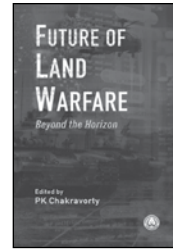


Future of Land Warfare: Beyond the Horizon

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Future of Land Warfare: Beyond the Horizon is a multidimensional book which chronicles any future type of war relevant to India's borders. The contents highlight the intrinsic need to synergise and integrate the combined war effort put in jointly by the Army, Navy and Air Force. *Beyond the Horizon* picturises different geographical areas and terrains, emerging military technology, trends in types of conflicts threats and challenges facing the nation and thereafter the way forward. Significance has been given to air, sea, cyber and space domains which will greatly impact future conflicts. The writers in this multifaceted book have closeted their assessments ranging up to 15 years ahead, or as warfare will emerge till about the year 2035. The pace at which new attritional equipment is being articulated and produced necessitates that the present pace and trends can stretch up to about 15 years, after which a renewed assessment will be necessary to format different types of conflicts.

India has huge geographical diversity in terms of varied terrains, climatic imbalances and battlefield environments. Due to unsettled territorial and boundary disputes with our adversaries for the past seven decades and the proverbial stance of no loss of territory on either side, the probability of conventional conflicts supported by technological advances and hybrid tools will continue to play a predominant role in this somewhat volatile subcontinent. It is believed that future conflicts will be triggered by any one or combined reasons such as demography inversion, resulting in flow of migrants and refugees across borders and try to influence domestic politics. A fast trending and enhanced requirement of energy

resources to cater for technological advancement towards destructive purposes is another cause. Religious zeal, fanaticism or extremism is on the rise, often leading to formation of group of non-state actors.

Territorial borders are not unalterable. These borders can be worked, fashioned or manipulated to serve national interests. These borders have an organised army which provides a physical protection to the state; likewise, the population or people provide the emotional connect with their state. Hence the term “Janapada” which literally means Jana (people) + Pada (where they put their feet, territory or land). This book gazes into the future of land warfare in our subcontinent, which perhaps will be a combination of conventional, hybrid, and unconventional means. With the rise in non-state actors, the concept of warfare demands a fresh perspective. In today’s scenario we are facing fresh challenges which require specialised focus equipped with real-time intelligence inputs, weapons which are technologically superior, which is required to counter an equally robust enemy.

The Indian army is already shifting gear to form Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs) which are smaller, self-contained fighting units and present quick mobilisation and flexibility to the fighting elements. In our context, Pakistan and China remain formidable military adversaries in our Northern and Western borders. President Xi’s statement, “China will not lose an inch of territory” is an indication that it maintains territorial focus against India. The Doklam stand-off had adequate testimony to Chinese designs. Added to the Chinese threat are the Pakistanis in the west who are still licking the wounds of their defeat in 1971, and are waging a calculated Hybrid war against India.

In the book *Future of Land Warfare*, this form of attrition has been categorised as Hybrid Warfare. Well, this is that warfare which strategically uses political and conventional warfare, irregular and Cyberwarfare and dilated with methods such as fake news, diplomacy, legal and foreign electoral intervention. This form of warfare encompasses certain peculiarities which are elaborated as follows.

- Waged by state and non-state actors.
- Employment of all forces and capabilities at disposal of the organisation.
- Targets native domain with population as target and means.
- Limitless in time to achieve overall aim. Therefore “why be in a messy war when you can just light a fire and watch people fight amongst themselves.”

In fact Hybrid warfare is the best strategy for Pakistan to take on a much stronger but diverse India in which this diversity and resulting fracture lines are exploited. Therefore, in brief, Pakistan is amply playing the role of desperately threatening to destabilise India without crossing the thresholds to conventional war. Cogent examples are the Parliament attack in 2001 and Mumbai attack on 26/11.

We must continue to upgrade our attritional and countering capabilities to minimise damage, therefore there is a need to formulate a comprehensive national security strategy (CNSS) and progressively transform our entire defence set-up including defence industrial base.

Future conflicts will be short, intense, nonlinear, multidimensional and hybrid. This warfare will encompass land, sea, air, space, cyber and information avenues. Jointness of command and unleashing the desired combat energy will be all important. Air power has to assume a predominant role which will entail surveillance, reconnaissance and selection of targets from Air and Outer Space. This will be followed by degradation of important targets, and protection of ground forces from similar form of warfare unleashed by the enemy. Maritime forces are going to be employed in protecting 1,195 islands of the country, besides launching aircraft and drones to assist the land operations. Our own territorial disputes emphasis on not losing even an inch of territory, necessitates joint forces being used with dexterity. Therefore, the need of the hour is for agile and well-equipped forces capable of delivering

a precise blow at the deduced target. Airborne forces will act as prolific components to speed up decisive results, operate behind the enemy and permit a free view to the ground forces on the other side of the hill. There will be a need for application of forces in real time based on state-of-the-art intelligence inputs. Artificial intelligence, cyberwarfare and outer space will have elaborate role for the ground forces to achieve “Janapada.”

Overall the entire book is interesting to read and delves into areas important for future operations. *Future of Land Warfare: Beyond the Horizon* is a thought-provoking book which will be useful for the policymakers, practitioners, training establishments and military personnel to conceptualise the futuristic evolvement of warfare and crystallise the methodology to achieve their aims in future operations. A must read for officials in the Ministries of Home, External Affairs and Defence as also officers from the three services.

Narjit Singh

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