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CLAWS Journal

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Contents

Note from the Editor v

Articles

1. Internal Security and Economic Cost of Violence:
An Analysis 1
V. K. Ahluwalia
2. India's Internal Security: Threat Perception and
Way Forward 28
Anshuman Behera
3. Restructuring for India's Disputed Borders:
An Appraisal 46
A.B. Shivane
4. The Gilgit-Baltistan Factor in India-Pakistan Dynamics 62
Priyanka Singh
5. Kashmir: Lest We Forget 80
R. K. Anuj
6. India Needs Smart Frontiers: An Assessment 95
P. J. S. Pannu
7. Military Diplomacy: An Appraisal in the Indian Context 108
Jaswinder Singh

Commentary

8. India-Iran Relations and the Afghanistan Factor 125
Manjari Singh

Book Reviews

- Face Off: Analysis of India's Capability to Fight a
Two Front War 134
Kulbhushan Bhardwaj
- India Versus China: Why They Are Not Friends 139
Amrita Jash



Note from the Editor

The constant shifts in the global geopolitical and geostrategic context has expanded the envelope of ‘security’ or rather issues that concern ‘national security’. Owing to the rapid changes, India’s national security challenges are not just increasing but becoming complex. The uncertainty attached to the security scenario, both domestic and global, demands greater attention and significance to the management of India’s national security system.

Specifically, in the context of twin challenges that India faces from China and Pakistan compounded with internal challenges of terrorism and insurgency to that of changes in the international system such as the Taliban in Afghanistan and others- call for the immediate need for India to not just respond to the security threats and challenges but act with flexibility and caution. As the strategic assumptions of the past have changed, the wisdom for India lies in ‘watching’ and ‘acting’ against the unwarranted risks posed in the internal and external security environment.

The increasing unpredictability to the strategic patterns in the 21st Century necessitates India to objectively assess the intensity and the direction of threats and challenges and act with tact.

Given this context, in assessing the implications of internal security threats and challenges combined with the looming effects of the external tensions emanating from the international security system, the Winter Issue puts together ten original contributions in the form of articles, commentaries and book reviews by a wide range of authors.

The articles mainly assess the issues and challenges that define the changing context of India’s national security and offers new insights on what needs to be done to safeguard India’s national interests- domestically, regionally, and globally.

The CLAWS Journal Winter Issue makes a comprehensive read and provides significant insights on India's internal and external security dimensions.

Wish you a happy and interesting reading!

Editor-in-Chief



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The vision of the CLAWS is to develop a 'strategic culture' to bring about synergy in decision making both at national and operational levels. Since its inception, CLAWS has established itself as one of the leading 'think tanks' in the country. To achieve its vision, CLAWS conducts seminars (at Delhi and with commands), round table discussions and meetings with academia and intellectuals of strategic community both from India and abroad. CLAWS also comes out with a number of publications pertaining to national and regional security and various issues of land warfare.

Members are invited to all CLAWS seminars/round table discussions (details regarding impending events are communicated to all members through e-mail. Information also available on our website, <http://www.claws.in>). For the benefit of members, who cannot attend various events, reports are forwarded through e-mail. Members are sent copies of the bi-annual CLAWS Journal & Scholar Warrior, occasional (Manekshaw) Papers and given membership of the CLAWS Library. From 01 January 2020, certain occasional papers would be made available to the members digitally only.

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Internal Security and Economic Cost of Violence: An Analysis

V. K. Ahluwalia

Abstract

South Asia is one of the most unstable and volatile regions of the world, and stands second least peaceful region out of nine regions that were evaluated by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP). The ranking of peacefulness of most of the South Asian countries is also rather low. In a developing country like India, the economic cost of violence at 5 per cent of its GDP is too high. The causes of internal conflicts can be attributed to factors like ineffectiveness of the governance systems, sub-nationalism, deprivations, discrimination, social injustice, ethnic, sectarian, and religious polarisation, socio-economic exclusion, identity crisis, and competition for fast depleting crucial resources. These conflicts manifest in the form of insurgencies, terrorism, low-intensity armed conflicts, civil wars, and related political violence. There is a definite relationship between terrorism and internal armed conflicts, as both generally follows near similar contours. The terrorists have tried to destroy the very idea of India – democratic, secular, growth-oriented economy, excellence in IT and industry.

Almost all elements of national power have a role - direct or indirect - on matters of national security, to suppress internal armed conflicts, and finally to resolve them. The legitimate aspirations and grievances of the people must be identified region wise and addressed with a sense of urgency. The Government needs to formulate a

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Comprehensive National Security Strategy (CNSS), to give a definite direction to the role of each element of national power in short and long term, and minimise its economic cost of violence.

Introduction

IEP's Global Peace Index 2021 report highlights peacefulness of nine regions and 163 independent countries of the world. Based on IEP's in-depth evaluation, it ranked India 135th least peaceful nation, which had incidentally improved its ranking by two positions from 137th in 2020.¹ The evaluation is carried out based on 23 qualitative and quantitative parameters. However, what is worrisome is that while India's Defence Budget generally ranges between 1.5 per cent to 1.6 per cent of its GDP, the economic cost of violence was calculated as 5 per cent of its GDP.² According to the same report, the ranking of peacefulness of the other South Asian countries is also rather low: Afghanistan 163rd, Pakistan 150th, Sri Lanka 95th, Bangladesh 91st, Nepal 85th and Bhutan 22nd. Therefore, South Asia too stands to be the second least peaceful region out of nine regions that were evaluated- second only to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Globally, irregular warfare, terrorism, and civil unrest have been the biggest contributors to violence, killings, and instability.

In a developing country like India, the economic cost of violence at 5 per cent of its GDP is too high. The economic impact of violence would be even much higher than the economic cost of violence. The primary reason, as given by the IEP, is that the former includes the direct and indirect costs of violence as well as an economic multiplier applied to the direct costs. Whereas the economic cost of violence includes only the direct and indirect costs. The IEP Report suggest that the percentage of GDP results are calculated using the economic cost of violence. The economic impact in India amounted to \$991.2 billion in 2019, of which more than 75 per cent was military and internal security expenditure. India accounts for 77.9 per cent of South Asian region's

total economic impact of violence, reflecting its size and role as a major power in the region.³

A significant reduction in the economic cost of violence will facilitate armed forces and the armed police forces to modernise themselves. It would be most prudent to take a note of the costs involved, and take suitable actions to improve the security environment on an urgent basis. While taking an overview of the global security landscape and trends, it is important to examine the challenges to India's internal security. Furthermore, the quest is to understand and assess what can be done to improve peace and stability to maintain focus on sustained economic growth and socio-economic well-being of its population.

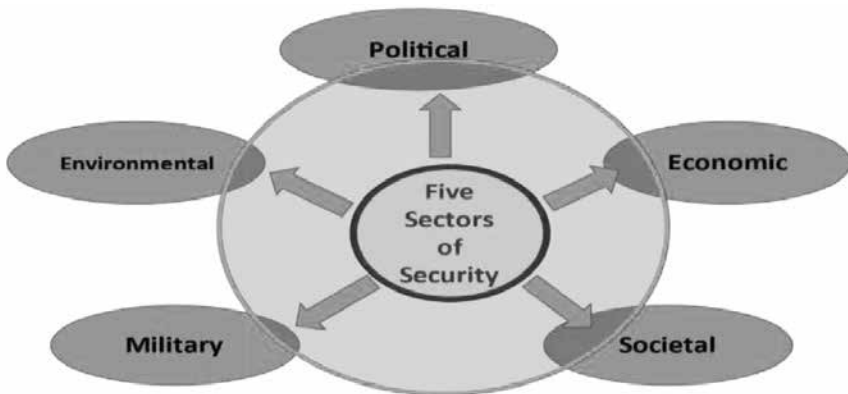
Traditional Concept

It has been accepted that the traditional concept of national security was always associated with protecting the territorial integrity of a nation-state against external aggression. It was confined primarily to the role of militaries! The concept continued to evolve and be shaped by historical events, interpretations of international relations, need to bring instability and the security of the society at large from varied forms of threats. The landmark events in evolution of the concept of national security were the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 that recognised absolute sovereignty of the states, and provided equal legal rights to all sovereign states. It continued to evolve. Consequent to the end of the Cold War, the Human Development Report (HDR) 1994 focused on addressing all threats and challenges that impact human security. As it was human-centric, the latter was titled *New Dimensions of Human Security* by the UNDP.⁴ While the primary aim of national security is to promote and safeguard the core values and interests of the nation-state and its people, four important dimensions are security of state, security of society, preservation of national and cultural identity, and to take appropriate actions when human security is likely to be adversely affected. Internal

security is one of the most significant subsets of national security, as it gets impacted by both traditional and non-traditional threats and challenges.

It is interesting to note that perceptions about global or national security vary based on the threats and challenges to security being experienced in different regions of the world. As Barry Buzan considers political, economic, societal, military, and environmental issues as the most essential elements of security.⁵

Figure 1: Five Sectors of Security



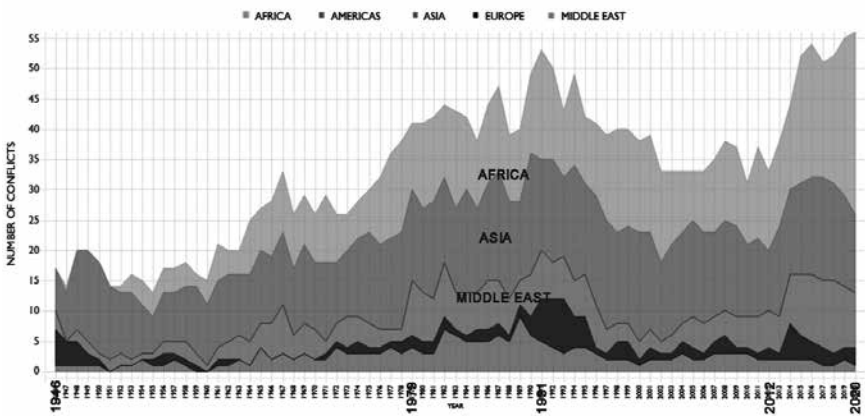
Source: Adapted from Buzan (1991).

Global Internal Security Landscape and Trends

Post-World War II, there has been a steady increase in intra-state conflicts the world over. In fact, these increased exponentially from the mid-1950s, when decolonisation gained momentum. Consequently, there was a void in the governance systems in most of the cases. It resulted in a spike in intrastate conflicts. The increase is attributed to several factors like ineffectiveness of the governance systems, sub-nationalism, deprivations, discrimination, social injustice, ethnic, sectarian, and

religious polarization, socio-economic exclusion, identity crisis, and competition for fast depleting crucial resources. These conflicts manifest in the form of insurgencies, terrorism, low-intensity armed conflicts, civil wars, and related political violence. Over the past few decades, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East have remained afflicted by armed conflicts. According to the IEP, Middle East and North Africa (MENA), South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa have seen a note worthy decline in the security environment due to prolonged intra-state conflicts, along with terrorism and extremists' violence.⁶ The statistics in Figure 2 suggest that there has been a sharp rise in armed conflicts since 2012. It is also the period when ISIS was on the rise in Iraq and Syria, Taliban was becoming stronger in Afghanistan, and Boko Haram was active in Nigeria from 2009 onwards, and Al Shabab in Somalia. In 2015, Boko Haram pledged allegiance to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and took the name Islamic State (or State's) West African Province (ISWAP; also known as Islamic State in West Africa, or ISWA).⁷

Figure 2: Armed Conflict by Region (1946-2020)



Based on UCDP 21.1 data

Source: UNDP (2021), Annotated by the Author.

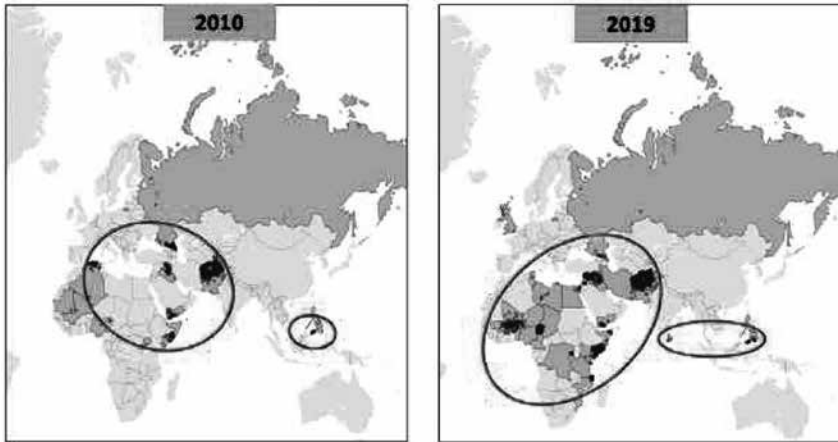
There are several irregular, asymmetric, and revolutionary wars active in the world. Irregular warfare, often described as the weapon of the weak, employs indirect and asymmetric methods, which may include regulars, irregulars, non-state actors, private military companies, deception, information warfare and drones, etc. Globalisation and the revolution in communications have added a new dimension in the internal armed conflicts, as the extremists are connected worldwide and share information and transfer money on real-time basis.

First Two Decades of the 21st Century

The first two decades of the 21st century saw the proliferation of several extremist ideologies and terrorist organisations, predominantly based on religious, sectarian, ethnic and identity-driven alienation or motivations. Terrorist organisations such as Al Qaeda and subsequently its off-shoot ISIS, came into prominence with its global ambition of establishing an Islamic Caliphate, by occupying territory and establishing bases worldwide. The world has been a witness to several high profile terrorist attacks such as 9/11 in the US, 13 December 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament, Bali Bombing in 2002, Beslan School Hostage Crisis in Russia in 2004, 26/11 Mumbai attack in 2008, and many more. Despite the persistent threat of terrorism and declaration of global war on terrorism (GWOT), the United Nations and other global bodies have failed to adopt a universally acceptable definition of terrorism.

Although ISIS was defeated in Iraq and Syria in 2017, it continued to take action to spread the ideology of ISIS. It remained virulent, to achieve its global ambition. The geographical spread of ISIS, Al Qaeda and their affiliates between 2010 and 2019 is given in Figure 3. ISIS has further spread its wings into Africa, and a few parts of South Asia and Southeast Asia.

Figure 3: Geographical Spread of ISIS, Al-Qaeda and Their Affiliates (2010-2019)



Source: Adapted from Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP).

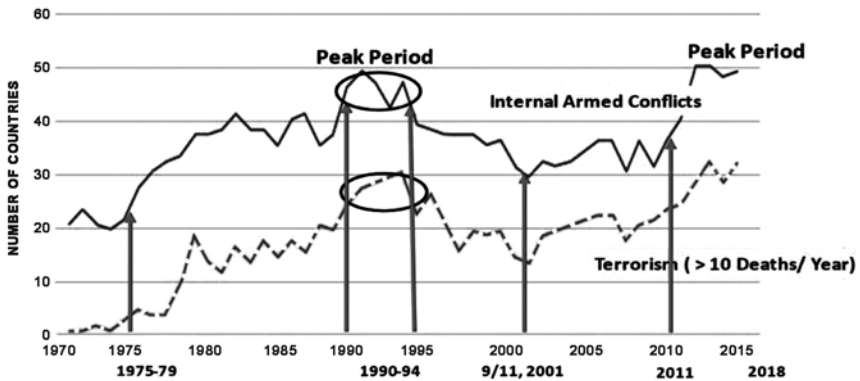
Internal Armed Conflicts and Terrorism

According to UCDP, the South Asian region experienced 298 conflicts between 1946 and 2002, of which 277 have been intrastate. Analysing the graphical depiction of casualties due to terrorism and internal armed conflicts, it has been observed that South Asia has had far more intrastate conflict-related casualties than due to war between states. Except for Maldives, every state in South Asia has faced one or more sustained insurgencies since decolonisation.⁸

A moot question that arises is whether there is any relationship between the ongoing armed conflicts and terrorism? An analysis of the graph given in Figure 4 is important to draw deductions.

A classical insurgency challenges the existing political, economic, religious, and social order, to force a change of government or its policies by the protracted people's movement, including the use of subversion. It aims to fulfil the aspirations of the population or the region, based on their grievances. Hence, it takes the form of people's armed movement with any one or more aims such as politico-economic-religious-ethnic and

Figure 4: Global Spread of Internal Armed Conflicts & Terrorism (1970-2018)



Source: START, GTD, UCDP, IEP Calculations, Annotated by the Author.

ideological. Thus, based on the goals and objectives, insurgencies could be classified as Separatist, Secessionist, Revolutionary, Reformist, etc.

A study of the two graphs – Internal Armed Conflicts and Terrorism – suggests a definite trend and relationship between them at the global level. It has been observed that the terrorism graph generally follows near similar contours as the internal armed conflicts. The reasons for the same are that most of the insurgencies have four stages: one, Ideology, organisation’s foundation, leadership to mobilise people, and subversion; two, guerrilla warfare (hit and run tactics, ambushes, raids, targeting the security forces by IEDs, and a hybrid combination of these); three, terrorism; and four, mobile warfare.⁹ The common thread that runs through most insurgencies is that their objective is to gain control of population (based on their grievances/aspirations) and/or control select portions of territory. This very objective of an insurgency pulls them apart from purely terrorist organisations. However, when the insurgents do not get support from the population at large, they indulge in terrorising people, SF, and the government officials by carrying out brutal killings. They follow the maxim, ‘Kill one, terrorise ten thousand.’

According to the IEP, it is documented that ‘more than 93 per cent casualties from acts of terror have occurred in countries with ongoing conflicts, with maximum deaths attributed to countries with ongoing civil wars during that period’.¹⁰ In addition, in most cases, there is a linkage between terrorism, crime syndicates and narco-trafficking. A brief description of the periods highlighted in Figure 4 are as follows:

- There was a spike in terror attacks in the late 1970s in South Asia, prior to and during the Soviet Russia’s invasion of Afghanistan. India was also experiencing multiple insurgencies in the Northeast, the Naxalite Movement (Maoists) in Central India since 1967, and the Punjab militancy during the 1980s. Worldwide, there were a large number of conflicts in Africa, Asia, and Middle East.
- After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990-91, there was an increase in the number of civil conflicts amongst the former Soviet Union member states.¹¹ In fact, the period 1990-94 was one of the most unstable and violent one, as it saw a sharp rise in the armed conflicts and terrorism the world over. The genocide of Rwanda in 1994 resulted in millions of people being killed.
- Although it was also the period when Pakistan’s proxy war cum state-sponsored terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) had reached unimaginable proportions, the Indian Security Forces gave a befitting reply and controlled the situation, with prohibitive losses to the terrorists. Pakistan sponsored proxy war commenced in J&K in 1989, which continues till date.
- There has been an increase in standalone attacks since the 1990s. In more recent times, the New Zealand attacker targeted Muslims in two mosques on 15 March 2019, and the Sri Lanka bombers attacked Christians on 21 April 2019.¹² It raised several questions if there was any link between the two terror attacks, as these attacks targeted minority communities. It is extremely difficult to predict such forms of standalone terror attacks and extremist violence, due to multiple

reasons. Such terror attacks must be studied in detail to ascertain the probable causes, mindset of individuals and groups, and thus evolve counter-terrorist strategies and tactics. Besides, politico-socio-economic discriminations, broad distinctions among the terrorist groups and their ideologies are driven by their political, nationalists, religious, ethnic and identity aspirations and motivations. Over the past decade, there has been an increase in the political and religious motivated terrorist attacks.¹³

Threats and Challenges to India's Internal Security

India faces a host of major threats and challenges to its Internal Security: multiple insurgencies, terrorism (with 42 banned terrorist groups),¹⁴ threats from cyber, information, economic, political domains, and drones and UAVs which can perform multiple types of tasks. India has long porous land and coastal borders over 15,000 km and 7,500 km respectively, with 16 States and 2 Union Territories bordering international boundaries. India is confronted with infiltration by terrorists, and other anti-national elements (ANEs), illegal migration, drugs and arms trafficking, human trafficking, Fake Indian Currency Note (FICN), and safe havens for ANEs across the borders. Hence, four aspects are important which merit attention to improve IS apparatus: first, a robust and effective intelligence gathering system; second, effective management of borders is key to improving its internal security environment; third, pay attention to the information warfare that aims to target the cognitive domains, to subvert and change the perception of the population at large; fourth, remember "State Police forces are the foundation on which the entire internal security apparatus for the nation must rest."¹⁵ The police forces must build their capacity and capabilities, with added focus on leadership.

Over the past seven decades, India has resolved the classical insurgency in Mizoram (1966-86), militancy in Punjab (1981-94); and

the insurgencies in Tripura, Meghalaya and Assam have shown a definite declining trend, but have not been resolved so far. The fundamental question that deserves an answer is ‘Does India have a formally declared National Security Strategy and Internal Security Doctrine?’ The short answer is No. Henry Kissinger said, “The purpose of a doctrine is to translate power to policy.” Rather than reacting to situations that develop in insurgency cum terrorism affected regions or border areas, there is a need to have a comprehensive strategy to address the challenges posed by IS threats. The state governments should not abdicate their constitutional responsibilities. They should also analyse and address them in a comprehensive manner.

Insurgencies in India

India is a melting pot of diverse ethnic stocks, religions, languages, dialects, cultures, customs, and traditions. George Tanhamis emphatic to suggest, ‘extraordinarily complex and diverse country (India).’¹⁶ Describing the heterogeneity of India’s population, N. N. Vohra states that, “[...] comprise over 4600 communities which practice all the world’s religions, speak 122 languages, nearly 2000 dialects [...] ... lifestyles of different communities reflect myriad social, cultural, linguistic, and religious diversities [...].”¹⁷

Since India’s Independence, it has been indeed unique to witness a new insurgency mushrooming in almost every new decade. Why did it happen as it did? Given its huge diversity, and socio-economic exclusion, identity crisis, deprivation, social injustice, the newly formed governance system could not address the grievances or fulfil the aspirations of the people. A few of these insurgencies have their genesis in the troubled history of India during the pre-Independence era and the Partition in 1947. These have got further aggravated due to correlation of external and internal threats and challenges. While the main causes of insurgencies in India are sub-nationalism, religious, ethnic, identity-driven alienation,

socio-economic exclusion and discrimination, their aim has predominantly been secessionist in nature, a few seeking separatism, greater autonomy, and statehood.¹⁸

India's Northeast Region

The separatist insurgencies in India's Northeast region (NER) began with the rise of the Naga insurgency, later called the 'Mother of all insurgencies. With the Naga nationalist leader, AZ Phizo, forming the Naga Central Government on 22 March 1956, the Indian Army was deployed for the first time for counter insurgency/counter terrorism (CI/CT) roles in Independent India's history thereafter, insurgencies continued to mushroom in Manipur, Mizoram, Assam, Tripura, and Meghalaya. When compared to India's overall statistics, the NER, with eight states, accounts for about 7.9 per cent of geographical area, 3.77 per cent of population, and about 2.5 per cent of GDP, which needs to improve to higher statistics. NER has a 6,387 km land border with five countries. Besides its geostrategic significance as a bridge to connect with more than one billion population in South East Asia and East Asia, NER is extremely rich in natural oil and gas, limestone, coal, uranium, water resources, tea, forest cover, biodiversity, etc.

NER has a complex landscape due to its demographic profile (several tribes, languages, dialects, culture, customs), fragile security due to both internal and external threats, illegal migrations, lack of economic development, connectivity, and high rate of unemployment. Due to illegal migration, in some cases, it has led to an identity crisis and inter-ethnic rivalry. Therefore, it faces different types of conflicts: tribal versus tribal, tribal versus non-tribal, and tribal versus the state.¹⁹ Mahongnao concludes that 'instead of 'planning for the Northeast,' the emphasis should be 'planning with the Northeast' for the benefit of its people through industrial prospects of this region ... to facilitate effective growth strategies'.²⁰

Left-Wing Extremism

In the late 1960s, the heartland of India was affected by the Naxalite movement [called Left Wing Extremism (LWE) based on left-wing ideology], engulfing several states. It aims to overthrow the government in power to establish a communist rule within the country. During the peak period of violence in 2007-2011, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Bihar, undivided Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Eastern Maharashtra (Gadchiroli and Gondia) and Eastern Madhya Pradesh (Balaghat) were among the worst affected states/areas. The tribal population as a percentage of the total population of the respective state in Maoist affected areas, as given in census 2011 are Chhattisgarh (31.6), Jharkhand (26.3), Odisha (22.2) and Madhya Pradesh (20.3); and the Scheduled Caste population in Bihar was about 16 per cent of its population. According to the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) 2011 (released in 2015), the share of the deprived and landless rural household was 70 per cent in Chhattisgarh, 66 per cent in Odisha, 60.6 per cent in Bihar, 53.3 per cent in Jharkhand, etc.²¹ Some of these statistics also suggest that these were also among the most critically affected states of the country.

Though exceptionally rich in land, forest, water, minerals, these areas generally rank much lower than the national average in socio-economic indices like education, health care, potable water, sanitation, housing, electricity, connectivity, unemployment, and the HDI.²² It is an indigenous insurgency, which has arisen due to neglect, deprivation, discrimination, social injustice, and more importantly, lack of effective governance over the years. The Communist Party of India (Maoist) or (CPI Maoist), Maoists in short, ranked third among the five perpetrator groups with the most attacks worldwide in 2017.²³ 2009-10 were the bloodiest years of LWE, in which the Security Forces also suffered a huge setback. However, with added focus on development, security and intelligence system by the central and state governments, and improved CI/CT techniques being adopted by the SF, creation of commando trained special anti – Naxal

forces like the Greyhounds in Andhra Pradesh, and C-60 in Maharashtra, the level of violence and tempo of insurgency has declined, especially after 2012. The Maoists' movement has been experiencing difficulties due to reasons such as leadership crisis due to old age and neutralisation of the prominent leaders (Politburo has just five members, and central committee 21);²⁴ traditional strongholds and safe havens of the rebels have shrunk; splintering of Maoists' Party in smaller groups due to differences largely over 'power and money sharing'; progressive decline in ideology of the LWE and propaganda; and inadequate support from the front organisations in the urban areas. During the spread of COVID-19, and due to disruption in grassroots level supply chain, the level of violence had generally declined in 2020 and 2021. However, given the support from a few political parties, increased network facilities available, and high rate of unemployment among the youth, the Maoists are still a force to reckon with and have the capability to strike against the SF. They are still potent in a few strongholds in Bastar region, Andhra-Odisha border areas, western Maharashtra (Gadchiroli) and some parts of Jharkhand.

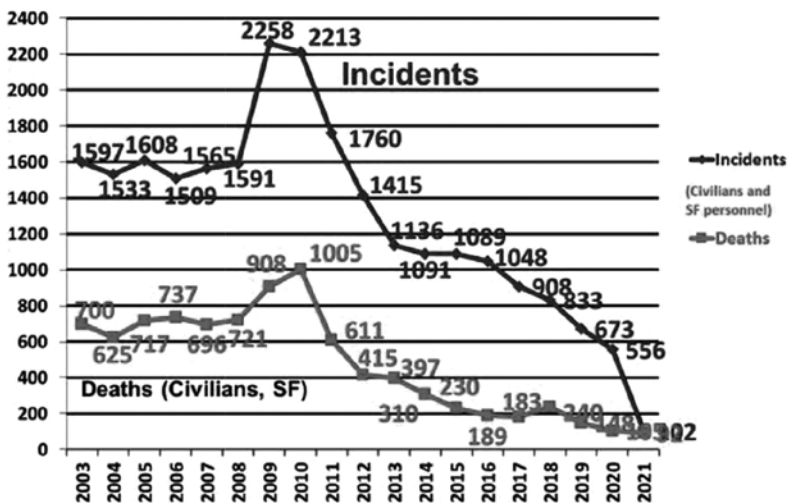
It must be understood that the grievances/aspirations and the centre of gravity of each region are different. The governance system must identify them and make sincere efforts to address them with a sense of urgency. Some of these include provision of basic amenities like food security, health care, community forest rights to traditional forest dwellers, job opportunities, connectivity, minimum support price for their local produce including tendu leaves, forest produce, etc. Recently, Chhattisgarh state government announced its strategy that 'problems are identified based on the local conditions and circumstances [...] the district administration are empowered and sensitised to work as per the sentiments, expectations, and demands of the localities.'²⁵ It is likely to address the aspirations of the people, if it is implemented on the ground.

The biggest tribal group – the Gonds – in central India number about 7.4 million, followed by the Santhals about 4.2 million.²⁶ Their language

and dialect must be promoted to establish communication and promote awareness. Guruswamy suggests that all tribal majority areas must be consolidated into administrative divisions whose authority must be vested with democratically elected leadership. This suggestion may help to address the aspirations of the tribals, as 45.86 per cent of Adivasis live below the poverty line.²⁷ The governance system must insist on timely implementation of people-centric schemes on the ground, accountability, and act against corrupt officials. The statistics in Figure 4 clearly indicate a sharp decline in number of incidents, killings, in the LWE areas, with periodic attacks to show their potent presence. However, it gives a window of opportunity to resolve this indigenous conflict by engaging all stakeholders.

The Security Forces need to focus on effective leadership at both strategic, and operational levels, actionable intelligence-based operations, and carry out the pending reforms to improve the capacity and capability of the police forces.

Figure 5: Naxal Violence in India, 2003-2021



Source: SATP (Data till 3 November 2021).

Punjab

In the 1980s, Punjab witnessed a politico-religious secessionist movement, primarily abetted, and supported by Pakistan. It was more of militancy than an insurgency, which was controlled with police playing a major role. It was a joint and integrated counter militancy structure, with Police as the lead force. With intelligence-based operations, support of the people at large, and good perception management, the militancy was controlled in a rather quick time frame. While Punjab has remained peaceful, India has to remain vigilant to the call for Khalistan Referendum 2020, by the US-based Sikh separatist body Sikh for Justice (SFJ), which was postponed (to 2022) due to the ongoing pandemic.²⁸

Jammu and Kashmir

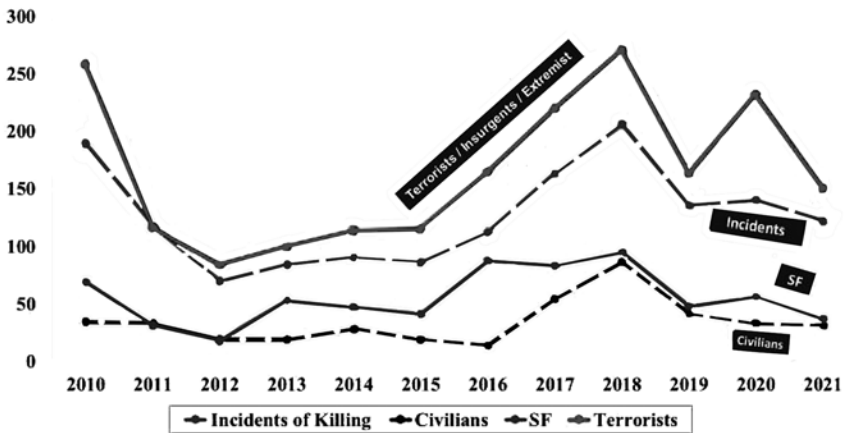
In the late 1980s, Pakistan resorted to proxy war cum cross border terrorism to destabilise India, with its focus on the state of Jammu and Kashmir (now Union Territory). It was in consonance with Pakistan's policy and announcement of 'bleeding India with a thousand cuts'.²⁹ Having not succeeded, Pakistan made persistent efforts to indigenise the insurgency by supporting the youth of J&K. Post the killing of Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist Burhan Wani in 2016, Pakistan has renewed its efforts towards radicalisation of the youth. While social-political analysts highlight the internal factors such as misgovernance, youth bulge and employment opportunities, resentment and lack of trust in the government due to abrogation of Article 370 on 5 August 2019, presence of the SF, and human rights violations; and external factors like religious radicalisation due to Wahabi sect and literature, infiltration across the LoC, Pakistan's support and instigation, cease fire violations and terrorist acts, and in more recent times, Pakistan – China nexus against India. There was an increase in ceasefire violations on the LoC in 2020, the highest since 2003. After the reinforcement of ceasefire between the two armies in February 2021, there has been a

spike in the CF violations and infiltration attempts on the LoC from September 2021 onwards.

Due to the improved security environment in the hinterland since 2010, there has been a decline in stone-pelting incidents (highest were in 2016 when Burhan Wani was killed), number of incidents of violence, attacks against the Security Forces, and killings of civilians. There was an increase in incidents in 2018 and violence, followed by a decline thereafter. However, the targeted killings of people in the Kashmir Valley in October 2021 has been a cause of concern, which must be controlled urgently by adopting appropriate measures.

While the conduct of Panchayat elections in J&K has been a good step, simultaneously governing system must communicate and interact with the people, prevent infiltration across the LoC and through road communication arteries. There is a need to instal full-body scanners for trucks and containers at bottlenecks like Madhopur to prevent inflow of weapons systems, choke the supply of terror funding, improve education system by bringing in transparency in syllabi, take counter measures

Figure 6: Kashmir, 2010-2021



Source: SATP (Data till 3 November 2021).

to expose the false narratives and ideas by local and Pakistan agencies, empower the youth to usher in an era of hope, and implement schemes on the ground to reach the people in the rural areas also.

Terrorism: Attacks against the ‘Very Idea of India’

India has large porous land, maritime and airspace borders with its neighbours, due to which terrorists exploit multiple routes from the neighbouring countries to reach J&K and other parts to carry out attacks. These areas also provide conduits for drugs, arms, and other contraband through the porous borders. According to the US Congressional Report of September 2021, Pakistan is home to at least 12 groups designated as ‘foreign terrorist organisations’ by the US including five of them being India-centric like the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM).³⁰ Pakistan has had a major role in organising terror attacks in India.

Given India’s location at the crossroads of the Golden Crescent and Golden Triangle, as also its distinctive location close to the ‘epicentre of global terrorism’, India has experienced almost all forms of terrorist attacks. These have been as part of organic to an insurgency, suicide attacks, sabotaging railway tracks, kidnapping hostages for meeting political demands or release of terrorists, hijacking of aircrafts, the assassination of prominent political leadership, systematic planned attacks on religious places of worship, financial hubs, transportation systems, security forces, communal riots followed by extreme violence and attacks both by religious and non-religious terrorist groups, cyber-attacks and public information cum propaganda campaign.

Having not reconciled with the Partition of India on its terms, Pakistan has remained obsessed with annexation of J&K, anti-India activities, and use of religion to rally global and terrorist groups in India to destabilise India, much to the detriment of its own economy, internal security situation within Pakistan. The terrorists have tried to

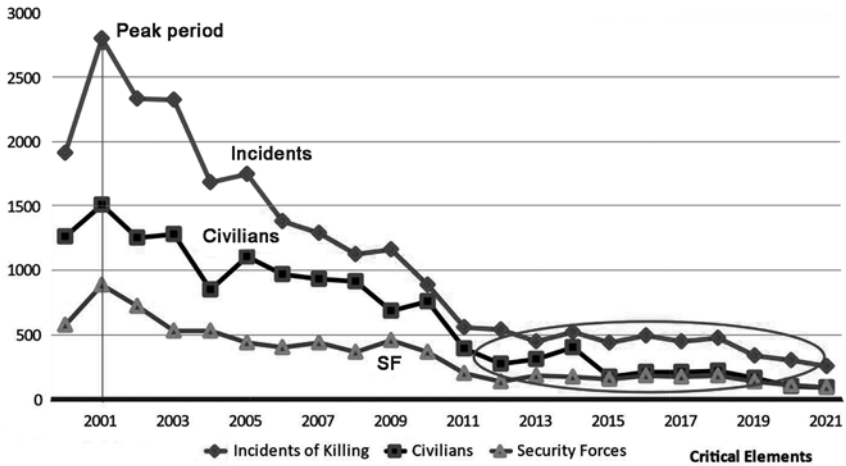
destroy the very idea of India by organising terrorist attacks against the Parliament (13 December 2001), financial and IT hubs, and Hindu temples in Ahmedabad, Varanasi and Jammu to incite communal disharmony. Speaking at the UN Security Council on Kashmir on 22 September 1965, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan declared a thousand-year war against India.³¹ Later, Pakistan's Army Chief, General Ziaul Haque (1977-88) had gone a step further to formulate a doctrine called, 'bleeding India through a thousand cuts', to be achieved using covert and low-intensity warfare with militancy and infiltration.³²

Religious, ethnic sub-nationalism and identity-based terrorism are perhaps the most potent threats to our national security. It would therefore be correct to conclude that terrorism, coupled with insurgencies, are the biggest threats to India and its 'very idea' – the idea to empower a democratic, secular, and secure India with a technology-enabled environment to ensure sustained economic growth and build comprehensive national power. Moreover, terrorists have also been carrying out cyber espionage, cyber-attacks, and hacking. These along with cyber-terrorism pose a serious threat to the security of the country.

Incidents and Killings at India Level

Figure 7 suggests that an excellent window of opportunity (WOO) was missed from 2010 onwards when the level of violence, incidents had declined to lowest levels. It required political acumen and the governance system to put their ears to the ground to resolve the conflict to the advantage or mutual acceptance of the proposals by all stakeholders within India. While there has been an overall sharp decline in the graph, it does not really measure the sentiments and perceptions of the population at large. However, post the killing of Burhan Wani, terrorist, in the Kashmir Valley, there was a spike in the incidents of violence.

Figure 7: Incidents and Killings at India Level, 2000-2021



Source: SATP, Annotated by the Author.

The geographical influence of the Maoists has been reduced to 41 districts in 2021.³³ In 2019: CPI (Maoist) & JeM were responsible for two-thirds of the total deaths in India. JeM has been far more active. In 2020 in J&K alone, a total of 203 terrorists, including 37 terrorists from Pakistan were killed, and nine surrendered. A study of the statistics³⁴ of incidents and killings of the past one decade suggests that the violence levels have progressively declined in the NER and the LWE affected regions in India.

Periodic Protests

Periodic protests by different castes, ethnic compositions and regions demanding reservations for Jats, Gujjars, Marathas and Patidars affect India’s economic well-being. IS is also negatively affected by the conflicts occurring due to the Pathalgarhi movement, agrarian movement, river water sharing and boundary disputes between the states. When such protests or conflicts turn violent, they create an adverse internal security situation and disrupt economic growth, resulting in avoidable

expenditures to the national exchequer. Political warfare is another area which dilutes the institutions of governance, and due to irresponsible statements and actions, it may result in communal disharmony, societal tensions, spike in religious radicalisation and violence between different communities or conflict with the state law enforcing machinery. The differences or disputes notwithstanding, national security should not be compromised at any stage.

Way Forward

“The insurgencies do not conclude with a clear cut victory by any one side.”

– Thomas R. Mockaitis³⁵

With certain initiatives and strategies put in place at political, diplomatic, governance, legal, and military levels, India has been fairly successful in managing (not resolving) the menace of insurgencies, and terrorism. However, India needs to work with a sense of urgency and commitment to address myriad internal security issues, resolve long drawn insurgencies, and minimise the economic cost of violence. While a few recommendations have been given earlier along with each specific region, a few aspects that merit consideration are:

- Almost all elements of national power have a role – direct or indirect – on matters of national security, to suppress internal armed conflicts, and finally to resolve them. Given India’s diversity and nature of myriad threats, the Government needs to formulate a CNSS. It may be in two parts: classified and unclassified. Although the armed forces have formulated Military Doctrines including for joint operation, and sub-conventional operations, a CNSS would give a definite direction to the role of each element of national power in the short and long term. This would thus help to integrate all elements of national power and resolve the conflicts in an acceptable time frame. CNSS

should also lay down guidelines to prevent political warfare that is detrimental to national security.

- To formulate a CNSS, there is a need to analyse the existing and emerging threats, and how these threats overlap with conventional threats. These threats must also include the threats from cyber, information, non-contact form of weapon systems, economic, environment etc.
- Given India's young demography and high unemployment rate, there is a need to focus on education, skill development and empowerment of the youth to provide employment opportunities and engage them in a constructive manner.
- A robust intelligence system, with technology-enabled tools and HUMINT, is not only essential for the SF to monitor the activities of the insurgents and conduct operations against hardcore insurgents and terrorists, but also understand the pulse and grievances of the people. Intelligence sharing and coordination between the IB, Multi-Agency Centre (MAC) and Subsidiary Multi-Agency Centre (SMAC) must be further strengthened. These actions will help to identify the CoG of each region, and create a road map to address the legitimate aspirations in a systematic manner.
- It is difficult to implement development initiatives without providing a secure environment. Depending upon the phase of insurgency and the trend of violence, the SF must also review its strategy periodically.
- The first responders to IS situation are the police force. Therefore, in the spirit of the landmark judgement of the Supreme Court of India on September 22, 2006, the central and state governments should implement the pending police reforms. There is a great difference between normal policing duties and combating insurgents and terrorists. It requires a cultural shift from conventional policing roles to fighting against guerrillas in unfamiliar and difficult terrain. There is, therefore, a need to further enhance its capacity and capabilities

with technology-enabled systems, along with added focus on training and the training establishments.

- The terrorists and insurgents remain ahead of the SF in acquiring and using the latest technology, weapon systems and social media tools for their functioning, including transferring money on dark nets. Violent non-state actors, insurgents, terrorists, criminals remain abreast at internet speed, unlike the SF and government agencies. The system of monitoring threats, maintaining situational awareness and acquiring the latest technology by the SF, in an early time, requires a comprehensive review.
- Challenges posed by an insurgency, terrorism, cyber-crime, and information warfare to change the perception of the population at large, require a coordinated response with specialists (cyber and information related) and other elements of national power. In J&K and the NER, the Army, CAPF, police, intelligence agencies, civil departments must synergise their activities. In India, to combat insurgency and terrorism, there is an urgent need to establish good coordination between the national and state-level security apparatus.
- During the Malayan Insurgency (1948-60), General Templar, newly appointed British High Commissioner, created a central command authority with four main components to synergise their effort against the Communist insurgents: SF, police, civil administration, and intelligence. Due to synergised effort, the insurgency was managed and resolved, in that order, in less than ten years. All agencies involved in CI operations must keep this principle to synergise their effort.
- While election manifestos of political parties generally include ‘to improve the IS situation’, but not much is done to resolve the insurgencies/conflicts. In such conflicts, there are no clear winners or losers. According to statistics, only 7 per cent of insurgencies were resolved by military’s intervention, while majority of them were resolved by a political solution, supported by a strong military muscle.

It requires a 'political strategy' and a mission-oriented approach to resolve them in larger national interest, by involving specialists', the affected local population, and the leaders of insurgencies. The five pillars of governance in insurgency affected areas depend upon development (extra focus on connectivity), empowerment and employment, creating a secure environment, perception management, and negotiation and dialogue.

- Given India has long porous land and coastal borders, effective management is vital to prevent anti-national activities from across the border, including LoC. The buzz word is smart management of borders, with better ISR capabilities, employment of technology-enabled systems, and simultaneously improving the infrastructure by providing better surface and cellular connectivity, socio-economic activity, and better facilities for education, health, employment opportunities to prevent migration of villagers from the border areas. Due to multiple forces on the borders, there is a need to have an Apex body to coordinate and ensure better Border Management.
- Depending upon the phase of insurgency, balanced civil, police, military and perception management techniques should be applied. The aim should be to defeat the ideology or the false narratives of terrorists and insurgents, and not the people. A 'strategy of reassurance to the people' that their aspirations and interests would always be protected. Therefore, tribal people, NGOs, civil society activists and media should be involved to not support the ANEs, and shun violence. A case in point is Naga Mothers' Association which has contributed significantly to dissuading the rebels from the path of violence. To prevent violence and loss of lives, it had propagated, 'Shed No Blood' as one of its primary mission.
- To ensure time-bound implementation of people-centric schemes on the ground, performance audit, and accountability of the functionaries must be ensured.

All elements of national power have some role to address the grievances of the population. These must be identified, region wise and addressed with a sense of urgency. Due to rapid increase in population, industrialisation, and employment opportunities in the cities, which are the hub of political, economic, social, and cultural activities, India would be confronted with the challenge of hyper urbanisation. The governance system must understand the challenge, and plan to provide essential facilities and infrastructure to people moving into ghettos and slums. Otherwise, it may result in ANEs initiating a mass movement against the government, which would be difficult to monitor in such densely populated areas. It would be prudent to pay attention to urban terrorism, cyber-crimes, information warfare and related threats in the future. On balance, it requires a whole of the government approach to address multiple threats to internal security.

“...Tangible support – the ability of insurgents to replenish and obtain personal, material financing, intelligence and sanctuary – was found to be even more important than popular support.”³⁶

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India's Internal Security: Threat Perception and Way Forward

Anshuman Behera

Abstract

Contrary to popular discourse, the threats emanating from the internal security issues pose serious security threats to the Indian state and its people. Faced with numerous internal security challenges, the Indian experience of dealing with them has been a mixed experience. Arguably, no other country has ever faced such multiple internal security threats, in various forms and intensity than the Indian state. While the threat perception emanating from the internal security challenges have de-escalated over the last few years, they refuse to die down. Considering the immediacy of the issue, this paper critically engages with the contemporary internal security challenges that the Indian state encounters. In doing so the paper reflects upon the very process through which each of these internal security threats operates and highlights the nature and the intensity of threat perception. Through providing a conceptual framework, the paper also evaluates the state responses to the internal security issues. The paper limits its scope to four major internal security issues in India: The Left-Wing Extremism (LWE), the violent conflicts in the Northeastern states,

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Mapping India's Internal Security: An Introduction

In order to offer a better conceptual framework to 'internal security,' it is important to distinguish it from the ordinary understanding through a 'law-and-order' framework. While scholars find it difficult in coming to a consensus, a widely acceptable definition of internal security was offered by the Commission of Centre-State Relations' report on 'Internal Security, Criminal Justice and Centre-State Co-operation'. This Commission, in the process of engaging with various dimensions of internal security, highlighted the important convergence points with 'National Security' discourse. Stepping away from the conventional understanding which limits the scope of national security to deal with the external threat and economic development, this report makes case for both national and internal security to be addressed from a common platform. According to this report, internal security in India is defined as:

“Security against threats faced by a country within its national borders, either caused by inner political turmoil, or provoked, prompted or proxied by an enemy country, perpetrated even by such groups that use a failed, failing or weak state, causing insurgency, terrorism or any other subversive acts that target innocent citizens, cause animosity between and amongst groups of citizens and communities intended to cause or causing violence, destroy or attempt to destroy public and private establishment”.¹

This definition merits a detailed engagement. An important aspect of this definition is about the larger scope of internal security. Contrary to the binary that we often encounter, it engages with both external and internal issues and stakeholders in understanding the internal security discourse.

Similarly, it doesn't limit the threats only to the state. Rather the threat perceptions to the citizens and to the communities are very much accommodated. This definition goes on to distinguish between insurgency and terrorism. The Western scholarship mostly understands terrorism and insurgency from a common platform. The use of 'irregular army'² in carrying out militant activities, among many other factors, is considered as commonality between the two. Often used interchangeably, insurgencies and acts of terrorism offer different connotations. Insurgencies are consciously planned violent political movements wherein the non-ruling parties tries to dislodge the ruling regime through acts of violence.

Going by this understanding, the Maoist conflict in India can be called as an insurgency. Similarly, few of the militant groups operating in the Northeastern states also can be called as insurgents. Terrorism, on the other hand, at least in the Indian context, has always been understood and engaged through the prism of external actors/countries. The role of Pakistan indirectly supporting and sustaining the terror activities in India hardly finds a miss in understanding and engaging with the issue of terrorism. More importantly, the acts of resorting to terror methods are a commonality between the insurgents, militants, and the terrorists. Despite this commonality, these groups depart from each other in terms of their ideology, objectives and the nature of stakeholders involved. In the Indian context, the dimension of irregular army as a commonality between insurgency and terrorism does not fit well. The insurgent groups like the Maoists continue to carry out their militant activities through a regular (if not a conventional) army. Functioning through an irregular army may be a truism to the terrorist groups.

Along with insurgency and terrorism, the subversive acts perpetrated by the communal and criminal groups also pose serious internal security threats. In this context, one would find it difficult to extricate internal security threats either from criminal activities³ or from the ordinary law-and-order problem. For example, the potential roles of petty cases of bank

robbery or an inter-personal fight between two individuals belonging to different religions in contributing to terror financing and communal riots cannot be diluted. In the Indian context, we often tend to overlook converge these issues in addressing the internal security challenges. A cohesive internal security discourse, therefore, would address the threats as nation-wide, threats to the state as well as to the citizens and should also take in account both the internal and external factors in addressing the threat. It is through the prism of this cohesive internal security discourse; this paper reflects upon the following four major internal security challenges in India.

Left-wing Extremism: The Largest Internal Security Threat?

The Left-wing Extremism or the Maoist insurgency led by the Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-Maoist), is arguably the largest internal security threat in India as once declared by the former Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh. Starting from the Naxalbari areas of West Bengal state in 1967, the Maoist insurgency has evolved through various forms and shades. The Maoist insurgency is mostly engaged through two dominant positions,⁴ one supporting the so-called revolutionary violence terming it as a fight by the downtrodden and under-privileged for their rights and entitlements and the other rejects the violent movement terms them as militants. While the Maoists garner substantial support from the first category, the Indian state rejects the violent movement.

Influenced by the political thoughts of Karl Marx, Lenin, and Mao (as claimed by the Maoists), the Maoists' objective is to seize political power and herald a 'New Democracy' through a protracted armed struggle. In doing so, the Maoists reject the parliamentary and democratic forms of governance in India and term them as a sham. It is through these ideological orientations and the romanticisation of 'revolutionary violence' the Maoists, in their movement in last five decades, have been

able to establish their presence over 180 districts in ten states. However, presently, the spread of the Maoists is claimed to be limited to fewer districts. Over more than five decades of their existence, the Maoist insurgency has caused large scale violence in the areas of their presence posing a direct threat to the Indian state and creating an environment of fear in the minds of common people. The following table offers testimony to this.

Table 1: Fatalities in Maoist Violence: 2004-22 September 2021

| Year | Civilians | SFs | Maoists | Not Specified | Total |
|-------|-----------|------|---------|---------------|-------|
| 2004 | 89 | 82 | 87 | 22 | 280 |
| 2005 | 259 | 147 | 282 | 24 | 712 |
| 2006 | 249 | 128 | 343 | 14 | 734 |
| 2007 | 218 | 234 | 195 | 25 | 672 |
| 2008 | 183 | 214 | 228 | 19 | 644 |
| 2009 | 368 | 334 | 299 | 12 | 1013 |
| 2010 | 628 | 267 | 264 | 20 | 1179 |
| 2011 | 259 | 137 | 210 | 0 | 606 |
| 2012 | 156 | 96 | 125 | 1 | 378 |
| 2013 | 164 | 103 | 151 | 0 | 418 |
| 2014 | 127 | 98 | 121 | 4 | 350 |
| 2015 | 90 | 56 | 110 | 0 | 256 |
| 2016 | 122 | 60 | 250 | 0 | 432 |
| 2017 | 109 | 76 | 150 | 0 | 335 |
| 2018 | 108 | 73 | 231 | 0 | 412 |
| 2019 | 99 | 49 | 154 | 0 | 302 |
| 2020 | 61 | 44 | 134 | 0 | 239 |
| 2021* | 41 | 48 | 75 | 0 | 164 |
| Total | 3330 | 2246 | 3409 | 141 | 9126 |

Source: SATP (2021)⁵

Apart from violent activities, the Maoist insurgency poses threats to the state and the people. Wherein, the Maoists by rejecting the democracy and the parliamentary form of governance challenged the sovereignty of the Indian state. The killings of civilians, government officials and the security forces by the Maoists reflect on this aspect of the security threat. In this context terming it as the single largest internal security threat to India makes sense. The Maoist insurgency also poses threats to the common people. The very presence of the Maoists creates an atmosphere of fear in the kinds of the Maoist affected areas. The tribal and other marginalised communities dominated areas of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra, where the presence of the state machinery is relatively limited, the Maoists have taken advantage through their acts of violence to create a fearful atmosphere and garnering support of the local people. Legitimising violence by non-state actors is another serious threat that the Maoists and their over-ground supporters also pose threats to the Indian society and polity. While the state and the Maoists appear to be the most important stakeholders, the role of a certain section of the intelligentsia in legitimising the Maoists, hence an important stakeholder, should not be overlooked.

In terms of responding to the threats posed by the Maoist insurgency, the Indian state has taken multiple measures. The twin-track approach- security and development- has been the dominant response. The security approach⁶ derives its rationale from the fact that the Indian state terms the Maoists as an armed group and hence, a counter-insurgency measure has been adopted to minimise the violence and threat perception. The deployment of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) in the Maoist affected areas along with the security forces by the respective states have been successful in minimizing the Maoist activities. Similarly, the development response by the Indian state is primarily aimed to win away from the support of the local people from the Maoists. Arguably, the erstwhile Planning Commission of India's report on 'Development Challenges in

the Extremist Affected Areas⁷ has been a reference point towards the Indian state's development initiatives. Measures such as Integrated Action Plan (now Central Assistance Scheme) in the worst affected districts, Security Related Expenditure, Road construction initiatives have been initiated with a motive to develop the areas and, secondly to address the grievances of the local people to win them away from the Maoists. Along with the security and development responses, the present regime has also initiated a policy of 'ensuring the rights and entitlements of the local communities' as a response to fighting the Maoists. The long-standing grievances of the local communities in the forms of demands over land and forest rights are addressed.

It is through the above-mentioned responses; the successive governments have been able to contain the Maoists substantially. At present, the Maoists are limited to a few pockets of Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Jharkhand, and Maharashtra. As one can observe a substantial fall in the Maoist related violent incidents, several leaders of the former have been either neutralised or arrested. To this extent, the threat perception emanating from the Maoist insurgency has been contained, but the threat, though on a much smaller scale, refuse to die down. Though there has been a lesser number of violent incidents by the Maoists, the banned outfit under the new leadership, Namballa Keshava Rao, alias Basavaraj as their General Secretary and Madvi Hidma as the chief of military affairs have been targeting the security forces through surprise attacks. Ever since Basavaraj has taken over the leadership, the Maoists have carried out four major attacks in the last two years. On 1 May 2019, the Maoists killed fifteen security force personnel in Gadchiroli district. Earlier on 9 April 2019, the Maoists attacked the convoy of Chhattisgarh BJP MLA Bhima Mandavi, killing the MLA and two others just before the first phase of the general election. Through these attacks, the new leadership wants to scotch the growing understanding that the Maoist movement is on its last legs.⁸ Considering the protractive nature of the Maoist

insurgency and lessons from the history, the state response to this security threat should not take delinquent approach.⁹ While the state responses, so far, have been effective against the Maoists, the very presence of the latter highlights the gaps in the policy framework. Along with the above-mentioned responses, the government should also think of investing in public perception management which would help in delegitimising the movement and its supporters in the intellectual circles. The government should also think of engaging in a peace talk and negotiation with the Maoists. Since the ideological contestation is an important factor in this violent conflict, a dialogue between two parties would help dilute the threat perception.

Militancy and Ethnic Conflict in the Northeast

The long-standing militancy and violent ethnic conflicts in some of the Northeastern states have been a serious internal security concern for the Indian state. Contrary to a dominant position that conceptualises the violence and conflicts as 'freedom struggle' against the 'homogenizing state'¹⁰, most of these conflicts are often guided by distorted sentiments overshadowing the realistic issues. Rightfully, the Standing Committee of the MHA puts these conflicts in three broad categories: Separatist insurgencies demanding independence; autonomist insurgencies asserting sub-regional aspirations; and intra-ethnic conflicts among dominant and smaller tribal groups.¹¹ Among other factors, aggressive assertion of identity and sense of alienation among the dominant as well as the minority ethnic groups in various states have contributed to the long-lasting militancy in some states in Northeast. The historical roots of alienation induced by the failure of the colonial rule to integrate these states with 'mainland' India continue to be there in some form or the other. The political elites of the Northeastern states have often integrated the economic backwardness and insufficient political representation with this sense of alienation. Moreover, the internal conflicts between

the dominant and the minority groups often blame the Indian state as a common enemy and hold the latter responsible. Apart from these, the external implications on the internal conflicts and militancy, in terms of sustaining them and providing them safe houses in their territories, have been an important factor. While in the last few years the levels of violence have come down drastically, still a number of militant groups (though very small in sizes) and the inter and intra ethnic conflicts refuse to die down. The following table highlights the violent incidents and fatalities in the Northeastern states of the last decade.

**Table 2: Fatalities in Militancy in Northeast
(January 1, 2011-22 September 2021)**

| Year | Civilians | SFs | Militants | Not Specified | Total |
|--------------|------------|------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| 2011 | 73 | 31 | 138 | 2 | 244 |
| 2012 | 99 | 18 | 216 | 1 | 334 |
| 2013 | 95 | 21 | 134 | 2 | 252 |
| 2014 | 243 | 22 | 204 | 0 | 469 |
| 2015 | 64 | 49 | 163 | 3 | 279 |
| 2016 | 63 | 20 | 85 | 0 | 168 |
| 2017 | 35 | 13 | 58 | 1 | 107 |
| 2018 | 20 | 15 | 38 | 0 | 73 |
| 2019 | 18 | 5 | 11 | 0 | 34 |
| 2020 | 5 | 5 | 17 | 0 | 27 |
| 2021* | 11 | 3 | 31 | 0 | 45 |
| Total | 726 | 202 | 1095 | 09 | 2032 |

Source: SATP (2021)¹²

The nature of security threats that emanates from the militancy and ethnic conflict is multi-fold. First, the separatist militant groups like the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN)¹³ in Nagaland-both the factions, Isak Muivah and the Kahplang, challenge the sovereignty of the Indian state. Similarly, the United Liberation Front (UNLF)¹⁴ of Manipur also

poses a security threat to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Indian state. The sub-regional aspirations leading to violent conflicts among the ethnic groups dilutes the democratic and constitutional ethos of India. Moreover, the involvement of bordering states like Myanmar and Bangladesh in harbouring the militant groups is also a serious matter of concern. Apart from the violent incidents, several states of Northeast have been vulnerable to drug and human trafficking. The states like Manipur have particularly been badly affected by illicit drug trafficking¹⁵ across the border. Similarly, the dumping of Chinese goods, through Manipur, in the Northeastern states also poses serious security concerns. The militancy and the ungoverned territories¹⁶ in and around the borderlands of Northeast substantially contribute to the threat to the Indian state.

The state response to these threats has been in four distinct yet integrated ways. They are a security approach in dealing with militancy; ensuring local autonomy through the provisions of Sixth Schedule; peace talks and negotiations with the militant groups; and development measures including special economic packages.¹⁷ This integrated policy framework has proved to be a successful to a great extent. However, some of these responses have had unintended and deleterious consequences as well. A security response to the militancy has brought down the violence drastically (refer to Table 2). Similarly, the sustained peace talks with majority of the prominent militant groups have also yield good results. For example, the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) completely disbanded its armed cadres through signing an agreement with the Government in January 2020. Further, in January 2020 hundreds of armed cadres belonging to eight different militant groups including the United Liberation Front of Asom-Independent (ULFA-I) surrendered in Assam. While the peace talks with multiple militant groups offer a good sign, such agreements also create a sense of apprehension and insecurity among the less privileged and minority groups and promote them to take up arms.¹⁸ The emergence of smaller armed groups in the

states of Manipur, Nagaland and Assam is a testimony to the sense of growing insecurities. On the other hand, the competition among the ethnic groups to have dominance over territories and resources alike, also contributes to the sustenance of ethnic conflicts and thereby contributing to the security threats. While the successive governments have been successful to some extent in responding to these security threats, the poor implementation of the cease-fire agreements, the involvement of the militants in criminal activities, indeterminate peace talks are some of the drawbacks in governments' policies in effectively handling the issues. On the external front, Myanmar territory continues to offer safe houses to some of these militant groups. A robust bilateral engagement with Myanmar would potentially offer a solution to this problem.

Separatism and Terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir

The issues of separatism and terrorism in the state of J&K blur the distinction between external and internal aspects of security threats. In fact, it is the combination of the external and the internal dimension that contributes to the security challenges in the J&K. The external dimension emanates from the direct involvement of Pakistan in harbouring and supporting the terrorist groups in its territory and supporting terrorist activities in J&K. The internal dimension of the security threats can be linked to the religious radicalisation wrapped with fig leaf of Kashmir nationalism asserting for separate statehood. This complex interplay of several interconnected issues makes it difficult for the Indian state to deal with the security threats effectively. Some scholars observe that the territorial defensibility of the Indian state, the assertion of Pakistan over the same territory and the aggressive religious-Kashmir nationalism¹⁹ offers a vicious cycle of security challenges for the Indian state. Apart from Pakistan, the role of China in sustaining the conflicts and violence cannot be ruled out. The episodes of the Chinese state issuing loose visas to the people of J&K can be seen as attempts to dilute the sovereignty

of India. Scholars argue that a sustained Kashmir conflict serves the best for the Chinese interest.²⁰ To this extent, the Chinese state is very much a stakeholder in the Kashmir conflicts along with Pakistan and Pakistan supported terrorist groups.

The nature of security threats emanating from J&K with the involvement of Pakistan, China and the terrorist groups are multifold. The territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Indian state face a direct threat. The rising religious radicalisation among the youth in J&K continues to have negative implications on the secular fabrics of India. The assertion of Islamic fundamentalism has been instrumental for the mass exodus of the Kashmir Pandits from their native place. Moreover, decades long militancy and terrorism in Kashmir also poses a serious threat to human security. Though in the last decade the violence-related incidents and killings have been on a declining path (see the table below), J&K continues to be one of the most volatile states in India.

**Table 3: Fatalities in Militancy in J&K
(January 2012 to 22 September 2021)**

| Year | Civilians | SFs | Militants | Total |
|--------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| 2012 | 19 | 18 | 84 | 121 |
| 2013 | 19 | 53 | 100 | 172 |
| 2014 | 28 | 47 | 114 | 189 |
| 2015 | 19 | 41 | 115 | 175 |
| 2016 | 14 | 88 | 165 | 267 |
| 2017 | 54 | 83 | 220 | 357 |
| 2018 | 86 | 95 | 271 | 452 |
| 2019 | 42 | 78 | 163 | 283 |
| 2020 | 33 | 56 | 232 | 321 |
| 2021 | 19 | 25 | 129 | 173 |
| Total | 333 | 584 | 1593 | 2510 |

Source: SATP (2021)²¹

In the last five years, the security situation in J&K has improved substantially. One can attribute the improvement in security situation to three important factors; identification and elimination of local and foreign terrorists; abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A putting an end to the special status and privileges of the state and implementation of development activities. The elimination of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HuM) leader Burhan Wani on 8 July 2016, is often cited as a reference point in India's strong action against the militancy and its local support in Kashmir. Since then the security forces have been successful in neutralising several terrorists in J&K, especially post-abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A.

Despite the strong military and police actions against terrorism in J&K, the success against the radicalisation and anti-India sentiment among certain sections of the population needs further actions. So far the radicalisation in Kashmir is concerned, one can witness three threads of narratives: pro-Pakistan, pro-Azadi, and pro-Salafist Islam – with calls for Nizam-e Mustafa, and Khalifat-e Rashida.²² While the active involvements of the terrorist groups like the HuM, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) in carrying out militancy have come down, the emergence of The Resistance Force (TRF), believed to be an offshoot of LeT,²³ has been responsible in carrying out most of the terrorist activities in Kashmir. Considering the change of guard in the neighbourhood, Taliban's takeover in Afghanistan, and the active role of Pakistan in the process, the Indian state should be prepared for any kind of eventualities in the future. The implementation of people-centric development measures, sustained dialogue process with the local stakeholders and a strong security approach would help minimise the security threats that emanate from militancy and terrorism in J&K.

Communalism and Religious Radicalisation

Unlike the above-mentioned issues, identifying the threat perception emanating from communalism is trickier. Communalism, as widely

understood, is conflict between two or more religious groups over secular issues.²⁴ These conflicts between two religious communities often receive certain political and social acceptance. In the Indian context, it is safe to argue that the communal violence is often socially and politically condoned unless it crosses a certain threshold. The involvement of the socio-political elites in initiating, pursuing, and determining the processes of communalism and the role of communalism in furthering the political objectives of respective groups make it trickier to articulate it around the larger discourse of internal security. While the existing literature engages with communalism through the prism of elections, religious intolerance, and social division, the security threats that it poses to the state and to the people have not been adequately understood. It is important to mention that the MHA also does not factor in communalism/communal riots as one of the internal security issues.²⁵ However, considering the regular occurrence of communal riots and their implications on religious radicalisation, this paper reflects upon communalism and radicalisation as an internal security issue.

The communal violence and riots in India have their deep root in the history of religious division and disharmony. The country has witnessed multiple communal riots, in various forms and scales, for centuries. While the successive governments claim to contain the communal riots, the last five years witnessed as many as 3399 communal riots (2016-869, 2017-723, 2018-512, 2019-438 and 2020-857)²⁶ in various parts of India. The communal riots pose a direct threat to the diversity of India.²⁷ Further, the communal tensions leading to fuelling religious radicalisation is a major security threat to the Indian state. The indoctrination of extreme religious ideologies leading to the radicalisation often finds its source of legitimacy through the communal divide and riots.²⁸ It has been observed by the scholars that terrorist organisations have shown an affinity to leveraging violence against a particular religious community to recruit and further their activities.²⁹ To cite an example, the “Voice of Hind”, a propaganda

material released by the Islamic State of Syria and Iraq (ISIS) in 2020 makes attempts to indoctrinate and recruit the Indian Muslims through manufacturing fears and grievances owing to the communal divides in the country.³⁰ We have also the examples of the Indian Mujahideen (IM) operating through taking the advantage of communal divides and riots in India. In the recent past, the role of external actors in fuelling and taking advantage of the Delhi riot and the Anti-CAA protest was highlighted by the security agencies.

While the successive governments have focused more on addressing the communal riots, there is an immediate need to focus more on the security threats that they pose. Merely containing the number of episodes of communal riots offers very limited scope for minimising the security threat. There is a need to investigate how these episodes are used as propaganda in radicalising and recruiting people for terrorism. A De-radicalisation measure directed towards delegitimising the radical ideologies along with strong police action would address the issue better.

Conclusion

The internal security threats in India are complex in nature. Considering this complexity and the role of certain external actors in enhancing the threat perception the response from the Indian state, contrary to criticism by some scholars,³¹ has been fairly robust. Containing the Maoist violence to a few pockets of central India, the de-escalation of violent related activities in the Northeastern states and actively pursuing peace talks with several militant groups in Northeast, bringing down the levels of militancy and terrorism in J&K offers testimony to effective internal security strategy of the Indian state. The comprehensive strategy of the Indian state in responding to the internal security issues can be summed up as: a strong security approach; development measures in the affected areas; addressing the grievances by ensuring rights and entitlements; and peace talks with the armed groups. However, in the areas of public perception management

and de-radicalisation of indoctrinated people, the state needs to engage effectively. Similarly, the ongoing peace talks with various militant groups in Northeast need to be expedited to win the trust of the people. The governments of the day should also think of replicating the peace talk models of Northeast in the Maoist affected areas.

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Restructuring for India's Disputed Borders: An Appraisal

A.B. Shivane

Abstract

In the present geopolitical melee, the tools of strategic coercion and conflicts are finding new ways to achieve the desired end. The need today is to restructure and reshape a 'big war military with smart, lean, agile and combined arms joint warfare smart capabilities'. India's military strategy must focus on 'offensive domination with manoeuvre warfare orientation rather than attritionist ground holding mindsets. The restructuring philosophy will accordingly need to focus on a 'capability-based approach with deterrence based on denial'. The operational need is to move from large bulky formations to modular technology-enabled networked Brigades and Divisional sized Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs). The challenge is to restructure in an institutionalised time-bound manner that is neither too much too soon nor too little too late.

Geostrategic Landscape and Its Implications

Titanic and revolutionary changes in the global security environment are creating geopolitical fragility at an unprecedented scale. Chinese belligerence, Pakistan's misadventure with terrorism and Talibanised

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Afghanistan has cast their security challenges centred around the Asian landmass and the oceanic tides of Indo Pacific. Both the economic centre of gravity and the potential conflict zones are surely shifting towards Asia, leading to rising geopolitical competition and competing power play shaping potential conflict zones. In such a geopolitical melee the tools of strategic coercion and conflicts are finding new ways to achieve the desired end.

Forecasting the future geostrategic landscape and predicting threats would be a factor of understanding environmental scarcity, cultural and social clash, geographic destiny and the transformation of war. Yet the denominator of multi-domain conflict and strategic coercion would remain a constant. Thus, strategies and structures to fight and win future conflicts must evolve in highly adaptive, innovative, and creative ways. Nations in pursuit of their enduring national interests are accordingly restructuring their Defence Forces to be future-ready and relevant. This man dates charting tomorrow's capabilities today and a review of concepts, doctrines and structures. Business as usual is not an option nor is making yesterday look perfect a solution.

Asian Fragility and Operational Imperatives

The trio of Afghanistan, Pakistan and China has added a new dimension to regional instability which directly impacts India. Afghanistan has emerged as the new geopolitical pivot with the re-emergence of terrorism taking shape from blazing guns to illusive governance. This portends both a psychological boost to terrorism and a potential spillover effect. China's disruptive rise has altered the balance of power with its unilateralism fuelling oceanic rivalries and landmass contestations, particularly in the Himalayas. While oceanic rivalries have a multinational response mechanism, countering the Himalayan transgression is the sole domain of India's military capability. Pakistan on the other hand with its cultural and economic fault lines fosters military-led revisionism and Islamist led terrorism, fuelling anti-India

disruptive policies. Pakistan's military, economic, ideological, geostrategic tandem with China along with the Taliban power play in Afghanistan portends a collusive threat to destabilise India. Pakistan and China may have reduced the likelihood of a full-scale war but have smartly increased the salience of military coercion below the threshold of war. For India, it defines an uneasy calm before the next storm.

Ironically the semulti-spectrum conflict challenges are fast outpacing the archival structures, legacy equipment and war fighting philosophy of the Indian Defence Forces, impinging upon resilient national security architecture. The recent threats manifestation on our Western and more significantly on our Northern borders are witness to the same. The emergence of disrupting military technologies has vastly impacted the character of conflict and levying new demands on the military's organisation, training, and doctrine. The need today is to restructure and reshape a "big war military with smart, lean, agile and combined arms joint warfare capabilities". The challenge is to transform into a future-ready force, within the all-encompassing budgetary constraints and overcome mind sets of the past. The recent transformation initiative in this regard is an exigent and logical step. Yet it requires a more holistic evolutionary approach with a reviewed doctrinal construct leading to the desired force structuring. The foundational principle is that force doctrine, restructuring and modernisation are mutually reinforcing and complementary aspects of military capability building. These must keep pace with present times and cannot be old wine in a new bottle.

Revitalising Military Strategy and Review of Doctrinal Construct

India's military strategy entails managing threats on its disputed border by 'defensive holding' psyche with 'attritionist force on force application' rather than 'offensive domination and manoeuvres warfare' orientation. While the erstwhile orthodox Defensive Offensive Strategy has been

doctrinally replaced by a Proactive Operations Strategy, its character and mindsets remain deeply emended in the legacy of the past. Traditional force on force attrition strategy based on wartime experience (except for 1971 East Front) and the deeply embedded counter-insurgency psyche remain retarders to imbibe the culture on manoeuvre warfare and understanding of the operational level of war. The focus must be on dominating spaces instead of universally holding ground by manpower. The concept of “Pre-emption, Dislocation and Disintegration” as the three empirical means of defeat in Manoeuvre Warfare as stated in the Indian Army Doctrine requires both greater teeth and understanding. The force structure required for their application has to be modular, lean and integrated with a potentescalatory joint force application matrix.

Traditionally the ground forces have dominated the military defensive response strategy giving secondary look to aerospace, maritime and new domains of cyber, space and information warfare. While the integrity of continental boundaries will remain primary, the importance of the maritime and aerospace domain merits due recognition. The imperative is to optimise tri-service capabilities beyond a service-centric parochial approach based on an integrated military strategy to achieve the desired ends. India must thus calibrate its military capability as an integrated and synergised application of war fighting elements in all seven mediums – land, air, sea, space, underwater, cyber and cognitive domain. Besides the Special Operations Division, Defence Cyber Agency and Defence Space Agency need greater empowerment and focus.

The operational imperative is to orient requisite combat power on the primary Northern Front while denying any gains on the secondary Western Front by in-situ forces with desired offensive reserves as part of force posturing. The internal security domain must be kept under positive control. Rebalancing, reshaping and restructuring military power towards China including maritime domain, as also the creation of centralised

reserves for inter front application and out of area contingencies must thus find strategic focus.

At the strategic level, we need to review our approach to state versus state and state versus non-state threats. As a nation with disputed borders and inimical neighbours, our military must orient essentially for the state versus state conflict and adapt to the state versus non-state threats. The severity and consequences of the former are more severe and face greater capability building challenges. India for the foreseeable future will thus need to balance its force structure to counter existent threats to its continental, aerospace and maritime domain while simultaneously building military capabilities in equally critical future domains like AI, IW, Space, Cyber, etc. The counter-insurgency or state versus non-state domain must be handed over to the PMF, CAPF and state security machinery duly empowered. The Armed Forces can ill afford to dilute their focus at the cost of their primary task.

At the operational level, the need is to strategically pre-empt, dislocate and disrupt enemy forces. Pre-emption implies initiating decisive operations before the enemy does thereby dictating terms on the battlefield. Pre-emption contributes towards gaining initiative and causing partial dislocation. Dislocation implies avoiding strength and striking at vulnerability through manoeuvre thereby causing physical and psychological paralysis on the enemy. Disintegration implies breaking the organic cohesion of the enemy and striking his strategic/operational/tactical centres of gravity thereby zapping his will to resist. In the end, it's the enemy's will not just the capability that should be targeted. The tools for this will be both kinetic and non-kinetic with information warfare and technology opening new vistas. We thus need an agile, versatile and aggressive integrated force structure to pre-empt and dominate all spectrums of conflict.

Command, Control, Computers, Communications, Cyber, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C5ISR) has yet been

another pitfall in the doctrinal construct leading to repeated strategic surprise and reactive disposition of the Indian Military establishment. The prevailing fragile situation on our disputed borders mandates an integrated C5ISR networked decision support system, integrated with state-of-the-art precision targeting, as part of our joint force future capability. A Joint C5ISR Philosophy must lead to shared and dominant battlespace awareness, blurring intra and inter-service silos. It must lead to the evolution of a fused integrated layered mix of sensor grid architecture that is pervasive, persistent, survivable, and enduring. Joint C5ISR operations must also be integrated into the overall operational philosophy and war fighting doctrine and not managed or be a standalone capability.

Restructuring Philosophy and Deterrence Primer

The Indian Defence Forces in recent past have donned the path of reforms with the recent establishment of a Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), the restructuring of Army Headquarters, the creation of IBGs, and now charting the evolution of Theatre Commands. Yet, the attritionist mindsets of mass over manoeuvre continues to define the use of force as hitherto fore. Modernisation is more than only new equipment and organisation; it also involves understanding the contemporary notion of victory, and doctrinal change that allows responses along the full spectrum of conflict.

India's conventional deterrence has been repeatedly put to test in the recent past, leading to the exposure of strategic and operational voids, vulnerabilities and reactive response constructs. Theoretically, there are two fundamental approaches to deterrence- 'Deterrence by Punishment' which threatens assured retribution making it cost-prohibitive for the adversary, and 'Deterrence by Denial' which seeks to convince an adversary that the aggression would fail to achieve its operational aims resulting in strategic embarrassment. Each approach is specific to a nation's threat matrix and geography. Yet punitive response strategies are rarely effective

in wartime, and even less useful as conventional deterrence in peacetime. As conflicts pave the way to military coercion below the threshold of a full-scale war, so must the doctrinal shift be to a strategy of denial to deter an adversary's misadventure.

India's force structuring philosophy has been essentially based on the traditional 'Deterrence by Punishment and Threat cum Capability Approach' rather than 'Deterrence by Denial and Capability Bases Approach'. Thus, both borders remain turbulent with space for conflict and coercion. This is essentially a fallout of the absence of the National Security Strategy and periodic strategic security reviews resulting in a lack of an institutionalised framework. Military transformation be it cultural, processes or capabilities requires an over arching framework. Doctrines and force structures as part of military transformation can never be evolved in a vacuum. This critical void needs to be addressed.

The future restructuring philosophy will need to focus on a 'capability-based approach with deterrence based on denial strategy'. Capabilities must optimise future technology exploitation in all domains and agile force structures must deny future threats by superior operational orientation. Further at the strategic and operational level, there is a need to comprehend the two basic concepts of 'denial versus defence' and 'holding versus domination'. Denial seeks to make conflict/coercion look bad to the enemy, while defence seeks to make conflict/coercion better for oneself by stalling the aggressor. Similarly, ground holding mindset brings in reactive ethos and predictability, whereas domination brings in aggressiveness and unpredictability. This is the essence and something the Indian establishment would do well to differentiate and arm its deterrence capabilities with a denial and domination strategy.

Ideating Force Restructuring Contours

The key issues for force modernisation are force rightsizing, force reshaping and budgetary rebalancing, elaborated as under:

Force Rightsizing

Rightsizing is a proactive approach to restructure and realign its human resources to the strategic security goals and desired capabilities. In contrast to downsizing, rightsizing is intended as a long-term move to maximise combat efficiency and future capabilities of a force to minimise risks and vulnerabilities, based on future threats and desired capabilities. The objective is to develop and field a credible force that is affordable, sustainable, versatile, and technology-enabled to deter and defeat potential adversaries, across the entire spectrum of conflict. Thus, force optimisation must reshape the Army with a quantitative and qualitative jump in teeth-to-tail ratio, modernisation impetus and joint force operations application. There is a need to address organisation inertia in rightsizing headquarters, as also adding teeth to combat echelons to fight and win future wars. This should also include optimisation of rapidly increasing civil manpower of MoD and monolithic civil establishments paid out of the defence budget. This flab remains protected and kept under the carpet.

Force Reshaping

The Defence Forces should modify their structures to achieve a 'lean and mean profile, with the thrust to convert some existing structures into 'smarter' technology-enabled ones. Reorganization of infantry units to reprofile the fourth company to an SF company with an integral sniper platoon, a mix of medium and light mechanised forces with integrated attack helicopters, multi-tier integrated air defence systems, reprofiling selected artillery units with long-range precision fires, induction of Drones/UAVs, UCAVs, restructuring existing intelligence staff to ISR and IW structures, and reorienting additional signal units to electronic warfare assets are some of the plausible deliverables. Analysis of the future security scenario has also thrown up the need for a rapid reaction joint force requirement with enhanced vertical lift and amphibious forces

capability, besides giving greater teeth to the existing joint force structures for Special Forces, Cyber and Space. While the aspects of strategic and operational mobility have been addressed by the induction of C130 and Chinook's, the tactical mobility merits greater focus with the introduction of light tanks, Armoured Personnel Carriers (both track and wheeled) and tactical lift vertical capability.

Budgetary Rebalancing

To be sustainable and with desired operational capabilities, the present force levels need to be optimised initially to progressively generate a revenue: capital ratio of 60:40 ratio. The ratios will only matter and make a difference provided matching budgetary support is assured. The defence budget must be gradually increased from current levels of all-time low to the closing of the world average of 2.5 per cent of GDP. Defence budgetary reforms must also be pursued in right earnest, complementing the military transformation effort.

Future Force Structure Goals and Doctrinal Construct

The operational effectiveness of a force depends on its 'Deployability' in terms of strategic, operational and tactical mobility, 'Employability' across the entire spectrum of conflict and 'Capability' to ensure combat overmatch. Sustainability dictates its operational reach and acceleration. Thus, the aim is to deliver an agile, integrated, sustainable, operationally-mobile combined arms capability to dominate the key operational factors of "Time-Space-Force-Information".

The core operational goals of force restructuring include the following:

- Rapidly deployable, lethal, survivable and manoeuvrable (Joint and Special Forces) with sufficient combat effectiveness.
- Networked organic C5ISR systems.
- Stand-off strike capabilities, and PGMs.

- Dominant Battle space Awareness and Decision Dominance of OODA loop.
- Modular and scalable organisations with flexible command architecture.
- Desired intrinsic operational reach and endurance.
- Innovative human resource with offensive orientation.

While the doctrinal construct of the desired force structure must entail the following:

Surface to Space Continuum

To achieve knowledge dominance, precision effects and operational speed, the land forces must graduate from their traditional two-dimensional spatial orientation to a vertical and cognitive integrated third-dimensional manoeuvre. A “surface to space continuum” as an operational manoeuvre must result in a multi-dimensional force application from the surface through the exosphere into space. The vertical component must include high altitude long-duration UAVs, UCAVs and airborne cum space satellite systems for ISR, SATCOM and PNT (positioning, navigation and targeting).

Graduating from Jointness to Interdependence

The level of interoperability and complementarity between land, sea and aerospace must achieve the desired speed, economy and operational acceleration. This will result in precision fire and dominant manoeuvre in near-simultaneous applications across the entire battle space and beyond. The challenge lies more in silos mentality and service-centric mindsets.

Modular and Scalable Force

Time is the enemy of the force that depends on knowledge and tempo for effectiveness. Traditional monolithic forces of the past were inadequate

for the desired mounting and execution tempo. Thus, force application must be in an escalatory matrix by modular and scalable forces while in situ forces with inherent reserves provide the immediate preemption capability. These forces need to be technology-enabled, modular, scalable and tailor-made based on a mission-oriented grouping. They should combine a higher degree of agility, lethality, and survivability, yet be more rapidly deployable and intrinsically sustainable than the traditional force structure.

Combined Arms Integrated Force Structure

What makes combined arms manoeuvre more potent than the sum of physical employment of multiple arms on the battlefield is its cumulative and complementary effect. This targets the enemy's will and ability to resist or respond effectively. The key to forcing constitution would essentially be based on intrinsic combat, combat support and logistics elements including Attack Helicopters, UAVs, Air Defence, Artillery and C5ISR capability. However, their combat effectiveness would be a factor of rapid deployment ability, integrated training, interoperability, complementary capabilities, and the competence of commanders to synchronise their effect.

Technology Empowerment

The mantra is quality over quantity and capability overcapacity. The requirement is for knowledge-based, decision-oriented and technology-empowered lean and agile forces to execute missions faster and with greater effect. Technology has also empowered smaller brigade-sized forces to execute missions faster and with greater effect, previously thought suitable only for divisions.

Empowered Leadership and Directive Style of Command

Knowledge of joint force application and technology exploitation of battle space will result in decisive outcomes. Risk-taking, audacity,

creativity and offensive orientation are essential for success. Thus, along with restructuring, we must focus on moulding competent leadership with a directive style of command and traits such as innovative solutions and nonlinear thinking. Future commanders need to fight smart and not allow predictability and set-piece operations to stall the tempo.

Force Modularity Dynamics

The operational need is to move from large bulky formations to many modular networked brigades sized IBGs capable of escalatory application both for domination and offensive. Yet the quest for IBG must not result in the euphoria of mass conversion of all organisations into brigade-sized IBGs. Due prudence must be exercised to have a healthy mix of modular and scalable IBGs as light (Brigade sized) and Medium (Division sized) structures. The orchestration of operations and interplay of forces will still require a Corps HQ duly sized and kitted with operational fires and command and control means. The Brigade sized IBGs must include the under mentioned ability.

- Generate superior mounting tempo and speed of deployment.
- Pre-empt, partially dislocate and disrupt enemy forces.
- Seek and retain initiative with an overwhelming rate of execution tempo.
- Create conditions for the next level of escalatory application of forces as part of shaping operations.
- Be capable of force infusion and extend operational reach cum acceleration.
- Be self-sustained and ability to fight dispersed.

Force Application Matrix and Invigorating Deterrence

Western Front

On the Western Front, the Pivot Corps Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs) suitably constituted at Brigade or in some cases Divisional level must

pre-empt the enemy through multiple ingresses resulting in partial dislocation up to tactical depth. This creates conditions and multiple opportunities for decisive operations by Strike Corps Division level IBGs, in an escalatory continuum, to dislocate and degrade the enemy's operational and strategic reserves. Simultaneously, air power, vertical envelopment and operational fires are used for disruption and disintegration of the enemy's centres of gravity. In keeping with the time-sensitivity of conflict, periodic conflict termination profile needs to be planned in various operational cycles with built-in surge capabilities and matching logistics.

Deterrence against Pakistan requires more teeth particularly in long-range precision operation fires and stand-off strike capability for pre-emptive strikes, particularly against its proxy war posture. A response that results in a status quo outcome will be a victory for Pakistan. The tit for tat and number game of kill ratios must be replaced by more lethal and pre-emptive force applications addressing both the psychological and physical domain. It's time Pakistan is made to react to India's pre-emptive cum proactive overt and covert actions, borrowing the traditional deniability of Pakistan. An irate and fanatical Pakistan would not understand any other language.

Northern Front

On the Northern Front, Brigade sized in-situ IBGs would deter, pre-empt, deny, dislocate, degrade and limit the adversary's offensive design while the sectoral reserve IBGs as Rapid Deployment Force would contribute to Quid-Pro-Quo gains. It needs to be understood that manoeuvre warfare and the three means of defeat elucidated are as relevant in the mountains as in the plains. In addition, certain centralised IBGs reserves on both the western and northern front could act as dual-task formations or strategic reserves for any exigent operational situation, including amphibious

operations and out of area contingencies. Deterrence against China is a more challenging form of credible denial with the present asymmetry. It must entail an offensive defence strategy along with in situ limited offensive pre-emptive capability along with stand-off precision capability. This would dilute China's offensive capacity by forcing him to divert resources to his defence, taking the war to the enemy's territory and increasing the political cost of aggression. A sample of what was done at Kailash range recently. This would cause strategic embarrassment and be a de-facto defeat to the aggressor. China's response must also be physically and psychologically constrained by multilateral and bilateral cooperative security partnerships.

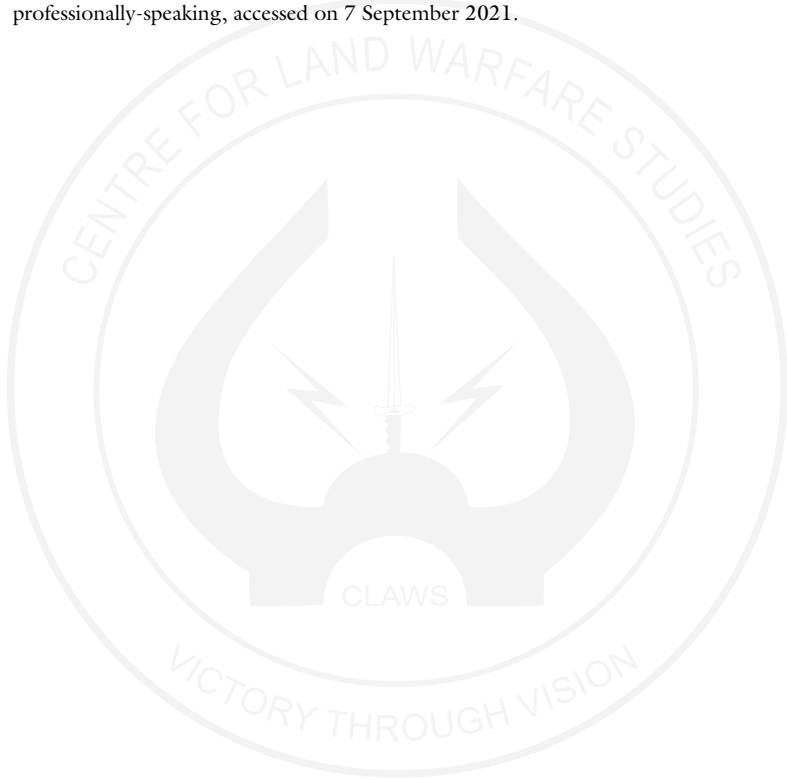
The Pace of Change

Adapting to change is always difficult but failure to adapt can be catastrophic at the cost of lives and military defeat. Managing change has its dynamics an evolutionary gestation period be it a political, economic or military revolution. Rightsizing, reshaping and restructuring military forces too fast can result in immature outcomes and inappropriate capabilities. It can also threaten doctrinal and organisational cohesion and set in a transitional instability. Further, it requires an institutional approach and understanding of its evolution and desired effect. Adaption must create incentives among stakeholders and thus have grassroots level acceptability which is best progressive. The challenges of fixated mindsets, institutional conservatism, military-political-bureaucratic harmony and budgetary penury are traditional retarders that need to be addressed. The challenge is to restructure in a progressive time-bound manner that is neither too much too soon nor too little too late. This calls for an institutionalised long-term perspective with a definitive time-sensitive road map for the short term, mid-term and long term, based on a value, vulnerability, afford ability and operational priority.

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The Gilgit-Baltistan Factor in India-Pakistan Dynamics

Priyanka Singh

Abstract

Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), part of Pakistan occupied Kashmir, is swiftly ascending on the geopolitical horizon in the wake of the coveted China Pakistan Economic Corridor being built through it. Given India's strident reservations on CPEC based on its extant claim on the region, GB has gained considerable focus in the India-Pakistan equations as well. GB represents a stark reality that stares at India's broader quest against burgeoning Sino-Pakistan nexus on its periphery. The paper relooks at India-Pakistan dynamics-bilateral and geopolitical-through the lens of GB while listing out India's approach, position and implications vis-à-vis GB.

Introduction

Gilgit-Baltistan, part of Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) has remained on the centre stage in the regional strategic discourse at least for a decade now. This was especially so since *The New York Times* article by Selig Harrison, noted thinker and author, in August 2010 made some revelatory observations on the increasing Chinese footprints in what he referred to as Pakistan's "Northern Borderlands".¹ Harrison's piece was instrumental in driving focus towards what had been an obscure identity/element in the broader Kashmir narrative. Though GB has been under Pakistan's control, India has an extant territorial claim on the region- it

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being a part of the erstwhile princely state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). The region was deceitfully usurped by Pakistan with active involvement and abetment from the British. In this context, the paper is an attempt to look at the India-Pakistan equation particularly through the prism of Gilgit Baltistan. It is important to state at the outset that GB's accession happened at a time when India's leadership and the armed forces were not only distracted but completely occupied at the western front in the so-called Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) where Pakistan unleashed a tribal invasion and wreaked havoc on the lives of innocent residents of the state.

GB's Strategic Import

GB is strategically located in the heart of Asia, and in several senses, the virtual pivot of the strategic construct that has perennially been attached with the erstwhile princely state of J&K. GB region is the confluence of key mountainous ranges- the Himalayas and the Karakoram Range, the Hindu Kush and the Pamirs. It straddles the strategic Wakhan Corridor in the Badakhshan province of Afghanistan, rest of J&K, China's Xinjiang province, the so-called 'AJK' and Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab provinces.

The region due to its distinctive geography remained inaccessible despite its core strategic quotient and its uniqueness with an underlying potential as an important gateway to the broader region. It was due to the strategic location that the British took control of it from the Maharaja of Kashmir in 1932 vide a 60-year lease. With an eye on keeping a tab over moves by Czarist Imperial Russia, an arch adversary, the British signed the lease at a point when their eventual withdrawal from the subcontinent was probably nowhere on the horizon. However, the lease was prematurely revoked in 1947 on the eve of the end of British rule from the subcontinent.

The chaos that followed the withdrawal of the British was conducive for a local rebellion to erupt in GB soon after-one that was propelled

by dissenters in the Maharaja's state forces with active support from the British and elements of the Pakistani establishment. A hasty accession in GB clouded by mass violence and havoc brought it under the direct control of Pakistan. GB's contested accession clashed with the Instrument of Accession that was already signed by the Maharaja of Kashmir on 26 October 1947, in favour of India. According to the Instrument of Accession, all areas that comprised the then princely state of J&K, including GB, acceded to India. Therefore, J&K's accession in fact preceded GB's controversial accession to Pakistan one that concluded under dubious circumstances.

GB's Geo-Political Trajectory

Given GB's geographical endowment, it is essential to examine why the region received less attention than was due- be it the India-Pakistan equations or the larger geopolitics of the region. Following are some of the realities that can be discerned with regard to obfuscations vis-a-vis GB with regard to respective approaches of India and Pakistan and how this has helped China not only to grab a substantial part of GB territory but also get engaged in widespread economic and strategic infrastructure building in the region despite dissenting voices and popular dissonance.

Eclipsed by the so-called 'AJK'?

The former princely state of J&K was ambushed by a pre-planned tribal raid soon after India's independence and creation of Pakistan. The raiders attacked parts of the state on the western plank which majorly consisted parts of the Jammu region along with swathes of the Kashmir valley. This particular region, too, continues to be under Pakistan's rule being farcically referred to as the so-called Azad Kashmir or the 'AJK'. The deceitful invasion and its aftermath unravelled a complex interplay of heightened tensions between India and Pakistan leading to a reference

of the matter to be adjudicated at the newly constituted world body, the United Nations. In the ensuing hectic parleys, the discussions remained trained on the matter as to fixing who the aggressor was, whether the tribal invasion was home-grown with local roots and local concerns/years against the Maharaja's rule, and whether Maharaja's will reflected that of the people.

The fact that a substantial sector of the J&K's territory acceded unlawfully to Pakistan under distress of a local rebellion aided and abetted by the residual sections of the British army was overshadowed, neglected and rather eclipsed by the matter concerning a strip of territory that Pakistan has usurped as a result of the tribal ambush- sanctioned by the leadership and unleashed by its army. Though India did raise the issue of the usurpation of GB in the subsequent UN debates and discussions, its focus on the region remained substantially low due to a variety of factors important being the looming international isolation it faced in the Cold War-tarred divisive geopolitical landscape.

Overshadowed by Kashmir

It is quite stark how GB has remained de-hyphenated from the broader discourse on Kashmir especially with regard to the persistent tussle between India and Pakistan over the issue. Besides, the international acquaintance to GB being part of Kashmir has remained dimly low due to a range of factors- Pakistan's deliberate attempt to keep it disengaged from the discourse being one of them. This obfuscated pattern on GB continued until Chinese forays in the region diverted international focus towards it, its territorial link and, more importantly, the decades-old deprivation of political status for the region.

Eyed by China

China's was quick to identify GB's strategic value in its scheme of territorial aggrandisement and its ruthless desire to preserve/secure its

periphery. The fact remained that GB laid in the vicinity of China's un-demarcated northwest. As soon as Pakistan gravitated towards the Peoples Republic of China during the late 1950s, the two countries huddled up to finalise what later came to be known as the provisional China-Pakistan Border Agreement eventually signed in March 1963. As a result of this provisional agreement, Pakistan illegally ceded part of the territory of the GB region- the 5,130 square miles Trans Karakoram Tract to China. In this territorial swap, Pakistan was handed control over some territory that China presumed to be under its control. Moreover contemporarily, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and its flagship China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was key to bringing popular focus towards GB that was for the most part of its post-1947 history left wanting of external attention/focus given GB's strategic location at the confluence of continents and strategically important mountain ranges.

GB in the Contemporary India-Pakistan Bilateral Conflict Matrix

More recently in November 2020, the announcement by Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan that a provisional provincial status will be conferred to GB raked up a diplomatic furore between India and Pakistan further aggravating the already acrimonious ties.² Ever since the inception of CPEC, India has consistently scaled up its attacks on Pakistan's hold over GB and stridently opposed any move to change the status quo in the region including the now controversial decision to absorb the region as Pakistan's fifth province. Irrespective of the fact that Pakistan has ushered in several changes in the region- ceding part of its territory to China through an illegal border treaty, making irreversible changes in the demography of the region to un-populate the Shia majority by reversing the State Subject Rule, and in the last few years trying to concertedly absorb GB as a province in an attempt to siphon it off from the broader issue of Kashmir.

Given GB is part of the former princely state of J&K, and a significant leg in India's territorial claim over PoK, as of today, it incrementally affects the bilateral equations between India and Pakistan at several levels. First and foremost, it is an indivisible part of India's claim on PoK – a steadfast position that has remained unaltered since 1947. In the wake of China-led massive infrastructure drive under the BRI umbrella, including that of CPEC, it is India's extant claim on the GB that has centrally shaped the contemporary discourse woven around India's persisting resistance towards the BRI, and CPEC in particular. Plainly speaking, GB is swiftly ascending to being a defining factor in the India-Pakistan dynamics be it in the domain of the India-Pakistan contestation over Kashmir or Pakistan contesting India's claim and territorial control over J&K and Ladakh.

However, this was not the case always. Why did it take this long for GB to arrive on the bilateral radar between India and Pakistan? Why the region's existence was deliberately and by design dimmed in the Kashmir discourse? These are the pertinent questions that need to be further explored and explained. This was despite some path-breaking international reports published way back such as Emma Nicholson's report (2007) to the European Union Parliament that made scathing observations on the grim realities besetting GB.³ Similarly, the International Crisis Group (ICG) report titled *Discord in the Northern Areas* also published in 2007 was an equally revealing account of the existing harsh ground realities in the entire GB region.⁴

GB in the India-Pakistan Dynamics: Historical Realities & Contemporary Challenges

On the eve of India's independence, India's leadership was pre-occupied with existential issues of integration of princely states coping with a bloody division of the subcontinent in what was a far from peaceful transfer of power. GB was a remote region comprising a section of population hugely

disgruntled with the state's administration headed by the Maharaja of Kashmir. There were significant numbers of soldiers who had deserted the Maharaja's state forces. The fact remains that members of the residual British forces were partisan and sympathetic to the Pakistani establishment and were equally well-versed with the strategic significance of GB. It was these British soldiers who played a significant role in staging the revolt against the Maharaja of Kashmir consummating in the eventual accession of the region amidst large scale violence and bloodshed.

On the other side in India, the two leaders that helmed the developments concerning the princely state's transition to the India Union were Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Sheikh Abdullah of the National Conference with its pronounced secular outlook. Both these leaders were immensely popular in Kashmir but perhaps did not enjoy much hold as far as the politics and society of GB was concerned.

It is also important to take into account whether the leadership in India concurred on the approach towards GB. Mahatma Gandhi who remained at the fore of India's independence was not in favour of "unqualified inclusion" of GB region in Kashmir since the region was under British lease for a good number of years.⁵ He was apparently not convinced looking at the celebrations over the restoration of Maharaja's rule on the region on his visit to Sri Nagar, capital of J&K. This was soon after GB's lease lapsed with the commencement of the British withdrawal from the subcontinent.

Nonetheless, one could also argue that contrary to the reality that GB has remained under-focussed and on the periphery of the larger Kashmir issue, the issue has been at the centre of a series of contention between India-Pakistan, and India-Pakistan-China. This trend began quite early as dynamics between India and Pakistan were still in a nascent stage and Chinese tinkering in the India-Pak bilateral equations had begun to occur gradually. Following is the series of events/issues/incidents where GB perceptibly became the flashpoint between the two sides:

The Sino-Pakistan Border Agreement March 1963

The first flashpoint occurred as Pakistan began cosyng up to the People's Republic of China in the late 1950s leading up to secret negotiations on demarcating their so-called borders between the two-area comprising GB. The negotiations eventuated in the Sino-Pakistan Boundary Agreement that was signed on March 2, 1963. As a result of the agreement, Pakistan ceded control to China over 5,130 square miles of territory of GB what was then and continues to be a constituent of the princely state of J&K. India had stridently opposed the provisional boundary agreement noting both countries-China and Pakistan- had no *locus standi* on Kashmir and, therefore, could not trade away parts of the former princely state. India observed:

“Pakistan merely for nuisance value and as an instrument to put pressure on us-has entered into negotiations and concluded an agreement with the Central Government of the People's Republic of China. That agreement is in total violation of any rights or authority Pakistan may possess, for it has no sovereignty over this state; it is not Pakistan's to trade away or negotiate about. It has been done on a basis which we cannot accept- our position in regard to China, which is not under discussion before the Security Council”.⁶

To China, India expressed its categorical reservations noting: “In lodging, an emphatic protest with the government of the People's Republic of China for this interference with the sovereignty of India over the state of Jammu and Kashmir, the government of India solemnly warns the government of China that any change, provisional or otherwise, in the status of the state of Jammu and Kashmir brought about by third parties which seek to submit certain parts of Indian territory to foreign jurisdiction will not be binding on the government of India and that the government of India firmly repudiate any agreements, provisional or

otherwise, regarding her own territories arrived at between third parties who have no legal or constitutional *locus standi* of any kind”.⁷

However, the Chinese side defended the illicit illegitimate agreement. It noted on May 31, 1962: “More than ten years have passed and despite the best wishes and expectations cherished by China, this dispute between India and Pakistan remains unsettled. In these circumstances, anyone with common sense can understand that the Chinese government cannot leave unsettled indefinitely its boundary of several hundred kilometres with the areas the defence of which is under the control of Pakistan over Kashmir. It is entirely necessary, proper, legitimate, and in accordance with the international practice for the Chinese government to agree with the government of Pakistan to negotiate a provisional agreement concerning this boundary pending a final settlement of the Kashmir question”.⁸

The Sino-Pakistan Border Agreement was the precursor of the Sino-Pakistan economic engagement and strategic collaboration that was to grossly proliferate in the coming decades. The Karakoram Highway now seen as the cornerstone of the multibillion CPEC was built in the years after Pakistan and China signed the provisional boundary agreement. The highway was completed and opened for public use in the late 1970s. It was through this highway- often hailed as the highest concrete road in the world- that Pakistan is said to have received illicit supplies of nuclear material from China. The role of this about 1300 km long highway in the evolution of China-Pakistan strategic partnership is considered pivotal in terms of developing connectivity and cementing the bond of friendship between the two sides.

Bangladesh Liberation War 1971

The second flashpoint in this regard was the 1971 Indo-Pakistan War that occurred around the Bangladesh Liberation Movement in the then East Pakistan. Amidst the stiff military standoff between the two countries,

a small contingent of the Indian army led by Major Chewang Rinchen unleashed an offensive on the Line of Control (LoC) straddling the Baltistan region. As a success of this particular operation during the 1971 crisis, India was able to capture four villages in the Baltistan region- those that continue to be under Indian control and possession. The total area captured by India was about 804 square kilometres. Apart from Turtuk, other villages included- Chalungka, Thyakshi and Thang.⁹ Turtuk is the last Indian post on the LoC straddling the Baltistan region and has for reasons obvious been a high-security zone. The remote village was opened up for tourists only in 2010 given the steep strategic and security sensitivities involved.¹⁰

The villages captured by India were never claimed back by Pakistan. Even during the Simla Conference held in the aftermath of the war when the Indian and Pakistani sides sat down for negotiations including the release of thousands of Pakistani prisoners of war, the issue of these villages did not come up prominently. Quite apparently, Pakistan did not make any serious effort to reclaim these strategic villages in the Baltistan region nor was it able to seize possession thereafter. These villages, henceforth, have remained under India's physical control all these years.

The Kargil War

A subsequent crisis concerning GB was the Kargil War in the summer of 1999. Soon after Prime Minister of India and Pakistan-Atal Behari Vajpayee and Nawaz Sharif signed the Lahore Declaration in 1999, massive infiltration by the Pakistani army in the Kargil sector led to a prolonged military confrontation between the two countries. The military standoff between India and Pakistan lasted for months. Pakistan initially made an effort to shield itself by flimsy claims that the intruders were mujahedeen fighting for the Kashmir cause and not the Pakistani army. However, the web of lies was soon exposed especially when Pakistan refused to take back bodies of the Northern Light Infantry

(NLI) soldiers killed by the Indian forces amidst the conflict. The NLI, a paramilitary force manned majorly by locals from GB was massively deployed and used by Pakistan during these operations. Despite their contributions, the Pakistani side disowned their bodies just to uphold their false claim that they were mujahideen and not regular members of the Pakistan armed forces.

During the Kargil crisis, India did have an option to cross the Line of Control. This is especially so as Pakistan had committed gross violations by intruding its army in the Indian side of the LoC and capturing strategic heights in the Kargil sector by sheer deceit. Indian forces valorously fought with the Pakistani captors and eliminated them before freeing all the heights and regaining control over them. The moot question is: had India decided to cross the LoC it stood a potential chance to recover more areas in GB from Pakistan's control? India, however, did not do so and this was in contrast to 1971 offensive on the LoC. Instead, India in spirit of the 1972 Simla Accord, chose to respect the sanctity of the LoC and honour the provisional understanding it has with Pakistan on the LoC spanning the J&K and Ladakh sector.

CPEC

In contemporary times, BRI and the CPEC in particular, have trained the focus on GB. The upcoming economic corridor has yet again stirred the dynamics/cauldron between India and Pakistan. A chronological review of developments around India's resistance to the economic corridor being built through a territory that India claims as its integral part shows that Pakistan was rather unprepared and hadn't really considered India would so actively and vociferously oppose the project. This was partly because India remained silent or at least perceived to be silent on issues when some irreversible changes were being initiated and executed in the GB region at Islamabad's behest- be it the demographic transition, revocation of the State Subject Rule, etc.

India's reaction to the unwarranted developments in GB became sharper once the Chinese intervention in the region intensified and was reported widely all across including in the West. From thereon, India issued objections and formal official statements slamming how countries including China supporting projects in the PoK region, including in GB, is an illegitimate act as the territory is claimed by India as part of J&K. India's toughened position against the CPEC was irksome for both Pakistan and China. This renewed up front approach was in break of India's inertness and a passive policy on PoK in the past especially as it watched the Sino-Pakistan equations grow subsequently becoming entrenched over several decades. Therefore, throughout CPEC's evolutionary phase, Pakistan's effort had been to undermine India's claim on GB on the one hand, and reject/ignore India's objections to China's expansive strategic connectivity drive on the other.

Opening the Kargil-Skardu Route

In a major landmark move, India and Pakistan opened up points on the LoC for travel and trade across the two sides in 2005 and 2008 respectively. The bus service was initiated on the Uri-Salamabad route and the Poonch-Rawalakote route in 2005 and trade was started in October 2008. On the lines of the cross LoC movements in the J&K sector, people in the Ladakh sector have been long yearning for possible opening of the Kargil-Skardu route. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during his visit to Kargil in 2005 acknowledged this popular sentiment.¹¹ The former PM noted in his address: "I have been told that the people of Kargil are keen on having the links restored with Gilgit and Baltistan and opening of the Kargil-Skardu road is under consideration."¹²

However, Pakistan on its part has been consciously reluctant to open up this particular point particularly so as it could give India access to the GB sector. Since Pakistan's creation and its deceitful seizure of the GB region, there have existed hundreds of divided families on both sides of

the LoC. The tragic state of the divided families and their decades-old separation was partially addressed by opening up the travel routes in the Jammu and Kashmir belt. The Kargil-Skardu route has remained neglected all these years due to Pakistan's dubious reticence and India being in a helpless state to act on the proposal without Pakistan's consent.¹³

Deciphering India's Perceived 'Silence' on GB

A lot has been discussed about India's purported neglect of the GB all these years. It was only when the Chinese made extensive inroads in the region and established their economic stakes that India was woken up to this stark strategic reality. Such contentions, however, may not wholly hold true. India was conscious of its claim on GB since the inception of the Kashmir issue and while it was evolving at the international level in the years following Pakistan's acquiring control over the PoK region. As described in the preceding section, India's diplomatic offensive in the run-up to the signing of the Sino-Pak Border Agreement 1963 is testimony to the seriousness and gravity of the Indian claim on GB.

Prior to this, V Krishna Menon as India's Defence Minister made an impassioned marathon speech at the UN where he extensively referred to Pakistan's unwarranted seizure of GB while positioning the region's inherent strategic capital. Menon argued that the region was crucial for India's security interests. Menon's scathing exposition was revelatory and accused Pakistan of having "annexed" and "incorporated" the Northern Areas (as GB was referred to as then) comprising Chitral, Gilgit and Baltistan.¹⁴ Reiterating Gilgit's pivotal geographical location in the heart of the continent, Menon asserted "that there is no question of it not being part of Kashmir" acknowledging how the region was "strategically very important to India for its defence".¹⁵

Attacking Pakistan's *raison detre* on the region, Menon's speech attacked Pakistan's dubious game plan as to how it discretely went ahead and incorporated the region even without informing the UN which

had begun to look into the Kashmir issue and even before the world body passed a resolution on the same. Pakistan failed to intimate the UN about its dubious act of overtaking control over the region even though the lease was dissolved before the British forces withdrew from the subcontinent. Menon's contention on GB was based on the reality that the region was under the control of Maharaja of Kashmir on the eve of British withdrawal and he signed the Instrument of Accession in favour of India on 26 October 1947, much before GB was made to accede to Pakistan under suspicious circumstances.

Notwithstanding the historical reality that India has been engaged in several wars with Pakistan over the decades and one with China in 1962, has resultantly caused excess drain not only on material resources, but more importantly, absorbed/hijacked its diplomatic energies and geopolitical designs, India has maintained a consistent official approach on PoK - in unequivocal terms that the territory in entirety belongs to India. The emphatic position has weathered the decades-spanning bloodshed in the Kashmir valley unleashed by Pakistan and India's untiring efforts to thwart all such attempts to cause internal violence and instability in J&K.

It was amidst heightened Pakistan aided militancy in the Kashmir Valley that the Indian Parliament unanimously adopted a resolution on 22 February 1994, noting categorially "Pakistan must vacate the areas of the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir, which they have occupied through aggression."¹⁶ The House Resolution further read that India: "expresses regret and concern at the pitiable conditions and violations of human rights and denial of democratic freedoms of the people in those areas of the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir, which are under the illegal occupation of Pakistan."¹⁷

However, it is fair to also acknowledge that it was the increasing Chinese activities in PoK and the unveiling of the BRI and CPEC that has provided a decisive fillip to India's approach on PoK and, GB in particular. That a multi-nation, multibillion-dollar project was crossing

through a disputed territory claimed by India has given India the necessary ammunition to deflate Pakistan's Kashmir propaganda- for allowing an externally aided project to come up via PoK without India's consent so as to only reflect how unserious Pakistan was towards the resolution of the Kashmir problem. Additionally, given the volatility across the Durand Line, the moot question has always been whether, for India, GB is better as a border or a buffer?

Much before the geopolitical euphoria had set in and around CPEC and India's stiff opposition towards it woven around territorial claim on GB, the report titled "A New Compact with the People of Jammu and Kashmir" by a group of government-appointed eminent interlocutors laid out special emphasis by vividly describing aspects on GB.¹⁸ India's position on GB being an inseparable part of the Kashmir issue has persisted for decades. It consistently heeds to the reality that an impending solution (if any) cannot be arrived at without taking into account the existing ground realities and the situations besetting the GB region.

GB in the India-Pakistan-China triangular theatre

Flowing from this reality is another theatre where GB seems to now figure prominently- the triangular India-Pakistan-China quest. This is especially so in the context of the regional debate on the BRI through which China is trying to strengthen its foothold in India's neighbourhood. The discussion around BRI is presently ridden with India's consistent opposition to the Chinese intrusive infrastructure drives, especially in its proximate region. India did not attend the gala BRI summit in May 2018 – through which China was trying to create spectacle of all-encompassing support to BRI. Before this, India has raised objections against the BRI and the leadership at the highest levels of engagement with China had expressed reservations including during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to China in 2015.¹⁹ Even on the sidelines of the G-20 summit held

in Hangzhou in September 2016, Prime Minister Modi is known to have conveyed to the Chinese President Xi Jinping that the two sides must be mutually “sensitive” to their respective strategic interests.²⁰

What Lies Ahead?

GB is of immense political and strategic capital given it is the only land link between China and Pakistan - the long-held steadfast iron brothers. GB's strategic potential is, therefore, indelible and continues to be the geopolitical foci of the China-Pakistan strategic partnership. Today, GB is at the core of the Pakistan-China nexus on India's periphery. More broadly, the significance of GB in China's Western periphery project concerning Tibet and Xinjiang has simultaneously ascended.

The unfolding grim situation in Afghanistan even before the US withdrawal was complete, is a factor to reckon. Given GB straddles the Wakhan Corridor bordering Afghanistan, whether the evolving volatility in Afghanistan could penetrate and adversely impact the situation in the region is something one needs to closely observe at least in the medium term. In the meanwhile, it would be interesting to see whether the Chinese would revisit/reassess their ambition to extend CPEC into Afghanistan against emerging realities.

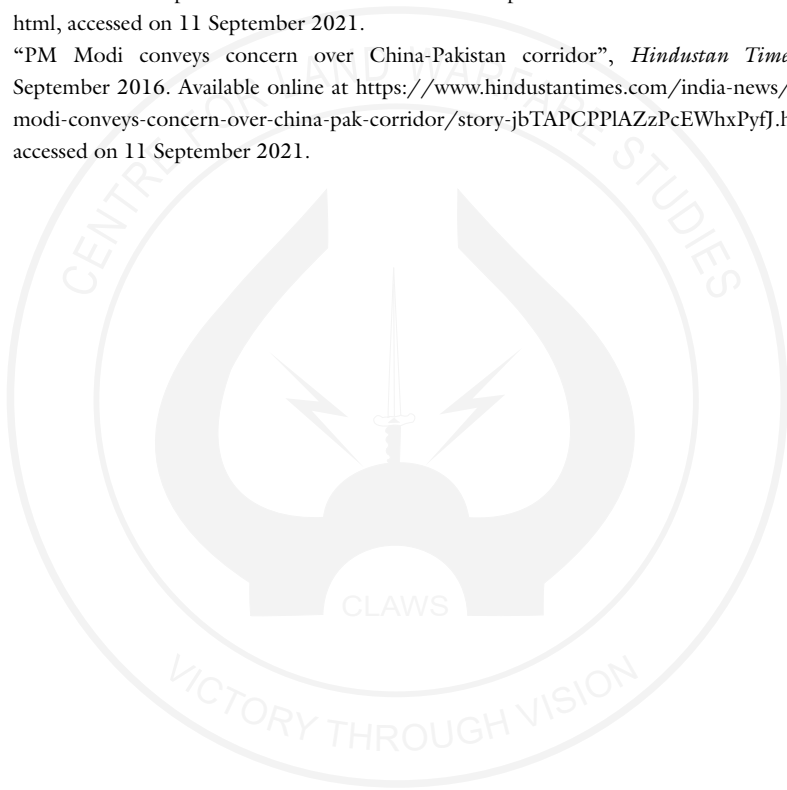
In this context, India's challenges vis-à-vis GB have multiplied. India's emphatic and consistent stance against the BRI and CPEC is much to China's distaste. India's upfront material constitutional changes in the J&K and Ladakh region – and territorial claim on Aksai Chin by the highest echelons of the government have caused a great deal of friction at the bilateral level with Pakistan and has shaken the triangular dynamics involving China-Pakistan partnership. India's swift and smooth gravitating towards the United States on one hand, and further frosting ties with Pakistan on the other, are additional factors to reckon with while analysing India's approach towards GB at the larger geopolitical plane.

It remains to be seen how far India is able to create and exercise strategic options vis-à-vis GB and deal with geopolitical fallout of a proactive/aggressive stance, if any, including at the international fora.

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Kashmir: Lest We Forget

R. K. Anuj

Abstract

From a time when Kashmir was regarded as the epitome of communal amity and the unequivocal support that the people of the state gave to the idea of India, to the past three decades of relative inversion of opinions, even if of a segment of the community, the state has travelled a long distance in a small span of its timeless history. All relevant parties to the Kashmir question have had a role to play in this quagmire of intrigue and deceit. Any resolution is only conceivable if there is acceptance of the role that each has played in bringing the situation to the current pass and taking magnanimous steps in undoing the errors that have given rise to ill- perceptions on all sides. This paper seeks to highlight some of the most glaring issues that have bred distrust and suggest a way forward.

Introduction

Conflicts arise from the perception of persecution that a people may hold against the state. This may be real, imaginary or induced; it may have its roots in politics, economy, cultural-ethnic-linguistic or religious identity, sub-nationalism or historical grievances; it may be latent, festering, active or explosive; it may follow a sine curve, may gradually peak and plateau or may decline for sustained periods before rearing its head again. Conflicts are seldom, if at all, one-dimensional and one-sided, it always takes two to tango and perceptions are formed and aggravated by actions or omissions of both or all the parties to the conflict. The purpose of conflict resolution is to identify the emergence of a conflict, realistically evaluate its roots,

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which may be myriad and inter-connected strains or may run in parallel to congeal into a singular whole and to take measures to remove the perceptions that gave rise to the conflict in the first place. The first step in this process is ‘acknowledgement’ that a conflict exists, that all parties involved have had a role to play in its emergence and that the path to resolution passes not over peaks of triumphalist euphoria but the shallows of placid accommodation, where neither side is perceived as victor or vanquished.

There was once a Kashmir, in the midst of the partition mania that engulfed the melancholy subcontinent, about which the revered Mahatma was touched enough to say that he saw a ‘...ray of hope...’ While madness prowled in the lands across the high mountains from Jammu to Punjab to Delhi and all the way to Bengal, where thousands were being massacred every day in the name of religion, there was an area of pristine tranquillity ensconced in the valley of Kashmir, which was a beacon for inter-religious amity and brotherhood; which raised a militia of volunteers to protect its people, regardless of religious persuasion from the marauding hordes that descended down the high peaks and threatened to engulf the peaceable territory in the flames that had been lit all around. This was the land which had declared through the voice of its tallest leader, literally and metaphorically, that it emphatically rejected the two-nation theory and aspired to be a state, secular in character and intent, even before the term became de rigueur and found its place in the Indian Constitution decades later. Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) became the only erstwhile princely state that exercised the right to form its own constituent assembly which declared unambiguously in its constitution of 1956 that, ‘the State of Jammu and Kashmir is and shall be an integral part of the Union of India’.¹

From such benign beginnings, how then did matters come to such a pass as prevails today? The intent of this article is to scrutinise the Kashmir question from the perspective of some of the most grievous

Indian missteps, real or imaginary, as perceived by the people at its core. It is not a historian's approach as reams have been filled by scholars microscopically examining each turn of the dice from every conceivable angle. It is an attempt to put oneself in the shoes of a small community emerging from the horrors of war and plunder with aspirations for a brighter future, in an era that held the promise of a utopian idyll. It begins in that baleful autumn of 1947, though arguably the roots have been traced some decades back.

Communalism

"The poison which has spread amongst us should never have spread. Through Kashmir that poison might be removed from us."² The optimism of Mahatma Gandhi in October 1947 was belied as the communal fires raging in its West and South, in divided Punjab, gradually reached the Jammu province, in the Northern districts where Hindus and Sikhs became targets of the Muslim majority while the antagonists reversed roles in the Southern districts where Hindus held a majority and which were the bastion of Dogra rule.³ By November 1947, it is estimated by scholars that between a few thousand to several hundred thousand had been either killed or displaced, condemned forever to refugee status on either side of a line drawn on a map.⁴ But the Kashmir valley continued to shun communal violence as it battled against the tribal Afridi invaders, assisting and supporting the Indian Army which arrived just in the nick of time.

Indeed, so impressed had the Mahatma been of the Sheikh's avowed secular values that in November 1947, he had Sheikh Abdullah accompany him to the Guru Nanak Jayanti celebrations, in a communally surcharged atmosphere, to present him as a testimony to the syncretic ideal that he had himself been working for all his life. The Sikhs of Punjab heard Sheikh Abdullah in rapturous silence.⁵ The pages of history are littered with numerous speeches by Sheikh Abdullah in 1946-47, where he

outrightly rejected the two-nation theory and the concept of an Islamic state, exhorting the Kashmiri masses to shun communal ill-will and link their destiny to the newly emerging Indian union with all its glorious diversities. The people of the valley followed his advice to the hilt, as is evident from the total absence of communal violence during the period, in the Kashmir valley.

Yet, Sheikh Abdullah began to have second thoughts less than five years later, evident in a speech delivered in Ranbir Singh Pura on 10 April 1952, as he publicly expressed fears of communalism in India and his doubts about too much integration of Kashmir with a putatively secular India, in principle but not evidenced as much in practice.⁶ In the rest of India, communal fires were never really doused in the early years following independence. Despite the legacy that Mahatma Gandhi left behind and the efforts of successive Governments, incidents of Hindu- Muslim violence have been regularly reported across India with increasing ferocity and frequency all through its independent history. The seeds of communal aversion that were sown in British India in the late 19th century have taken deep roots and are flourishing to this day. Seen from the eyes of the Kashmiri, a distinct, minuscule cultural and religious minority surrounded by a sea of humanity that is India, the fear of being swallowed up is very real and palpable. We (the Indians) have to 'acknowledge' that despite the best intentions of our leadership, we failed to alter this perception and indeed may have only unwittingly aggravated it over the years, with not a little manipulation by Pakistan.

Semi-Autonomous Status

The logic of the partition of India placed the princely state of J&K in a unique position, unlike all the other 565 odd princely states. It was the only large state which had a Muslim majority under a Hindu ruler and had contiguous land borders with both India and Pakistan. Indeed all land communication from the state ran east to west towards Pakistani Punjab:

the roads from Jammu to Sialkot, Poonch to Rawalpindi, Srinagar to Rawalpindi and Kargil to Skardu along the ancient silk route connecting Kashmir to the Central Asian states and Kashgar; the only railway line from Jammu to Sialkot; the rivers all flowed west into Pakistan; post and telegraph lines ran from Kashmir to Rawalpindi and in fact, the only link to Indian Punjab was a dirt track from Srinagar to Jammu to Pathankot that remained closed for several months of winter. The strategic location of the state bordering Pakistan to the West, India to the South, Afghanistan to the Northwest (with a narrow strip of the Wakhan corridor separating it from Tajikistan), Xinjiang to the North, Tibet to the East and with the high Himalayas within its borders that provided a natural barrier from the North, made it an invaluable entity for both India and Pakistan. So to say, it had unparalleled bargaining power when it came to the question of accession. It could arguably have been the only viable independent state on the Swiss Confederation model if the Maharaja, or Sheikh Abdullah for that matter, so decided. Maharaja Hari Singh knew the value of his state and he ostensibly dithered, keeping the suspense till well after 15 August 1947, much to his own and his state's distress. But despite the events that unfolded in late October 1947 compelling him to finally accede, his was the only state that demanded the full concessions assured under the common instrument of accession that had been drawn up for all the princely states. And these were granted, considering the importance of the state strategically and politically as a counter-point to the two-nation theory.

These concessions were translated into the Constitution of India as Article 370, a temporary provision till such time a plebiscite could be held to ascertain the wishes of the people, who in the words of the Mahatma were the 'real sovereign of the state'. That this plebiscite has never happened due to the intransigence of Pakistan in executing the withdrawal of its troops and tribesmen, in full measure, from the territory of the state as it existed on August 15, 1947, in terms of the UNSC

Resolution 47 of 21 April 1948 and the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) Resolution of 13 August 1948 is a matter for separate analysis. After the arrest of Sheikh Abdullah in the infamous Kashmir Conspiracy case on August 8, 1953, the state governments that came to power were largely perceived by the people to be subservient to India, none of the other local leaders bearing the stature and following of Sheikh Abdullah, with the Indian National Congress (INC) itself forming the majority state governments in 1967 and 1972. Thence began the integration of the state with India, with over 40 amendments after the first one by the Presidential Order of 1954, with the concurrence of the state assemblies as required by Article 370 of the constitution, making a large and substantial part of the Indian Constitution applicable to the state by 2009; till finally, the Indian Constitution was made applicable in its entirety to the state by the Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 2019, thereby abrogating the special autonomous status that J&K enjoyed theoretically, at least, if not in reality.

Arguably, all amendments to the constitution were done with the benevolent goal of extending benefits of the Indian Constitution to people of the state and its integration with India, which was the ultimate aim of nationalist leaders of the era of freedom struggle in both India and Kashmir. But perceptions matter, regardless of their logic or veracity. For the common masses of J&K, not holding the avowed plebiscite till date, the arrest of their most respected leader and his incarceration for over 15 years and the progressive dilution of semi-autonomous status till its eventual annulment would presumably appear like broken promises and betrayal. The down gradation of the state to union territory status and its division into four parts of the original over the years (J&K, Ladakh, Pakistan Occupied Kashmir including the separate administrative unit of Gilgit-Baltistan) adds insult to that injured sub-nationalist pride. In this regard, there is a pressing need on India's part to 'acknowledge' that due to its compulsions and despite its best intentions, India has played a part

in fostering this perception of alienation, which Pakistan has amplified by its relentless, inimical propaganda.

The Security Paradigm

The perception of alienation, persecution complex and rabid support from Pakistan turned some of the otherwise affable and garrulous people of Kashmir into a cauldron of hate and loathing. The eruption of a militant movement in 1989-90 in Kashmir took the Indian state by surprise. Though it shouldn't have, as a secessionist movement had already emerged over two decades earlier in the form of the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) in 1964 and the 1986 riots in South Kashmir gave ample evidence of a brewing communal chasm. The Army was hurriedly called in and soon enough J&K earned the infamous distinction of being the most 'militarised region' in the world.

The Army is mandated to operate in 'aid to civil authorities' to deal with law and order disturbances, riots and natural calamities. Legal provisions are built into the military and civil laws for these contingencies. But an insurgency which has all but crippled the civil administrative machinery hardly yields to these legal niceties. To enable the Army to function effectively in a counter-insurgency (CI) role, legal powers and safeguards are essential for acts performed in good faith within the set national aims and parameters. Thus, came about the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act, 1990 (AFSPA) and the Jammu and Kashmir Disturbed Areas Act, 1992. The AFSPA gives powers to search, break upon locks, seize vehicles and property, arrest without warrant, on suspicion and even open fire to the causing of death, to non-commissioned officers and above. Of course, there are also numerous checks and balances built into any professional Army's systems to ensure that these powers are not unfettered and subject to abuse. So, there are the COAS' Ten Commandments, the elaborate 'Rules of Engagement' promulgated by the Director General of Military Operations, the Do's

and Don'ts before, during and after a military operation and numerous other Standard Operating Procedures at formation and unit level in the field covering all conceivable elements of these operations. Every unit and individual inducted into the CI environment undergoes intense pre-induction training at theatre level schools where besides the tactical aspects of CI operations, training about the legal provisions, Human Rights (HR), local customs and conduct with the citizens form essential elements of the curriculum. That said and even though the Indian Army has religiously endeavoured to follow 'minimum essential force' as its guiding principle, exuberant soldiers occasionally make mistakes and aberrations do occur. Also, all men are not born alike and there is in any group of people, the odd bad-hat who, no amount of training and character-building can straighten. Such individuals, when identified, should and are dealt with in an exemplary manner through a transparent and visible process. The greatness of a national ethos is best displayed by graciously accepting, apologising and taking remedial steps to minimise these aberrations and not by petulant denial of every charge flung at it about its conduct. But alas, the fact that these aberrations keep accumulating in the public psyche cannot be helped.

CI operations by their very nature are prone to discomfiting the resident population and occasionally, unintended collateral damage. Prolonged exposure of a population to an Army creates resentment despite its best, well-intended efforts. It is not without reason that the Romans denied their armies, except the Praetorian Guard which protected Caesar, the permission to enter the gates of Rome and why all armies have traditionally been garrisoned in cantonments away from population centres. But we got enchained by the ebb and flow of militancy/terrorism, looking at the circumstances from a myopic security paradigm and turned Kashmir into a permanent garrison where two generations have been born and entered into adulthood under the shadow of a military camp. A cursory glance at the annual crime data in the country will make it

obvious that the level of violence in J&K is a mere fraction of most states in the crime and violence riddled mosaic of the Indian mainland.⁷ Rather than disengage, while retaining the ability to expeditiously reengage, at times when the going was good, the Army and other central security forces became a permanent feature of the verdant landscape over the past three decades. This brings into perspective the need to ‘acknowledge’ and take responsibility for the resentment that some Kashmiris feel towards the Army and the ‘occupation army’ label they tag it with.

Human Rights

A mere lack of direct violence, or the threat of it, does not guarantee human security and rights. Ever since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 by the United Nations and the incorporation of most of its tenets in the Indian Constitution, the Indian state accepted the broader dimensions of HR and positive peace. It has, to a very large extent and certainly more so than most states that have encountered insurgent movements, lived up to its commitments. There has been a normative, moral underpinning in most of its actions when engaged in conflicts. Historically too, through the era of the holy epics, the lives and times of its great warrior kings and the humane approach of the modern state and its military machine have set standards, though at times they may have appeared ineffectual or downright pusillanimous to the more hawkish elements within.

Human Rights awareness and commitment to broader notions of human security are the hallmarks of the modern, civilised society. When a house is searched and the bridal trousseau of a young girl is touched by the hands of strangers, sentiments are hurt. When a house is destroyed in a gunfight against militants, the state pays financial compensation, but emotions are scarred. Houses may be rebuilt though homes are difficult to recreate. If lives are lost to unintended collateral damage, the resulting execration may be unfathomable. When identity cards are demanded

daily by security personnel in the very streets where the forefathers once roamed free, it gives the impression of enslavement in one's own land. When curfews are regularly imposed, it takes away the freedom of movement and choice. Denial of communication for any amount of time impinges on several rights, including but not restricted to the rights of free expression, education, employment, health and well-being. When elections are presumed to be rigged and the state appears to be indulging in gerrymander despite its best intentions, it gives rise to suspicions of attempted disenfranchisement. In a minority community already reeling under a perceived state of siege, spurred on and instigated by the pernicious influence of a neighbour, these feelings may get magnified beyond proportion. Thus, the need to 'acknowledge' that even the Indian state's legitimate actions over the years have gradually bred the animosity that many in Kashmir may feel towards India today.

Refusal to Make Dialogue 'Uninterrupted and Uninterruptible'

With the passing in quick succession of Sheikh Abdullah in 1982 and Indira Gandhi in 1984, the historical thread that had bound India and Kashmir in a relationship of mutual admiration and respect, despite frequent disagreements, finally snapped and their successors were thrust into the deep end, with little first-hand connect to the current of events of the past three decades. Thereafter, the relationship became a transactional one and realpolitik replaced the elements of enquiry, equity and accommodation. Thus, there were the Rajiv-Farooq Accord of 1986, the PV Narsimha Rao talks with '...sky is the limit...', the Gujral Doctrine, the Vajpayee proclamation of '*...Jamhooriyat, Insaniyataur Kashmiriyat...*' and the Composite Dialogue with Pakistan, the Manmohan Singh dialogues with the separatists from Kashmir and Musharraf of Pakistan and the Modi olive branch to Nawaz Sharif, all of which disappeared faster than footprints on the sands of time.

The Indian state has swung like a pendulum from one extreme of dialogue with all shades of opinion and on all matters, to talks within the confines of the Indian Constitution, to talks with Pakistan on issues other than Kashmir, to talks on all matters of mutual concern, to no talks till support to terrorism ends, to no dialogue with any separatists and finally the other extreme of no talks with anyone who indulges the separatists, virtually closing the doors on any dialogue with any stream of thought that differs from the Indian one. To any onlooker interested in disrupting efforts at peace building, like the deep state in Pakistan, India has provided an endless list of options to derail the processes. India has all along played into the bloodied hands of the Pakistani extremist-the hate-filled, irredentist elements within its Military-Mullah-Militant triumvirate.

Conflicts are resolved through positive strokes of engagement and dialogue. For the resolution process to make headway, every shade of opinion has to be taken into consideration, differences reconciled, own culpability recognised and corrective steps taken to ameliorate the misperceptions. This may be done publicly, though that requires a politically impenetrable thick skin; through the back channel in a sustained but low-key fashion; or with the so-called Track-II mechanism that builds trust and bonhomie before more substantive engagement can begin. Whatever the mechanism is chosen, it has to be made immune to the vagaries of periodic resurgence of negative narratives and actions by the enemies of resolution. In other words, it has to be uninterrupted and uninteruptible. For far too long India has been falling prey to the on-now, off-now syndrome. Thereby, the need to 'acknowledge' that the inability to pursue a resolution process in a sustained and continuous manner has given fodder to the perception of lack of intent, seriousness and deliberate filibuster, howsoever misplaced that may appear to us.

Where Do We Go Now?

The state that we are in today is partially of our own making. We could have played our cards differently, anticipated the pitfalls and avoided the most egregious missteps. But that's easier said with 20/20 hindsight. It is what it is and we have to take it from here. As previously stated, the first step in the onward journey has to be the 'acknowledgement' of our own part in the making of this sordid saga. Blame can be apportioned to all involved parties in varying measures and no hands are absolutely clean in this, figuratively and practically. But one can never let go of hope and it doesn't take a miracle to end this. Some recommendations for the path to resolution are listed hereinafter.

- **Talk:** Talk and more talk. Talk with more shades of opinion. Talk with everyone willing to come to the table. Induce even the inhibited to come forward and talk. Tolerate and talk to the most recalcitrant elements in the society. Do not talk at, as we have often done, but talk to the people. Understand and make it be understood to all what happens when we do not talk? Nothing. And more of the same.
- **Hands off:** We have been too politically invested in the local dynamics at play within J&K. This approach hasn't brought us much further than we were at the stroke of midnight, on that moonlit night, those seven decades ago. Maybe it's time to give a free rein to local politics and await the emergence of fresh leadership from within the community, as the current generation of leaders passes the baton on.
- **Faith and Trust:** The narrative built around the events in J&K in the past, has led to an acute lack of trust about the Kashmiri loyalty to the Indian nation in the minds of the common Indian. Change the narrative. Highlight the positive aspects of Kashmiriyat, tolerance, culture, intellectual achievements of the past generations of Kashmiris, Sufi-Islamic traditions common with the faith in Rishis among Hindus in India and so many other aspects that have enthralled visitors to the

state throughout history. Make the Kashmiri feel welcome, when he visits the rest of India for education, business or just tourism. Grant him the little joys of celebrating a Pakistani victory in an insignificant cricket match for he, after all, shares a lot in common even with those people as surely as he does with us.

- **The fruits of peace:** Do everything in our powers to accelerate the rate of economic growth, employment and financial prosperity. We have some of the finest economic brains. Let's not leave it to the whims of bureaucrats, plutocrats and practitioners of real politik. In times of peace and harmony, let the common man experience the dividends of peace in a manner that he associates it with his relationship to India. Time is of essence here and we do not want the passage of time to give the enemies of peace an opportunity to create roadblocks and set us back.
- **Demilitarise:** Minimise the visible presence of security forces to the extent possible. If we truly believe that Kashmir is on a path to peace, there is no reason for the heavy security presence. Some of the most reviled laws and restrictions can be lifted, at least partially from the areas deemed appropriate.
- **Restrict the restrictions:** Communication blackouts have become our default first response to any sign/apprehension of disturbance. Curb this tendency. Learn to work around and with emerging technologies. It may help to up our own game rather than muddying the playing field for all.
- **Patience:** There are controversial elements in any reform process that are capable of igniting suspicions and doubts. Do not rush into every reform measure with undue haste flowing from the desire to do the maximum good in the shortest possible time. Take it a step at a time. Let the debatable ones come last, when the time is ripe, the people are less obdurate and more accepting of the change.

- **Benevolence:** India is a continental sized country with a humongous population. J&K is also a large state but with a comparatively minuscule population. Be more willing to give and do not pinch the pennies. Most people of the state have suffered undeserved hardships for far too long. Empathise and alleviate
- **Do not Play to the Galleries:** The Roman emperor Commodus is said to have gained his subjects' approval and popularity by showering expensive gifts on them and organising bloody gladiatorial games that the people of decadent Rome so loved. But he is also credited with the beginning of the decline of the glorious Roman Empire. Common masses are easily swayed by emotion, which is often irrational. Problem-solving involves a cool, calculated and rational analysis. When there are people involved, compassion may also play an important part.
- **Restraint:** Let triumphalism take a back seat for a while. There will be enough reason and time to celebrate when the people of Kashmir embrace the idea of India of their own accord.

Conclusion

Much water has flown down the Jhelum and Chenab since the dawn of freedom in the Indian subcontinent. A lot of it has been coloured red. It didn't have to be and there is no reason that it should continue to be so. All protagonists in its tragic history have been caught up in the currents that swept them from one precipice to another. It is a tale of intrigue, deceit and above all mistrust in the other. It's about time a serious effort was made to put an end to these travails that impede the prosperity and progress of the entire region. All the parties involved have arguments in their support, plausible to varying extents. And all of them have erred at the others' expense in varying degrees. There are multiple narratives which muddle the entire affair to an inexorable extent. It may thus be impossible today to decipher the real truth. The truth may indeed prove

to be intractable for all concerned. What remains are perceptions. And perceptions are nebulous. Someone has to take the initiative to step back, take a deep breath and erase the past. Make a fresh start and begin with the ‘acknowledgement’ of one’s own complicity in arriving where we are at. Possibly, as the largest player in the game, destiny has willed India to take that initiative and display its statesmanship.

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India Needs Smart Frontiers: An Assessment

P. J. S. Pannu

Abstract

In the era of Fourth Industrial Revolution, technology has transformed the ways of doing any business, including warfare. The human element is slowly giving way to machines who would perform major functions including substituting and supplementing rank and file in the Military. Over 22,500 kms of India's frontiers are guarded by various Border Guarding Forces including the Coast Guards to prevent surprise incursions by the adversaries' State, State-sponsored or Non- State Actors. The Border Guarding Forces act as eyes and ears of the frontiers and can take on basic defensive actions for which colossal manpower is used. For a Military threat, Regular Forces takeover the responsibility for the Defense of the Nation. There is a case for optimizing the manpower and increasing the efficiency by bringing in smart systems in delivering constant situational awareness and response solutions. This would also ensure that all stakeholders are networked in real time. A combination of sensors, electronic and digital platforms, Data and Communication centers, using Terrestrial and Non-Terrestrial means, would build 'system of systems' for Common Operational Picture at Strategic, Operational and Tactical levels. Data/intelligence analysis and automation would be possible if such systems are ubiquitous and part of overall National security apparatus. The smart frontiers would soon be inescapable necessity for the Defense of the nation.

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Introduction

The term Frontiers is being used in a generic manner to define the borders/ Frontline as being held, managed and guarded by respective forces. This expression in no way replaces conventional terms but is representative of de-facto ground positions being held. Currently, manpower is being extensively used to carry out patrolling, watch duties from towers by sentries. Generally, analogue systems and traditional means are being used to police or manage the frontier. Coastal areas are also managed by the Coast Guard along with other forces. Border Management is the responsibility of the MHA and skies being a mixed responsibility with the Indian Air Force being a major stakeholder.

Modern warfare is undergoing rapid change and becoming more dependent on advanced technology. Non-contact and non-kinetic domains of warfare have emerged as more relevant; however, these domains would overlap with the kinetic and contact domains. Hybrid warfare covers all domains and also includes sub-conventional operations by the state and non-state actors. India's frontiers, irrespective of the neighbour, remain tense and are prone to infiltration by terrorists, agents, insurgents, smugglers and migrants with cross-connections with one another.

The response to hybrid security scenarios necessitates that there is not only overlap between various security forces and other agencies of the government, but complete integration between them. In the current and future times, technology would offer the possibility to integrate through smart networks. In the event of a warlike situation, the defence forces would need to quickly stitch up with the border guarding forces taking them under command.

This can be made seamless through integrated smart networks. It is necessary that the Armed Forces remain integrated into the national security apparatus as the line between war and peace are being blurred. India should adopt a smart frontier concept which is built as one system

and integrated into a system of systems. Future threats are difficult to predict as also there would be a short/negligible ‘warning period’. There would therefore be no luxury of time to designate a ‘Preparatory Period’, carrying out mobilisation and for taking over the operational responsibility.

Indian International Boundary

India’s Borders with its neighbours have been defined by the Department of Border Management, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and surveyed and marked on the maps by the Survey of India. The alignment of the International Borders (IB) includes all areas that describe the shape and size of the nation. India shares its borders with seven countries: 4,096.70 km with Bangladesh, 3,323 km with Pakistan, 3,488 km with China, 1,751 km with Nepal, 699 km with Bhutan, 1643 km with Myanmar and 106 kms with Afghanistan. However, the dynamics of disputes mainly with Pakistan and China makes it difficult to describe the exact alignment of the Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan and the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China due to many disputes even on the disputed alignments. The number of negotiations have failed to yield any settlement. India and Pakistan have fought several wars over the Jammu and Kashmir state, but the outcome has been only in militarisation.

India and China fought a war in 1962 over the border dispute. After capturing certain Indian border posts and running over large territories during the war, the Chinese unilaterally withdrew to their bases some 20 km behind the claimed areas. 22 boundary negotiations between the two countries have failed to resolve the boundary question. Frequent incursions by the PLA have attempted over years to press their claims to certain areas. The year 2020 saw PLA coming to the areas of their perception, which were earlier patrolled, but in April the strength and the intention made it clear that the PLA consolidated their positions. Meetings of Corps Commander level could only achieve the partial

withdrawal of the troops; however, certain sensitive areas still continue to be held by the Chinese. The troops from both sides have been building up, hardening the positions from both sides on the LAC.

Other than the active military situation that prevails on the LC and the LAC, the international borders are held by the Border Guarding Forces, essentially for Border Policing duties to check the illegal transborder movement such as smuggling, transborder crime and movement of the population with common ethnic connections across. The entire Western International has been fenced to ensure there is no infiltration of terrorists. Similarly, the entire border with Bangladesh has also been fenced to prevent trans-border movement of migrants and Insurgents operating in the Northeast region.

Management of Indian Borders

Border Surveillance and Policing during peacetime are globally the responsibility of the Ministry of Interior (MHA). Protection of borders from surprise incursions is the responsibility of the Border Guarding forces, which are primarily the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs). These forces use conventional means of carrying surveillance across the borders from watchtowers and the gaps between towers are covered by foot patrols, sometimes using a combination of Vehicle/Animal mounted patrols. The sentries on the watchtowers use day/night binoculars and maintain daily observation logs. Immediate suspicious movement is reported by the radio/telephones.

The MHA under the concept of 'One Border-One Force' has raised a number of forces for Border Guarding i.e., Border Security Force (BSF) for Guarding the India-Pakistan and India-Bangladesh borders. Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) for the Northern Borders (Indo-Tibetan borders). Seema Suraksha Bal (SSB) has been given the responsibility of India- Nepal and India- Bhutan Borders. While the Assam Rifles is responsible for the Indo- Myanmar Border. Indian Coast Guard is

responsible for coastal protection. Under the 'Single Point Control' concept of MHA, the responsibility of conduct and coordination of any activity or operations to be carried out on a particular border would be under the authority of that designated force. However, the activities on the LoC and the LAC are under dual responsibility where the Army is the primary responder to a Military Threat.

The Union War Book is the guiding document of the Government of India that contains the provisions that would dictate the activities to be undertaken on declaration of war. Under these provisions, once invoked, all the border guarding forces and the designated police forces of the country are placed under the operational control of the Army/Ministry of Defence (MoD). The Military formations and units takeover the responsibility of any activity on the borders in Defence of the Nation and by implication the responsibility of border guarding/Defence gets transferred to the MoD.

The management of the LoC has unique dynamics. This was referred to as a Cease-Fire Line (CFL) until 1972 when the Shimla Agreement was signed. It was expected that after 1972, the forces from both sides would disengage/reduce as the agreement was signed on a map. However, the tenants of CFL based on the grabber-holder concept have continued on account of Pakistan being uneasy about the Shimla agreement. Ironically, occasional Cease fire Agreements do get announced and broken over these active frontiers. The occupation of Kargil heights by Pakistan in 1999 was a case in point of Pakistan going against the principles of the Shimla Agreement. Indian Army however conducted the Kargil Operations keeping the spirit of the Shimla Agreement alive.

The LAC separates India and Tibetan China and is generally referred to as the Northern Boundary. This line is referred to as the Mc Mahon line in the Arunachal Pradesh Sector, IB/LAC in Sikkim sector and LAC in the central and Ladakh sectors. The Chinese have gradually built roads and infrastructure that connect all the forward military outposts,

whereas on the Indian side the connectivity is basically up to formation/ Unit HQs and gradually expanding to connect the forward posts. Both sides carry out regular patrolling of the passes from where crossing over the boundary is possible. However, many other open areas also exist where vehicle-mounted patrols carry out area domination. The PLA has built a digital wall all along their side comprising Radomes, day and night electro-optical cameras and digital sensors connected with OFC – 5G terrestrial and Non-terrestrial networks. These walls provide a constant EW and surveillance grid that alerts the forward posts and the commanders in-depth whenever the significant activity of their concern happens. The PLA troops not only react to these by physical action but also use this data for analysis which they use for institutional memory. Over the last three decades, China has been following a process of digitisation and referring to it as ‘fighting under the conditions of Informatisation’.

India shares Maritime Boundary with Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Myanmar. Due to disputes on the Indo-Pakistan boundary at the Sir creek (the Indian state of Gujarat and Pakistan Sindh) the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL), as the extension of IB is also unsettled. Similar disputes are there on the claim of a small island between India and Sri Lanka making the IMBL also open to interpretations. Other Borders of India with Myanmar Nepal and Bhutan are being manned in traditional manner of domination by patrols, watchtowers surveillance and occasional border meetings for coordination.

The responsibility of guarding the Sea Frontiers rests with the Indian Coast Guards (MHA), under the operational control of the Indian Navy (MoD). The National Waters, up to 12 nautical Miles are considered as the Indian territory and up to 200 nautical miles is the EEZ, where the international shipping transit is permitted but no foreign exploration of economic assets including fishing by any foreign national is permitted. The responsibility of sea vigil is divided between coastal states, who use

Marine Police for the immediate coastline and the Coast Guards who patrol up to the EEZ. The Coast Guard also is responsible to protect offshore assets of the country. BSF Water Wing is responsible for guarding the disputed Indo-Pak coastal and creek areas. An established coordination mechanism exists between the Indian Navy, Indian Coast Guards, State Marine Police, the BSF and the state police so that there is no infiltration from the coastal and creek areas.

Operational Environment and Imperatives

India is known to have active borders even though there is an absence of war. One can best describe this condition as No War – No Peace. The Western and the northern borders have a large deployment of Border Guarding and Military forces. While the portion of IB where there is no dispute largely remains peaceful, however, the threat of infiltration of terrorist groups remains not only from the land borders but also from the sea frontiers (attacks of 1990 and 2008 in Mumbai).

The situation on LoC and the LAC remains warlike. Exchange of trans-LC firing with intermittent mortar and Arty duels is a regular feature. LAC, especially in Eastern Ladakh has seen a military build-up since early 2020, the frequency of patrolling has been on the rise for almost a decade from both sides. Similarly, border movements all across the northern borders have seen a sharp increase resulting in frequent clashes between the Indian and the Chinese troops. China has taken up large infrastructure development programmes in Tibet that bring the roads, villages and communication installation right up to the Indian borders that support military deployment.

While ITBP is responsible for guarding the northern borders of India, the large deployment of the Indian Army creates many coordination issues between the two. Similarly, on the Chinese side, the PAP (People's Armed Police) is responsible for border policing, however, the PLA has the responsibility for border guarding. Lately, the People's Congress has

passed a new law, where the PLA and the citizens would have a role in the protection of their borders, making the PLA a direct stakeholder. The PLA units are already connected with the digital wall created by the Chinese for surveillance.

The IB between India – Pakistan has been completely fenced with two layers of barbed wire. The Border fence has been built towards the Indian side leaving a reasonable distance ahead of the fence up to the IB which is patrolled. The Border fence has been electrified with generators and has beamed lights to cover the areas ahead of the fence with 1,50,000 floodlights to ensure clear visibility at night. There are a number of BSF posts along the border, generally in alignment to the border fence. The LoC also has the Anti- Infiltration Obstacle System (AIOS) which comprises strands of barbed wires, lighting systems and a number of sensors for day and night surveillance. However, as the altitude of mountains along the LC rises, the snow levels being a major obstacle, the dynamics of LC management differ where AIOS has not been found fully satisfactory as infiltration still takes place over the snow or by cutting the fence. There are a number of places where tunnels have been dug under the Border/LoC fence for infiltration. Lately, drones have increasingly been used for smuggling or dropping arms and ammunition across to resupply the terrorists. The LoC in Kargil, Ladakh and Siachen (Actual Ground Position Line called the AGPL) is defended with the physical deployment of troops.

Post-1962 war, the LAC has been largely peaceful barring a few skirmishes and incursions by the PLA. The agreements based on the principles of *Panchsheel* have been holding out where both sides had agreed to resolve the boundary question peacefully without using any military means. Regular Border Post meetings have been held at designated spots in Eastern Ladakh, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh to resolve any tactical or operational disputes. At the national level, regular meetings at the Special representative levels have been taking place to resolve the

boundary disputes, but have had suboptimal results. Due to continuing disputes on the LAC, there has been an increase in PLA activities all along the LAC especially in the last decade. However, during these activities, the protocols were maintained where banner drills were carried out by patrols in case of any face-off. In 2020, the PLA has militarised the Northern borders post their forward movement into their claimed areas, resulting in fatal engagement at Galwan between two troops who used clubs to fight rather than the firearms. The patrolling activity and surveillance from both sides have been intensified.

During a conventional war, the responsibility to defend the borders would be transferred to the Army. The Hot War re-deployment would include the deployment of Border Guarding Forces preferably in the same Area. However, the modalities of border surveillance would undergo a change. The peacetime surveillance resources would need augmentation and conduct of routine would be in readiness to face a threat from conventional military forces. The Preparation of Battle Area would entail shaping up the tactical battle areas and war zones aligned with the Military commander's intent in their Area of responsibility. The Areas of interest and Areas of Influence would extend into the enemy territory and surveillance resources deployed accordingly.

India faces a 'two-and-a-half-front' challenge. The Western and Northern borders already have troops facing adversaries. Insurgency and internal threat is always simmering. There is a threat of infiltration from all sides from land borders and sea fronts. The forces are also involved with internal security duties within the states of J&K, Northeast and LW in Chhattisgarh. The borders with Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar are relatively calm, but intermittent cross border activities by the Anti-national Elements/illegal migrants have been prevalent. With multifarious agencies, ministries and forces deployed there is a need for 'whole of a nation' response. It is essential that a Common Operational Picture is available at the Apex level and networked with subordinate and

related agencies. It is time that smart systems are developed for national security.

Need for Smart Systems

It is already ascertained that today the threats to National Security are Hybrid in nature that include traditional and non-traditional threats. While the traditional and physical threats have continued to manifest, technology has added a new paradigm to the threat dynamics. The advent of Information Communication and Technology (ICT) has brought in exponential growth in digital platforms. The neo-millennium generation has brought in innovation culture to fuel the fourth industrial revolution.

Space and Cyber domains combined with Artificial Intelligence (AI) has brought robotics to play a major role in how the future of wars would be fought. The niche and disruptive technologies would contribute to supplement manpower for surveillance and border guarding duties. Israel and China have increasingly introduced technology to replace soldiers to give Early Warning and be the first responders. The digital frontiers and Geo-fencing would replace physical systems to recognize or respond to threats.

India with over 2,2700 km frontier including the coastal areas needs round the clock surveillance to ensure any threat is detected ahead of time. With the availability of technology, it would be possible to build a smart detection and response mechanism for threat mitigation. Different Border Guarding Forces would need to adopt smart systems for border guarding. The technology used should meet the needs of Armed Forces and be compatible with military platforms once deployed. Currently, the MHA has been investing in technologies that may not be suitable and meet the requirements of the Armed and Strategic Forces.

The first and the outer layer of smart frontier should be able to carry out round the clock Strategic Surveillance that provides a multi-dimensional

scan. This layer should be built on 360-degree dome architecture that should cover land, sea, subterranean (sub-surface/undersea), threats from space and cyber-attacks. The targets for surveillance would be in the depth areas and beyond the area of interest of military field commanders. This architecture is based on space, aerospace, aerial, cyber systems and dovetails the Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) and Air Defence (AD). Due to the exponential increase in the range and speed of missiles and 5/6 Generation Aircraft, the response mechanism has to be built on rapid and instant neutralisation and counter-attacks. There are means to detect the Cyber and electronic signatures and these would be used to lock the critical targets. The precision strikes on the locked targets especially of critical infrastructure can be achieved through direct hits and indirect neutralisation. The strategic digital/smart frontiers created would become the essential part of Cyber Defence and Cyber deterrence. The strategic smart outer layer and subsequent inner layers would need a plethora of assets at the national level consuming large budgets. This may need a separate controlling entity such as Strategic Surveillance and Defence Agency as part of the Strategic Command.

Operational surveillance and response mechanism is relevant to the military commanders once warning orders are received. Effective strategic surveillance on the outer layer would be a trigger in sounding a military warning. The smart systems would be able to detect any threat or pick up suspicious activity instantaneously in the Areas of Interest of the Military commanders. The smart frontiers do not mean a physical obstacle system or a visible line of sensors. The smart frontier would comprise static, mobile and rapidly deployable assets. A set of drones with payloads of sensors would be sufficient to deploy the rapid surveillance sensors. These can also be deployed by aerial or artillery means. Similarly, electronic and laser energy based on the space, land and aerial means would be able to generate digital intelligence mosaics on the GIS platforms to be part of C5-I2-STAR2.

C5 (Command, Control, Computers, Communications, and Cyber) would build Common Operating Picture and link up the strategic and Operational Command and Control centres for clear, swift, instant and integrated picture. The Information and Intelligence (I2) would allow informed decision making, cutting down OODA loop and preparing the Surveillance, Target Acquisition, Reconnaissance and Robotics (STAR2) to activate the sensor-shooter element during the warning period. Since most of the future battles would be non-contact, engagement or kill chain of Cyber targets would give first strike advantage to the initiator. Smart Frontiers would be able to transmit the information and Intelligence directly to the War Rooms. A combination of precise Space surveillance, aerial/drone reconnaissance and ground/sea-based sensors would be necessary for IPB (Intelligence Preparation of Battlefield) to give ability to the field commanders to make precise assessments and for asset and priority allocation. The use of ballistic missiles and aerial attacks would far precede the engagement of ground forces.

Smart frontiers are not about a physical obstacle system like Border Fencing or AIOS, which have the primary role of stopping infiltration. These frontiers are not physical barriers but a combination of all-encompassing systems that are working across periods such as Peace, NWNP, Hybrid and conventional scenarios. These frontiers have to be ubiquitous in nature and cross-connect with Border-policing, Border Guarding and Military forces asking for total synergy between the MHA and MoD. The designs and configuration of smart frontiers would differ for plains, riverine, mountains, jungles and super High Altitudes as the terrain and threat dynamics differ in India on different fronts. These systems would need a dedicated power supply preferably through renewable energy. The sensors would need to be custom made to detect threats at different ranges, visibility and electronic spectrums. They would need to detect subterranean threats such as tunnels, undersea threats and equally cover the land, air, sea and space scanning facility. These systems

would need to be part of other domains and systems to facilitate a seamless switch of responsibility between the Police/Border Guarding forces and the Armed/strategic Forces that report to different ministries.

Smart systems are also vulnerable to hacking, cyber-attack disruptions and data deaths. These systems are prone to be manipulated and suffer from insider attacks and inept handling. It may be prudent that the system handling is done by specialists of Cyber Corps working under the DMA/MoD. The border Guarding Forces under the MHA should be the user of the same system for counter-infiltration and for detection of minor threats. To make the switching of responsibility easy during hot war, different applications can be made to work on the common platforms. The complication of switching ownership would by itself be a security risk and should not be allowed. Incident reporting, Data Recovery and redundancies would need to be carefully built-in.

The implementation of 5G and IOT in the civilian sector would allow industry 4.0 to easily build indigenous solutions for running the IoMT Internet of Military Things (IoMT) and Internet of Battle Things (IoBT) for the digital hot war. Since India neither has material nor fabrication capability for making semiconductors, supply chain infections of imported Chipsets remain a major concern as these could facilitate trigger system attacks or compromise smart frontiers. All units need to train and employ Chief Info Security Officers (CISOs) who would be able to exploit the smart systems fully but ensure the cyber hygiene is maintained at all times.

Military Diplomacy: An Appraisal in the Indian Context

Jaswinder Singh

Abstract

Defence Diplomacy is an integral part of foreign policy and state security, it helps in increasing military cooperation between the countries and strengthening relations between the states. India's growing global outreach and vibrancy of its foreign policy can be gauged by the fact that it has made substantial efforts in defence and security cooperation, however, India's defence diplomacy efforts do not commensurate to its rising global status, since all tools of defence diplomacy have not been used optimally. In this context, the paper argues for the need to revisit and formulate a strategy that is aligned with India's foreign policy. It is because defence diplomacy is vital for a state to not only ensure its stable and strong international position but is also significant in shaping a structured and functional security policy.

Introduction

Defence Diplomacy is an integral part of foreign policy and state security, it helps in increasing military cooperation between the countries and strengthening relations between the States. In the dynamic and

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ever-evolving geopolitical global landscape, Defence Diplomacy can effectively leverage our national interests. Defence diplomacy enables to occupy a strategic space where one's adversary should not be able to engage. Defence Diplomacy was a relatively new term coined in the post-cold war era describing cooperation between countries on different ends related to Officer exchanges, Ship visits, combined training missions and Joint Military Exercises. Military Diplomacy is often confused, or used interchangeably with the term Defence Diplomacy. However, 'Defence' (related to all components of Ministry of Defence) is a broader umbrella term which subsumes the 'Military' (Army, Navy and Air Force); and hence, Military Diplomacy is a subset of Defence Diplomacy.

Military diplomacy is developed and implemented conjointly by the foreign and defence ministries and is often associated with conflict prevention and application of the military. It is distinct from the concept of 'coercive diplomacy' which is generally motivated by the desire to intimidate potential adversaries.

India's growing global outreach and vibrancy of its foreign policy can be gauged by the fact that it has made a substantial effort in Defence and Security cooperation, however, Indian Defence Diplomacy efforts do not commensurate to its rising global status, since all tools of Defence Diplomacy have not been used optimally. There is a need to revisit and formulate a strategy that is aligned with the Government of India's Foreign Policy.

The scope of Defence Diplomacy in India includes visits by Service Chiefs, conferences at the Service staff level, joint training and exercises, participation under UNPKOs, port calls, training in Service Academies and training institutions, survey by Naval hydrographical ships, etc.¹ Since Defence Diplomacy is an integral part of foreign policy, hence it becomes mandatory to understand the effectiveness of the two concepts, namely- Hard Power and Soft Power by assessing their use in foreign policymaking.

Hard Power Versus Soft Power

The terms Hard Power and Soft Power represent two important concepts in the field of International Relations, more specifically, in the political relations between States. Soft Power Projection can be defined as ability of a state to project its influence other than through military combat into an area that may serve as an effective diplomatic lever, influencing the decision-making process and acting as a potential deterrent on other States' behaviour. Although appearing as an oxymoron by referring to components of both force and negotiation at the same time, defence diplomacy is actually an expression of Soft Power. Deployment of various countries' militaries during the humanitarian response to the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami is one of the best examples.

Hard Power facilitates India's use of military, economic and political means to influence other States; soft power has, through our cultural or ideological means, the ability to indirectly influence the behaviour of other States.² Hard power is referred to the ability to change other states' positions by force or by inducing military and economic power to coerce them into submission. It is tangible and easy to measure, the effects of which are visible and even predictable to a certain degree. On the other hand, soft skills refer to the ability to shape the preferences of others through cultural exchanges and understanding, co-option, and influence based on context and necessity.³ Hence, defence diplomacy is a display of soft power, wherein States are able to peacefully use armed forces and related infrastructure as a foreign policy and security tool to achieve a State's foreign policy objectives.⁴

Defence Diplomacy: Ends, Ways and Means

Defence diplomacy is not the interest or responsibility of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) alone, and therefore not a stand-alone activity of the MoD. Since the effort should be towards leveraging the country's strength to take it forward and serve the larger cause of nation's foreign

policy, all organs of the State must contribute to the successful execution of the same. *Ends* are the strategic outcomes which can be broadly classified under three categories - conflict prevention/resolution, security and, stability and prosperity. The objectives have to be clearly identified with an aim of arriving at a result-orientated output. *Ways* are the methods, tactics, procedures, practices, and strategies to achieve the ends. *Means* are the instruments of defence diplomacy to achieve the above objectives. Accordingly, a nation needs to have a roadmap both short term and long term with definite timelines.

Need for Global Defence Diplomatic Footprint by India

Today's world order is mired in strategic brinkmanship, that is, in a VUCA environment characterised by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity with number of flash points, witnessing the end of unipolar era, and rebalancing of powers. Post withdrawal of the US from Afghanistan, the Pakistan-China nexus is already taking roots in Afghanistan as witnessed in the coordinated efforts between Islamabad, Beijing, and the Taliban. The rise of China challenging the US has led to increased strategic jostling in the IOR, further enhancing the geo-strategic importance of the region. India, with its growing economic might, aspires to be a key player in world affairs. This calls for bolstering its Comprehensive National Power (CNP) which includes its global diplomatic clout. It is, therefore, axiomatic that India's global defence diplomatic footprint needs to grow proportionately.

Therefore, one needs to have a comprehensive and a three-dimensional understanding of the environment one is operating in. There is a perceptible building of partnerships and strategic power-play between nations. India has made progress in bilateral, diplomatic and economic engagements. Military diplomacy is a campaign that does not work without a plan. It must be documented and mutual interests, as well as objectives, must be clearly articulated with time lines. There should

be a stated strategic objective for every country we wish to engage with. Military diplomacy is not one-off visit, it is a continuous engagement and of course, Partners should be prepared to fulfil commitments.

Military Diplomacy Across the World

We live in a strategic environment, there are no permanent friends or enemies. Commercial interests and economic gains have begun to play an increasingly prominent role, leading to traditional allies doing business with traditional foes. The best example is of Russia and USA selling weapons to both India and Pakistan.

USA, UK, France and the NATO nations could be considered the world leaders in military diplomacy. China has been aggressively enlarging its military-diplomatic efforts and could also be considered amongst the leaders. Australia and India have well established military-diplomatic efforts. USA, UK, France, the NATO nations and Australia have very focused and relatively transparent policies and programmes. India, with a long tradition of use of military diplomacy, is also ramping up its efforts, albeit, in its own slow and perplexed style under the overly centralised and bureaucratic control of its ministries of external affairs and defence.

India's Immediate and Extended Neighbourhood

A major challenge to India's defence diplomacy is posed by the rise of China, this is a concern not just in the immediate neighbourhood but also in terms of its newer strategic partners. In its neighbourhood, China has expanded its military cooperation exponentially. Nepal and Sri Lanka are already balancing India's rise by doubling their strategic partnerships with China. Even China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) presents India with many strategic challenges and it has been the most vocal opponent of the infrastructure strategy. It is particularly concerned that Gwadar Port might give China control over the West Indian Ocean, including Indian energy and trade supplies.⁵

In sharp contrast, China employs military diplomacy at the global level proactively in order to secure every possible advantage. China's extensive defence diplomacy in the region is further supported by its economic presence in the region. China has perhaps the biggest economic footprint in the CAR region and the Gulf States, principally owing to its massive project, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). In order to deter China's expansionist tendencies in the region and to establish formidable ties with the region, India needs to consequently exploit its military cooperation with the region and supplement it with economic ties.⁶

India in its constructive engagements with different parts of Asia itself i.e., South Asia, South East Asia and Central Asia have tried to maintain strategic partnerships with the immediate and extended neighbourhood by engaging in different sectors simultaneously and creating an atmosphere of mutual benefit. India has from time to time brought changes in its foreign policies to revamp its relations with its neighbours.

India's military cooperation with the Gulf largely encompasses naval cooperation, joint exercises, regular Indian ship visits and broad-based MoUs. In terms of military education and training, Gulf Armed Forces personnel are trained in Indian defence and military academies. Most importantly, all the Gulf states are members of the Indian Navy-conceived Indian Ocean Naval Symposium, which is a biennial forum for Navy Chiefs of Indian Ocean Littoral.⁷

Pakistan, by virtue of its important geostrategic location, its Army's "exalted" position within the state, and its Islamic affiliation, will remain a challenging competitor to India. India will need to strengthen its defence diplomatic capability and strategy to deny advantage to Pakistan, particularly in immediate neighbourhood, West Asia and Central Asian region. In spite of poor state of its economy, Pakistan's performance in the sphere of defence diplomacy can be rated as comparable to India, if not better in some aspects.

India's Defence Diplomacy Efforts

India is an emerging regional power and a rising global power. India has made successful strides in expanding its defence diplomacy. Today, India is seen by the world as a country of high technology and skilled professionals. India has not only expanded its activities of military cooperation, humanitarian assistance, contribution to UN Peace Keeping Forces, etc. with respect to its immediate neighbourhood or the major players like that of the USA, UK, France, Russia Japan, etc., but has also discovered new partners of strategic importance. Indian foreign policy aims at securing India's economic interests, protecting India's Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOC), border protection and securing India's energy security, and therefore, acquiring the required capabilities.⁸

Defence cooperation is emerging as a critical tool to complement foreign policy goals. However, it is important to note that drawing up a defence engagement plan is a tedious and high-level process. A defence cooperation engagement plan is drawn up by the Services and is executed after the same receive clearance from the Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of Defence.⁹

India's defence diplomacy footprint is increasing by the day. India is an avid practitioner of 'military diplomacy.' India presently has 89 Embassies and 108 Consulates worldwide. She hosts 152 Embassies/High commissions and 18 other representations. However, Defence Wings in Indian embassies abroad exist only in 45 States. The sanction of 10 new Defence Wings, taking the number up to 55, is a positive step. However, on a comparative scale, India lags hugely behind the US and China, both of which have military-diplomatic presence in more than 100 states globally.¹⁰

Building Defence Capability of Friendly Foreign Countries (FFCs)

India has been assisting Friendly Foreign Countries (FFCs) to develop their defence capability without impinging on their own security. India

can become a net defence exporter and meet the growing needs of militaries around the world, The Indian defence industry can be home to manufacturers who can create a perfect blend of State-of-the-Art, high quality and cost-effective hardware. This will not only bolster national security but make India a net defence exporter.

On 28 September 2021, India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in his address at the annual general meeting of the 'Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers' (SIDM) in New Delhi stated that an atmosphere of jointness has been created to ensure the modernization of the Armed Forces. This is being achieved by encouraging the participation of the private sector to achieve '*Aatmanirbhar Bharat*'. Due to these steps, defence exports had already crossed Rs 38,000 crore mark in the last seven years. More than 10,000 Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) have joined the defence sector. The minister further urged that private sector defence companies must invest in Research and Development (R&D), particularly in technologies relating to Cyberspace.¹¹

Enhance One's Defence Capability

Military diplomacy could enable cooperative efforts for drawing up equipment specifications, research and development, technology transfers, acquisitions and production. The Making of own Defence Industry and R&D effective, and financially viable gives the added advantage of not being dependent on imports during conflict situations and reduces the vulnerability to sanctions or exorbitantly high prices or economically detrimental contracts.

The international military engagement can be undertaken to enhance own military capability overtly, through personnel contacts in the form of professional military exchanges, defence and military human resource development in basic and advanced military skills, war fighting skills at tactical and strategic levels, and in conceptual and doctrinal abilities; and defence management specialisations in

resources, techniques and training. There is an urgent need to also energize our military-industrial complex, which can play a major role in military diplomacy and which should be fully dovetailed into our military diplomacy framework.¹²

Role of Defence Attaches

A Defence Attache (DA) is a Military diplomatic footprint in the host nation for facilitating the military exchanges between two countries. DAs are the linchpins of defence diplomacy. Defence Attaches share ground-level experiences and concerns so as to enhance Defence Cooperation. DAs work in a genuine tri-Services/defence framework and contribute more actively towards our broader defence diplomacy goals. The DAs can help in conveying national point of view to the respective host country and ensure that the government line is being followed.

As seen, military in certain countries have a large say in the national policy, therefore, the Defence Attaches must harness interpersonal military relations in such countries. In the fast-changing geo-strategic scenario, Defence Attaches need to keep abreast of the development and enhance their efforts to find traction with the national goals. The Defence Attaches are expected to nurture linkages with their host countries and enhance interactions between Indian Think Tanks and similar institutions in other countries.

Participation in United Nations Peace Keeping Operations (UNPKO)

A formal commitment to the UN and other regional cooperative organisations or coalitions for provision of forces and equipment for UNPKO, humanitarian assistance and relief and joint operations is a cornerstone of military diplomacy. The Centre for UN Peacekeeping (training) (CUNPK) in New Delhi is a small step in this direction. The US has an elaborate training programme and funding for training other nations

in peacekeeping operations under the former president's Global Peace Operation Initiative (GPOI).¹³ GPOI has subsidiary programmes such as Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA)¹⁴ and Enhanced International Peacekeeping Capabilities (EPIC).¹⁵

Establishment of IFC-IOR

With an intent to make India the maritime information hub, towards which the Indian Navy has set up Information Fusion Centre for Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) and has signed agreements with a number of countries for sharing white shipping information.¹⁶ There are a number of initiatives like Exercise 'MILAN', Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), Goa Maritime Conclave etc which are used by Indian Navy to interact with other foreign Navies.

Synergy for Effective Military Diplomacy

Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) considers diplomacy as its preserve, and therefore, assumes lead role in defining the tasks for the Armed Forces in pursuance of foreign policy. Both MEA and the MoD are of the opinion that Armed Forces should be able to provide them consolidated military security objectives which can be further incorporated as part of the overall foreign policy objectives. There exists a difference in opinions with respect to the priority of objectives of India's military between the MoD and MEA.¹⁷

India must make a thorough overhaul of military diplomacy as part of its foreign policy and create the *capacities, structures and processes* necessary to put it into action. To achieve the same, MEA and MoD have to jointly develop a *vision statement* which aims at expanding defence cooperation and establishing Indian military presence around the globe to secure India's national interests. Correspondingly, military security concerns, duly incorporated as part of foreign policy objectives, must be pursued by MEA in unison with MoD.

Though efforts have been made in recent years to bridge the divide by the posting of an Indian Foreign Service Officer in the Ministry of Defence's Planning and International Cooperation Division and the deputation of a serving military Officer as a Director for Military Affairs at the Ministry of External Affairs. But such effort scan still be built upon and broadened.¹⁸

The Way Forward

Creation of Appointment of the CDS and Department of Military Affairs (DMA)

The creation of the office of the CDS and the Department of Military Affairs (DMA) on 31 December 2019, has enabled Defence Diplomacy to be conducted with an emphasis on *Synergy and Jointness*. A large number of changes and new formats have been adopted for exercises and courses et al. As Armed Forces are placed under the DMA, there is a need to streamline the roles of the latter and the Department of Defence (DoD). The defence cooperation will get a major impetus. With a separate vertical of the DMA, the decision making will be faster. Even the procedures will need to be simplified for the faster processing of cases. DMA would be responsible to process the requisite documentation and issuing Government Sanction Letter (GSL) for all activities under its ambit.

In addition, Joint Secretary (International Cooperation) has been retained by the DoD, the new structure must clearly bifurcate the roles of DMA and DoD. As Armed Forces are placed under the DMA, it is recommended that Tri-Services activities must be classified under the domain of the DMA while balance tasks of the defence diplomacy are undertaken by the DoD.

Funding

The budget or the funding for facilitating defence cooperation has been an issue. Defence diplomacy fund was being analysed with the

aim of granting more financial powers to the Defence Attaches and for the judicious use of the Defence exports promotion fund. Funding or budgeting for own Defence Attache has to be non-lapsable. There is a need to revise the guidelines. Moreover delink/free defence funding and allocations from undue internal bureaucratic processes that lend stagnancy to the processes, due to lack of strategic perspective of low-level functionaries. The Defence Attache should have calibrated financial powers for which he can be answerable.

Language Training

The DAs and support staff at Defence Wing has an important role to play as part of the team and hence needs to be better trained in language and culture of the host country. Our DAs during dealing with officials need to have achieved a certain amount of fluency in local language prior to the induction in Defence Wing. To discharge diplomatic duties, the DAs need to have a certain degree of language proficiency, conduct befitting diplomacy(that is, social skills) and have the aptitude to understand geostrategy apart from sound knowledge of one's own country and its major issues. In view of a large number of informal exchanges and meetings, family especially spouses of Defence Wing Officers could also be encouraged to acquire requisite language proficiency.

Preparation of Roadmap

There is a need to prepare a roadmap by all stakeholders in the areas of mutual interest. In the absence of a plan, it is a path heading nowhere. Internal review of policy framework of defence diplomacy must be carried out every five years, to appropriate and re-allocate priorities, focus, finances and efforts for effective outcomes.

DAs Conference

The Defence Attaches Conference is being conducted annually since 2018 based on the Defence Minister's directive and held together with

Defexpo/Aero India. The collective forum helps to get the best out of efforts in Defence Diplomacy. This includes timely and comprehensive defence policy assessments of foreign countries and promotion of defence industry cooperation, in particular enhancing defence exports and technology partnerships. DAs Conference provides a platform to bring Defence Diplomacy in synergy with the foreign policy initiatives of the government. Hence, the DAs conference is recommended to be held every year alongside Defexpo/Aero Indiaas invogue.

Conduct of JDC/Staff Talks

The need for institutionalising mechanisms for interaction like JDC/Staff talks, high-level visits, setting up of new Defence Wings, presence of defence industry in R&D, collaborations and defence exhibition is required. India should aim for realistic expectations, focus on building leverages, keep a check on competition and therefore must look at long term investment rather than short term gains. There are multiple agencies conducting separate staff talks and visits with the same region/country. Such an approach results in lack of coherence, duplication of effort, wasteful expenditure in travel, administration, and coordination. Any Staff talks or other such engagement must end in an action plan otherwise it would only remain a mere activity.

Transfer of Technology

In future, owing to Transfer of Technology the indigenous content in our equipment would increase and foreign content would decrease. There is a need for DAs to tie up with the Academic Institutes, R&D organisations – both government and private players of host countries in order to increase the export of their own defence production. The DRDO is particularly interested in core technologies of other nations where development has taken place. The Country is interested in harnessing technology from advanced countries of Central Asia

and West Europe where companies with such technology are under economic pressure.

Alumni Connect

There is a systemic apprehension in permitting continued alumni to connect with foreign participants. The members of National Defence College and War Colleges delegations from FFCs include Senior Military Officers who attend Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme. These Officers are groomed to take senior leadership positions in the future. The majority of these Officers in their subsequent assignments are involved in shaping policy for their respective countries. There is a need to institutionalise mechanism of keeping a record of personnel from FFCs who attended the Indian Military ITEC programme as the same generates goodwill and open doors for defence diplomacy.

In the world of advanced communications and no digital borders, there is a need to allow officers who have been abroad to keep in touch with their contacts. The archaic policy of 'No contact' needs a review. This connection can be capitalised institutionally as people rise in their respective hierarchies. Accordingly, the requisite policy changes with due regard for security, may be made to permit contact with foreign Officers.

Optimisation of Manpower

As seen, defence diplomacy is a very important aspect of a Foreign Policy. In the fast-changing geo-strategic scenario, the Staff handling the International Cooperation needs to keep abreast of the development and enhance their efforts to find traction with the national goals and capitalise in the available window of opportunity. Hence it mandates continuity of uniformed Personnel preferably akin to IFS Staff who is Country specific/Foreign Division specialist. Therefore cross-staffing of officials from the Services and MEA/MoD must be ensured at all levels of the incumbent organisation to provide a military perspective in foreign policy

decision making. This will ensure coherent functioning as well as domain specialisation, and tenure stability in important planning appointments. Similar optimisation and capitalisation on the Human Resource that repatriates from Foreign Missions, including JCOs and NCOs, be ensured by posting them in relating appointments for harnessing their experience and gained potential.

Liaison for Foreign Service Attaches

When a Foreign Service Attache (FSA) arrives in an Embassy/High Commission in New Delhi, he is looking for advice and guidance to help him in familiarising with his job, getting training slots and liaison with Directorates of three Services. There is a need to reach out and walk that extra mile, as these are the intangibles which have to be factored in military diplomacy protocols, as they have far-reaching dividends in the longer run.

Need for New Defence Wings

Need to establish new Defence Wings to ascertain needs of host country, offer assistance, and to ensure execution on ground. Need to familiarise the government narrative on sensitive issues to ensure that official viewpoint and not the individual perception is given out during discussions at various forums.

'IN/OUT-Visits'

Structured visits of important personalities in the defence hierarchy must be planned as per priority of region/nations. Limits restricting number of international visits by Service Chiefs must be removed. Invitation to Service Chiefs of Immediate Neighbourhood nations may be extended on assumption. There should be no cap on number of visits, rather strategic interests of visit should be kept in mind. The visit should be result oriented.

Conclusion

Defence Diplomacy has become an important component in our foreign policy and contributes towards achieving our national goals. Military Diplomacy is quite quickly becoming a vital aspect of foreign policy, as seen developing among the powerful states, such as the United States, China, the United Kingdom, France, Spain and Russia. Depending on the state's agendas, powerful states use defence diplomacy to establish dominance among regional neighbours and dictate their foreign policies to clarify their terms and conditions in an alliance. This is why defence diplomacy is so vital for a state to not only ensure its stable and strong international position but also etch a structured and functional security policy.¹⁹

The challenges in successful pursuit of defence diplomacy are borne out of infirmities in guidance, structure and processes. Therefore, there is a critical need to establish frameworks for guidance, planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation, and to review existing structure of defence diplomacy in India.

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India-Iran Relations and the Afghanistan Factor

Manjari Singh

Post-America's chaotic withdrawal and the resurgence of Taliban in Afghanistan, India's development and assistance prospects in the country demand stability under the interim regime. Likewise, New Delhi's Chabahar port development – an initiative along with Iran – seems to remain stalled until the situation in Afghanistan steadies down. With India not being invited (under Pakistani and Chinese objections) in any of the extended troika meetings initiated by Russia¹, it is imperative for India to develop a one-to-one discussion with the interim government as the country has invested over US\$3 billion for Afghanistan reconstruction and development in various aspects. Towards the end of August, India initiated its first public meeting with the Taliban in Doha wherein Indian concerns on continuation of its developmental efforts in Afghanistan, progress on Chabahar development (though the issue was not explicitly mentioned) and insistence on Taliban not supporting any terror outfits that may harm Indian national security were the prime areas of discussions amongst others.² While Afghanistan remains important for India for a host of reasons, the latter's continued engagement is crucial in maintaining its relations with Iran with which India has had a tumultuous relation of late owing to the American sanctions on that country.³

Despite civilisational connect, border sharing until 1947, India's oil dependency on Iran and the subsequent signing of strategic

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partnerships; Indo-Iranian relations have made slow progress. Much of the reason for this slow growth needs to be accorded to the role and influence of external players. While India's post-independence, ideologically driven non-aligned movement barred it from actively engaging with the Persian state, it was only after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989 and the subsequent disintegration of Union in December 1991 that a visible bonhomie was developed between the New Delhi and Tehran.⁴

Both the two countries were looking for new friendship/partnerships to build clout in Afghanistan which was of strategic significance to both. Thus, for the want of new friendship, partnerships and assurance of cheaper oil, India was naturally drawn to Iran. Similarly, wary of the Iranian Shah's western outlook, post-revolution Iran was at crossroads with western powers especially with the US and its allies in West Asia. It was looking for new friendship, India, in that context was a viable option given the huge market for Iranian crude. Thus, while most of the regional and extra-regional players such as Israel, Arabs and Gulf Arabs, Britain, Russia, the US, Pakistan and now China have had a detrimental impact on the relations between India and Iran; Afghanistan has acted as a binder in the relations, a glue that binds both the countries to work together. Afghanistan's reconstruction is a convergence point in Indo-Iranian relations.

Recently, given recurrent and incessant American sanctions on Iranian oil and trade, has had a negative impact on New Delhi's trade with Iran and to some extent on the relations between the two. Once India's third-largest source of crude oil now barely contributes to its energy requirements. On the other, under "Afghanistan Reconstruction", both India and Iran have been working together on the Chabahar port development project. Additionally, China's visible strategic footprint in the region, its growing proximity to Iran, and increasing violence in Afghanistan post the US decision to withdraw its troops; has again impacted the relations. India's

strategic investments and strategic interests in the region, has compelled New Delhi to work in tandem with Tehran in ensuring the safety of its critical assets, Chabahar topping the charts.

Thus, while maintaining its strategic autonomy, how does India rebuild its relations with the Iranian state especially under the new hardliner leadership are a critical question that needs to be pondered upon. With Taliban in Afghanistan, how does India navigate to safeguard its interests in the country as well as with Tehran needs to be studied in detail especially when the external players in the country remain unwelcoming and mostly hostile towards it.

Pre-historically, India under Indus Valley and Iran under Mesopotamia have had a civilisational connection. In fact, even under various Persian empires such as the Achaemenid, Parthian and Sassanids, Indo-Iranian relations flourished, particularly in trade and commerce. This was feasible as Iran was India's immediate neighbour before the British induced partition in 1947. Post-partition not only led to creation of a new state sandwiched between Iran and India but the period also coincided with the commencement of Cold War. While India under Jawaharlal Nehru's leadership became a strong proponent of non-alignment movement (NAM), Iran under Shah chose to side with the US. This led to coldness in the relations between New Delhi and Tehran which further deteriorated after the advent of Islamic Revolution in 1979 as the religious angle was again in contrast to India's secular framework. Importantly, religion also played a crucial role in bringing Iran and India's adversary, Pakistan, together.⁵

As mentioned earlier, it was only after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan that both India and Iran came closer to play a role in that country. After the US and allied forces entry in Kabul, both New Delhi and Tehran jointly supported the Northern Alliance and Afghan government as the legitimate Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-governed player.⁶

By the 2000s when India's foreign policy shifted from NAM to strategic autonomy, it provided more leverage to India to look at Iran beyond the transactional equations; the strategic partnership was signed between the two countries during the Delhi Declaration in 2003 and since then strategic and security angle became additional areas of cooperation for the two. This not only helped the countries in exploring new areas of convergence but it also gave more impetus to their aspirations in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, post-9/11 attacks have led to the American presence in the Islamic State of Afghanistan which further facilitated Indo-Iranian engagements in the country.

While development and infrastructure assistance under "Afghanistan Reconstruction" helped India to garner goodwill amongst the Afghan population, it needed something to have its presence felt in the country. With Pakistan being hostile towards India, Afghanistan provides the gateway to New Delhi to reach out to the Middle East, Central Asia and Europe. This was the time when Chabahar project was initiated to connect India to its western neighbours. It was an ideal strategic location for India to keep a check on Pakistan's movement and aspirations in Afghanistan in terms of supporting proxy elements against India as well as its support to Taliban and to check the sprawl of homegrown terrorist organisations such as Jaish-e-Mohammad and Lashkar-e-Toiba and the likes.

With China's "march westward" strategy to build inroads in the Middle East, Chabahar also acted as a check to watch out Chinese growing sphere of influence in the region, collusivity between China and its all-weather friend Pakistan while developing the Gwadar port also played in the back of the mind of Indian policymakers and thus compelled New Delhi to work strategically in the operational aspects of the port. Additionally, it also helps in checking the inflow and outflow of drug trafficking and to increase trade and commerce within the country. Given these stakes, India has invested in more than 400 infrastructure

projects in Afghanistan in the past two decades which amounts to about US\$3 billion.⁷

Interestingly, India was given a waiver by the US on Chabahar development with Iran under Afghanistan Reconstruction even when the Persian state continued to remain under US sanctions and despite America's decision to remove all waivers from countries trading with Iran including India in May 2019.⁸ To substantiate, a 98-page report by the Congressional Research Services (CRS), published in April 2021, notes that despite the US's imposition of "maximum pressure" on the Persian State, the Trump administration "issued the permitted [The Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act] IFCA exception for Afghan reconstruction to enable India to continue work at Iran's Chabahar Port".⁹

Therefore, to safeguard the above-mentioned interests in Afghanistan and more so to secure its relations with the Persian state of Iran, India needs to pull itself together to have a role in Afghanistan. An inclusive, expanded interim government primarily led by Taliban seems symbolic but a further inclusion may help India to garner support for itself in the country. Iran's role in building a working relationship along with India is thus crucial for New Delhi. However, India also needs to be watchful of growing China, Pakistan role along in Afghanistan and given that the former is cosying up to Iran, lest India act fast, it will lose its leverage point with Iran. This also requires New Delhi to be sensitive to the needs and concerns of Iran vis-à-vis Afghanistan. With no visible sign of rapprochement between Iran and the US, a joint role in Afghanistan along with Iran is in the Indian interest to continue its engagement with the latter.

For Iran, given that changing situations in Afghanistan has more pronounced negative impacts on the country, the Persian state began engaging with Taliban as soon as it saw visible signs of US withdrawal from the country in 2020. Since then, Iran has been wary of spiraling effect of

tense problems in Afghanistan reaching out to its own borders. Being an immediate neighbour to Afghanistan, a chaotic situation in Afghanistan undermines national security of Iran. The most critical concerns that Iran has with Afghanistan under Taliban are: the new interim regime may support various like-minded Sunni Wahhabi extremist groups which may try to harm Shia minority Iran in the region this not only poses security concerns for the Persian state but will also affect its Shia crescent, which is built to inculcate Iran's axis of power and axis of resistance in the wider Middle East and which is also a survival tactic for revisionist Iran; resurgence of Islamic State of Khorasan Province (IS-KP) within the Afghan borders gives an indication ISIS may resurge in the Middle East. Given that Iran's Quds Forces under General Soleimani was one of the frontier forces to fight against ISIS and thus Iran will be under the ISIS radar if and when it regains its strength. In that context, United Nations Security Council Reports in January 2020, February and July 2021 states that ISIS is already reassembling itself under a new leadership in the Levant.¹⁰ The report further confirmed that the group "maintains a largely clandestine presence in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic and wages a sustained insurgency straddling the borders between the countries".¹¹

Economic constraints heightened by incessant American sanctions and pandemic situation in Iran compels it to be watchful of huge refugee influx from Afghanistan primarily from Shia populated Herat and Zaranj governorates which are adjacent to Western Iran. The country already hosts 3-4 million Afghan refugees who fled their country under political crises at various points in time. With the Taliban takeover, this figure must have escalated to include many more Afghans in Iran.¹² Hence a precarious situation like this not only contributes to demographic inversion in the country but also poses a threat to Iran's stability and national security.

Other compelling reason why Afghanistan stability is of interest to Iran is the latter's dependence on Afghanistan which is the main source of

economy generation for Iran. Recurrent slapping of sanctions on Iran led it to run a parallel economy with Afghanistan and wherein given the dearth of dollars, hard currency exchanges worth of US\$5 million were made on daily basis between the two countries. With Taliban takeover, the US administration has frozen Afghan Sovereign Wealth Funds in its Central Banks fearing misuse by Taliban. This not only is likely to drastically impact Iran's trade and currency exchange under Taliban but also will lead to an economic slump and high inflation rates.¹³ Thus, Iranian troubles are high if Afghanistan does not stabilize as soon as possible. This is the prime reason why the hardliner regime under President Ebrahim Raisi, is pursuing Taliban despite ideological and sectarian divides between Iran and Taliban in the past.

Thus, with no role in Afghanistan, India will lose its chance to rekindle its relations with Iran for which the former is crucial. Therefore, to engage actively with Iran, India needs to have a strategic footprint in Afghanistan. Importantly, in a pursuit to engage Iran, Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's July and August visit to Iran to meet President-elect Ebrahim Raisi, who took over as President in August focussed primarily on the role in Afghanistan amid other issues.

Moreover, India needs to look at Iran beyond the US. American sanctions are biggest hurdles in India-Iran relations to proliferate. As the US has already committed a strategic mistake in Afghanistan probably it is time for India to show what is of national interest to it in the wider Middle East. Iran should factor in India's strategic calculations. India has successfully balanced its relations in the region vis-à-vis Israel, Iran and Saudi led Gulf Arabs but has not been able to successfully balance its relations with Iran and the US. Engagement with President Raisi should be weighed in a long term manner: likely successor to Ayatollah Khomeini, belongs to Khorasan province and to a political school of thought that believes in engaging with the East including India, and Raisi's main mandate being economic growth and prosperity of Iran. Oil

deals with Iran are approved by the Ayatollah who is closer to Raisi hence engagements with the President of Iran are crucial.¹⁴

Lastly, while Foreign Minister Jaishankar's unprecedented stopover visit to congratulate the then President-elect Raisi of Iran acted as an ice breaker in the relations, New Delhi also took the step to host National Security Advisor level regional countries meeting on Afghanistan in November, wherein Iran also participated. This is a welcome step to discuss its decisive role in the country as it is crucial for its continued engagement with the latter.

Notes

1. Russia invited the US, China and Pakistan to join the extended Troika meetings in September 2020 and 2021 and both the times even though it was speculated that India might be invited to the same, the latter was kept out of it on the persistence of Pakistan and China. Iran, another invitee to the meeting decided to keep itself out of it following the nuclear deal conundrum with the US.
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Book Review

Face Off: Analysis of India's Capability to Fight a Two Front War

Ravi Rikhye

KW Publishers, New Delhi (2021)

ISBN 978-93-89137-92-7, 616 pp., Rs 1,480



Kulbhushan Bhardwaj

With India facing a growing existential threat of a two-front war with its two hostile nuclear adversaries – China and Pakistan, there is an increasing interest in India's capability to confront both of them simultaneously. Therefore, this book comes at the right juncture, especially after the clashes against China in Galwan last year by the Indian Army (IA) and the Balakot strike against Pakistan by Indian Air Force (IAF) in 2019. Thus, the moot question of India's two-front war is no longer merely pedantic but in the realms of reality.

The book *Face Off: Analysis of India's Capability to Fight a Two Front War* by Ravi Rikhye, a distinguished author with 35 books to his credit and expertise in military matters, offers a detailed narration of India's capability to fight a two-front war. It is a well-researched book which presents cogent arguments on the subject of India's capability to fight a two-front war. The book has been divided into eighteen chapters with

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six chapters being devoted to the analyses of the three armies, navies and air forces in detail; one chapter detailing the background to the two-front war problem and one chapter devoted to India's 'Cold Start' doctrine. These chapters form the bulk of the book. Three chapters are devoted to the background of the whole problem and in the balance of the chapters, the author discusses the geo-political environment, infrastructural capabilities, nuclear arsenals, intelligence collection and analyses methodologies and the emerging India-US embrace and the Quadrilateral (Quad). Thus, adequate attention has been paid to the whole gamut of the issues involved.

In the introductory chapter, the author posits a simple question – Can India fight a two-front war against China and Pakistan? To which, his answer is that 'India cannot'. Rikhye further goes on to assert that because of the China-Pakistan alliance, India cannot fight even a single front war without running the risk of weakening the other front for exploitation. The author submits a solution to the predicament: build a two-front war capability. Thereafter, the whole book explores the various nuances and methodologies of executing and implementing this solution after due analyses.

The author has carried out an in-depth analysis of various factors involved in fighting a two-front war successfully, which is indeed commendable and highlights the pedagogic knowledge of the author. He has analysed in detail the force ratios of the three nations in a methodical manner. The author contends that for a proper two-front defensive capability, India immediately needs eight more divisions, and then some. However, to win decisive victories, he posits that the requirement is of 54 divisions. And to give the military the confidence it needs to recover Kashmir, and deploy sufficient force to deter the adversaries requires 72 divisions. Rikhye claims that in a classical scenario, 54 divisions – with 12 as uncommitted reserve – are the bare minimum forces required for decisive victories. And the figure goes up to 72 divisions – with 18 as

uncommitted reserve – to reclaim Kashmir. He has also given a People's Army model, where the border is held by semi-static fortress divisions composed largely of the Paramilitary, Territorial Army and militia with 39 divisions in 13 corps forming the strike force. His logical arguments make for a compelling reading. However, as he keeps the air force and the navy out of the gambit of force ratios, the numbers appear mere mathematical without any aggregation of the requisite effects when all the three services are applied in a synergistic manner. In the backdrop of the on-going the atersisation of the Indian Armed Forces, this sticks out like a sore thumb.

In this book, Ravi Rikhyehas also covered the famous Schlieffen Plan of 1914 of Germany to fight the two-front war against France and Russia in some detail, to build up the backdrop for a two-front war and his insights are indeed interesting. However, the author could have included some more background, maps and narrative to elucidate the problem of *mitteleuropa*, for ease of assimilation of the subject by those not having sufficient knowledge of the same and hence may miss out on some insights and linkages to India's two-front war impasse.

The economic analysis involving the GDP figures and infrastructural development and modernisation programmes has also been covered in detail at various places, supplementing the arguments being made. As per the author, India needs to spend 3-3.5 per cent of GDP for a strong defensive posture. To negotiate from strength, India needs to spend more than 4 per cent of the GDP; and to recover lost territories, the figure goes up to 6 per cent of the GDP. The author has also carried out a historical GDP and economic analysis of the three nations viz India, China and Pakistan. He infers that China and Pakistan out match India's GDP by almost six times which is a huge disparity and a cause for concern. Although the economic arguments have been covered at various places in the book, it would have been better if these facts and figures were compiled in one single chapter/appendix rather than being sprinkled all

across the book. This would have retained the coherence of narration and also provided for easy reference for the readers.

The order of battle (orbat) of the various armies, navies and air forces of the three nations has also been covered in the chapters. It is indeed commendable that the data has been compiled in detail. There are a few inaccuracies and some data needs to be updated, which the author duly acknowledges. Also, it is felt that to maintain the narrative style and coherence of the book, the orbat should have been included as an updated and accurate appendix rather than getting repeated in part or in full in a few chapters. This would have added to the comprehension and also led to easy referencing by the reader. The author has also given hypothetical situations and deployments of various divisions and corps in the book at a few places in pursuance of his arguments. This makes for interesting reading as it gives insights into the problems of fighting myriad battles along each front to secure overall victory.

It is pertinent to mention that the author has factored only the tangible force levels and carried out a mere quantitative analysis and arrived at the number of divisions required in various scenarios. The intangibles – leadership, strategy, operational art, morale, et al. could also have been covered, thereby giving the book a holistic flavour. The author has missed out on the fact that many battles and wars have been won by smaller armies based on the intangibles like proficient prosecution of operational art by the military leaders involved. Hence, mere quantified analysis – even though a good indicator of likely outcomes – may not be carved in stone. The author has also missed out on the power of technology and the ability to leverage it usefully during wars. Nonetheless, the overall analyses by the author is compelling in revealing the gross deficiencies in terms of numbers of divisions/brigades, squadrons, ships, missiles, nuclear warheads, etc. that is glaring even to a layman.

Some insights have been given by the author on cold start, firepower, attack helicopters, minefields, tank organisations, etc. while airing his

views on how to fight and win a two-front war. He has also covered aspects of intelligence collection, 'Quad' and offered his views on nuclear weapons policy and the silhouettes of the next war. However, these have not been carried through to their logical conclusions and have been discarded after a brief discussion.

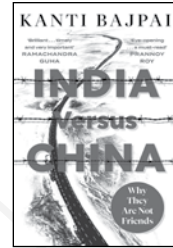
The book been has written in a lucid and cogent manner. The author has given persuasive arguments to support his recommendations. However, the anecdotal references have at times provided some digression to the subject under discussion – making some parts out-of-context and irrelevant.

In the overall assessment, in this book the author deduces that fighting and winning a two-front war by India is a difficult proposition. While Rikhye offers some insights into the solutions for this impasse, however, he has failed to arrive at tangible policy recommendations for the decision-makers. Thus, the book leaves one with an unnerving feeling of an existential threat of a two-front war but sans any concrete plan to be implemented in a phased and time-bound manner to resolve the cul de sac. Nevertheless, on the whole, the book makes for a gripping read by positing some compelling arguments. The book will be essential reading for all uniformed personnel and an invaluable resource for both academics and practitioners. It will also be of good value to the students on the subject and the general public with interest in matters of defence.

Book Review

*India Versus China:
Why They Are Not Friends*
Kanti Bajpai

Juggernaut Books, New Delhi (2021)
ISBN 978-93-9116-508-6, 284 pp., Rs 599



Amrita Jash

Seventy years to India-China diplomatic ties, the relations have taken a departure from the long-held ‘peaceful co-existence’ embedded in the *Panchsheel* Principles to that of becoming one of ‘confrontational co-existence’ under the new realities of the Eastern Ladakh stand-off. With ‘*Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai*’ only a metaphor of the past, India-China ties continue to struggle under the vestiges of the past, wherein, the ‘trust factor’ (or rather ‘trust deficit’) has to constantly run the test of time. After seventy years, the outcome is – competing interests complemented by mutual suspicion of each other’s intentions. Hence, the query: Can India and China ever become Friends?

Taking the Eastern Ladakh crisis as the backdrop, Kanti Bajpai, a renowned scholar of international affairs with a special interest in India-China relations, in his book *India Versus China: Why They Are Not Friends* contextualises the antagonism in the India-China ties by drawing from

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the past and assessing the implications of it in the present and future. As Bajpai emphatically posits: “Why did these two societies become locked into a conflict that has stubbornly refused to go away?” (p. 1). To which, Bajpai suggests the need for a deeper introspection as proved by the Ladakh crisis, the relations between the two countries “are darker and more complex than most observers appreciate or acknowledge” (ibid.). To be specific, as Bajpai asks in the very title- Why India and China are not Friends?

Taking a straightforward approach, Kanti Bajpai cogently puts forward four key reasons that justify why India and China are not friends, which in Bajpai’s view is a composite of ‘four Ps’: negative perceptions, differences over perimeters, rival partnerships, and the power asymmetry. What adds to it is the ‘fifth P’- the Pakistan factor which is often seen as the ‘source’ of conflict, but as per Kanti Bajpai, the close China-Pakistan relationship is an outcome (effect than cause) of the India-China conflict and not otherwise.

In the context of the ‘four Ps’, the author makes the following arguments. First, in considering the ‘perceptions of the Indian and Chinese elites’, Bajpai argues that India and China ties have transformed from being perceived as that of a respectful relationship in ancient times to a less respectful view of each other in the modern and contemporary times (p. 60). Furthermore, Bajpai strongly posits that in Chinese world views based on the concepts of ‘*tianxia*, communism and great power’, India is seen in a ‘secondary or subordinate’ role and not as a ‘fellow great power’.

Second, the differences in perimeters are anchored in the unresolved border, wherein even after seventy years, the two countries have failed to come to an agreement on the delineation of the border, on the status of Tibet, and on appropriate military actions and behaviours. In Bajpai’s view, the ‘inability to agree’ or ‘continuous disagreement’ between the two countries can be understood from a four-fold perspective: lack of trust in either’s intentions and actions, a zero-sum view of security,

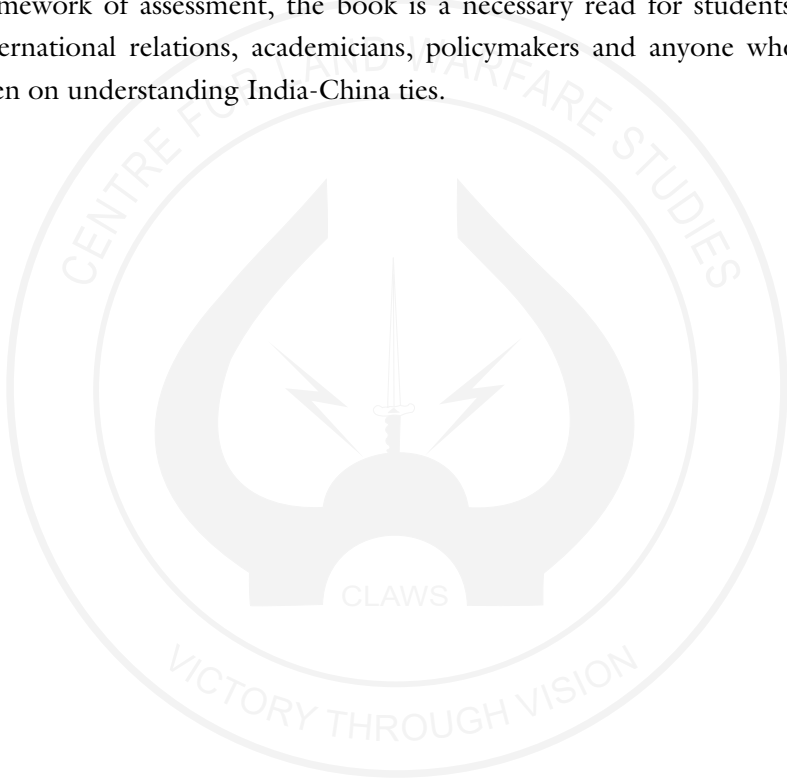
cognitive dissonance and, neither political leadership has the ability and courage to handle nationalist domestic opinion. As these factors continue to prevail, Bajpai suggests that “[a]nother confrontation along the border is therefore quite possible” (p. 136).

Third, on the issue of partnership, Bajpai posits that India and China’s policies towards each other are driven not just by negative perceptions and territorial differences but over their partnerships with the USSR/Russia and the US. The two countries were never on the same sides except for two brief periods of parallel and compatible interests- in the early 1950s and after the Cold War from 1989-1998. Apart from these brief periods, India and China have never been allies of true strategic partners against either USSR/Russia or the US. In Bajpai’s words, “change is the only constant” in India and China’s respective partnerships vis-à-vis Russia and the US.

Finally, on power asymmetry, Bajpai posits that India and China are “far apart” in terms of economy, soft power attraction and military. Here, the key is a comprehensive national power, in which China has an upper hand - being seven times that of India’s. Owing to this, Bajpai suggests that unless India “substantially closes the power gap, there is less prospect of a lasting rapprochement” between New Delhi and Beijing (p. 220). Power differences matter- wherein neither the weaker power nor the stronger power is willing to make concessions.

Drawing from the ‘four Ps’ framework, Kanti Bajpai in the concluding Chapter contextualises the Eastern Ladakh crisis by positing the query: Was the crisis triggered by Chinese: perceptions, worries over India’s infrastructure along the perimeter (the border), response to India-US strategic partnership or, demonstration of power. While the queries still remain to be answered but Bajpai argues that “India-China relations always seem to be framed by a combination of these four elements” (p. 221). This brings forth the perennial query: What holds for the future of India-China ties?

Broadly drawn from the existing literature (mainly western and Indian) and his personal anecdotes, Kanti Bajpai's book makes a comprehensive and timely read. However, the missing point is reference to Chinese sources – which makes the only caveat. Nonetheless, written cogently and with lucidity, the book makes a significant value addition to the existing literature on India-China relations. With its four-fold framework of assessment, the book is a necessary read for students of international relations, academicians, policymakers and anyone who is keen on understanding India-China ties.



Notes for Contributors

General

The CLAWS Journal welcomes professional articles on warfare and conflict, national security and strategic issues, especially those related to the art and science of land warfare including sub-conventional conflict in the Indian context. Articles may be submitted by serving and retired members of the armed forces as well as civilians in India and abroad. Articles on aerospace and maritime issues and those on foreign policy and international relations having a bearing on land warfare are also welcome. The Journal particularly encourages articles from younger members of the armed forces.

Manuscripts: Contributors should submit their manuscripts (main articles, commentaries, review articles and book reviews) by e-mail, with one hard copy being sent separately by post. All material must be original, unpublished and should not have been submitted for publication elsewhere. Main articles must have a length of 3,000 to 6,000 words. Commentaries and review articles must not exceed 1,500 to 2000 words.

Book Reviews: Book reviews must contain the name of the author, the title of the book reviewed, particulars of the publisher, place and date of publication, number of pages and price. Authors who wish to have their book considered for review should ask their publisher to send a copy to the Editor, CLAWS Journal.

Submission: Since manuscripts will be sent out anonymously for peer review, the authors should omit their identity from the manuscript. The author's name, rank, unit/institutional affiliation, e-mail ID, postal address and telephone number should be submitted on a separate cover page. Each article must be accompanied by an abstract of about 250 to 300 words. A four to five line (or 75 words) biographical note describing the author should accompany the manuscript. Manuscripts should be typed in double space, including endnotes and references, with 1.5 inch (3.0 cm) margins, on one side of A4 size paper.

Acceptance and Revision: Intimation regarding suitability of the article for publication will be given within 30 days of its receipt in normal cases. Articles not accepted for publication will not be returned. The Editorial team reserves the right to edit articles for better clarity and to ensure that the style conforms to the style of the CLAWS Journal. However, views expressed by an author will not be altered. Authors should be prepared to revise their manuscript based on the suggestions made by the reviewers and the editorial team.

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- Retired armed forces officers and civilian authors should submit a certificate of originality, clearly stating that the article is original and unpublished and has not been submitted for consideration elsewhere.
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 - ❖ First, a certificate of originality, clearly stating that the article is original and unpublished and has not been submitted for consideration elsewhere.
 - ❖ Second, a certificate from the author stating that s/he has not used any official information or material obtained in an official capacity while writing the article submitted.
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 - ❖ The format of the latter two certificates is given in Para 21 (a) and (b) of SAO 3/S/2001/MI.
- Responsibility for obtaining Army HQ DGMI (MI-11) clearance in respect of articles pertaining to subjects specified in Paras 13 and 14 of SAO 3/S/2001/MI, will be that of the officer herself/himself.

Style of the Journal

Clarity: Articles should be written in a clear and lucid style. Sentences should be kept short. The use of too many adjectives should be avoided. The most complex ideas can be expressed in simple language. Paragraphs should also be short.

Use of Pronouns: Articles should be written in third person. Writing in first person should be avoided completely—unless the author is over 65 years old!

Spelling: Use British, not American spellings. Thus, use “humour,” not “humor,” and “programme,” not “program.” Where alternative forms exist, choose “-ise” instead of “-ize” or “-isation” instead of “-ization” spellings. Thus, use “modernise,” “stabilise,” “modernisation,” “stabilisation,” etc.

Quotations: Quotations must be placed in double quotation marks, reserving single quotation marks for a quote within a quote. Long quotes (i.e., four lines or more) should be indented, without quote marks, to set them apart from the text.

Abbreviations:

- All abbreviations must be given in full at their first use in the text; for example, Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).
- Abbreviations should include a final stop in words shortened by omitting the end (such as p., ed., vol.) but not in contractions (words such as Mr, Dr, edn, eds) or between capitals, e.g., USA, SAARC, UN.
- Avoid using “i.e.” and “e.g.” in the text but use them in the notes if you wish.
- Do not use military abbreviations such as “ops”, “int” and “adm” as the CLAWS Journal will have a civilian as well as an international readership. However, those such as CI (counter-insurgency), IS (internal security) and CPMFs (central police and para-military forces) may be used after being given in full at their first use.
- Abbreviated military ranks may be used; e.g., Lt Col, RAdm and Wg Cdr.

Headings and Parts: The only centre heading should be the title of the article. Refrain from dividing an article into several parts. Avoid too many headings, as is the norm in Service writing. While group headings are the norm (bold but not underlined), paragraph headings are best avoided.

Sub-paragraphs and sub-sub-paragraphs:

- Avoid writing in sub-paragraphs unless it is inescapable – e.g. a list needs to be provided.
- Even then, write in complete sentences and not in point form under sub-paragraphs.
- Do not write in sub-sub-paragraphs under any circumstances.

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(e) Articles in Newsmagazines: Gurmeet Kanwal, "Pakistan: On the Brink," *The Week*, November 4, 2007, p. 45.

(f) Articles from Newspapers: M. K. Bhadrakumar, "New Regionalism in Central Asia," *The Hindu*, July 14, 2004.

(g) References to Websites: United Nations Development Programme, "Arab Human Development Report 2003", <http://www.undp.org/rbas/ahdr/english2003.html>, accessed on October 27, 2007.

(h) Reports and Documents:

- United Nations, UNCED, *The Global Partnership for Environment and Development* (New York: United Nations, 1992).
- Canberra Commission, *Report on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 1996). Available on the Internet at <<http://www.dfat.gov.au/cc/cchome.html>>

(i) Conference Papers:

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(j) Unpublished Theses and Dissertations:

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