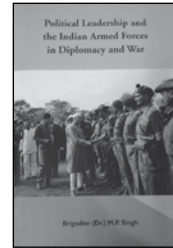


Political Leadership and the Indian Armed Forces in Diplomacy and War

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The supremacy of political leadership and apolitical Indian Armed Forces can be traced back to history wherein in 1853 by an Act of British Parliament, superintendence, direction and control of political leadership over the Armed Forces was obtained. However, the mutiny of 1857 led to the realisation that differences between Governor Generals and Commanders-in-Chief were responsible for the breakdown of discipline and administration, both civil and military. Soon after the mutiny was controlled, the efforts were made for re-establishment and improvement of civil administration. By 1895, the three Presidency armies were amalgamated and the resultant British Indian Army was placed under one Commander-in-Chief who was the sole executive head of the army. Throughout this period, the subordination of the army to the civil government was maintained. However, post-independence the C-in-C was replaced by the Defence Minister whose executive powers are shared by the Defence Minister, the three Service Chiefs and the Defence Secretary and has thus ensured the defence forces to be apolitical and subordinated them to civil government and the bureaucracy.

The book has 9 chapters. The details have been covered very comprehensively with numerous examples from history. The book makes an interesting reading and brings out the importance of civil-military relations and apolitical nature of our armed forces.

Chapter 1 covers the period from 1757 till the mutiny (1857) and brings out how the East India Company's Army was controlled by the civil government and various disputes that took place between civil and the military. The lessons that emerged from pre-1857 administration of India were that there should be no confrontation between the political leaders and the defence forces and there should be no interference with the religious sentiments of natives, which lead to mutinies.

The next chapter brings out the post-mutiny relations (1857-1947) and the various changes (Constitutional, political and military) brought about post the mutiny to streamline functioning between the civil and the military. It also talks about the joint civil-military control throughout the country till 1895 because of unshakeable cooperation between the Governor General and Viceroy, the Governors, C-in-C, India and Cs-in-C of the minor presidencies. The author has beautifully brought out how the class composition of units was designed and how the concept of martial races was developed during C-in-C Sir F. S. Roberts' time (1885-93), which was later used for recruiting them into the units of the British Indian Army. The chapter also highlights the civil military reforms undertaken during Lord Curzon and Lord Kitchener Era which meant that the financial control over the Armed Forces which continued even during the Second World War, i.e., financial control over the Armed Forces by the civil government.

Chapter 3 covers the period of independence and the transfer of power from the British to the Dominions of India and Pakistan. Instead of one C-in-C, three independent heads for three services were appointed. The author also talks about the need to have a Chief of Defence Staff for better coordination (Post of CDS has since been created as part of Defence reforms). The author mentions about unification of India into a Nation state and the deliberate British mischief wherein the 1935 Government of India Act on a "Federation" with three categories of constituents would

have left the future Central Government with little control over the Indian nation wherein the British Indian Provinces and Chief Commissioners' Provinces would accede to India and the 562 Princely states would be entitled to decide their own accession.

The next chapter covers the National Security and its economics besides Indianisation of the Army or getting rid of the Europeanisation of the Army as Pandit Motilal Nehru had put it. The chapter also covers dismissal/resignations by various Chiefs on differences with the civil government.

Chapter 5 deals with Kashmir and 1947-48 operations and its uniqueness in the annals of modern warfare, wherein the British Generals commanded the armies of newly independent states of India and Pakistan. The Defence Committee of the Cabinet was chaired by Lord Mountbatten and not PM Jawaharlal Nehru. The chapter also brings out that there were no previous plans to send Indian troops to Kashmir as has been alleged by some historians.

The next chapter covers the political developments and the two quick wars that India fought in 1962 and 1965. It covers in detail how the political establishment ignored the warnings from defence with respect to Chinese Defence preparedness and its intentions. The author also covers the role played by Mr. Y. B. Chavan, Defence Minister after the 1962 debacle and pulling the Indian Armed Forces out of the humiliation suffered during Mr. Krishna Menon's incumbency and making them fit for the next war with Pakistan.

Chapter 7 covers an overview of Pakistan and its governance by Pakistan Army from 1958-71, 1977-88 and 1999-2008. It also talks about how the Pakistan army, government and the people are obsessed with Kashmir, will never give up war and would never want India to prosper and become a regional power. It also highlights the repeated coups in Pakistan because of direct confrontation between the most senior

government and military figures, fuelled by government corruption, warping of constitution and gross economic inefficiency.

The next chapter highlights that Kashmir is the perpetual source of conflict starting from 1947 till the Kargil conflict. It covers various diplomatic initiatives taken by both India and Pakistan, including the Lahore Declaration and Agra Summit.

The last and the final chapter covers the political and the military events at the turn of the twenty-first century, including the enigma of a two-front war and relations with China.

Overall, the author has comprehensively tackled all issues of civil-military relations except that there could have been a chapter on Way Forward which could have covered integration of decision-making structures, the National Defence University and revamping of the defence acquisition/production process. Notwithstanding, the author has done an outstanding job and the book is a must read for civil and defence officers and the political masters.

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