by rules or conventions, laws or treaties....where prisoners are not seen as human beings with emotions and familial ties but as pawns in never ending game blighted by hate and revenge". The book ends on the poignant note: 'There can never be any last word for any story about missing soldiers. Not until they are found dead or alive'. It is time we re-dedicate ourselves to accounting for every man after a situation of conflict and war. This is the hallmark of all self-respecting militaries the world over.

A brilliantly written book that is seminal in nature and will have lasting value as an authentic reference material for posterity. A must for libraries and for serious reading and reflection.

Maj Gen BK Sharma, AVSM, SM & Bar (Retd)

Kashmir: Beyond Article 370. By Bashir Assad, (New Delhi: Pentagon Press LLP, 2020), Page 177, Price Rs. 595/-, ISBN 978-81-942837-9-9

The book, spread over fourteen chapters, covers a wide range of complex issues to include history, sociology, religion, economy, governance and, above all, venal politics that coalesce together seamlessly to create the conundrum of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) . Hailing from Srinagar itself, Assad possesses excellent credentials and he has kept his ear to the ground. An independent thinker he apparently writes from his heart without caring for the consequences. He must be sure of his facts for a few of his statements can be termed scurrilous.

As Assad brings out, the propensity of leaders of various ilks in Kashmir was totally parochial. The weak-kneed policies and discourse adopted by the centre and state alike resulted in hybridism, ethnic and religious aggressiveness. The governments at Srinagar and Delhi chose to be subsumed by structural factors like Article 370 & 35 A. The easy way out was to firefight using ad hoc measures. Elections were rigged as a matter of course; governance was in shambles and corruption remained rampant. The idea of religion (*Wahhabi*) as a basis of separate identity was allowed to be propagated which provided the catalyst for the “*azadi*” sentiment to find root. The author posits that *Wahhabis* and *Maududis* can exploit a narrative that the objective behind abrogation of Article 370 is to change the demography. While previous central governments cowered at the very idea of doing away with the Articles in question, the Modi government had no such qualms. This was undoubtedly an act of courage with far reaching repercussions. The bluff of doomsayers had been called and there was no blood bath. The government’s idea of Empowerment, Investment and Development (EID) has got some traction with the people.

As the author brings out, it was the wily politicians who made Article 370 synonymous with the air, water, mountain, flora and fauna of Kashmir. They drilled this into the psyche of the populace through inflammatory speeches. The author exposes that only politicians and separatists gained from Article 370. Asking for greater autonomy resulted in increased separatism and radicalisation. Article 370 literally was the goose laying golden eggs. Dynastic politics, cronyism and large-scale corruption flourished. Subsequently, mainstream parties strategically surrendered their space to the separatists. Post Burhan Wani — a terrorist allowed to be made into a martyr by the state — ISIS and Pakistan’s flags began to be displayed openly. At one time or another, Mehbooba, Omar and Farooq — all Chief Ministers — voiced threats of secession. As Assad brings out, separatists had been rejecting talks with the government since 1990 but hobnobbing openly with Pakistan. The Abrogation and its aftermath were handled with aplomb by the government. The high-flying politicians and separatists were

cut to size. The dressing down of Omar Abdullah by the Prime Minister, as narrated by the author, is quite illustrative.

To help marginalised sections in Kashmir, Assad recommends relocation of power politics from urban areas to rural Kashmir. However, radical Islam, abetted by clarion calls from mosques, has firmly established itself and would remain a major obstacle. The author reminds us that Kashmir always had a syncretic *Sufi* culture with belief in pluralism; therefore, it is strange that people forgot their heritage of centuries and blindly submitted to the diktat of *Wahhabi* Islam. Again, amongst Muslims, Kashmiri language has been replaced by Urdu and now only the Hindus speak Kashmiri. Incidentally, Assad perceives *Pandits* to be divided on all issues and opines that post abrogation of Article 370, return of the *Pandits* will be adversely impacted. The author does not spare the central government either, who at various stages added to the misery of J&K by a lack of clear understanding in handling the twin issues of terrorism and radical Islam. Assad explains well the nexus of politicians, separatists, academics, bureaucrats, businessmen and media houses that combined to siphon off public money, diaspora remittances, humanitarian aid and trade in conflict commodities for over decades in J&K. The author speaks highly of the Army and military leadership. It is, however, curious for him to say that 'the buck now stops with the Army' as Army has little role in transformation of J&K.

A major fault line identified by Assad in the new establishment is the all-powerful bureaucrat who keeps holding meetings but remains disconnected from ground realities. Citing specific examples at apex level itself, Bashir feels that their stranglehold in administrative matters only breeds inertia. Assad is equally dismissive of interlocutors who offer armchair advice. The author ends on a sombre note that the government must act with a sense of urgency to generate employment, investment and development else the gains of 05 August 2019 may be lost. In Assad's perception, and perhaps rightly so, the Kashmiri society is very complex with many facets and features. If the urban elites continue to drive the narrative the gains will be slow in coming.

The author deserves to be congratulated in giving his point of view of complex issues in a forthright manner. An eminently readable book, it gives a fresh insight into many issues relating to Kashmir.

Maj Gen Ashok Joshi, VSM (Retd)

Islam, Authoritarianism, and Underdevelopment: A Global and Historical Comparison. By Ahmet T. Kuru (Cambridge University Press, 05 September, 2019) Pages 316, Rs. 2398/-, ISBN-13: 978-1108419093.

In recent times the question as to why Muslim societies have problems of authoritarianism and socio-economic underdevelopment which has led to their decline has vexed scholars. Ahmet. T. Kuru, a Turkish American who is a professor of political science at San Diego State University, attempts to answer this question.

His book is laid out in two parts. Part I deals with the present and has three chapters dealing with Violence and Peace; Authoritarianism and Democracy and; Socio-Economic Underdevelopment and Development. Part II, with four chapters, is the history of Islam from the time it swept the known world to its collapse under Western colonialism and Muslim reformists.

Ahmet Kuru undertakes a sweeping and detailed analysis of the ills of the authoritarianism, economic backwardness and religious violence that plague almost all Muslim-majority states. He rejects the common narrative that the fault for the ills of these states lies in Islamic doctrine. Concurrently, he does not blame these ills to Western colonialism too which is the reason given by many Muslim and non-Muslim scholars.

He traces a longer period of the decline of Islamic states. He describes a period of Islamic scientific and cultural brilliance, from the eighth to the twelfth centuries, in which a dynamic trading community lived — under which scientific knowledge and the arts flourished. His thesis is that this community declined due to the rise of a conservative and anti-intellectual alliance of religious scholars (the ulema) and state officials,

each of whom had their own benefits in mind. Kuru makes a convincing case as to how Muslim societies inherited the model of the powerful military-theocratic state — composed of warrior-rulers, religious authorities, and their subjects — from Persian tradition, and not the Koran. His study continues to contemporary politics showing that to this day, the ulema-state alliance still prevents creativity and competition in Muslim countries.

The book provides a useful reflection on the present trend of violence and terrorism which is more prevalent in Islamic states. The book also gives a valuable comparison in studying Islamic societies when seen in the 'clash of civilisations' context propounded by Samuel Huntington. A must read for civilian and military scholars.

Lt Gen Ghanshyam Singh Katoch, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd)

Allahu Akbar: Understanding the Great Mughal in Today's India. By Manimugdha Sharma, (New Delhi: Bloomsbury India, 2019), Page 330, Price – Rs. 599/- (Hardback), ISBN: 978-93-86950-53-6.

The Mughal rule lasted in India from 1526 until its final eclipse in the Great Uprising of 1857, which saw the last scion of the dynasty banished to Rangoon for his alleged role in support of the rebellion. The reins of government were then taken over by the British Crown, which realised that in order to effectively rule over the people of the land, *Divide et Impera* or 'Divide and Rule' must be the cornerstone of its colonial policy. However, unlike the British who supplanted them, the Mughals had laid down their roots in the soil of this country and had made immense contributions to the culture and polity of India. Under their rule, a fusion of Indian and Islamic cultures brought about the development of a distinct Indo-Islamic style, which found its expression in art, architecture, poetry and literature. Contrary to popular belief, fusion, rather than division, was the guiding policy of Mughal rule, with some notable exceptions.

Arguably, the foremost amongst the Mughal rulers was the king who not only expanded and consolidated the empire, but

also foregrounded an important socio-political consensus that laid the foundations for a secular polity in modern India. Akbar was the first Timurid ruler to be born and brought up in India. Having welded his empire into a single geographical entity, he then went on to try to integrate the diverse people who inhabited it into a Unitarian whole.

This well researched book provides the reader with an interesting insight into the life and times of, arguably, one of India's greatest monarchs. The author adopts a narrative style that is easy to read and assimilate. He, however, goes beyond a mere biographical account of his subject and places it in broader historical and social contexts. While the book is extensively referenced, it is not a standard academic text. The author argues that the syncretic, secular and rational values espoused by Akbar, during his reign, are of particular relevance today. He decries the attempts in certain quarters to rewrite history, and to erase Akbar's legacy from it. He intersperses his narrative with often detailed descriptions of similar acts or events, both in a historical and contemporary context, and often uses this as a polemic against the policies of the current government.

Akbar was a unique monarch by the standards of his time. His contribution to the history of India deserves to be better known and understood, particularly his attempts to promote rationalism and his development of the doctrine of *Sulh-i-Kul* to further India's civilizational ethos of tolerance. It was not without reason that he was known to history as 'Akbar the Great'.

Sqn Ldr Rana TS Chhina, MBE (Retd)