



VICTORY INDIA

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The Pending Need For a Well Defined Defence Policy & Strategic Doctrine

Major General VK Madhok (Retd)

The Unfolding Situation at the India-China Border: Call to Prepare for a Prolonged Haul

Lieutenant General (Dr) Vijay Kumar Ahluwalia (Retd)

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Colonel Vinay B Dalvi Vol.1 • Issue 4 • October 2020

Dear Readers,

The month of Sep 20 has seen a spate of sudden deaths by heart attack among middle-ranking Army officers putting the focus on stress, fitness, and health of officers. The death of six officers of the rank of Lt Col & Col, in their mid-40s due to sudden cardiac arrest have brought to the fore the medical and physical fitness standards of our officer cadre while in service. It has also highlighted the excessive amount of stress that these mid-level Army officers face while in service.

The causes being attributed to such unfortunate deaths are ranging from work pressure to maintain a high profile, tough competition for promotions, additional workload due to shortage of officers, poor fitness and physical efficiency, lack of fitness and sports culture, nature of job, multiple stress factors, disturbed lifestyle, unpredictable work schedule and pressing family responsibilities.

The controversy of 2019 that erupted on disability benefits to serving personnel when Army's top brass had cast aspersions for what were lifestyle diseases received sharp criticism from medical experts and veterans. All these factors have cumulatively put needless pressure on serving officer fraternity.

There is an imperative need to seriously review the entire system of keeping all ranks of our Army fit both medically and physically. The stress related factors that adversely affect the fitness and health of our sincere, diligent and committed officers must be minimised.

This Oct 20 issue of Victory India has several articles that are intricately linked to these issues and encapsulate selection, training, fitness, and lessons in leadership.

The Indian Armed forces remains confronted with their belligerent neighbours, especially China's PLA and in for a long and severe winter in the Himalayan region, particularly Ladakh and Akshai Chin areas. All the possible consequences for India resulting due to present standoff with China have been thoroughly analysed by our renowned military experts.

Collectively, they would give a very true and realistic picture of the present and unfolding situation not only in the Asian subcontinent, but the rest of the world and their collective will to deal with belligerent and expansionist China.

The issue has given special focus on 'PT Reforms in the Army' due to the 75th year of service of Army Physical Training Corps (APTC) through personal interviews of two former DGMT, Lt Gen Bhopinder Singh and Lt Gen (Dr) VK Ahluwalia.'

75 years of APTC' with role, relevance and review of this Corps has been done highlighting the views and perceptions of our senior military hierarchy in 1996/97 during the APTC Golden Jubilee. These emphatic statements recorded for posterity would surely guide the present Army hierarchy to plan with vision and foresight.

'The Long Pending Need for a Defence Policy & Strategic Doctrine' and 'Learning from Military Disasters ' by renowned veteran Maj Gen VK Madhok need special attention from all concerned.

This edition also brings out an 'Internal Report' by the Indian Army as submitted to the 'Ministry of Defence' highlighting the unforgivable state of affairs at the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB). The report has been painstakingly collected and reproduced by team 'Victory India' in the larger interest of the Armed Forces, and therefore merits a thorough read.

We hope the readers enjoy reading this 4th issue of Victory India as much as we enjoyed in compiling it. Please do continue to write for and support our noble endeavour which has only one aim & objective - 'Victory India'!

Col. Vinay B Dalvi, ex-Maratha LI, ex-APTC,

Editor-in-Chief Victory India.

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CLAWS Director Lt Gen (Dr.) VK Ahluwalia Talks about PT Reforms in the Army

Former Director General Military Training (DGMT) and Current Director of the Think Tank Centre for Land and Warfare Studies (CLAWS) Lieutenant General Vijay Kumar Ahluwalia speaks to MVI's Aritra Banerjee on the need for PT reforms in the Indian Army.

by Aritra Banerjee

Lieutenant General Vijay Kumar Ahluwalia (Retd) is the Director, Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS). He has had an illustrious military career with over four decades of distinguished service in the Indian Army, the author retired as the Army Commander, Central Command in 2012. Thereafter, he served as a member, Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT), Jaipur – Jodhpur Benches, for four years.

Amongst the highest decorated generals, he commanded an Infantry Brigade on the LoC in Uri Sector (2001-02), Mountain Division in Kargil (2005-06) and Corps in Leh - Ladakh Sector (2008-09). He was the first Indian Brigadier to attend the National Defence Course (NDC), at Dhaka, Bangladesh in 2003. A keen army helicopter pilot, he is also a pioneer of the Bofors gun, as he was a part of the first batch of officers to be trained in Sweden and raised the first sub-unit of the Indian Army.

While commanding the formation in Kargil, his Division was awarded the BNHS National Green Governance Award 2005 by the Prime Minister of India on 10 Nov 2005, for conceiving and implementing the unique strategic concept, 'Operation Green Kargil'. As the Director General Military Training (DGMT), he made a positive contribution by introducing new concepts of military training and raising the educational standards of the soldiers.

He completed his Doctorate on 'Naxalism, Internal Security and Conflict Resolution', and has authored a book— 'Red Revolution 2020 and Beyond: Strategic Challenges to Resolve Naxalism', along with co-editing & co-authoring 'Surprise, Strategy and Vijay: 20 Years of Kargil and Beyond', and 'COVID-19 & its Challenges: Is India Future Ready?'



Extracts from the conversation



Q: *What has been the contribution of the Army Physical Training Corps (APTC) and their mother institution the Army Institute of Physical Training (AIPT) towards promoting Physical Training (PT), Sports & Games, Excellence in Sports, and in Combat Fitness?*

Ans: Although the Army Physical Training Corps (APTC) was formed on 1 July 1946, I saw and experienced their sense of commitment and professional acumen in the National Defence Academy from January 1968 onwards. The '*PT Sahabs / Ustads*', as they were called, were

instrumental in bringing up the physical fitness and sports standards of all cadets.

In fact, we had seen two Physical Training Officers (PTOs) in Major Darshan Singh and Maj Devine Jones, who were feared, as well as loved, for their commitment and objective stance to enhance the physical fitness standards, at the NDA and the IMA respectively. Thereafter, I have seen the performance of the APTC fraternity at different levels, including, while I was the DGMT and Army Commander, (Central Command), which had several training institutions and regimental centres under its fold.

Undoubtedly, both the APTC and the Army School of Physical Training (ASPT), later renamed Army Institute of Physical Training (AIPT), have enhanced the physical fitness, games, and sports standards of the armed forces as whole and the army in particular. The larger payoff of good proficiency in physical fitness is that it creates physiological and psychological wellbeing, reduces the stress levels, and enhances combat effectiveness of a soldier.

Given our extremely difficult terrain, and inhospitable weather conditions in the operational environment, physical fitness has much greater significance, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic brought in a feeling of isolation, and uncertainty, which affects the mental and psychological health of soldiers. Physical fitness and wellbeing help to combat such situations. Over the years, besides physical fitness standards, the Indian Army has performed extremely well in the competitive sports and games. We must try and further enhance the standards thus achieved.

Q: What in your mind are some notable contributions of the APTC?

Ans: After commanding the Division in Kargil, I was posted as the DGMT & President Services Sports Control Board (SSCB) in early 2006. During my very first briefing, I realised that planning, preparations and conduct of the World Military Games 2007 (WMG 2007) would be one of the major challenges of the Army in particular. Till then, I had seen the APTC primarily through the prism of a cadet / gentleman cadet (GC), and unit PT instructors (trained by the AIPT), which, incidentally, was good.

I was informed that President SSCB, a rotational appointment, was handed over to the Army earlier than scheduled, primarily to conduct the WMG 2007. Not only was it an additional responsibility, it was going to showcase the ability of the Armed Forces to jointly conduct the event. To cut it short, APTC, AIPT, and equivalent organisations of the Air Force and the Navy joined the effort with a great sense of commitment and enthusiasm.

The conduct of the WMG at Hyderabad/Secunderabad and Mumbai during October 2007 was an International level event, with participation from over 100 militaries of the world. It must be said to the credit of the APTC officers and other ranks that they planned, trained themselves, acquired the requisite additional skills in certain new events being conducted, and positioned themselves to conduct the event in a flawless manner.

As an appreciation and recognition of their positive contribution in the WMG, APTC fraternity got their highest honours and awards in terms of VSM, COAS commendation cards and GOC-in-C's Commendation Cards. The IAF and the Navy conducted their events in an equally impressive manner. The APTC fraternity has continued to contribute in a meaningful manner, despite the increase in operational commitments of the Army.

During their 74 years of service to the nation the APTC, despite being the smallest Corps in the Indian Army has won numerous distinguished services awards. Some of the awards won are the Arjuna Award-1, Asiad Jyoti Award-1, MC-1, SM-2 VSM-13, COAS Commendation-29, besides many more which are not mentioned. Winning these coveted awards in the Army is a testimony to their commitment and dedication towards their assigned tasks and duties.



NDA cadet crawling under barbed wire in full battle kit; File Photo

During my two tenures as DGMT, I learnt and have personally known a few outstanding personnel of the APTC who achieved unique distinctions, and made significant contributions to the Corps. Some of their names are as follows:

- Lt Col JJ Fonseca, VSM, was a legendary officer who is fondly remembered as a father figure to the APTC who was the Comdt AIPT (erstwhile ASPT) for six eventful years from 1963-69. His contribution to the corps was phenomenal. A pioneering PT and Sports Specialist who not only set the right benchmarks for Army PT instructors but made the ASPT the hub for national sports in India. Even after his 100th birth anniversary his high standards and vision for fitness and sports in the Army remain valid today. His selfless work and service would surely inspire the APTC to rise to greater heights.
- Brig GS Sandhu, VSM, was a national decathlon champion and was instrumental in raising the Boys Sports Companies and the erstwhile Armed Forces Sports College (now Army Sports Institute) in Pune and various army sports nodes in the country. He was also the Chairman of the Committee for the review of PT System in the Army including PT tables, Physical Efficiency Tests (PET) and Methodology which was successfully implemented in 1992.
- Brig PKM Raja, SM, VSM, was an asset to the nation as he was the 'Chef de Mission' for London Olympics 2012 and a Referee and Judge in Boxing in numerous international meets including Olympics, Asian & Commonwealth Games. He was also the Chairman



'Burma Bridge'; one of the essential obstacles for all Field Obstacle Training of trainees; File Photo

Jury in Boxing in Asian Games and Commonwealth Games.

- Sub Maj Karunakaran, VSM, was recognized for his professional acumen and outstanding distinguished services both in India and Bhutan; he was awarded the VSM.

Q: *Given the complexities and demands of 21st century warfighting, what are the physical fitness requirements that will ensure Army combat readiness and APTC's role in ensuring high standards of fitness?*

Ans: We have a peculiar operational environment due to the unsettled borders with two of our neighbours - Pakistan and China. The boundary cum territorial disputed areas lie along the mountainous terrain in the North. These areas range from low level hills to extreme high altitude cum glaciated regions, with heights between 3000 feet to 21000 feet. Indian Army personnel are deployed in some of the most remote and difficult terrains. Such operational environments require all ranks—officers and men—to be physically and mentally strong - to be able to deliver effectively.

With a given set of weapon systems and technological enabled environment, it is my personal belief that a physically and mentally fit soldier exhibits much greater confidence to withstand all odds against the enemy and the operational environment. It should be our endeavour to promote awareness and enhance physical fitness of all ranks to maintain Army's standards and be recognised as the finest combat ready army of the world.

Q: *What is the way out of the serious non-availability of OPTC qualified officers and also drastic reduction in suitable officers for transfer into the APTC or on deputation?*

Ans: To answer this question, one must objectively look at the contours of our operational scenario. India

faces many external and internal threats to its security, due to its geo-strategic location, size, demographic profile, and the prevalent politico-social- economic conditions.

Along with the external challenges, the proxy war cum state sponsored terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, low-intensity conflicts in the North East and Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) have continued to persist. Resultantly, the army has continued to remain committed in Jammu & Kashmir and in the north eastern states. Therefore, operational requirements must always be given the highest priority.


On the other hand, lack of well-qualified PT instructors (JCOs/NCOs) is a major reason for the deteriorating physical fitness standards in the army. The physical fitness and its related advantages for better combat effectiveness cannot be overlooked. A correct balance would have to be drawn to train, especially the other ranks, to ensure that units' and regimental centres' requirements of trained PT instructors is met adequately.

Without increasing the APTC cadre, one option that merits consideration is that we could increase the cadre strength by drawing minimum essential persons from the army so that at least two (preferably four) PT NCOs are trained per battalion and equivalent units by organising additional courses for the JCOs and NCOs.

The officers, being inducted into the APTC, should necessarily have adequate experience in the operational environments of our country, who should actually be the role models of physical fitness themselves. We could even consider the CMP model to augment the strength of the officers cadre, if considered essential. Due to prolonged peace tenures and remaining in the same type of environment, sometimes organisational staff do not deliver to their full potential. This aspect must be monitored, by instituting suitable checks and balances.

Q: *Any concluding remarks?*

Ans: I am immensely proud to have been associated with the APTC fraternity, as I found them to be exceptionally committed and rose to the occasion to deliver and deliver well. As instructors at the academies and the regimental centres, the Red Stocking have inspired officers, cadets, and other ranks to remain fit. The World Military Games 2007 is just one of the many landmark achievements of the Corps.

The APTC's contribution has been remarkable over the past 74 years and it must continue to strive towards living upto the corps motto; "A sound mind in a healthy body," and its salutation in hindi, "Swast Raho" meaning "Be Fit" said Lt Gen (Dr) Ahluwalia before signing off. 



Former DGMT, Lt Gen. Bhopinder Singh Talks about the Need for PT Reforms in the Army

Former Director General Military Training (DGMT) Lieutenant General Bhopinder Singh speaks to MVI's Aritra Banerjee on the need for PT reforms in the Indian Army.

by Aritra Banerjee

Commissioned in and subsequently commanded the 17th Rajput, Lieutenant General (Retd.) Bhopinder Singh fought in the 1965 and 1971 wars and various counter-insurgency operations in J&K and North East. He was the Military, Naval, and Air Attaché for the East & South Africa Region. Later, he was the Military Secretary to the Presidents: KR Narayanan & APJ Abdul Kalam. He was

the 'Colonel of the Regiment' of the Rajput Regiment, President's Bodyguards, and the Army Physical Training Corps. The General retired as the Director-General of Military Training (DGMT) and went on to become the Lieutenant Governor of Andaman Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. He is currently a columnist for leading publications.



Extracts from the conversation



Q: *What has been the contribution of the Army Physical Training Corps (APTC) and their mother institution the Army Institute of Physical Training (AIPT) towards promoting Physical Training, (PT), Sports & Games, Excellence in Sports, and in Combat Fitness?*

Ans: The Indian Army's intrinsic 'inner health' that breeds a culture of combat resilience, endurance and indomitable spirit is to a very large extent attributable to the physicality of its bearers. As the foremost Military Corps and institution to define, nurture, and implement those exacting standards of the Indian Army's 'physicality' – its role in ensuring the 'kinetic' ability of its combatants is palpable, incalculable, and often, invisible.

Given the domain of 'physicality', its collateral extension and refinement to excellence in sports is both logical and desirable. Sports and Soldiering are positively interlinked, as Sports not only leads to even higher standards of physicality, but it also channelizes aggression, focusing of mind, inculcates a competitive 'winning' culture, builds cohesion, enhances esprit de corps, and above all, a sense of

belonging and pride in a unit, regiment, corps, or service. It is empirically proven that those soldiers who have excelled in sports at any level tend to exhibit a higher level of courage under fire, confidence, and hunger for success in a battlefield.

Given that AIPT as the nodal and specialist institution can sift individual cases of extreme and potential excellence from overall generic standards – its role in picking talent and harnessing the same towards competitive sports standards has been exemplary. It is seldom acknowledged that the role of honour from the institute in churning sports personnel, especially in shooting, boxing, wrestling, athletics, and gymnastics is higher than any private or governmental institution in the country.

Q: *What are some notable contributions of the APTC?*

Ans: Above all, it's the underlying role and contribution of APTC in inculcating and institutionalizing the 'can do' spirit of the Indian Army that makes it invaluable. The increasingly asymmetric nature of combat tests

the physical, mental, and even emotional quotient of a combatant. Today's soldier on the border or deployed in the internal insurgency works under the most hostile, inhospitable, and non-linear challenges. The institute that is reposed with the duty of ensuring 'physicality' and thereby, and collaterally, even mentally and emotionally where-withal, is in that context irreplaceable and necessary to further hone and sharpen the combatant to meet any future challenge.

Q: *Given the complexities and demands of 21st-century warfighting, what are the physical fitness requirements that will ensure Army combat readiness and APTC's role in ensuring high standards of fitness?*

Ans: The context of fitness has become more sophisticated, scientific, and layered. At an individual level it can mean physical, mental, or emotional. It can be cut to the realm of competency (physical standard, fitment for higher leadership, self-discipline, courage, etc.) or cultural (coordination, esprit de corps, teamwork) and even institutional (resilience, 'can-do', competitive, etc.) The future-ready combatant or Army will need to widen the scope and

individual roles, is essential in the formation of a 'future-ready' Army.

Q: *What is the way out of the serious non-availability of OPTC qualified officers and drastic reduction in suitable officers for transfer into the APTC or on deputation?*

Ans: The over-commitment of troops is a ground reality, as is the need for a physically, mentally, and emotionally robust combatant – both are not expected to change over time. Therefore, onus is on APTC to recognize, adapt, and continue contributing to the 'inner health' of the Indian Army, albeit, recognizing the 'new normal' of operation existence.

This will necessitate the optimal use of technology, science-based shorter/capsule courses and even adaptation of new teaching concepts like 'train the trainer' that has the logic of cascading skills or embedding APTC personnel in units/regions that work like 'nodal' set-ups.

The future of APTC must morph from a generic institution of excellence to a cutting-edge institution of super



Combatant traversing obstacle in Commando School, Belgaum; File Photo

appreciation of 'fitness' to prepare for the varied concepts, levels, and relevance of 'fitness' for future-combat readiness.

For example, increasing mechanization and weaponry may have lowered the QR for physicality in some vocations, but the same has substantially enhanced the requirement of 'fitness' at a 'mental' or 'emotional' level. Understanding the trade-off and calibrating the QR's for

specialization like Research & Referral Hospital in the Indian Military Medical domain. A leaner-meaner and more assertive footprint of the same can come if 'specialist/permanent cadre' is dedicatedly created for APTC – not only does it instill pride, specialization but also aspiration for joinees e.g. Special Forces. 🇮🇳



Challenges of Recruiting & Training Army Officers

“In recent times there has been a spate of deplorable incidents that have regrettably brought dishonour and disgrace to our Armed Forces. This lends credence to the belief that we are not anymore that feared, professional and integrated fighting force.”

(Editor’s note: This article was first written ahead of the 2014 parliamentary elections and subsequently updated prior to the 2019 elections. The observations made still hold in good stead and are worth introspecting over.)

by Colonel Vinay B Dalvi (Retd)

It is an established fact that the man behind the machine is the most important factor in any armed forces. In India today there are critical questions raised in respect of the ‘strength’ of the armed forces and a critical finger of suspicion points to the personnel manning the defence of the nation.

As such, the nation must take charge, assess the present status, remove weaknesses and build on its strengths. But the army cannot rise in isolation; it must be lifted to its heights as an integral part of a thriving nation. And even when the trends of the times do not inspire hope one must continue to

act positively with hope that the answers will emerge.

The Indian Soldier

The history of the Indian Army is replete with proof of the high professionalism, competence and commitment displayed by its soldiers during numerous challenges confronted by it. This bears adequate testimony to support the claim that the Indian soldier is among the best in the world.

The fact that he is effectively manning lengthy international borders (approximately 15,000 km) in the most rugged and inhospitable regions of

our country, having severe climatic and weather conditions, confronting the most brutal and hostile of enemies, speaks volumes for his loyalty, dedication, discipline and devotion to duty.

Challenging Times

In recent times there has been a spate of deplorable incidents that have regrettably brought dishonour and disgrace to our Armed Forces. This lends credence to the belief that we are not anymore that feared, professional and integrated fighting force that we probably were during the 1971 operations. Against this backdrop it is only pertinent to ask whether our Armed Forces

The ‘status quo’ generals should realise that they can no longer hold on to the past, a legacy of the British era, and should move on. The Jawan’s are only claiming a more professional and equal relationship with their officers and not the ‘lord and master’ feudal relationship of a bygone era.

are operationally fit and competent to effectively ward off the ever-looming threat from our traditional foes—China and Pakistan on – our live international borders.

It is also relevant to ask if we are prepared and capable to meet the present internal challenges in the form of prolonged proxy war, militancy, widespread Naxalism and the so-called Maoist menace in its present manifestation.

Besides these challenges, are we geared to face the grave problems that would confront us, post the US Army’s withdrawal from ‘Taliban infested’ Afghanistan and the subsequent focus of the Taliban’s attention on the adjacent Pakistan-India border region? Added to this is the growing need for Indian troops in UN missions abroad coupled with the critical demand of optimum strength of officers and men for multifarious duties both in field and peace.

This brings to fore the dire necessity of sufficient ‘strength’ and requisite ‘quality’ military manpower to keep pace with the growing need and high wastage rate.

A serious introspection of our present operational effectiveness and detailed threat analysis of our international borders, coupled with the disturbed state of internal affairs, highlights the imminent need for an effective, integrated and highly motivated Armed Forces led by committed, dynamic and selfless military leaders — a ‘dream state’ of operational preparedness and efficacy.

How do we achieve this ‘dream state’ that would be a strong deterrent to any enemy that ventures into our area or meddles in any way in our internal matters?

Soldiering—A Chosen Profession

In the present 21st century, in most democratic countries, including India, soldiering is being considered as a ‘chosen profession’ and like any other means of earning a livelihood. Does this take away the inspirational aspect that is contained in the honourable profession of taking up arms? Does this imply that all these countries



Indian Army officer cadets traversing obstacles; File Photo

do not any more get the best talent or the most suitable young men for their armed forces? If so, what measures have they taken to address this problem?

We do not need a defence expert to tell us that the induction of inferior quality material in terms of manpower would invariably weaken the quality of its fighting soldiers and officer leadership of any country. India being no exception, it will be pertinent to ask if the Indian Armed Forces are getting the desirable quality of manpower for

its’ military officer leadership’ and also for the ‘rank and file’.

It is also relevant to ask if ‘officer-men relations’ are in a healthy state, resulting in well-integrated fighting units with the backing of effective support elements and adequate logistics-cum-administrative backup.

‘Officer-Men Disconnect’ Calls for Vital Change in Mindset

If some of the recent incidents of face-offs between officers and Jawan’s are any indication of the present state of officer-men relationship, it is indeed a matter of serious concern not only for the forces but also for the nation. The integrity in the fighting units needs some fostering. It should be appreciated that India has moved ahead, and soldiering is no more ‘a way of life’. It

is now a ‘chosen profession’. This reality should be welcomed as a healthy development and great boon for an evolving professional army.

The ‘status quo’ generals should realise that they can no longer hold on to the past, a legacy of the British era, and should move on. The Jawan’s are only claiming a more professional and equal relationship with their officers and not the ‘lord and master’ feudal relationship of a bygone era. The evident anger between the young junior



It should be realised that the officers are now coming from the lower middle class; this would mean that the socio-economic gap with their troops has now diminished considerably. This should be welcomed as a healthy development of a professional army.



level officers and soldiers does not augur well for the organisation.

This evident disconnect between the officers and men cannot be swept under the carpet anymore, as the biggest casualty is the 'morale of the army', which remains the prime mover of the all-important 'man behind the gun'.

A serious introspection of the situation will reveal that the present generation of young officers and soldiers is vastly different from the ones that fought in the 1962, 1965 and 1971 wars. It should be well understood that this new generation has been drawn from a society undergoing fast socio-economic transformation; this is creating a widening gap between their expectations and what they receive.

It should be realised that the officers are now coming from the lower middle class; this would mean that the socio-economic gap with their troops has now diminished considerably. This should be welcomed as a healthy development of a professional army.

The top hierarchy of the forces needs to engender a culture and ethos of professionalism, financial honesty, and integrity where they should lead by personal example. The generals should seriously address the root causes to the problems and not only the symptoms. The 'Jawan', the symbol of our fighting men, is only claiming his right for change, for a more equitable relationship with his officer leaders based on mutual respect and trust.

This should be granted to them as a directive from the top as an outcome of the harsh realities of soldiering of the present times. This would restore the confidence of the Jawan, help revive the health of the officer-men relations and also restore the traditional rapport and bonhomie.

Indian Troops—A Great Asset

"The Indian soldiers are undoubtedly the best troops a leader can wish or hope to lead. They will follow you up the jagged peaks of snow-clad mountains, through the burning sands of unending deserts, across the marshy maze of thick jungles and into a haze of bullets and shrapnel, unmindful of their personal safety, uncaring of their personal comfort and devoid of remorse or fear and unrelenting in their resolve and determined to challenge the test of destiny.

All they will look up to you will be to see confidence in your eyes, trust in

numerous regiments of arms and services of our armed forces. It is our real strength and cutting edge over our adversary — the 'quality man behind the gun' and the most decisive factor in any kind of military operation.

It is thus imperative that we do not take this 'asset' for granted. We should rather give it great attention to derive optimum results. We should also train the men in the most professional manner, using the most scientific training methodology and latest equipment of present times.

Today, the troops are well educated and generally come from lower middle-class families of rural and urban areas. With the rapid development of most rural areas even those from these so-called rural areas are not that backward as before. Further, with the narrowing of the social-economic-intellectual gap between officers and men, there is much scope for incentives and encouragement for rapid personal development, in terms of professional



Cadets performing the monkey crawl BPET test; File Photo

your voice, command in your demeanour, professional competence in your actions and above all the desire to lead them from the front."- These were the words of a reviewing officer, about seven years ago, at the passing-out parade at the prestigious Indian Military Academy, Dehradun.

These words aptly sum up the traits of our troops which are our greatest asset, nurtured, cultivated, and groomed over decades and decades of army tradition, culture and ethos of

and educational qualifications, for selection of potential men as officer candidates for commission into the services.

With the high quality and depth of manpower of the troops that we now possess, especially in the Army, there is great scope to produce many officers for multifarious general duties. This would greatly reduce the workload on the existing officers, presently overloaded with additional duties/tasks due to the large and prolonged



IMA Cadets during their Passing Out Parade; File Photo

shortage of officers. This exercise will certainly enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of our Armed Forces. In the challenge therefore lies the opportunity — in the disease lies the cure.

Quality Military Leadership

As stated recently by Air Chief Marshal N A K Browne, CAS & Chairman COSC, “The Indian Armed Forces is in the midst of a comprehensive modernisation phase. Quality military leadership at all levels is indeed the need of the hour”. Besides paying special attention to the selection and training aspects of the leadership in the Armed Forces, the top brass of the forces would do well in associating themselves with some of the renowned and reputed military veterans in addressing this great concern. The wide experience and expertise of the veterans in their specialised fields will pay them rich dividends. But this can only go some distance and not further.

After all, the armed forces is only a component of the larger society and the leadership in the armed forces can at best influence the armed forces itself; what of the society from which the entire breed of soldiers and officers emerge? At the highest level, the nation must look up to inspiration from the political leaders of India. But where is the hope in it?

Weak Political Leadership

India is presently handicapped with an extremely weak and timid political leadership displaying a deplorable state of collective incompetence. In such a grim state, for a nation to find ‘inspiration’ to become one of ‘merit’ and ‘values’ is a far-fetched dream. If the leaders’ interface with our armed

forces is an indicator to go by there cannot be an iota of hope.

An ill-equipped military with a crippling shortage of officers, deteriorating ‘officer-men relationship’, anguished, unhappy and disgusted ex-service/war veterans, all cumulatively do not ‘inspire’ or ‘motivate’ the men in uniform; they only de-motivate, depress and demoralise them — ominous signs for the country! Add to this the internal turmoil in the country in the form of Naxalism, Maoism and all their variants.

The inability of the Centre and State agencies to tackle this grave threat and menace in all their dimensions, well within our borders, raises serious questions of a ‘failed state’ in these areas, now being called ‘free zone’ or ‘red-corridor’. With our traditional enemy, China’s expansionist designs, continued hostility of Pakistan and strained relations with even traditionally friendly Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and Myanmar, all apparently indicate a weak, divided and disintegrated ‘state’.

Even after 73 years of a democratic system of governance in the country, the political rulers have failed to meet even the basic expectations of most of the people. Irrespective of their political parties and individual affiliations most of the leaders have displayed a callous and lackadaisical approach to the grave problems confronting the country.

Their reprehensible and shameful conduct during the Parliament sessions of both Houses says it all! Considering the above it is evident that the Indian ‘state’ has now reached its ‘nadir’ and on the road to a ‘failed

democracy’. Under these most trying circumstances in our history ‘Victory India’ (a ‘concept’ and ‘symbol’ of hope of a formidable, successful, and prosperous state) can only be but a dream, illusion or mirage!

A Dream ‘State’

In order to revive and restore the ‘state’ from further decline and decay, the entire political system needs a major shakeup with a great people’s revolutionary movement for the liberation of the country from 73 years of misrule, mismanagement, corruption and tyranny that it has suffered. This is already happening in different forms of movements, agitations, fasts, rallies and protests.

The charged, enthusiastic and enterprising youth of the country, with the support, expertise and guidance of capable, competent and selfless leaders, will soon improve the dismal state. In the forthcoming 2019 Parliamentary elections one surely feels that the youth brigade can turn the tide in our favour, usher in a new era of hope for the masses, help in fulfilling some of our aspirations and also finally realize ‘Victory India’ — a dream ‘state’! The Armed Forces may of course not have the liberty to directly participate in this except for voting sensibly like every other citizen.

Hope

Even as the nation waits in hope, at this moment, the Armed Forces of the country need to be given the utmost priority along with due importance and powers to the paramilitary and State police forces. Those in harness now, whatever their level of operation may be, must ensure that the Armed Forces continue to get the best men to fill its ranks.

The selection procedures and training must not be deficient in any way. The prevailing scenario raises this need to a high level of criticality. This and this alone would collectively ensure our security and safety from the enemy across our borders and also neutralise the enemy within and facilitate the country in moving forward in all ways to meet the minimum expectations of its people. Victory India! 🇮🇳



An Appraisal of Military Leadership

“Military Leadership probably still stands out as compared to other institutions. But I repeat that our leadership is “good but not good enough” as the military profession deals with life and death.”

by Lieutenant General HS Panag (Retd)

While the fundamentals of leadership have remained constant, these must be applied keeping in view the leadership challenges of the 21st century.

Our crisis in leadership stems from the fact that on the one hand we have compromised with these fundamentals due to leadership development programmes not having kept pace with the times and on the other hand, we have failed to bridge the gap between the omnipresent individual and organisational failings and idealistic requirements of military leadership by strict application of rules, regulations and military law.

The Indian officer corps has acquitted itself creditably both in peace and war. Our officers and men are held in high esteem by the society. The

officers have led from the front and performed exceptionally in war and are the envy of all armies. The high causality ratio of officers to soldiers signifies their courage and bravery, though ironically it also reflects poorly on the leadership in not empowering their subordinates.

So, what I am going to say is relative. Over a period of time, a lot of shortcomings have set in that impinge upon the performance of our leadership. As Major General Wingate would often say in respect of military leadership – “Good not good but enough!”

The directive of the Chiefs of Staff Committee to the Commandant of the National Defence Academy (NDA) is simple – you shall develop leadership qualities in the cadets. What then is

the problem? The leadership development programme at the NDA is inspired by the principles evolved by the British Army a century ago. If not in concept then in application it is based on breaking the will through subjugation to ensure discipline, uniformity and adherence.

Apart from the rigid unimaginative leadership development programme, a large part of the “leadership development” is done in the barracks by senior cadets where bullying and illegal punishments amounting to physical abuse are rampant – a practice done away by all modern armies.

Individual creativity and initiative are killed. A curious form of initiative focused on avoiding the draconian system is developed. A trait that

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Yet so flawed is the appraisal system that 80-90% of the officers are assessed as above average and outstanding making no difference between the good bad and the ugly. This not only stymies reform but also leads to a flawed selection system and further dilution of leadership standards in higher commanders.

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impinges on the organisational mission in later years. The academic programme at the NDA lacks imagination and is based on a standard BA/BSc degree rather than on militarily relevant academic subjects like man management, military history, military psychology, aeronautical/naval science, space science, weapon technology, nuclear physics and so on.

Instead of producing self-actualised and creative leaders driven by military ideals, we end up with “adherent under supervision” leaders whose inherent and acquired shortcomings due to the flawed environment remain latent and come to the fore when they get higher independent commands. The situation in other service academies is no different.

The in-service leadership development is done through self-actualisation and organisational support in terms of self-study, mentors, appraisal system, counselling by superiors, unit/army ethos and application of rules, regulations, and law. There are no further formal leadership development programmes and only a limited time is devoted during courses.

Critique of military academies notwithstanding, the young officer still comes out with a reasonable degree of idealism. This gets shattered when he faces the reality of unit life. He is faced with below par duplicitous mentors/superiors, a flawed appraisal system and an environment where mediocrity rules the roost. He ends up either flowing with the tide or becoming a cynic.

Off late, there has been a tendency to give short shrift to the application of rules, regulations and military law.

The reason for this is the compromised leadership, particularly in higher ranks, which lacks moral courage. This has had the most serious impact on leadership standards as this was the final check that works when everything else fails.

Of course, the issue is relative. Military leadership probably still stands out as compared to other institutions. But I repeat that our leadership is “good but not good enough” as the military profession deals with life and death. An honest assessment



CDS Gen. Rawat with his security detail during Republic Day celebrations; File Photo

of leadership standards vis-a-vis the military ideals shows that 50% of the officers measure up only to the average standard, 30% are high average, 10% are above average and outstanding and the remaining 10% are below average.

Yet so flawed is the appraisal system that 80-90% of the officers are assessed as above average and outstanding making no difference between

the good bad and the ugly. This not only stymies reform but also leads to a flawed selection system and further dilution of leadership standards in higher commanders.

Due to compromises with leadership traits and principles, most leaders do not qualify as role models for their subordinates. This has a cascading effect on the junior leadership. Integrity, morals and ethics, particularly among senior officers have become suspect. Abuse of privileges is rampant and cases of moral turpitude are on the increase. That two Army Chiefs and one Naval Chief by inquiry and admission were part of the Adarsh Scam and by implication involved in perpetration and cover-up, tells the whole story.

Intellectual military education deals with the “why” of matters military and involves a wider study of the theory of war and military history. Training deals with “how” of matters military. Our army neglects military education leaving it to the individual and primarily focuses on training.

Without the former, the latter hangs in mid-air. We were shocked when one Chief removed the military history paper from the Defence Services Staff College (DSSC) entrance exam. With great difficulty, it was reintroduced a decade later.

The performance of the officers in DSSC entrance examination has been pathetic. Out of 1000 officers who



COAS Gen. MM Naravane reviewing the COVID-19 situation in an operational area with senior officers; File Photo

appear, the number passing remains in double digits against 250 vacancies. For the balance vacancies, the best is selected from the worse. The performance in promotion examinations is no better. The assessment has been diluted to avoid embarrassment and loss of seniority. In a nutshell, the intellectual military education of the officers is high on emotions and low in substance. The Armed Forces have been brushing this issue under the carpet.

What is most disturbing is that the first requirement of military character – bearing and fitness – have been given a short shrift. Fifty per cent of officers and JCOs cannot pass their physical fitness tests. A large number of officers, Colonels and above are a public embarrassment because poor bearing due to being overweight.

The moral courage to stand up for what is right has been diluted to the extent that we have become an army of “yes men”. The current sorry state of civil military relationship where rather than apprise the political leadership of the real state of the Armed Forces to force reforms, the hierarchy has simply joined them to fool the nation.

Will and initiative are the hallmark of creative leadership. What is left of these fundamentals after the military academies is killed by the autocratic rigid and “no mistake” approach of the commanders. A non-creative leadership can only produce average results. Non-empowerment of junior leadership is probably the biggest shortcoming of the army. Consequently, there is a call for more and more officers. Whereas the JCOs and NCOs should be the mainstay in the grassroots battle, in our army the officers have to fill the void.

There is an urgent need for the armed forces to revamp their leadership development programmes both in the military academies and in service. Rules, regulations, and law must be strictly applied to prevent dilution of the fundamentals and bridge the gap between military ideals and individual failings. The appraisal and selection system must be overhauled to select the best for higher command as the rot begins with the head. 🇮🇳



Lieutenant General HS Panag (Retd)

Lt Gen HS Panag, PVSM, AVSM & VSM last served as GOC-in-C, Northern Command and GOC-in-C, Central Command. In December 2008, after his retirement, he was appointed as an Administrative Member of the Armed Forces Tribunal. He is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla, Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, Higher Command Course, Mhow and the National Defence College, New Delhi. He has authored several publications concerning Indian defence forces and national security.

Views expressed are the authors own, and do not reflect the editorial policy of ‘MVI.’

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75 Years of APTC: Paving the Path with Glory

Sir Rudyard Kipling's quote, "Nations have passed away and left no traces. History gives the naked cause of it, one single, simple reason in all cases, they fell because their peoples' were not fit," has remained the driving principle of the Indian army's hallowed PT Corps since its inception as an elite corps designed to train the physical capabilities of the men behind the machine

by Colonel Vinay B Dalvi (Retd)

The Army Physical Training Corps (APTC) celebrated its first Reunion & Golden Jubilee at the Army School of Physical Training (ASPT), Pune on 11 & 12 Jan 1997 under the aegis of the then Director General Military Training (DGMT) & Colonel Commandant, APTC, Major General RPRC Naidu and Deputy Director General Physical Training (DDGPT), Brigadier V Chandrasekaran. Late Brig GRC Nair was then Comdt ASPT, Pune under whose directions and guidance the landmark event was conducted. A Special APTC Golden Jubilee Journal 1996/97 was released on the occasion.

This Journal recorded some of the important landmarks and milestones of fifty glorious years of service rendered by APTC and ASPT, Pune.

The contributions of the predecessors of APTC were recalled with nostalgia and reverence including their consistent zeal, fervour and untiring efforts that built up the Corps edifice brick by brick to reach the summit of its historic 50th anniversary.

The kind and encouraging messages received from then senior civil & military dignitaries on the historic occasion were of great significance and served as a beacon for future hopes and aspirations.

A few select extracts of these most relevant and landmark messages are reproduced below to serve as a guide to the present serving fraternity, especially the Army hierarchy that vested with the onerous responsibility of the fitness of all ranks.

In this context the eternal quote of Sir Rudyard Kipling,

"Nations have passed away and left no traces. History gives the naked cause of it, one single, simple reason in all cases, They fell because their peoples' were not fit."

is both relevant and critical. The importance of fitness has been repeatedly stressed not only for the benefit of the individual but also played a vital role in safeguarding and shaping the destiny of nations.

For India today and the Indian Army in particular this quote holds truer than ever before. The APTC is completing 75 years on 1 Jul 2021 and due to celebrate its Platinum Jubilee in 2021/22.



A horse rider jumps through a ring of fire at the OTA grounds on Friday; Picture Courtesy – Martin Louis

Extracts from Luminaries

NVN Somu, Rajya Raksha Mantri

“

The Army Physical Training Corps (APTC) celebrated its Golden Jubilee and First Reunion on 11 & 12 January 1997. The yeoman's service rendered by the personnel of this Corps has kept the Indian Army fighting fit in all types of terrain and under adverse climatic conditions

”

Gen S Roychowdhury, Chief of Army Staff

“

The achievements and contributions of APTC during the past half century have been commendable. Notwithstanding any degree of modernisation of the Army, physical fitness of the soldier will always remain our foremost requirement

”

Lt Gen HM Khanna, Army Commander Southern Command



The Corps has not only introduced and adopted new and scientifically tested techniques of physical training but has also generated tremendous awareness regarding physical fitness amongst all ranks.



Lt Gen Ravi Eipe, Army Commander Eastern Command



The Corps has a vital role in keeping the Army in good state of physical fitness and assisting in pursuit of excellence in the field of sports. In this, all ranks of APTC have displayed exemplary sense of dedication and commitment.



Lt Gen HB Kala, Army Commander Western Command



The APTC has been responsible to raise, maintain and improve the standards of Physical Training and methods of instruction in physical and recreational training throughout the Army. During the past 50 years of its existence, it has produced and trained several outstanding sportsmen, who have brought laurels to the Army and the Nation



Lt Gen Chandra Shekhar, Army Commander Central Command



Physical fitness has always been the bedrock for operational fitness of any Army, at any time in any clime. This is especially so for the Indian Army which has been holding its own under some of the severest climatic conditions in which armies can possibly operate. The APTC and the ASPT can take legitimate pride in their role in cultivating physical fitness culture in the Army which enables excellence under the most trying conditions.



Lt Gen S Padmanabhan, Army Commander Northern Command



The APTC has made significant contributions in the field of physical fitness and sports and I have no doubts that the Corps will move from success to success. May the Golden Jubilee be a harbinger of many more laurels to come for the Corps.



Lt Gen S K Sharma, Army Commander Army Training Command (ARTRAC)



The achievements and contributions of APTC during the past half century have been commendable. I am certain that appreciating the importance, all ranks of APTC will always strive to improve and maintain a high standard of physical fitness of the Army as in the past.



Air Mshl Jagbir Singh Rai, Commandant National Defence Academy (NDA)



The achievements and contributions of APTC during the past half century have been commendable. The significant role played by the APTC in the overall contribution towards training is credit worthy, particularly here at NDA. Notwithstanding the modernisation of Armed Forces, physical fitness will always remain the foremost requirement of a soldier, sailor and airman's life.



Lt Gen AS Sandhu, Commandant Indian Military Academy (IMA)



The readiness of any Army in the world begins with physical fitness of the leader who steers the individual soldier in war and peace alike. It is essential for a soldier to understand that every aspect of military training is built up on the foundation of physical fitness and this cannot be sustained without training. Physical fitness is complementary to military efficiency and forms an integral part of all military training. Your Corps is charged with the duty of training instructors and soldiers in the art of ensuring fitness of our Army. As heirs to the high standards established and maintained by your predecessors, I highly value and honour this proud heritage that is your charge today.



Maj Gen KC Dhingra, Commandant Officers Training Academy (OTA)



The APTC has played a sterling role in moulding the soldiers fit physically and mentally, thus enabling them to perform any assigned duty effectively and efficiently both in peace and war. I am confident that on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee the APTC personnel will pledge to strive for greater heights as-in the race for perfection there is no finish line!





China's Taiwan Priority Over Ladakh-Gilgit-Baltistan!

“The PLA is ready to safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity, deter US interference and Taiwan secessionist forces, and, if they go too far, reunify the island by force”

- Global Times of 19 September 2020-

by Colonel Rajinder Kushwaha (Retd)

Xi Jinping's China has simultaneously opened two fronts: one, on the east, against Taiwan and the other on the west, with India. It is an extension of Xi's declared policy of 'Fa fen, you Wei' (FFYW). It means to prove your worth with firm resolve. In other words, it entails to achieve one's political and strategic objectives through aggressive projection of its real and demonstrable power. In doing so, it must flex its muscles.

Why has China chosen to open two fronts in two diametrically opposite directions? Well, there are different reasons. At the outset, it should be noted that Taiwan was China's top priority because it fits into the overall context of 'One China Policy'. Chinese action in Eastern Ladakh was a second

priority, as would be brought out subsequently in this article.

Let us see why Taiwan was a top priority? Taiwan has an area of 36,197 square km with a population of around 24 million. It is currently an independent island state, though under the unofficial protective umbrella of the USA. However, in the 17th century, like Tibet, it was a part of the Qing Dynasty of China. It is this historical claim that China justifies its sovereignty over this island state.

Taiwan is fairly a rich country and it is the 15th largest economy of the world. Geographically it could serve as a strategic outpost for China in the Indo-Pacific region. It's GDP in normal terms is \$586 billion at nominal

rate and \$1.3 trillion in Price procurement Parity (PPP) terms. The per capita income in terms of PPP is around \$65,000/-.

Taiwan is a leading producer of microchips, which are extensively used in all electronic gadgets, including 5G technology. Until 1971 it was part of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) but was replaced by China. Ironically, only 14 countries, out of almost 200, have diplomatic relations with it. All the same, it has a good armed force, particularly a potent Airforce and Missile force, to protect itself, therefore it is not going to be an easy task for China to forcibly occupy it.

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All said and done, China's focus and priority remains Taiwan. It would not like to get involved in a major fight with India. Frankly speaking, it has already occupied its 1959 claim line. But India must keep a vigil and do not lower its guard. There is not going to be any de-induction of Chinese troops this winter.”

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China has been long desirous of integrating Taiwan with the mainland, but the protective umbrella of the USA has been holding it back inebriated by its economic and military clout, Xi Jinping thinks that it can forcibly occupy Taiwan. An opportunity came China's way, in April-May 2020, due to mayhem unleashed by COVID-19, which had originated in Wuhan city of China.

This pandemic has created panic everywhere and the whole world got preoccupied combating it. While the rest of the world was gripped by the pandemic, China had successfully come out of it. This presented a good opportunity to China, as USA and Europe, strong protectors of Taiwan's independence, were neck deep into trouble by the pandemic manslaughter.

Accordingly, China not only planned an operation to militarily take over Taiwan but also initiated a diversionary action against India to draw away USA attention from Taiwan. It was a 'threat in being' to India, as part of a deception plan. It seems diversionary action was the 'Phase one' of 'Operation Taiwan'. But the USA did not buy the bait and, instead, dispatched two aircraft carriers, Nimitz and Ronald Reagan, to the South China Sea (SCS) to forestall any offensive plans China had. It thus punched a hole in Chinese Taiwan Option.

All the same, China considers it only a temporary setback. It is still hopeful of executing 'Operation Taiwan' during the three months period of November 2020 and January 2021. This is the time, when US administration would be in a limbo due to enforced 'decision-paralysis' period, post presidential elections and

swearing in of the new incumbent. This is the primary reason as to why China has not stopped its planned exercises and live firing drills in the Taiwan strait?

It is manifestly apparent to note that Taiwan remains its top priority. Ladakh action was only a deception plan. Recent events in the Taiwan strait stand testimony to such Chinese intentions. It has been reported that over the first fortnight of September 2020, PLAF has intruded into Taiwan air space 37 times by crossing the 'midline' of Taiwan Strait. China says



Military exercise in Taichung, Taiwan; File Photo

it does not recognise 'midline' as Taiwan was part of China.

Recently in the third week of September 2020, two aircraft carriers of China have conducted live firing drills in East China Sea (ECS) and SCS. The PLA Navy has also deployed Mine sweepers for clearing the mines in the Taiwan Strait. China is even prepared to take on the USA if it intervenes. Therefore, China has not abandoned its plans for Taiwan but will wait for

an opportune moment in November-December 2020.

This temporary setback has led to initiation of 'Plan B' by China. It pertains to securing the Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) region of Pakistan which has its strategic importance for China. It was to engage Indian army in a 'No War; No Peace' scenario in Eastern Ladakh to disallow it to intervene in GB, while Pakistan goes for its integration as a fifth state of Pakistan.

Pakistan has announced that it would hold assembly elections on 15 November 2020. India has raised serious objections to this move. China and Pakistan are apprehensive of a military action by India. China wants to disallow this leverage to India.

This is where Eastern Ladakh comes into the picture. It is a known fact that China claims certain parts of Ladakh which it asserts as an integral part of Western Tibet. In this regard, there is a 1959-60 Claim line of China which roughly coincides with the present

positions of the Line of Actual Control (LAC). There are perceptible differences by both sides on the exact alignment in ground.

However, Indian stand has been to claim territory based on Johnson Line of 1865, which ran along Kunlun Mountains and thus inclusive of Aksai Chin and such areas. Though there have been modifications to Johnson's line in 1899 and 1913 by British Indian Government but independent



Taiwanese soldiers during an anti aircraft combat confrontation drill in May; File Photo

India decided to go by Johnson's line which was considered legitimate territory of J&K state when J&K acceded to India in 1947.

But the territorial claim is not the real reason of Chinese current action in Eastern Ladakh. Its interest lay in the GB region of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK). The significance of GB for China is because of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which is dubbed as the 'New Silk Route' of China for trade with the rest of the world.

The principal component of the CPEC is Karakoram Highway (KKH), which runs over 3,000 km from Kashgar in the Xinjiang province of China to Pakistan's warm water port of Gwadar in the Balochistan province. As on date 90% of China's trade is through sea lanes of the East China Sea (ECS), South China Sea (SCS) and it passes through Choke point at Malacca strait.

This is 12,000 km. China has been looking for an alternative and a land route. KKH, as an alternative route, is therefore strategically important to China. It is hugely investing not only in KKH but also in the development of Gwadar Port.

KKH passes through GB at Khunjerab pass. The glitch is that India has been laying its claim to GB, which threatens to jeopardise the CPEC project. India has intensified its claim

after abrogation of articles 370 and 35 A on 5 August 2019. Indian Home Minister, Amit Shah, had stated in the Lok Sabha that India would also seek not only POK, including GB, but also Aksai Chin, under Chinese control. If India takes away this territory, it will not only affect KKH but also threaten G-219, China's Tibetan Highway from Kashgar in Xinjiang to Lhasa in Tibet.

In doing so, China has been insisting upon Pakistan to amalgamate GB as the 5th province of Pakistan by amending the constitution and probably settle for LC as IB, according to the secret Clause of Shimla Agreement. This is also the viewpoint of current National Security Advisor (NSA) of Pakistan, Moeed Yousuf — a

39-year-old Defence and Security analyst scholar from Harvard.

He is pushing forward the idea of LC as IB. Pakistan media has revealed that Army Chief of Pakistan, General Q J Bajwa had a secret meeting in September 2020, with opposition leaders on this aspect. If so, it is going to be a paradigm shift in Pakistan's Kashmir stand.

Notwithstanding this, both China and Pakistan, had become suspicious of Indian intentions after abrogation of Article 370. Therefore, they have decided to go ahead with making GB as the 5th province after the assembly elections on 15 November 2020. India has raised serious objections and China expects that India might intervene militarily.

Therefore, to checkmate India, it is keeping Indian army engaged in Eastern Ladakh to draw it away from GB. Therefore, China has been dilly dallying troops disengagement from Eastern Ladakh. It intends to keep India busy in Eastern Ladakh in the winters of 2020-21 to allow Pakistan adequate time to consolidate its position.

All said and done, China's focus and priority remains Taiwan. It would not like to get involved in a major fight with India. Frankly speaking, it has already occupied its 1959 claim line. But India must keep a vigil and do not lower its guard. There is not going to be any de-induction of Chinese troops this winter. 🇨🇳

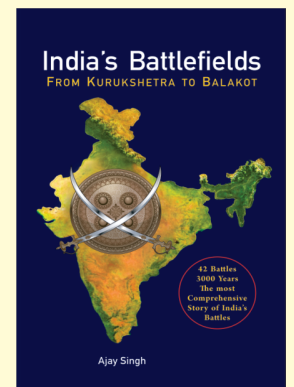
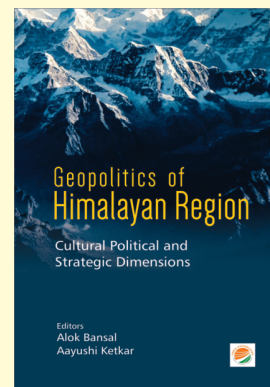
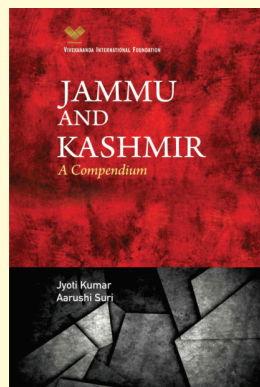
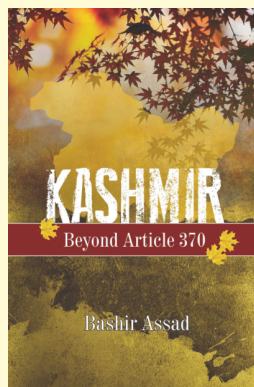
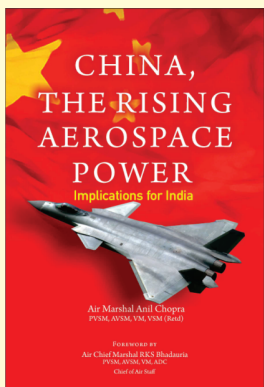
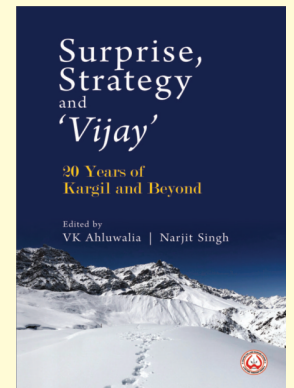
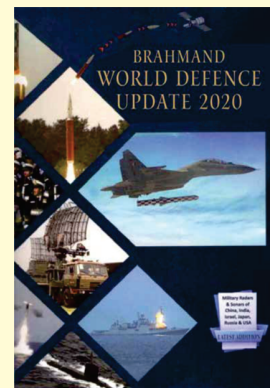
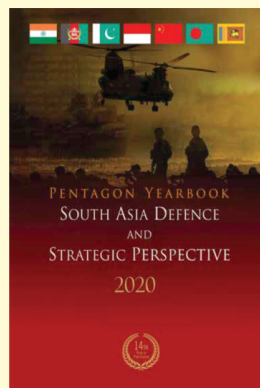
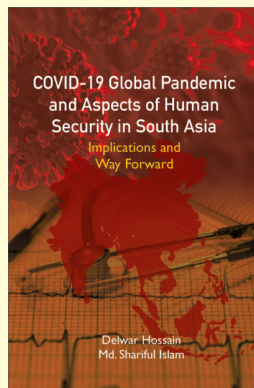
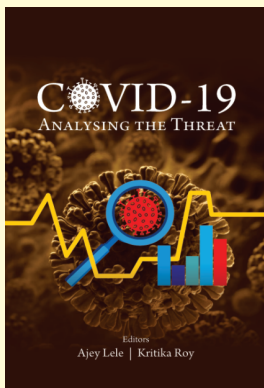
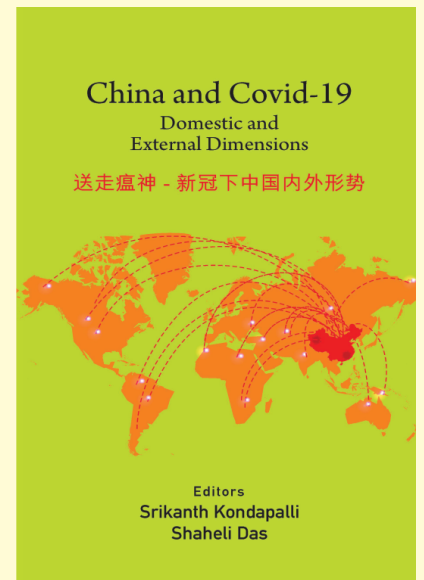
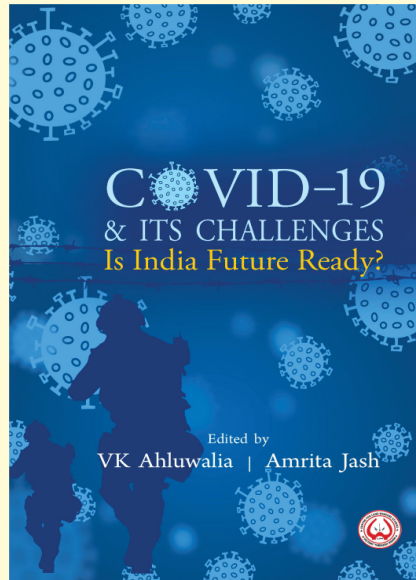
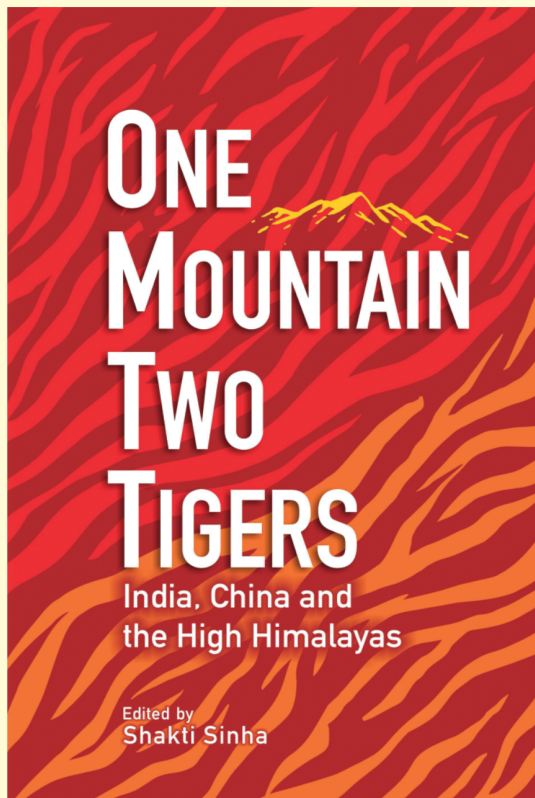


Colonel Rajinder Kushwaha

Col Rajinder Kushwaha is an ex-NDA, commissioned into the 3 Bihar Regiment in June 1971 and was the Commanding Officer of the same unit in insurgency environs in Assam in 1990-93. Has vast experience in CI Ops from North East to Punjab and J&K. A prolific writer-cum-critic on defence and security matters, he has authored the book, 'Kashmir: A Different Perspective'. His second book on Assam was released in April 2018. Held prestigious appointments in the army including as an instructor at a premier army institute, Col GS, Col Adm of an Infantry Division and Col "Q" works at a Command HQ. He can be contacted on email: rajee749@yahoo.com.

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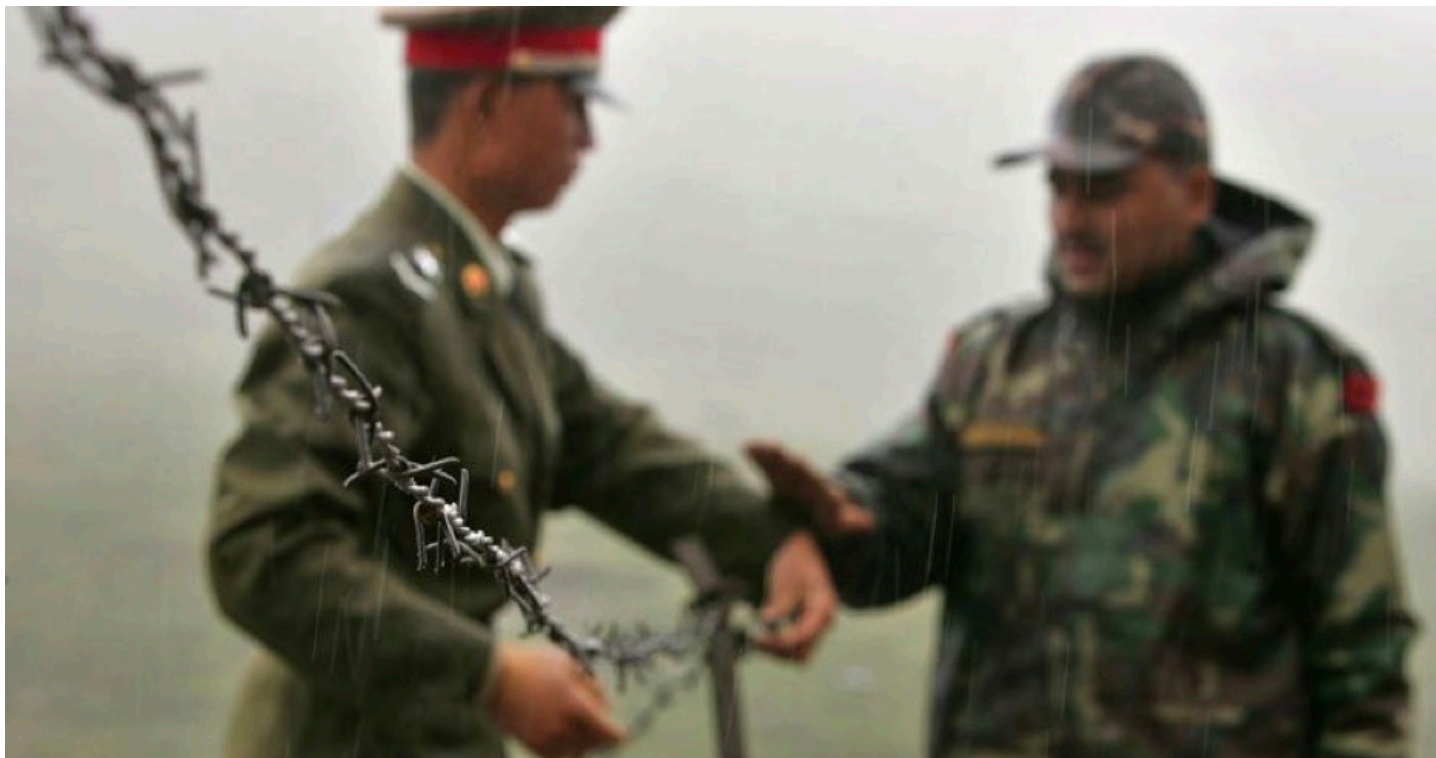
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It's Going to be a Long Eyeball-to-Eyeball Standoff with China: But India is Well Prepared

“In early August, the newly inducted Mountain Division, including Tibetan troops of the SFF, was fully acclimatized. They had begun reconnaissance and validated their offensive plans which were so secret that even the holding formation troops were unaware of what was going on.”

by Colonel Anil Bhat (Retd)

After exactly 53 years since September 1967, of being reactive on the ground to thousands of moves/attempts by China's Peoples' Liberation Army (PLA) trying its tricks to grab India's land, Indian Army finally responded with some unprecedented "redeployment of troops" on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) to evict the PLA from some key heights and tactically advantageous positions and occupy them. To say the least, the Chinese are shocked as they are seeing a reversal of roles.

For over six decades, the Chinese always bullied on the table and

bulldozed on the terrain, always grabbing and gobbling or trying to grab further chunks of Indian territory. Many parts of current China were independent sovereign nations, the largest being Tibet. In fact, all of the India-China boundary is what China captured and refers to as Tibet Autonomous Region.

An official press release stated that on the night of 29/30 August 2020, PLA troops violated the previous consensus arrived at the military and diplomatic engagements during the ongoing standoff in Eastern Ladakh and carried out provocative military

movements to change the status quo. Indian troops pre-empted this PLA activity on the Southern Bank of Pangong Tso lake undertook measures to strengthen India's positions and thwart Chinese intentions to unilaterally change facts on the ground.

The Indian Army is committed to maintaining peace and tranquillity through dialogue but is also equally determined to protect its territorial integrity. Till September 3, four Brigade Commander level Flag Meetings have failed to resolve the issues.



The Chinese had realised that not only were they outnumbered but totally outflanked, making their position untenable. Any armed clash hereafter would have been suicidal. The annihilation of the Moldo garrison was assured.



China Breaks Peace Agreements

It has been seen over seven decades that talks are an old trick of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and PLA combo, with the aim to buy time and very often not following any agreement. Nonetheless, the Indian government and Indian Army have always been amenable to talks for the sake of peace and tranquillity; even so after the PLA shattered every peace agreement, and which was seen from May 5 to June 15, 2020. Lies and deception have been part of the CCP-PLA combo's standard operating procedure or rather, its very philosophy.

Ever since the PLA freaked out in May 2020, the Indian Army was rather reticent in sharing some realities, that too at a time when some much overdue and never before like decisions and actions were taken, shocking the Chinese like never before and breaking the jinx of the Indian Army that they only react, and that too with one hand tied behind their back.

Col. Danvir Singh (Retd), Associate Editor, Indian Defence Review, who served as a Company Commander in the Chushul Garrison in 2004-2005, needs to be thanked for an elaborated version of what transpired before and after August 29, which shocked PLA like never before and surprised the world.

In early August, the newly inducted Mountain Division, including Tibetan troops of the Special Frontier Force (SFF), was fully acclimatized. They had begun reconnaissance and validated their offensive plans which were so secret that even the holding formation troops were unaware of what was going on. Options were carefully drawn and diligently vetted.

India Use Secret Guerrilla Force in Ladakh

By August 24, one plan was finally given the go-ahead. The plan involved the retaking of certain commanding heights by evicting the Chinese forces. Simultaneously, the Chief of Defence Staff, General Bipin Rawat, cautioned the nation to stay prepared for any eventuality, even if that meant war.

The final phase of the retaking of the objectives was planned to be completed in 120 minutes flat. Tanks, artillery guns/missiles and air defence were all well poised to counter and destroy any PLA attempt to thrust into the Chushul Valley. Air defence troops were also deployed with shoulder-fired anti-aircraft Igla missiles, networked and coordinated to shoot down any Chinese aircraft interfering with the advancing troops.

The Chinese on their side had their mechanized Combat Team located in Spangur near Moldo. They had 33-ton T15 light tanks designed to fight a battle in this high-altitude region. The Indian troops, who were fully geared for action, with all ends tied, contingencies catered for and rehearsed, were ready to strike. Their objective was Spangur Bowl, an area south of Pangong and east of Chushul.

The features dominating the Spangur gap provided great tactical dominance and huge strategic advantages were Black Top, Helmet, Magar, and Gurung Hills stretching right up to Rezag La. Under the cover of darkness, Indian infiltrating troops moved up to the LAC established their release points, and waited for the green signal. Some troops mounted on high mobility vehicles drove straight up to the objective - the 3 km ridgeline on the hill alongside Requin.

At the word go, these troops crossed over into the enemy claimed territory with lightning speed and occupied the hill features, beating their own planned timings well under 120 minutes. Before dawn, one complete infantry brigade with over 2,000 troops was holding the heights overlooking the Spangur Bowl. Armed with French Milan anti-tank missiles and Carl Gustav rocket launchers, Indian troops had literally rendered the Chinese armoured tanks at Moldo redundant and outmaneuvered. On August 31, the Chinese garrison at Moldo was virtually under siege.

When the greatly shocked Chinese mustered their club-wielding troops and advanced towards the positions now held by the Indian Army, more shocks awaited them. The Indian troops warned the advancing PLA men, who continued with their advance. The Indian troops fired a few warning shots in the air and the Chinese, seeing the aggressive posture, fled, only to return a little later.

This time they came with their armoured personnel carriers, driving on their cemented road from Moldo to Rezag La. But this advance also came to a halt and was followed by a hasty retreat because the Indian troops were at a stone's throw from the Moldo garrison, dominating each and every move of the PLA. The sight of anti-tank missiles and rocket launchers deterred the move of the Chinese armoured personnel carrier and halted them in their tracks. The Chinese had realised that not only were they outnumbered but totally outflanked, making their position untenable. Any armed clash hereafter would have been suicidal. The annihilation of the Moldo garrison was assured. The Indians by now were firmly dug in.

Subedar Nyima Tenzin of the SFF died on August 30 when he stepped on a mine near the south bank of Pangong Tsoduring the action of occupying the strategic heights. Sending a strong message to China, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) general secretary Ram Madhav attended Subedar Tenzin's funeral, which was conducted with full military honours.

“

The Indian Armed Forces are preparing for the worst and if push comes to shove, it may not be wrong at all to predict that losses on China will be heavy.

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Army Chief Gen. M M Naravane, who toured Ladakh from September 2-4, said the situation along the LAC is “tense” but added that the nation can “count on us.”

Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria visited front-line air bases in Eastern Air Command on September 2. Respective Air Officers Commanding apprised him of the readiness state and operational preparedness of the combat units under their command. The air chief also met and interacted with air warriors serving in these units and lauded the focused efforts by the station personnel towards maintaining proficiency in all roles envisaged and urged them to continue performing their duty with due diligence.

Following PLA's gross violation of India-China peace agreements on June 15 when they brutally killed 20 Indian Army personnel. In the Indian Army's fierce revenge attack, without firearms, PLA soldiers – 3 to 4 times more – were killed. PLA Air Force fighter aircraft and helicopter activities heightened along the LAC. Its fighters and strategic bombers have staged forward and have been detected flying near the Indian Territory maintaining the 10 km plus distance from the boundary.

Chinese helicopters have been flying very close to the LAC in all the troubled sectors, including the Sub Sector North (Daulat Beg Oldie sector), Galwan Valley near Patrolling Point 14, Patrolling Point 15, Patrolling Point 17 and 17A (Hot Springs area), Pangong Tso, and Fingers area.

This was countered by the deployment of India's quick reaction air defence missile, including the Akash missile, which can take down very fast-moving combat aircraft and drones in few seconds. Many modifications and upgrades have already been done in it to make it suitable for

deployment in the high mountainous terrain. IAF's fighter aircraft have also been very active in the Eastern Ladakh area. The surveillance gaps have also been plugged and no enemy aircraft would be able to go undetected India's forces.

Soon after the Chinese transgression into the Indian territory in early May, their aircraft began entering very close to Indian air space and frequently up to their claim lines in the Ladakh sector, including a construction site close to the Galwan valley. The IAF sent its Su-30MKIs to Eastern Ladakh, where formidable air defence systems of both Indian Army and IAF has been to prevent any misadventure by PLA or/and its air force. Also, reportedly, India is very shortly getting a highly capable air defence system from a friendly country that can be deployed and the entire area can be taken care of to prevent any enemy flying there.

India-China Defence Ministers Meet

When General Wei Fenghe, State Councilor and Defence Minister of China, made urgent requests, or as the media put it “begged India for talks,” Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh met him on September 4, in Moscow on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting.

In the two-and-a-half hours the meeting, the Indian defence minister

categorically conveyed India's position on the developments along the LAC, including at Galwan Valley in the last few months and emphasised that the actions of PLA, including amassing of a large number of troops, their aggressive behaviour and attempts to unilaterally alter the status quo violated the bilateral agreements and was not in keeping with the understandings reached between the Special Representatives of two sides.

Indian Defence Minister Singh stated clearly that while the Indian troops had always taken a very responsible approach towards border management, there should be no doubt about its determination to protect India's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Given the CCP-PLA combo's record of renegeing on all past peace and tranquillity agreements, lies, deceit sustained attempts at bullying India till some years ago and this meeting full of platitudes by Gen Fenghe, the immediate future of the talks appear to be bleak.

While China has specialised in projection/propaganda of its military being powerful in numbers weapons and equipment, it should not be opting for an armed confrontation/war. The Indian Armed Forces are preparing for the worst and if push comes to shove, it may not be wrong at all to predict that losses on China will be heavy.

Meanwhile, the least India can expect is an extended eyeball to eyeball standoff but, for a change, with Indian Army being on some commanding heights. On September 6, when Chinese troops attempted to approach Indian troops, the latter fired warning shots in the air, of which China is making a big issue. 🇮🇳



Colonel Anil Bhat (Retd)

Col. Anil Bhat, is a published writer, strategic analyst and former Defence Ministry and Indian Army spokesperson, can be contacted at wordsword02@gmail.com

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On Sino-Indo border: Skirmish, War or Peace?

“While jingoism will rule the airwaves under such conditions and every Indian becomes an analyst, the term ‘war’ adopts a romantic hue”

by Lieutenant General Syed Ata Hasnain (Retd)

As you enter the hallowed precincts of the Defence Services Staff College (DSSC) at Wellington, Tamil Nadu, one of India’s most prestigious military institutions, the credo “Yuddham Pragya” greets you everywhere. Before it got translated to its Sanskrit version, it existed as “Tam Marte Quam Minerva”, or “To War with Wisdom”.

It essentially denotes two things to future senior leaders of the armed forces. First, you need to be wise enough to understand the enormity of war; and second, war should be resorted to if only you have the wisdom to understand and prosecute it. As the ongoing four-month standoff continues at the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh, with some dramatic changes in the last few days, people are increasingly worrying about the possibility of war.

While jingoism will rule the airwaves under such conditions and every Indian becomes an analyst, the term “war” adopts a romantic hue rather than a pragmatic one. It is the wisdom and not the romanticism which must prevail, as per the DSSC credo.

After suffering a perceived ignominy of surprise by PLA troops, under training in depth areas, who transgressed an appreciable distance and refused to vacate the Finger complex of northern Pangong Tso, the ongoing dynamics of buffer zones and uncertainty about transgressions in other areas like Depsang, the Indian Army smartly turned the tables on the PLA.

It opened an unexpected front and proactively beat the PLA to the occupation of dominating features on the Kailash Range, south of Pangong Tso, to secure a couple of advantages. First,

this gives depth to the Chushul Bowl, currently the nerve centre of eastern Ladakh. Second, it gives clear and uninterrupted domination over the Spanggur Gap, Spanggur Lake and the PLA’s Moldo garrison; the locations from which all PLA forces against Chushul will need to spring.

Third, it forces the PLA to focus on our current strength, with no immediate flanks for riposte. Reading this, the natural question a non-military mind should ask is why this action could not have been executed in late May or June. The decision not to do so probably had a basic military rationale.

Since the LAC is perceptual, the Kailash Range features have remained unoccupied by both sides; a sudden occupation at that stage in a critical area like Chushul could have led to a response from the PLA while we were

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While jingoism will rule the airwaves under such conditions and every Indian becomes an analyst, the term “war” adopts a romantic hue rather than a pragmatic one. It is the wisdom and not the romanticism which must prevail.

”

still imbalanced; remembering that in terms of mobilisation of additional troops the PLA had a fair head start over us.

We are more balanced now and in position for a protracted fight should the PLA's response be violent. In terms of a military response, it is not just the first order of action by the adversary that needs to be assessed; that assessment must go well beyond with imponderables increasing at every level and every order. Judging by the emotive and passionate response from China in the political and military domains this time, the temptation to go overboard and attempt eviction to evacuate the Indian occupation would even then have been extremely high. In May-June 2020 it would have triggered a situation of much higher intensity to which we would have had to respond yet from a position of weakness without adequate troops to maintain the necessary balance all along the front.

The operation of 29-30 Aug has been smart thinking, probably a result of some war gaming, but has also been risky as Chushul remained vulnerable.

It is equally important to assess why the PLA did not grab the opportunity to place troops at Rechin La or Helmet Top and dig in, in May or even June. My reasoning only leads me to imagine that it was contempt and a PLA superiority complex which gave it the perception that the Indian side would never have the proactivity to occupy features at a location where it had felt deterred to do so all these years; opening another front by India probably made no sense to the PLA leadership.

Chushul is such a sensitive location on our side it is surprising that the PLA probably got lulled. It attempted to do something based on a late appreciation

once Indian forces (including a lot of mechanised elements) were visible in the Chushul Bowl and its vicinity. We beat them to it with good early warning.

Prominent media persons are asking whether India is now in a position of advantage and whether counterattacks should be expected on the Kailash Range heights as appreciated by a former senior Indian Army commander.

Whatever be the surmise we arrive at, the belief that counterattacks should be expected is sound; this could happen without application of any reasoning; a PLA lower-level knee-jerk response could be expected to retrieve a situation usually associated with commanders in desperation.

Tactically, the heights once secured and in this case reinforced with mechanised elements (some of these heights are rolling “downs”), it will make it extremely difficult to evict our troops without the use of force multipliers; that means artillery, air, rockets and missiles.

All this means war because India too has a lot of those ready for action. Does China wish to pursue this option? At present neither is its narrative carrying weight in the international community nor is there any guarantee that the PLA has the capability to worst the Indian Army in a short, sharp border war.

It is a risk, and a serious one at that. Inability to achieve its objectives means a virtual loss for China and Xi Jinping cannot afford that, especially with the fifth plenary of the 19th Central Committee and Politburo due in October 2020. Conventional wisdom from the past points to October-November being the period for a war-like situation, the winter setting in thereafter.

As such there is a month or more available, for war avoidance by negotiators on both sides. The positive in all this is that engagement at the political, diplomatic, and military levels has not broken down. Sharp words from the Chinese state-controlled media as part of its psychological and information warfare should not influence us.

To my mind, the stumbling block to “status quo ante” just got a little more complex with southern Pangong Tso getting added to the list. Skirmishes could therefore well be on the cards though war is only a remote possibility, with elongation of the standoff a certainty. When that remote possibility happens at all, let our wisdom prevail in pursuing it. 🙏



Lieutenant General Syed Ata Hasnain (Retd)

Lieutenant General Syed Ata Hasnain (reted), PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM is one of India's most respected commentators on national security and a notable member at 'Mission Victory India' The general commanded the Indian Army's 15 Army Corps in Kashmir and was known as the 'People's General' in the Kashmir Valley. You can reach him on Twitter: @atahasnain53

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Effective National Integration Vital for Enhancing India's Defence & Security Imperatives

“The battlefield needs to be looked at from the eyes of a hawk, the fists of a boxer, the legs of a sprinter, the feet of a footballer and nerves of a supercomputer.”

by Brigadier Pradeep Sharma (Retd)

Security and protection of national interests rests squarely on the heads and shoulders of the Governments regardless of which political party forms it, perhaps it is for this reason alone that the Constitution of India talks about the Defence Secretary being responsible for the Defence of India, political parties are not the constant whereas the Defence Secretary does provide continuity in the thought process.

What remains questionable is the 'Nature of appointing the Defence Secretary and his qualification/domain expertise in the field.' Further, the short-sighted approach linked to the 'Five Year' term of each Government leaves much to be desired in the absence of a long term vision document.

Another major weakness is the absence of or lack of Defence Forces presence in decision making and strategising.

These are an indication of the 'Gap' in the formulation of a 'National Strategy' for ensuring the sanctity of our borders and protection of national interests from external aggression.

The current situation along the LAC with China clearly reflects a foggy National Vision for the security of our territory as well as National Interests. Diverse statements by Politicians, Defence Commentators, Experts and External Affairs Ministry are evidence.

The way defence procurements are being pursued tells us of another story.

Present Stand Off Demands an Objective Review

Soma Mukherjee | Kolkata | August 10, 2020/ The Statesman reports suggest that the deployment of Light Armour by China has prompted India to start looking for Light Tanks to counter the Chinese Type ZTPQ tanks. Lieutenant General Shivane (Ex DGMF) is quoted saying "After China moved Type 15 ZTPQ light tanks among other equipment to the areas along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), to support its aggressive posture, is a wakeup call for upgrading

deterrence in these areas where medium category tanks are difficult to deploy,"

The importance of light tank as a 'mobile protected fire power' for the Indian Army for multi-spectrum, multi-front applications cannot be ignored by the professionals. He said, "It is time to review our one size fits all strategy. The need of the hour is to have a mix of light and medium tanks to be effectively meet the emerging threats and fights the next war differently."

"Thus, the immediate need is to dynamically reorient, reshape, restructure and rebalance forces and have a focused, time-sensitive capability development towards Northern borders." Gen Shivane's thoughts were first published by a think tank 'Centre for Joint Warfare Studies' (CENJOWS).

The deployment of light tanks both at high terrains of Himalaya in Northern and Eastern Sectors could be used in both offensive and defensive operations. "The light tank encompasses rapidly closing with and destroy enemy forces thereby preserves freedom of manoeuvre for infantry formations in all weather and visibility conditions."

The Tribune 22 June 2020, carried an article by Vijay Mohan "IAF airlifts dozens of tanks to Ladakh to beef up firepower, first time since 1962 that tanks and mechanised elements urgently airlifted to Ladakh."

India is seriously thinking of procuring Russian made air transportable SDM1 light tank as reported, worth noting that as per reports only 24 such tanks have been bought by the Russian Army and Rosovoron exports would be able to provide these to India only after a year!

Need for Aggressive Defence

Defences they say are never complete, indicating that preparations of defences in a continuous process, requiring review, up gradation, rehearsals and war gaming followed by further reviews and the cycle goes on. Changes and developments forced by

technology, new equipment etc. impact tactics and strategy periodically.

While there can be no denying that the employment of Armour in High Altitudes does give us advantages, the cost effectiveness and ROI requires a rethink. Are there better methods and technology for similar tasks?

The costs, efficacy, degradation in performance due to altitude and rarefied atmosphere need to be considered and evaluated against Anti-Tank Guided Missiles (ATGMs) with Infantry, supported by Precision Guided Munitions (PGMs) guided by UAVs and other aerial platforms which can be accurately employed from stand - off distances using the barren terrain as killing grounds for enemy armour attempting any ingress into our territory. The

ten to fifteen thousand kilometers and the vehicle is sent down to other formations/units operating at lower altitudes.

Compare this with Anti-Tank Guided Missiles (vehicle mounted or/and man portable), the cost of transportation, maintenance and life are far lower and longer, the range of ATGMs out guns a tank, it is more flexible and nimble, consider an increase in density of such weapons combined with anti-tank obstacles where required and to my mind we would have a potent defence.

The limited opportunity offered by terrain in the mountains may in fact be gainfully used to destroy enemy Armour by augmenting the Anti-tank weapons with Infantry Battalions, supported by UAVs for surveillance,



Republic Day 2019; File Photo

skies of course need to be dominated by the IAF.

The cost of induction, maintenance and so forth of tanks far outweighs that of other equipment. The life span and operational efficiency are both much reduced in a rarefied atmosphere, every two to three years this equipment requires an upgrade due to engine wear alone.

For example, a Maruti Gypsy lasts for one lakh kilometers in the plains, however, in super high altitudes the performance is degraded after

target acquisition and guiding PGMs at reasonable depths.

One must acquire and use technology for maintaining surveillance in our areas of Interest as well as areas of Influence. Targets for interdiction along lines of maintenance are a must. The key to a good defence is effective surveillance based upon which aerial platforms, ground forces for holding relevant features deny, hold/stop and destroy enemy forces and upset his efforts and reserves to respond ground-based situations.

A balanced and well thought out plan based on these is required for any permanent /long term plans. Close coordination amongst all forces deployed along the LAC includes a unified command and control which facilitates not only intelligence but also ensures proper defensive planning, coordination, and responses at various levels.

A Galwan Type Situation Restricts Speedy & Unified Response

Imagine different 'Brains' controlling various organs of the body, the leg moving back while the hands swing forward and eyes looking elsewhere!?

As a Nation, India needs to (if not already done) reexamine and work out threat perceptions, prioritise these and deploy equipment as well as force levels which are capable of acting as deterrence as well as stopping any adventurism, allowing for a riposte to either dislodge the enemy or compel the enemy to withdraw.

A stalemate is more than likely if such a riposte is delayed beyond a set timeline as the enemy forces would dig in and stabilise.

A frame work which may be cost effective may just be expected to be based on the following:-

- At the strategic levels it needs to be Satellite Surveillance which looks deep into areas of interest, serving as early warning to allow for sufficient time to own forces for deploying/activation.
- Aerial Surveillance to ensure that there exist no gaps in the Area of Interest and Area of Influence, which needs to be within strike capability of various weapon systems or forces.
- Ground holding in sufficient strength at vulnerable locations to prevent ingress. Integrated with these forces, Anti-Tank Obstacles, remotely delivered mines, UAVs capable of Tactical Surveillance, Target Acquisition, Target Designation.
- Suitably positioned forces, fully acclimatised and ready to respond

either for a riposte or eviction. These may be Combat Groups where terrain permits such forces to operate, Infantry Units equipped with additional Surveillance as well as Anti-Tank Missiles, supported by PGMs with multiple use ammunition.

- Multi Terrain Vehicles may also be added to the inventory for speedy movement of troops, ammunition, casualty evacuation as well as other roles.

The deployment of heavy equipment like Tanks may be reconsidered keeping in mind the limited employment opportunities, cost of deployment, maintenance, degradation in operational mobility. A combination of suitable technology as suggested, may just be the right answer.

With Defence Manufacturing being opened and encouraged by the Government, private defence equipment manufacturers, we need to ensure that the right mix of weapons, equipment and technology is readily available on each front. The time lag is worrying.

Conclusion

The battlefield needs to be looked at from the eyes of a hawk, the fists of a boxer, the legs of a sprinter, the feet of a footballer and nerves of a supercomputer. All sensory organs, act as early warning systems, the brain being the control centre, the nerves as the chain of command, abdomen as the logistics support and legs for mobility.

Just as there is 'One Brain' acting as the control centre for different organs, no organ indulges in 'turf war' even though they have different roles and responsibilities the Defence of a Country needs also to rid itself of 'turf war' if we have to win battles and wars. To that extent the need for a unified system of sharing information/intelligence and quick responses is a must.

Politics over National Security needs to take a back bench. Advice from military minds, strategic think tanks needs to be given due importance.

Placing all border guarding elements under the Army would ensure synergy and appropriate responses, economy of effort would provide us a more cogent system and balanced expenditure of funds, therefore, a re look at the budget for CAPF vs a vs Defence may be considered pragmatic.

A reduction in the CAPFs, leading to an increase in budget for defence forces and emphasis on State Police modernisation for internal law & order in my opinion should be the order of the day.

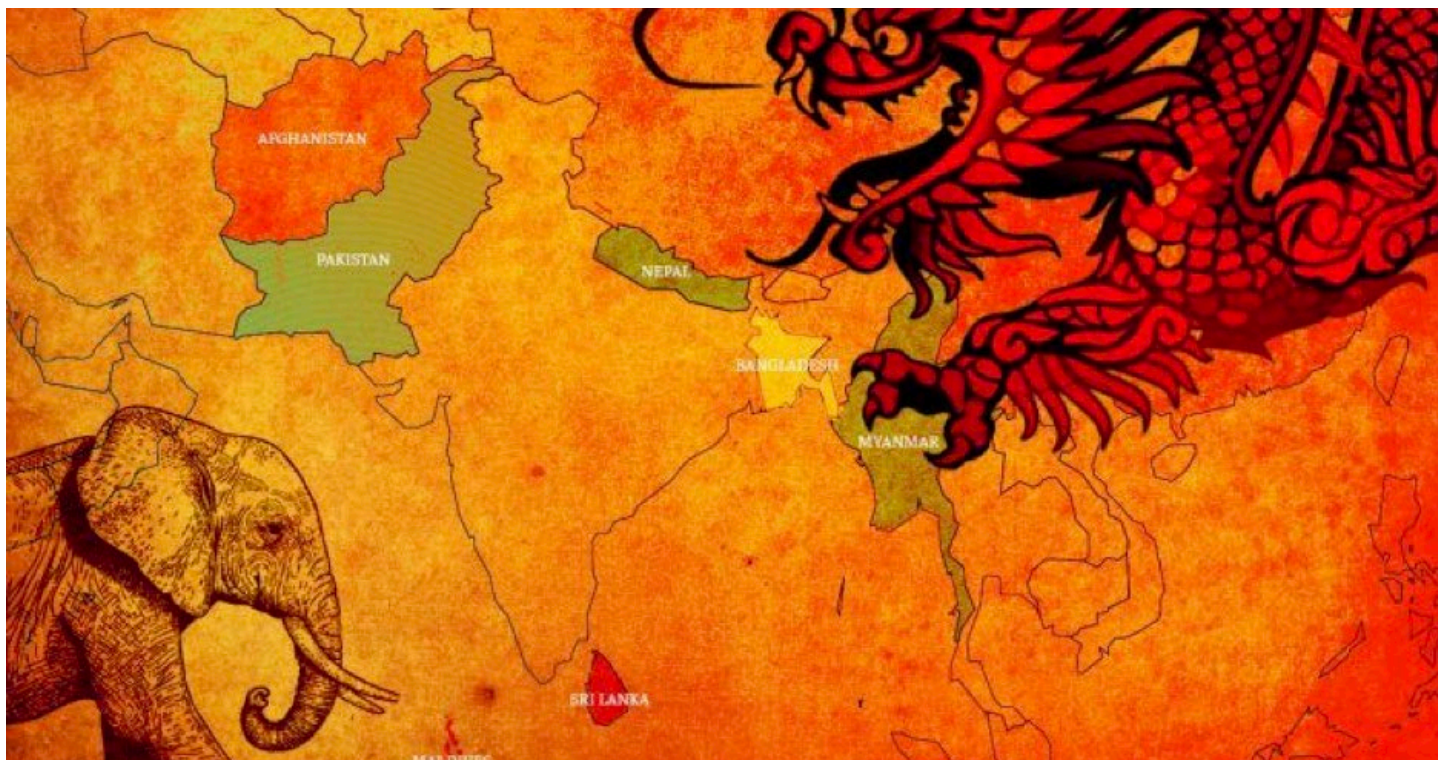
Had the Government paid attention to this all-important aspect, proper planning, procurement and preparation would have been more cost effective rather than 'panic buying'. Our responses would have ensured that the Chinese suffered in their attempts to intrude into our territory rather than allowing them to occupy our area and then ponder over dialogue versus military action! 🙏



Brigadier Pradeep Sharma (Retd)

In 35 years of service, Brig Sharma was tasked to raise the (NSG) and was squadron commander 51 Special Actions Groups (SAG), served as an instructor at Indian Military Academy (IMA), Commander of a Brigade in High Altitude Areas, Directing Staff in Army War College (AWC), among other high profile appointments. He has been a member of study groups on China as well as Officer Cadre management in his time. He can be reached on Email ID: pradeepsharma66@gmail.com

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Sino-Indo Logjam: Aim, Capability & Environmental Analysis

Whatever China set out to do with India, the opposite has happened. China is now entangled in its secondary theatre when the primary one in South China Sea is frothing. Any major action on this front will have repercussions there.”

by Lieutenant General PR Shankar (Retd)

I was in the Indian Military Academy (IMA), Lieutenant Colonel Shankar Roy Choudhry (later a General and our COAS) taught us the Principles of War, twirling his moustaches. The first and foremost principle he taught - ‘Selection and Maintenance of Aim’. He also introduced the Clausewitzan postulate - “War is continuation of politics by other means”. As I grew professionally, it dawned on me that ‘Selection and Maintenance of Aim’ also meant that war between nations must be prosecuted with a political aim, desired end state, conflict termination and exit strategy – all with fall back options. If you do not use this strategic toolkit - you lose.

In the current Sino-Indian context what are the respective national aims? The Indian aim is straight forward. India aims to maintain its territorial integrity, altered at the LAC

unilaterally by Chinese aggression. How about the Chinese aim? In the past four months many have speculated about it. No clear answers. Have they maintained it, or has it changed? What is it now? What are the repercussions? It will tell us where we are heading.

Aim Analysis

In an inscrutable, complicated, and ambitious country like China nothing is singular or definitive. Hence a broad range of likely aims need consideration.

Territorial Aim: Settlement of the LAC in own favor before Indian border infrastructure improves to a level beyond which China might not be able to force the issue on its terms. This aim is linked to abrogation of Article 370, threat posed by DSDBO road to CPEC,

‘Doklam revenge’, regional dominance and putting India in its place through a massive military embarrassment.

Dominance Aim: Demonstrate and assert that China is the most dominant power – virus or not. Regional and global messaging that India is no competitor or leader, breaking the QUAD and targeting India’s growing links with USA, Australia and Taiwan are all connected.

Economic Aim: Prevent decoupling and economic relocation. India is the chosen target due to being at the forefront of decoupling and relocation drive, resistance to BRI, CPEC and RCEP, declaring intent for self-sufficiency and attracting investment. India as a competitor had to be destroyed.



In the current Sino-Indo context what are the respective national aims? The Indian aim is straight forward. India aims to maintain its territorial integrity, altered at the LAC unilaterally by Chinese aggression. How about the Chinese aim?



Domestic Aim: The aim could have also been to cater for hyping nationalism or diversion from internal problems due to the then prevalent virus-related geopolitics.

Most Likely Aim: Analyze. The Territorial Aim is the most plausible. Others are inherent sub themes. However, to achieve this, the operation had to be on tight timelines. The shock of surprise had to be exploited to present a fait-accompli to India quickly. USA, after recovering from the initial shock of the Wuhan Virus, would retaliate due to concurrent events in the South China Sea. China had to exit fast to avoid the current two-front situation.

Execution

I am now even more convinced that the Chinese targets were the DSDBO Road at the Galwan-Shyok Junction and the Gurudongmar Road, through Naku La. These incursions, if successful, would have enabled China to achieve its aim while presenting a nightmare scenario for India. Others at Depsang, Gogra, Pangong Tso and Demchok were supporting actions. However, Naku La was blocked by alert Indian action.

The weight shifted to Eastern Ladakh. By early Jun, China was dictating terms. Indian response was hesitant and unsure. Chinese appeared ten-foot-tall and India was grasping at straws due to slick influence operations. The Galwan-Shyok junction eluded China.

At this stage if China had stepped back, they would have achieved most of their fall back options and some territorial advantage. However, they were myopic and changed track. China opted for tactical gains to maximize

territorial grab despite agreeing to disengage at the Corps Commanders level meet. Then Galwan happened.

It unshackled India. It broke Chinese invincibility, roused India, instilled belief in the Army and hardened the nation. After that the Chinese lost the plot. War entails conflict termination once political goals (even partly) are achieved before the enemy recovers. Any idiot who reads history would tell you that India's forte is counterattack - 1947, 1965, 1971 and Kargil.

True to form, given time, India has turned the tables. It is now fighting classic mountain warfare. Hold the tops - Finger 4 and South Pangong Tso heights. China is plain bound and will hereafter be dominated. China is fighting with the hills while India has taken to the hills.

The Residual Chinese Aim

China might have started with an Aim but has not maintained it. Today its 'Aim' seems to be a 'face-saving exit'. However, their concept of face saving involves - inflicting a blow on India, make India vacate the heights and retain its territorial gains. Does it have the capability to do so? I doubt. If things freeze as they are - it is advantage India.

A headline in NEWSWEEK says so - 'The Chinese Army flops in India. What will Xi do next'? Status quo ante is passe. Holding the heights South of Pangong Tso up to Rezang La virtually closes most avenues to Leh while opening own offensive options. This ridge line should never be vacated.

PLA can keep sitting on the Fingers and open up tourist activities there. Those in power will be historic villains if these 'Strategic' gains are

given away just as those are, who gave Haji Pir back to Pakistan.

Capability Analysis

The PLA has a 'Stability - Instability' paradox'. The PLA might have great equipment, sophisticated infrastructure, and faster communications. Their Command and Control structure at Theatre level must be great. Very stable at the top. At the lower levels, lack of battle experience and operational adaptability is palpably apparent.

The widely reported 'peace disease and micro corruption' have taken their toll. There is instability at the bottom evidenced at Galwan and the Karakoram Ridge Line. Why is the PLA less than the sum of its parts is a question which is propping up. The PLA has grown politically. It might not have grown militarily.

The video clip showing off PLA capabilities of air dropping, rocket and SP Artillery firing is impressive. Watch it again critically. Will it be effective? Tactically well dispersed and deployed Infantry and Artillery in mountains as well as Armour tucked into folds in defensive positions in high altitude plains will not be affected by rocket ammunition spraying all over.

On the other hand, Chinese positions, concentrated in plains, near permanent bases / non tactical staging areas are sitting ducks for own direct firing weapons, Artillery and Air Force. Their bases can be dislocated. Aim for that clinically.

Rockets firing is a dead give-away from 30-40 km away. A systematic appreciation of hides, routes and firing positions will enable their accurate location and decimation by IAF. The Rockets can shoot once only. The IAF should not allow them to scoot. Nothing lowers morale of Infantry than Guns being lost. It needs joint planning between Artillery and IAF.

Need I say this at all? I am sure the commanders on ground will do better than my old age babbling! Oh BTW, I have always loved direct firing. Kargil proved its utility. A few guns on the South bank of Pangong Tso with latest direct firing night sights will provide

adventure to tourists on the fingers. At the core. Our infantry is pure hardened ESR steel. PLA beware.

As per Clausewitz, 'Strategy is about picking the right battles. Tactics are about successfully executing those battles. The Aimless grey zone strategy of 'Belligerent War Avoidance' has led Chinese to pick the wrong battle. Their tactics? Medieval at best. The fighting morale is apparently not high.

War is a two-sided blood sport. Not a unilateral firepower demonstration. Do the Chinese have the stomach for body bags? So far, they have hidden them. In the ultimate analysis morale determines outcomes. Indian battlefield morale is high.

Environment

The Chinese spokesperson Zhao Lijan and that comic strip, Global Times, have repeatedly spoken of winter. PLA might not be prepared for it. Appears to be a weakness. They have pumped in Motorized Divisions. Heavily mechanized formations even if reinforced will struggle in winter. Logistically and operationally. Their troops will not be that battle effective.

On the other hand, we just need to remember that we initially occupied and held on to Siachen Glacier with normal boots and clothing. Arctic equipment started pouring in later. All our Infantry and Artillery units have had 2-3 tenures on the Glacier/ high altitudes over the past two decades.

Also, they are battle hardened after fighting all kinds of ideologically committed insurgents and terrorists who would never give a quarter. This advantage must be driven home ruthlessly. We just need to consolidate and hold on now. Stave off any PLA attempt to retrieve their situation.

Let things cool a bit. As winter sets in give the Chinese another 'gray zone knock'. That will bring them to senses. It is high time we also make the PLA look back. The Tibet card must be flashed brightly. It will add to their confusion and consternation.

Larger Picture

Whatever China set out to do with India, the opposite has happened. China is now entangled in its secondary theatre when the primary one in South China Sea is frothing. Any major action on this front will have repercussions there. Already China is getting hyphenated with India.

Internally there appears to be some political instability. The floods have created havoc. Food is short. Their Non-Han rimlands are having unprecedented problems. The Tibet issue has flared up again. The economy is misfiring. Their diplomacy is failing. Any major offensive action by China is a high-risk gamble with unpredictable outcomes.

If it goes wrong and the chances are high, the Leader for life will have to start looking for a new job or there will be a huge purge. Even if things go China's way to some extent, it will not end. I am sure we will continue with grey zone operations and start an insurgency against Chinese illegal occupation of Tibet.

What Should We Do?

The Foreign ministers have met and issued their statements. The Chinese have already started twisting things even before the ink is dry. Untrustworthy they remain. We have an historic opportunity to get rid of the ghosts of 1962. Hold on to our positions.

Do not let the Chinese go back. Xi's face-saving is not India's concern. Do not lose nerve. Comprehensive National Strength has no value in battle. Conserve strength. Fire for effect.

Play the Gray Zone. With time India will grow stronger. Economies will recover. Morale once lost takes time to recover. Instigate Tibet and Xinjiang. Talk of an alliance with USA. Never trust the Chinese.

Snakes and Viruses are better. Have faith in the Indian Armed Forces. They will deliver the goods. They have never failed India after 1962. The world, except stupid Pakistanis is with us. If we show down the Chinese, they will flock to us. A stalemate is victory for India. Just achieve that. Anything more is gravy.

Reflections

Battles are not linear. Vietnam defeated France, USA, and China with almost nothing. Afghanistan defeated UK, USSR, and USA with less than nothing. India is better trained, equipped and prepared than Vietnam or Afghanistan were ever were. PLA is not half of what USA, UK, USSR, France, or the Old China was. So where is the doubt? I have never had one.

Our economy is down. The Chinese Virus is devastating our people. We are not that well equipped due to our own inadequacies. We are fighting with our backs to the wall. We have a clear aim. That is a recipe for victory. We can pull this off and stop this juggernaut. If we do that and I do not see why not, we will see a different India emerge.

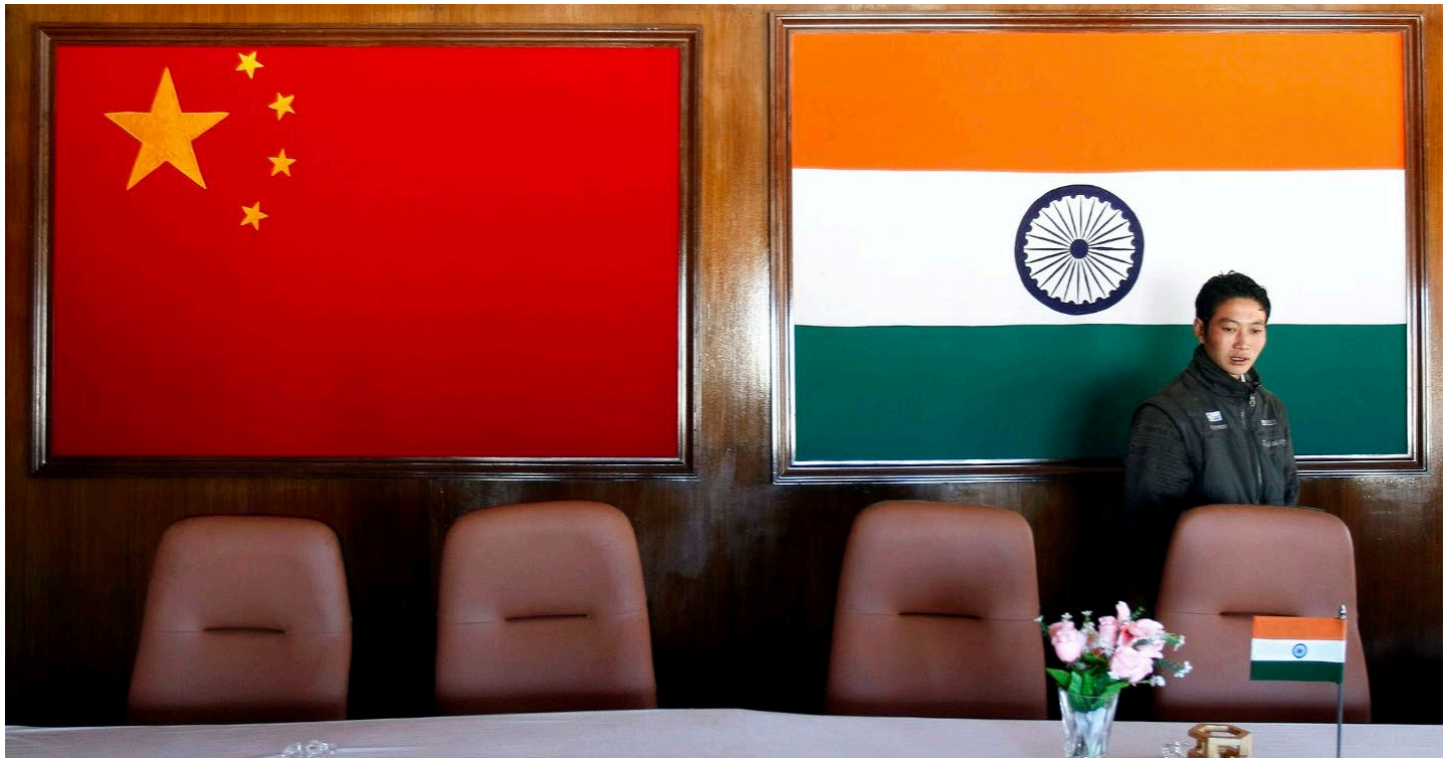
The past two weeks have indicated that wars can be won only by fighting. Enough of SunTzu. That is why I got back to Clausewitz. 🇮🇳



Lieutenant General PR Shankar

Lt Gen PR Shankar was India's Director General (DG) Artillery. He is highly decorated and qualified with vast operational experience. He is now a Professor in the Aerospace Dept of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras. You can reach him on Twitter: @palepurshankar, Email ID: pravishankar3@gmail.com.

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The Curse of Semantics in Conflict

“Clearly China had infiltrated the Indian establishment years back to include bureaucrats, politicians, media, scholars and other besides working on diplomats posted in Beijing. Little wonder that all recommended or rather enforced a ‘soft’ line on China – quiet submission.”

by Lieutenant General Prakash Katoch (Retd)

The Line of Actual Control (LAC) between India and China has remained ambiguous ever since. China reneged on the McMahon Line demarcated between Tibet and Northeast region of India at the Shimla Conference (October 1913–July 1914) between Tibet and Great Britain which was signed by the Tibetan representative.

Over the years, China has taken India for a royal ride without indicating a firm claim to-date, taking advantage of an un-demarcated LAC. To top this China plays the game of multiple claim lines in the same area, which they have also been doing with Bhutan. Despite knowing which LAC China was referring to, we foolishly signed various agreements with China, like:

- 1993 - Agreement on Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility along the LAC
- 1996 - Agreement on Confidence Building Measures in the Military Field along the LAC
- 2005 - Protocol on Modalities for the implementation of the Confidence Building Measures in the Military Field along the LAC
- 2012 - Agreement on establishment of a working mechanism for consultation and coordination on India-China Border Affairs
- 2013 - Border Defence Cooperation Agreement (BDCA)

China is in illegal occupation of 43,180 sq km territory of the original state of Jammu and Kashmir that had officially acceded to India on Independence; 38,000 sq km of Aksai Chin and 5,180 sq km Shaksgam illegally handed over by Pakistan to China in 1963. In addition, despite the above so-called five agreements China had managed to nibble another 645 sq km by 2013 as per the Shyam Saran report (not made public) handed over to then Prime Minister in 2013. 400 sq km of these 645 sq km is in Ladakh as per former ambassador P Stopden.

India kept pussyfooting amidst the jargon of “transgressions” instead of intrusions, “their perception of boundary”, China Claim Line (CCL) and the like as if we needed

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A big question is why the ‘China Stooges’ in the Indian establishment who had access to means for monitoring movement of PLA formations in Aksai Chin and advance beyond did not alert the military? Was it by design? But no heads will roll and there is no question of anyone accepting responsibility and stepping down.

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to give credence to such crap. The term “transgressions” was also used to propagate that we too keep going across according to “our perception” of the LaC. But no one asked if China had nibbled away additional 645 sq km of our territory, how much have we retrieved or sliced off from China Occupied Tibet?

Clearly China had infiltrated the Indian establishment years back to include bureaucrats, politicians, media, scholars and other besides working on diplomats posted in Beijing. Little wonder that all recommended or rather enforced a ‘soft’ line on China – quiet submission.

No doubt there were the Nathu La and Sumdorong Chhu incidents when China was on the receiving end but China continued to exploit vulnerabilities of the Indian establishment and ensured bureaucratic control over the military which is wholly different from civilian control. The Indian National Congress (INC) even signed a memorandum of understanding with the Communist Party of China in 2008 (sic) – might as well have had similar agreements with Pakistan and Turkey where they have already established an office.

But Chinese infiltration and influence over the Indian establishment has been irrespective of whichever political party formed the government in India. That is why we accepted ‘One China’ without China accepting ‘One India’. That is why despite China working against Indian interests at every step, the futile efforts to woo Xi Jinping through informal summits at Wuhan, Ahmedabad and Mamallapuram. The susceptibility of the Indian establishment continues.

A Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament went public in recent years about a dozen plus Indian politicians in the hawala racket (under ISI blackmail) and some bureaucrats of defence ministry honey trapped. Beijing’s diktats to its ‘followers-cum-employees’ in India include ensure ‘soft’ approach to China no matter what China does; keep the military at arms’ length, and curtail India’s hard power.

The results are obvious. We still do not have a national security strategy, have not done a worthwhile strategic defence review and defence budget



An Indian soldier communicates with colleagues on a walkie-talkie at Nathula Gate; Photo Credits; Deshakalyan Chowdhury; File Photo

allocations were reduced to below 1962 levels. The finance minister became the executioner of military’s budgetary demands with not thought to operational imperatives.

Now suddenly with the Chinese aggression, there is rush for defence imports with no dearth of finances despite the economy being in the dumps. We do not seem to understand there is no short-cut to building hard

power without which we cannot really stand up to China. Network-centric warfare (NCW) capabilities being built by the army over the years were killed with budgetary cuts and can hardly be built in a jiffy.

Our only thinking appears to be to cut down army manpower while there is no limit on expanding central armed police forces. Visuals of the recent meeting between defence ministers of India and China in Moscow witnessed the Chinese minister accompanied by an array of PLA officials with our defence minister sitting across with a galaxy of bureaucrats - not a single military officer.

There are no military advisors in the Prime Minister’s Office. Now another Shekatkar committee is appointed to increase civilians in various echelons of the army rather than combatising the civilians (sic). Nehru’s legacy that police is enough for securing the nation has mostly continued by undermining primacy of the military in

national security notwithstanding the ‘surgical strikes’ that were reactions to losses suffered.

Will the above change with the Chinese intrusions in Eastern Ladakh?

The government still has not placing the ITBP (Indo Tibetan Border Police) in the show window of Ladakh under the command of the army. The fear is age old – all senior appointments in



Infantrymen charging into battle supported by an armoured column; File Photo

central armed police forces are manned by IPS officers; IPS officers man intelligence agencies and are privy to skeletons of politicians and bureaucrats. Keeping them on the right side is much more important than operational requirements.

A big question is why the 'China Stooges' in the Indian establishment who had access to means for monitoring movement of PLA formations in Aksai Chin and advance beyond did not alert the military? Was it by design? But no heads will roll and there is no question of anyone accepting responsibility and stepping down.

The current Chinese aggression has added new semantics to the jargon mentioned above. There is frequent use of terms like 'disengagement', 'de-escalation', 'status quo', 'buffer zone' etc. Talks are continuing unabated but which LAC are we discussing while the PLA consolidates the intrusions and China accuses us of crossing the LAC?

The Ministry of External Affairs has recently stated that India expects China to sincerely work with it for complete disengagement of troops along the LAC in Eastern Ladakh and de-escalation along with the full restoration of peace and tranquility in the border areas. Is that what we really want or are we lost in semantics?

When we call for disengagement, China demands our troops also move back from Finger 4 on north bank of Pangong Tso. Are the troops on both sides not about a kilometer apart throughout Eastern Ladakh? Do we want a so-called buffer zone in our own territory? It is also amazing to hear views that China having come in is not going to withdraw, and therefore we should accept status quo – wouldn't China love this?

With respect to the Chinese aggression in Eastern Ladakh, the only official statement that India should keep repeating is that PLA must return to deployments as in April 2020. Talk of

anything else is pointless with China insisting PLA is in its own territory, India is the aggressor and making new claims like whole of Galwan Valley.

Time has also come to bury the term LAC, which was first used by Zhou en-Lai in a 1959 letter to Jawaharlal Nehru and subsequently used for the line formed after the 1962 Sino-Indian War. India should tell China the only border we recognize is the one between India and Tibet, not China occupied Tibet. This would also serve as a shut-up call to China for illegally demanding Arunachal Pradesh as 'South Tibet'. 🇮🇳



Lieutenant General Prakash Katoch

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The PLA's 'Peace Disease'

“Battle experience cannot be bought, and this could expose the Chinese chimera on the battlefield.”

by Lieutenant General Bhopinder Singh (Retd)

None less than the Chinese leader Xi Jinping himself has conceded that the world's largest standing military, the People's Liberation Army (PLA), with more than 2.1 million active-duty strength, is afflicted by the “Peace Disease.”

Since taking over the reins of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) as the General Secretary and chairmanship of the Central Military Commission (CMC) in 2012, Xi has unleashed transformational investments and restructuring in the PLA in terms of doctrinal, strategic, technological, cultural and on-boarding of weapon platforms.

Yet, he remains acutely conscious of the combat inexperience that besets a military force that has not been tested since 1979, where it came a cropper against a decidedly inferior Vietnamese force. Importantly, the

Vietnamese forces that had fought the Chinese in 1979 were still blood-soaked from fighting the American forces for nearly two decades, and had even worn out the supposedly better organised, trained and equipped military then.

The essential mass of the Chinese PLA in 1979 had last seen a full theatre-level combat only in the early 1950s (Korean War) and soldiers, therefore, were raw and untested when they had taken on the Vietnamese. They were soon made to pay a price for lazily assuming that a larger force, better equipment, and aggressive posturing could compensate for combat inexperience. It is this foreboding pertaining to the obvious inexperience of today's PLA that Xi has been alluding to in the context of “Peace Disease,” even as it continues its optics of aggressive

posturing, intimidation and global expansionism.

There are other elements compounding the “Peace Disease” that are pertinent in questioning the core spirit of PLA's fighting abilities. First, the perennial concern of ensuring PLA's loyalty and subservience to the civilian CCP – this got magnified by the purges initiated against the PLA Generals in the initial Xi years and elevating his own “young guard.” Not only was this “young guard” of post-1979 vintage but the essentiality of “unity of command” in a Chinese combat unit (at company levels) is always diluted and compromised with the shared command responsibility of the political officers, who are responsible for ensuring the non-military task of loyalty to the party, i.e. CCP.



PLA recruits during a bayonet drill; File Photo

A vital chink in the structural formation of the PLA is the relative under-development of the non-commissioned officers (NCO cadre), which is invaluable for operational efficacy. The steel of the Indian Army that shone in the Kargil operations was attributable among other things to the “junior command” that led from the front, where the role of NCO cadre was significant.

Unlike the militaries of India (or even Pakistan), which are bloodied in real time operational experience in internal urgencies or restive borders, the Chinese “Peace Disease” comes with accompanying laxities. Even the 1967 Nathu La and Cho La border clashes in the Indo-China history were symptomatic of a recalibrated Indian military that was by then battle-hardened and in a vastly different frame of mind from the Indian military of 1962.

Undoubtedly, China has embarked on mammoth military investments that ensure that its annual budgetary allocation (estimated at \$261-266 billion in 2019) towards its armed forces is almost four times that of India. There is debatable realism about the Chinese claims in cutting-edge military technologies (the Chengdu J-20 Stealth ‘5th generation’ fighter plane) or about the quality of training, restructuring, command systems and so on.

Despite its claimed proficiency in indigenous weaponry, China has openly sought S-300 and S-400 anti-aircraft

systems, SU-27 and SU-35 fighter jets from Russia, among other platforms and technologies to “reverse engineer.” But where the Chinese score over countries like India is in the way they have internalised “security” as an integral component of their national vision, international manoeuvres and strategic calculus for all policy decisions, be it internal or external.

Whereas, beyond selective invoking of the “Indian soldier” whenever tensions looms, the Indian governance has diminished the role, relevance, or priority on defence matters and only displays knee-jerk or politically competitive “investments” in the said domain. Ironically the mismanagement of India’s domestic affairs by its political classes has ensured that the armed forces have not suffered any “Peace Disease.”

Battle experience is one of the most important features that determines



Lieutenant General Bhopinder Singh (Retd)

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the fate of forces, along with others like the lethality of weapons, processes, leadership, numerical strength or even environmental factors like social, cultural or political moorings. Japan’s “banzai” culture and motivation levels could compensate for material disadvantages. The numerically far-superior and experienced Iraqi military (after the decade long Iran-Iraq war) got decimated within 100 hours by the superiority of American weapons, training and professionalism in the first Gulf War.

At the same time, the same battle-experienced and obviously more professional American military has been forced to “pull out” of Afghanistan when faced by the rag-tag Taliban militia who neither have the matching weaponry, training, nor the infrastructural wherewithal.

The Chinese awkwardness with the reciprocal stare-down at Doklam, Galwan gallantry and recent operations of the Indian Army in occupying advantageous heights is reflective of the “Peace Disease” that has been sought to be compensated by sabre-rattling, deceit and troops/infrastructural build-up.

Lieutenant General He Lei of the PLA had famously remarked a couple of years ago that his biggest regret before retiring was that he never fought a war – his successors are even more distant from war experience, whereas, those on the other side may have other concerns and deficiencies, but “Peace Disease” is certainly not one of them. Battle experience cannot be bought and this could expose the Chinese chimera on the battlefield. 🇨🇳



The Unfolding Situation at the India–China Border: Call to Prepare for a Prolonged Haul

“If no amicable solution is reached, the standoff would develop into a long haul resulting into logistic build-up for the winters, and deployments of all arms in sufficient numbers to maintain a balanced posture.”

by Lieutenant General (Dr) Vijay Kumar Ahluwalia (Retd)

While the talks were at play at different levels to diffuse the tensions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), on 30 August, the Indian Army pre-empted Chinese provocative actions to occupy the dominating heights on the southern bank of Pangong Tso and Rechin la or Requin mountain pass in Eastern Ladakh. Based on effective surveillance and situational awareness, India foiled the PLA's attempts, along with their mechanised elements, to occupy the said heights.

This successful offensive action exemplifies the grit and undeterred attitude of the Indian Army against its adversary. Besides, it also adds to the motivation and morale of the Indian troops on the ground. But this win calls for a longer battle that is likely to unfold, that the Indian Armed Forces need to be prepared to fight. Owing to

this new development, it becomes imperative to understand: What is China Thinking?

To note, China's state-owned newspaper Global Times reported that, China's Western Theatre Command has accused the “Indian troops to have once again illegally crossed the LAC near the south bank of the Pangong Lake”. Calling it a “blatant provocative move that seriously infringed on China's territorial sovereignty”, it further stated that India is a “typical opportunist” when it comes to the China-India border issue, and that “China must resolutely counterattack India's opportunist move”.

These very statements by Global Times, although do not represent the Chinese Government's official position, but it somewhat resonates the Chinese

thinking. In this case, China thinks it will be able to ‘coerce and intimidate’ India by these statements.

To add, Global Times also categorically stated that “China-India border frictions are likely to prolong, and various kinds of crises, be they big or small, will become normal.” Further, it accused India of ‘trying to turn it (south bank and strategic heights) into a new disputed area as a bargaining chip in negotiations’- adding to Chinese psywar campaign to deter India. These statements make an interesting case in point and suggest that a prolonged deployment on the LAC is likely to be the new normal.

For China tends to forget its own actions in the past, just four months ago. To note, the precursor to the current tensions was laid by PLA's aggressive

In response to China's incessant psywar campaign, at least two messages must be clearly given out: one, that Indian troops are battle hardened and are highly proficient in mountain warfare, and that any military misadventure by China will be dealt with severely.

actions at the borders, both in Sikkim and Eastern Ladakh in May.

Wherein, China was engaged changing the status quo at the India-China border by taking actions such as: diverting its troops conducting training in high altitude areas on the Tibetan Plateau towards Eastern Ladakh; mobilising additional mechanised formations (4 Motorised Division and 6 Mechanised Division, along with their light tanks T15, vehicle mounted 155mm howitzers and air defence guns) and fighter aircrafts to areas closer to the LAC and forward airbases respectively; contacting the LAC on a wide front at multiple points; transgressing across the LAC that led to large scale standoffs and physical scuffles, resulting into killing of 20 Indian soldiers on 15 June at Galwan; continuing build-up of war waging systems and preparations of field fortifications and infrastructure up to the LAC; and fiercely unleashing information cum psychological warfare campaign by way of: fake news, false narratives, morphed images, videos, incorrect maps, blocking information dissemination systems, manipulating the perception of domestic and global audience, and exhibiting superiority in economy, GDP and technology.

In response to China's incessant psywar campaign, at least two messages must be clearly given out: one, that Indian troops are battle hardened and are highly proficient in mountain warfare, and that any military misadventure by China will be dealt with severely; two, an often quoted statistics has been that Indian military is no match to China's, as the latter's economy and GDP is minimum five times that of India. History is replete with examples, including China's conflict with Vietnam, which suggest that outcomes of military conflicts are not dependent on GDP differential alone.

Needless to say, these Chinese actions highlighted the intentions and sinister design of the PLA to change the status of the LAC to its strategic advantage; thus, disregarding the spirit of diplomatic cum political initiatives, and the five major border management mechanisms and CBM agreements and protocols that were signed between 1993 and 2013, by the two countries. Post 30 August military action by India, Global Times reported that "if China and India are really engaged in comprehensive antagonism, it will be much easier for China to rope in



Para SF Operatives rigged for airborne insertion; File Photo

countries, including Pakistan, against India".

What explains China's adventurism along the LAC? Given the several challenges being faced by China, both within and outside, China's actions may have been due to cumulative effect of a number of reasons: India's opposition to China's flagship projects BRI and CPEC, and RCEP; India's role in Quad and further enhancement of strategic partnership with the US; development of strategic infrastructure along the India-China border,

especially the 255 Km strategic Road Darbuk- Shyok-DBO; and India's actions to abrogate Articles 370 and 35A in Jammu and Kashmir and publication of maps in which the entire Aksai Chin is shown as part of the Union Territory of Ladakh. In this regard, India's pre-emption only checkmated China's unfolding sinister design at the LAC.

Options

What are the options available for India and China? To note, an adversary's threat to India's sovereignty and territorial integrity is not just limited to the border but encompasses all elements of its national power. In view of this, India has two broad options: first, use all elements of national power; and second, act militarily both on the continental and maritime domains. So far, against PLA's aggression and the mistrust that has developed, India has tempered its actions to review and recalibrate its China policy

involving political, economic, diplomatic, military, information and psywar domains.

It is certainly not business as usual! In the long term, India must progressively improve its comprehensive national power (CNP), sustained economic growth, and build its continental and maritime capabilities. Thus, India must invest in building its capabilities and resolve to deter our adversaries. According to The Economic Times, the trade deficit between the two countries was at USD 53.56 billion in

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History is replete with examples, including China’s conflict with Vietnam, which suggest that outcomes of military conflicts are not dependent on GDP differential alone.”

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2018-19 and USD 63 billion in 2017-18. India’s trade deficit with China fell to USD 48.66 billion in 2019-20 on account of decline in imports from China.

Specifically, on 2 September, India has banned 118 more mobile apps with Chinese links, including Baidu, Alipay, WeChat Work and popular mobile game PUBG, citing data privacy concerns and a threat to national security. It took the total count to 224. Some of these actions have already hurt the Chinese companies as the Global Times reported on 3 September that “China firmly opposes India’s ban on 118 Chinese apps” and explains that the Chinese firms and investors will bare huge losses.

Wherein, a media strategy, though not a robust and comprehensive one at that, has also been followed to counter the Chinese information – cum psychological warfare campaign. Being more defensive, India has predominantly aimed at shaping the perceptions of the domestic and global audience, which is not good enough against a well-orchestrated campaign by China and Pakistan.

While militarily, the option is to adopt a short-term and long-term strategy. Wherein, the ‘short-term’ should encourage immediate disengagement of troops on both sides- a process that has been halted at few areas of contact at China’s resistance, despite several round of talks. Here, the endeavour should be to restore the status quo, as it existed in April 2020.

This would require complete disengagement and the withdrawal of the additional troops (on both sides) that were inducted to their permanent locations, and their movements duly monitored. In addition, propagating narratives that both countries ‘must avoid differences from escalating into disputes’ should be avoided. For it

only creates greater scope for new disputes to occur. Rather it would be appropriate to suggest that the existing differences should be resolved on priority- thus, narrowing the room for new disputes.

This policy prescription will help seek a long-term solution to the unsettled border. Being global players, for India and China, the intentions should be on securing a long-term solution to the dispute to bring peace and stability to the region.

Anticipating a Long Haul but Making a Way Forward



Indian troops are highly adept at Mountain Warfare; File Photo

If no amicable solution is reached, the standoff would develop into a long haul resulting into logistic build-up for the winters, and deployments of all arms in sufficient numbers to maintain a balanced posture. If this be the case, India needs to follow the bottom-line principle – it is strength that mellows China. It needs to be understood that a strong military muscle based on technology-based systems (hard, soft and

demonstrated power) in all domains – acts as a strong deterrence.

In this regard, rather than opting for breakneck speeds to carryout emergency procurements during actual hostilities, which reflects insecurity and panic; India needs to act pragmatic and work towards a long-term acquisition plan, backed by adequate defence budget. It remains indisputable that India’s China quandary is here to stay and thus, wisdom lies in making concerted efforts towards force development and capacity building than acting out of a ‘knee-jerk’ response. What India needs to do?

First, as Global Times suggests, “China needs to prepare to carry out a military struggle in the China-India border area. [...] But when India recklessly challenges China’s bottom line, China must not be soft. It must take military actions when necessary and ensure it can win”. This also clarifies China’s intention of not returning

to the status quo ante – leaving India with no alternative but to be ‘ready’ and ‘prepared’ against the odds.

The Indian Armed Forces must be fully prepared to quell any form of contingency in all its sectors with China – Western, Central and Eastern- especially after seeing the satellite imageries that suggest China is build up opposite all sectors. With its focus on its preparation for military



PLA troops demonstrating bayonet drills during a public demonstration; File Photo

actions against China, one should not dismiss the element of China-Pakistan collusivity and their designs. Notwithstanding these contingencies at the strategic levels, the troops on the ground must be prepared and well-postured to tactically and timely respond to any adversarial action (s), without having to look back for orders.

For to act 'tit-for-tat', time is of essence. Rather, India should be prepared for immediate tactical responses given China will not act from a 'nimble footing'. Comprehensive preparedness should be central to our thought process, on land, sea, air, and cyber space.

Second, call for military preparedness through indigenisation. This current contingency provides India with an opportunity to actively pursue the 'Make in India' initiative. Here, the starting point is India's Defence Industrial Base (DIB) and the DRDO, which should be subjected to performance audit, and be made accountable. Simultaneously, a significant defence budget (accounting for about 3 percent of India's GDP) should be allocated to undertake military reforms and modernisation to match the current security environment.

Some of the key reforms entail: addressing the critical hollowness of the armed forces on priority; laying emphasis on technology-enabled systems to manage borders effectively; upgrading surveillance, intelligence and reconnaissance systems (reliable

intelligence is the key to ensure effective border management and response mechanism); enhancing capacity and capability of the armed forces; instilling jointness among services; cyber security; and building critical infrastructure on the borders.

TECHINT and human intelligence sources and collaboration with friendly foreign countries must be explored. Also, dedicated / uninterrupted satellite coverage capability must be acquired along all our borders, with priority to LAC and line of Control (LoC).

Third, at the foremost, niche capabilities of Defence Cyber and Space Agencies; and Special Operations Divisions at strategic levels, must be developed with a sense of urgency, and their progress must be periodically monitored. Simultaneously, force development should be complimented with structural changes.

In this regard, organisations such as the DIB and DRDO require transformative structural reforms – to ensure

greater indigenisation to meet own requirements, and to finally make them an export-oriented industry. In addition, DRDO should be proactive in providing 'cutting-edge technologies' in select fields to enhance India's reliability and security architecture.

Fourth, the concept of "One Border One Force" was in fact recommended by the Kargil Review Committee and the Group of Ministers Reports (1999-2001) for better border management. This merits consideration in light of the changing security dimensions and technology enabled systems in place. To ensure synergy in application of effort, it would be appropriate to place disputed borders under the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence.

This would imply that all elements, including the ITBP, deployed towards guarding or security of such borders would be placed under the control of the MoD / Army – thus, achieving 'unity of command, unity of purpose, better situational awareness and battlefield transparency.'

Fifth, an effective information cum psywar policy should be put to place, backed by an appropriate organisation at the apex level with requisite resources, to counter the adversary's actions and foil their intentions.

While it should be the endeavour of both countries to be responsible enough to resolve the unsettled boundary and territorial disputes, it is unlikely in the near future due to China's intransigence. With this as the benchmark, India needs to develop its capabilities and prepare its armed forces with vigour to meet the operational challenges of the future against both China and Pakistan. It has the will and it will! 🇮🇳



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Views expressed are the authors own, and do not reflect the editorial policy of 'MVI.'

COVID-19 & ITS CHALLENGES Is India Future Ready?

By Chris Cabbage, Executive Editor

VK Ahluwalia and Amrita Jash (eds.), *COVID-19 & Its Challenges: Is India Future Ready?* New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2020, ISBN-10: 9390095026; ISBN-13: 978-9390095025, E-book \$9.36, Print Copy: 750 INR. PURCHASE on Amazon

Despite being amidst a dynamic start to the global pandemic – COVID-19, this work from the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS) in New Delhi, India was born from the endeavour to publish ‘an editorial and scholarly book, based on the events that unfolded until the month of June 2020’, “as also to crystal gaze beyond the horizon and to shape a secure and brighter India.”

True to its vision, CLAWS has promptly produced deep and timely guidance for appropriate policy formulation, dealing with one of the world’s most significant events in a century and with the commensurate national security issues that a pandemic brings.

In context, with a population of 1.3 billion, India was always a country of concern as COVID-19 increasingly reached around the globe. Released in early August 2020, this publication may yet be viewed as a work in progress, as it sets the scene on how India should and will treat the pandemic and the challenges the country faces post COVID-19.

It should be noted, as at September 30, India is experiencing one of the world’s fastest growing outbreak of the virus, crossing over 6 million infections and fast approaching 100,000 dead. The issues identified by the Editors have highlighted the aspect that old methods of quarantine and isolation cannot fully cater to India. “As is obvious, the safety only accrues to the privileged while more than half of the population is forced to face the challenges of starvation, unemployment, no-cash situation compounded with the burden of lack of health care facilities and support.”

With 11 contributors across nine chapters, culminating in ‘Making India Future Ready’ this book provides critical insight into India’s strategic challenges in 2020 and importantly, the recognition that ‘human security’ remains the preeminent domain for national security. “The security aspect needs a multi-domain approach, as non-traditional threats today pose a far greater challenge. What lies at the core, is the aspect of human security and well-being of the

people. Every nation must realise that its people or human capital is its core strength. Hence, the need of the hour is to ‘realign the priorities’, such that human security takes precedence in the gamut of national security.”

General Ng Vij, former Chief of the Army Staff notes in his Foreword, “The need of the hour calls for a “Re-Think and Refining” India’s national security issues and policies in practice- both at home and abroad, it is time to push the security envelope, rather than fold it further.”

It is time for bold decisions and bold investments, and not for conservative approaches. This also is the time to move from command and control economy to plug-and-play and to build a competitive global supply chain”. — Prime Minister Narendra Modi, ICC Plenary Session, 11 June 2020.

The editors appropriately provide early structure to this body of work; “As befits a study of such a comprehensive nature, this book makes multiple arguments and sub arguments; however, the overarching thesis is centred on offering an Indian perspective to ‘COVID-19 and its challenges’. Given the vastness of the subject of enquiry, the scope of the book is limited and is mainly concentrated on analysing some of the core issues of concern.”

India’s National Security: Old Threats: Imbalanced with New Challenges

VK Ahluwalia, in his chapter, ‘India’s National Security: Old Threats: Imbalanced with New Challenges’, COVID-19 has brought the world to its undeclared ‘Third World War’, caused not by any kinetic action, but by an invisible enemy. Calling for a global health emergency, the coronavirus outbreak has emerged as a deadly weapon of mass destruction, bringing the world to a standstill.

He correctly identifies, “Did we really learn some lessons from SARS and MERS-CoV, and did we implement them to avert future crisis? The answer is ‘No’, as the world

was deeply unprepared in combating the catastrophe of COVID-19. For the reality lies in the fact that so far countries were mainly focused on the military aspect of security. This is evident from the increasing global military expenditure, which reached US\$1,917 billion in 2019—the largest annual increase in a decade.”

“According to a WHO report, between 2011-2017, 1,307 epidemics were recorded across 172 countries worldwide. COVID-19 is a perfect example of a ‘non-military’ threat or as commonly denoted a ‘non-traditional security’ (NTS) threat that has affected the entire world, posing a threat to the survival of states and its people. Threats to human security are no longer just personal or local or national, but are transnational and beyond regional boundaries.

What is noteworthy is that despite its growing vulnerabilities caused by air and water, India has not given due importance and seriousness to address these issues in its annual budget, which has increased from Rs. 2,658 crore to Rs. 3,100 crore in FY 20-21. However, this sum is too little to address the increasing environmental security concerns which affects human health and the natural ecosystem. In view of this, it can be argued that if survival needs of the people (water, food and health care) are affected by environmental degradation, atmospheric pollution or biological factors resulting into infectious diseases like SARS, MERS CoV and COVID-19; this could trigger social unrest.”

India faces serious external threats

“India can leverage its strategic advantage to increase its sphere of interest and influence in the new security architecture under the Indo-Pacific. However, to achieve its rightful place, India must first identify the prominent threats and challenges that it faces or is likely to face.

India faces serious external threats, the prominent ones being from Pakistan, China, the Sino-Pakistan nexus, presence of nuclear armed states, maritime security and more recently, Nepal’s claim to portions of Indian territory in Lipulekh area. What looms large in India’s security matrix is Pakistan, which itself is faced with several complex issues in the domains of politico-socio economic, civil society, judiciary, and media. However, despite its own fragility, Pakistan continues to hinder India’s national security interests.

Pakistan has reduced its budgetary support to jihadis and terrorist groups due to the recession, but with support from China, it has been upgrading its military systems, information warfare systems, missiles, and nuclear arsenal capabilities. This, along with presence of Chinese security personnel in Gilgit-Baltistan region and along the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), makes the aspect of collusion a grave concern for India. What significantly adds to India’s security dilemma is the China factor, wherein the threat is increasingly getting magnified.

China aspires to become not only the world’s largest nation in cyberspace but also among the most powerful.

However, India’s asymmetry with China is not just limited to the military capability but pervades in all domains: economy, science and technology, innovations, information and cyber capabilities, outer space, and nuclear capabilities. Notwithstanding, India has been one of the fastest growing large economies of the world. It has the potential to develop its economy to US\$ five trillion in the next 4-5 years, as also upscale its comprehensive national power (CNP) to become a global power in the years ahead.

Does economic slowdown affect China’s great power ambitions? As Michael Beckley notes with caution: “When rising powers have suffered such slowdowns in the past, they become more repressive at home and more aggressive abroad” – as validated by examples from history. Applying Beckley’s assessment to the changed security scenario under COVID-19 and the resultant global recession, China could then be more aggressive in asserting its claims in areas of disputed territories as a tactic to divert the attention of the Chinese people.

This would then remain an area of concern for the international community at large, and India in particular, as it shares an unresolved border with China. In the recent past, China has been aggressive on its periphery in the South China Sea (SCS), East China Sea (ECS), and the Taiwan Strait. For India, the tension has already manifested with new military flareups being witnessed along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh and Sikkim.

Given the severity of COVID-19, it should be India’s endeavour to exploit the opportunities by acting with a sense of urgency. To seize the opportunities created by the current crisis, India needs to adopt a technology-centric approach to identify focus areas and act simultaneously on several fronts as part of its national strategy.

In this perspective, as UN forecasts suggest, India’s projected economic growth is expected to slow to 1.2 per cent in 2020—a further deterioration from the already slowed growth of 4.1 per cent in 2019. The Government focus is on eight sectors: Coal, Minerals, Defence Production, Airspace Management, Social Infrastructure Projects, Power Distribution Companies, Space Sectors and Atomic Energy.”

India’s National Military Strategy: A Task in Hand

Rakesh Sharma’s chapter, ‘India’s National Military Strategy: A Task in Hand’ highlights it is imperative to understand and assess the adversarial environment that India is likely to face in the post-COVID world. The queries that demand attention are: Will this environment remain as status quo of the previous years and decades, or that a newer paradigm is created by the catastrophe wrought by the pandemic?

“With the warfare in the subcontinent transiting to a modern technological plane, a paradigmatic shift in India’s

National Military Strategy in the post-pandemic world is highly imminent.

China will have a modern military capable of modern war in the future. India can ill-afford to ignore China's increasing economic and military might, its assiduous strategic bases in Indian Ocean Rim nations, lack of progress in the Sino-Indian border talks, and close economic and military affiliations with Pakistan. Thus, India needs to re-vamp itself accordingly.

Hence, COVID-19 has not halted China in the pursuit of its revisionist policies and geo-political ambitions, even by use of force. If the world, wary of China's involvement in the pandemic, were to take strong measures that would significantly put a brake on the 'Chinese Dream'. If so, then China would prepare itself to undertake measures

of strong response—also to convey to its own nation. India may then be at the receiving end of PLA's wrath. Undoubtedly, prospective wars, whenever prosecuted, will be in multiple domains, some already evident and many off the horizon, in the process of development or under wraps."

Rakesh Sharma offers the following broad parameters of strategising become imperative:

"First, contested, unsettled borders and territory will remain important contentious issues in future wars, although the larger basis may be related to geo-political rivalries or power struggles. The likelihood of conventional force-on-force kinetic warfare will exist, and must require simultaneous planning.

Second, as salience and preparations for modern conventional kinetic war cannot be put on the back burner, substantive offensive capabilities in the form of duly acclimatised, trained and kitted force, must be available for achieving 'across the hump' success and consolidation. Substantial enhancement of third dimension capability will help provide requisite deterrence, and reduce salience on massed combat power.

Third, kinetic and non-kinetic warfare may also go well beyond force-on-force engagement on the territorial sphere as well. It may utilise potent precision guided munitions, hypersonic weaponry, drone swarms, autonomous systems and stealth operational capabilities delivered by multiple modes—ground, air or projectiles."

"It must be unequivocally stated that with nations reeling from a heavy and serious impact of the pandemic, the initiation of an all-out conventional war is unlikely. The coercive actions and policies pursued by China and Pakistan during the course of the pandemic clearly portray the signage of the events to come in the post-pandemic phase. China will choose to be a calculative coercer and may rely on grey zone warfare. In addition, as technology has expanded the domain of warfare to an arena unheard off, such as space, tensions will also arise in new domains.

Likewise, information warfare, precision weaponry and autonomous systems and many more will continue to expand to newer vistas. This makes it obvious that the measure of victory in future wars will be the successful paralysis over destruction.

Assuredly, warfare has a future; the all-important question is the typology of warfare, and what it would take to accept it as inevitable, and assiduously work to acquire the capabilities. The strategic conclusion is that technology has fundamentally transformed the character of war, and maybe its nature too, in a significant measure.

However, future wars may be without extreme violence, aggression, destruction, and mortality, and yet cause enough suffering to achieve political success."

Situational Preparedness

VK Ahluwalia & Amrita Jash "Making India Future Ready" bring the book's broad discussion to the watchword for India, namely 'situational preparedness'.

"In the pre-COVID phase, the global debates centred on US-China trade war, instability in the Middle East, pressure on Iran, Afghan peace process, complexities in the South China Sea, India-Pakistan tensions and increasing protests worldwide—thus, highlighting the dominant trend of instability caused by state-centric factors.

An ineffective health care system, lack of understating of the social concerns, the magnitude of migrant labour workforce and its aspirations, and, above all, the preparedness to combat such an all-encompassing emergency inflicted on a dense 1.3 billion population nation."

In summing up and providing policy direction, the book clearly outlines 'What India Needs to Do' which may be easier to document than to achieve, in the following domains:

- Organisational Changes: Co-ordination and Integration at all levels
- Prioritising Health in Security Appendix
- Re-booting the Economy by Re-vitalising Indian Industries
- Leading, Engaged and Proactive Foreign Policy & Diplomacy
- Tap the Potential of Medical Diplomacy
- Defence Preparedness at All Times
- Finding Solutions to Practical Problems

In the current context of September 2020 and much of the pandemic and its longer term impacts yet to unfold, the book's closing statement leaves a lasting message, "The time to act is now and not give into any further delay. For speedy recovery, the government should work in tandem with private organisations, NGOs, major Think Tanks in the country—maintaining a symbiotic relationship between policymaking and academia. The recovery process demands India to be proactive, agile, informed, responsive and responsible. As only then will India be future ready in terms of safety, security, and sustainability. Therefore, we all are at a moment of nation building and making



Passing it on: Learning from Military Disasters

“There is an inescapable necessity to study past mistakes, to avoid the same in the future. In particular, Higher Commanders should, and must study important military campaigns.”

by Major General VK Madhok (Retd)

Surprisingly, it is a fact that there exists a common thread of blunders which led to their disaster. In 1812, Napoleon after preparing for two years supported by his allies – Austria and Poland – with the largest force gathered at that time, failed to conquer Russia. He had to be escorted back to France by 2800 loyal troops. 120 years later, Hitler invaded Russia in June 1941.

The Germans employed 134 divisions (full strength) and 73 divisions in a holding role along the 1800-mile front. He too, failed, to defeat Russia. He made mistakes like Napoleon’s, and finally committed suicide. An analytical study of mistakes made by the commanders will not only enrich the minds of future military leaders but make the formidable combat commanders.

In our case, 1962 Sino-India conflict is a benchmark. As to how a campaign should not be conducted. If our army suffered a shameful and humiliating defeat at the hands of China, we deserved it. India committed similar mistakes yet again, in the induction of unprepared IPKF (Indian Peacekeeping Force) in Sri Lanka, on 30 July 1987, is one such example.

Second one is Operation Blue Star, in May-July 1984, to eliminate Jarnail Singh Bhindrawale, the Chief of Damdami Taksal, from the Golden Temple. Even in Kargil, we were caught with our pants down in the initial stages.

There are many more examples, such as the failure of the Americans in Vietnam (Nov 1955-1975), or the Russian invasion and their inability to

subjugate Afghanistan (25 Dec 1979 – 15 Dec 1989). For that matter, the Third Battle of Panipat, between the Afghans and Marathas, which led to the end of the Maratha Empire.

Napoleon and the Russian Disaster

The greatest military commander in history, while invading Russia, made three serious mistakes. One, faulty time plan. His appreciation was that Russia would fall in twenty days. But took supplies for thirty days. The campaign lasted five and a half months.

Troops were therefore, without rations, clothing, ammunition, for nearly three months. This led to frustration and ill-discipline. Troops started looting villages and annoyed the civil

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Intelligence is a crucial factor, which has been neglected time and again. Not only about enemies' strengths, dispositions, and intentions, but also what is in the Army Commander's mind. His strategy and tactics? Not only did Napoleon fail in this respect, but we neglected this factor while planning for Blue Star, or the induction of the IPKF. In 1962, we had no warning regarding the Chinese invasion.

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population. Two, Russians avoided a pitched battle.

They followed a “scorched earth policy” and kept drawing French forces inside Russia. Except for two important battles at Smolensk, and Borodino (south-west of Moscow) respectively, no major battles were fought. Russians offered marginal resistance. When Napoleon entered Moscow, there was no representative of the Czar.

Three-fourths of the city had been burnt. Having stayed there for a month, as winter was approaching, they decided to withdraw with an exhausted, fatigued army, short of supplies, fuel, and clothing. It was then that the Cossacks and Partisans played hell with the retreating army.

Raiding, looting, and destroying what was left of the grand army. Three, in his ambition, Napoleon had underestimated Russia and failed to cater for contingencies.

Napoleon was not defeated by Russia, but by the Russian winter. Plague, typhus, and tick devastated the army. In one month, 80000 troops died. And as mentioned, the Emperor had to escape with an escort of 2800.

Operation Barbarossa – 22 June 1941; and Hitler's failure in Russia

Fresh from the conquest of Czechoslovakia, Austria, Poland and then France, Hitler decided to invade Communist Russia. He abruptly terminated the German-Russian Non-Aggression Pact, signed on 23 August 1939.

Germany invaded Russia in 1941, employing nearly 6,80,000 troops, with

many vehicles, tanks and even horses. This made it the largest invasion in modern history. Russia was caught unprepared, as Stalin had believed that Hitler won't attack.

Hitler signed his first directive on 18 December 1940. Three objectives were selected. Leningrad, first. And then the third being Moscow. He told his colleagues that Russia would collapse in three months.

German planners had studied and even rehearsed Napoleon's campaign of 1812. They concluded that the Red Army would not retreat in Russia as they couldn't afford to give up Ukraine, Leningrad and Moscow.

On the second day of battle, Soviet bomber groups had lost 600 aircraft, and by the end of August 1941, an estimated 5000 Russian fighters had been destroyed by the Luftwaffe. Panzer divisions advanced in three directions and met initial victories. In fact, they had advanced 200 miles in the very first week. Such was their initial success, but then in April

1945, the red flag was flown over the Reichstag in Berlin, under Field Marshal Zuhov's leadership, and Hitler committed suicide.

What were the causes of failure? Firstly, Soviet resistance was fiercer than the Germans had anticipated. They were caught outside Stalingrad for nearly two years. Supply lines from Leningrad were cut. Russians again followed the scorched earth policy, by partisan bands, creating difficulties for Germans.

But winter returned before the fall of Moscow. Rain made the battlefield into swamps; frost came in with a vengeance. Severe blizzards grounded the Luftwaffe. Troops had inadequate clothing and supplies could not reach them, while guns could not fire. In December 1941, there were thousands of cases of dysentery, frostbite, and suicide. Attempts to reach Moscow, twenty miles away, and within reach of German forces, were abandoned.

Germans were widely outstretched, and their forces were fighting in Africa, preparing for an assault in France and Europe by the Allies, besides looking after already conquered territories. They had failed to deal with such a situation.

Sino-Indian Conflict, 1962: What led to the Indian Army's debacle, humiliation, and collapse at China's hands in 1962?

Now that excerpts are available from Henderson Brooks report on the 1962 war, and two top-secret declassified



Napoleon Bonaparte Looking over the Russian Campaign; Representational Image



There is a tendency to take things for granted. That Bhindranwale will not fight, that China will not attack, that V. Prabhakaran will lay down his arms, that Pakistan cannot attack in Kargil. We must realize that if I cannot do it, someone else can, and will do it.



letters, dated 19 Nov 1962, from Mr. Nehru to President Kennedy of the USA, to intervene and save India are available, it is worthwhile to revisit this disastrous campaign, which must be read, and re-read again and again.

As details of battles and skirmishes at Dhola, Nyamkachu, capture of Towang, Walong, or Bomdila, etc, and Chinese advanced to the Brahmaputra valley in Sept-Nov 1962, and finally the capture of Indian troops and keeping them as POWs for eight months are available. Details of this missive focuses on the causes of the mistakes made.

Intelligence failure. Chinese started their preparations to teach India a lesson in May 1962. Troops and commanders were trained and acclimatized. Forward dumps were established at Le (north of Thagla ridge at Marmang and Tsonadzag). On the Indian side, there was no intelligence appreciation. If there was one, it remained in air-conditioned offices in Delhi.

At an operational conference in Tezpur in July 1962, the then DMO (Director of Military Operations), Brig. Palit informed the Chinese that they couldnot attack till their railway lines reached Lhasa in Tibet. That would take at least two years. There was as such, no plan to counter any Chinese invasion. Yet, the Chinese were ready, and they attacked in Sept 1962.

Military leadership and Politicians

Except for Gen. Thimayya (the COAS), none of his successors had the courage to differ with Mr. Nehru's forward policy, which aimed at established posts all along the McMahon Line. After Thimayya's retirement, Gen. Thapar and his CGS (Chief of General

Staff), acquiesced and ordered furtherance of forward policy.

Establishment of individual posts like Dhola, which was overlooked from Thagla ridge, was objected to by the Chinese. They tried to remove it. It was a trigger for the start of the Chinese invasion. Political leadership ignored military advice and considerations. Defence Minister ordered that no minutes would be kept of his meetings with Army commanders.

Command Structure



Solider priming ordnance during Op Barbarossa; Archival Image

4 Corps was established on 4 Oct 1962. Lt. Gen. Kaul, Nehru's favorite, was appointed as the GOC. An ASC officer, who had never commanded a combat unit. He and his staff thought that Thagla was a plateau.

He intervened and gave direct orders to subordinate formations like 7 Inf Brigade, to move forward without informing his Division Commander. He was evacuated on 17 Oct 1962. During his tenure, he was running from forward areas to Delhi, to personally brief the Prime Minister and Raksha Mantri.

The Raksha Mantri had even ordered Kaul, that the last date acceptable for evicting the Chinese was 1 Nov 1962. We can see that the 7 Inf Brigade, which was responsible for the defense of Tawang, was five days' march from Thagla.

Div HQ was at Tezpur, 200 miles away. 33 Corps HQ at Shillong, another 200 miles away. And Command HQ at Lucknow, 600 miles away. There was no road from Tawang towards Dhola. Divisions' 2nd Brigade was in Nagaland and was shifted to Walong. As such, there were no reserves.

State of Army Units

Units were under strength. 400 men against 800 in a battalion. Clothing was inadequate. So was ammunition. Men had not done field firing, and yet, they fought well under junior leaders. In conclusion, it can be said that the government took it for granted that

the Chinese wouldn't attack. Military commanders were influenced by political thinking, rather than military considerations.

They did not stand up to reject wrong decisions. Senior commanders had little or no knowledge of ground. And as such, gave wrong decisions. Military should take equal blame for failure of intelligence. Why did they not question, and ask for information they needed?

American Fiasco and the Embarrassment in Vietnam

America's Vietnam war, 1 Nov 1955 – 30 Apr 1975, was the longest and most unpopular intervention. Also known as the second Indo-China war, or resistance war against America. The United States had, at its peak, 500,000 troops, and suffered 58,119 killed and 53,303 wounded, and withdrew on 20 Jan 1974.

Vietnam with its checkered history, was first under China, and then France. During World War 2, Japan ruled it. After 1945, the French returned, but left after the battle of Bien-Phu, in which they suffered 20,000 killed from Viet-Minh.

Meanwhile, Ho Chi Minh, the guerrilla leader had returned, and declared Vietnam a republic, with Hanoi as its capital. This was followed by the Geneva conference, at which Vietnam was divided into North and South Vietnam, along the 17th Parallel, with a demilitarized zone around it. Elections were to be conducted for the unification of Vietnam in 1961.

Americans were driven by the Domino Theory. In that, if one nation comes under communist rule, under countries will follow. While Ho Chi Minh was determined to unite North and South Vietnam into an independent Republic of Vietnam, but the Americans failed and had to withdraw. What were the causes for American failure? At the national level, Domino Theory did not work. As Russia and China, supported Vietcong indirectly.

United States underestimated the psyche and will of the Vietnamese, who fought against oppression. Two incidents, the Mylai incident of 1969, when innocent villagers were lined up by US troops, fired upon, killed and injured, besides the American policy of Americanization of Vietnamese forces in South Vietnam, which was the brainchild of President Nixon, did not work.

In fact, the hatred further strengthened the Vietcong resolve, and led to distrust between the government and the people. The worst was, the tactical concept of Gen. Westmorland, United States commander of all US forces in Vietnam, from 1964-68.



American GI's during the Vietnam War; Archival Image

His philosophy of maximum attrition, penetration, search and destroy, and kill, body count, bombardment, and use of chemical weapons (Agent Orange), did the maximum damage. He cooked up casualty figures, briefed the United States Senate that all was going well.

He failed to understand the Vietnamese and was the wrong choice to be appointed. He was replaced by Gen. Abrams. Finally, came the Tet offensive in Jan 1968. When 70,000 Vietcong attacked 100 cities in South Vietnam. Its purpose was to draw out American soldiers. 2,500 US soldiers and 3,700 Vietcong were killed. But it strengthened the Vietcong's resolve, and led to American withdrawal.

IPKF and its debacle in Sri Lanka

Indian Peacekeeping Force (IPKF) has been an inconvenient truth. Here was a disastrous campaign, like that in 1962. Reasons for intervening were Indo-Sri Lanka accord of 29th July 1987. The Sinhalese government in Sri Lanka was having trouble and even danger, from the LTTE, who wanted an independent Tamil Elam.

India was invited to intervene to ensure peace, conduct elections, and a referendum to merge North and Eastern provinces, and to protect the President from a coup. An agreement was signed, on 29th July 1987, between Rajiv Gandhi and the President, permitting Indian troops to be inducted.

The induction started on 30th July 1987. LTTE was to lay down arms. However, V. Prabhakaran, the LTTE chief, did not agree with the terms. He said that the agreement was to bring Sri Lanka under India's strategic influence. "We do not trust the Lankan government, and only Tamil Elam is acceptable".

The Indian COAS (Gen. Sunderjee) advised the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, that the LTTE would be tamed within two weeks. But it took two years. 80,000 troops were inducted, and the IPKF's role shifted from peacekeeping to peace enforcement. It cost 300 crores and India suffered 1,200 casualties, and 3,000 wounded.

Troops had no maps, nor any interpreters, nor any recce reports. The IPKF's role was not defined, so field commanders were not clear. Sunderjee did not question political leadership, to give clear policy instructions and mandates. The force was withdrawn, finally, on 24th March 1990. Why did the IPKF campaign end in a disaster like in 1962? India had played a double game. It trained LTTE guerrillas at Chakrata, Deolali, Ahmednagar, at Paramilitary forces' schools.

Regular army personnel, in civilian clothes, provided training in field craft, weapons, explosives, and so on. Training of two LTTE leaders, Kittu and Mahatya, was carried out at Bhopal and Indore for six months. The Army transported nearly four divisions (54, 57, 36, plus two brigades) to Batticaloa, Trincomalee, and the

eastern provinces, to fight 3000 LTTE, but without clear instructions. So, there was confusion, peacekeeping, to peace enforcement. A role not clearly defined in the agreement.

There was no intelligence structure before the Indian troops landed in Sri Lanka, which was a serious mistake. There were too many cooks, who wanted to sort out issues with diverse solutions. On the military side, Gen. Kalkat (Force Commander), Harkirat (GOC 54 Div), and Deepinder Singh (GOC-in-Cd Southern Command).

And on the civil side, Natwar Singh and Dixit, and two centers of power, PM and the COAS. The army was caught between the LTTE and the government, and later, both wanted the IPKF to leave.

It can be said that the fault for failure lay at the top level, particularly the army. Troops were launched without preparation. The COAS should have sought a detailed intelligence appreciation from the government. He was in a hurry to implement political directions.

Operational commanders were not clear about their tasks. There were too many self-appointed leaders, trying to solve various issues. Determination to fight by the LTTE was underestimated. IPKF operations were, to say the least, a repeat of 1962.

Russian failure in Afghanistan

Russia invaded Afghanistan on 25th Dec, 1979, and withdrew after nine years, on 15th Dec, 1989. They suffered 15000 killed, and had large numbers wounded without achieving anything. They had approximately 150,000 troops in Afghanistan. What led to the invasion and the causes of failure? These are interesting issues for a student of war.

At the strategic level, after World War II, there was a race for power and influence between superpowers. The US chose Saudi Arabia, Israel, and Pakistan as allies. Primary concern being the safety of the Persian Gulf, and the availability of oil. Russia chose Afghanistan, with its emphasis and

policy, and its conversion to a communist state. Prime Minister Amin and President Taraki of Afghanistan approached Russia for 80,000 troops, to support communism in their country.

Also, to fight Mujahideen. President Leonard Breznev agreed. Russian paratroopers landed in Kabul on 25th Dec 1979. Amin was killed, and so was Taraki. Barabak Karmal was appointed Prime Minister, but was removed, on account of how ineffective he was. He was subsequently replaced by Najibullah, later assassinated by Taliban.

To ensure that Russians failed, and fearing a similar revolution to the Iranian Revolution, the US resorted to arming the Mujahideen/Taliban, and even supplying missiles and other weapons to them. Funds were provided by Saudi Arabia, US, and the training was conducted in Pakistan, and even China.

Causes for failure: The Russians misinterpreted Islam. Afghanistan has a population of 99% Muslims. Soviet leaders saw Afghanistan through the eyes of Marxist/Leninist doctrine, which did not fit well in a tribal society that considered outsiders as infidels.

This led to non-cooperation and the support of Mujahideen by the civilians. Russian commanders followed conventional World War II tactics, not realizing that they were against Mujahideen guerrillas who would ambush and disappear, while avoiding pitched battles.

While the Russians employed large formations and units to attack them, such as in the Panjshir valley, where the Russians were successful, but did not stay on to hold their ground. Besides, the Russian forces were composed mostly of conscripts, who'd had training for 2-3 months only, fighting against seasoned guerrillas.

Their intelligence was poor, chiefly depending on satellite information, wireless intercepts, air reconnaissance, and so on. They seldom patrolled for ground recces. As such, they were seldom aware of ground positions.

Atrocities were committed on the civilian population, along with the bombardment of villages. This led to very hostile action by civilians. In fact, one-third of the population had fled to Iran, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia. Overall, approximately 850,000 Afghans, including Mujahideen were killed. President Gorbachev came into power in mid-1987, and ordered the withdrawal of Russian troops, which was completed by 1989.

The aftermath of the war resulted in the weakening of the Soviet Union. The government was unable to look after its territories outside the Soviet Union; it emboldened them, leading to loss in confidence in the government. But it did not end here. The Mujahideen, who were now well trained, took over Kabul, and the fight went on against the international security forces deployed in Afghanistan.

Operation Blue Star

From 1st to 8th June 1984. Here is an operation of incredible courage, but political and military incompetence. Mistakes made (not analysed during planning) led to profoundly serious consequences. A question arises: Why with such elaborate planning, and abundant resources, the Army miscalculated the Blue Star horribly. What were the mistakes made, and consequences? Before that, a brief on the background.

The COAS, Gen. Arun Vaidya was directed by the PM Indira Gandhi, to clear Harminder Sahib and eliminate Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, Chief of Damdami Taksal, and Dal Khalsa, who along with his supporters (nearly 2000), had occupied Harminder Sahib, and who was able to motivate Sikh youth, was demanding Khalistan, and had established headquarters at the Golden Temple, which had been fully fortified with advice from his military advisor, Maj. Gen. Shahbeg Singh.

Operations were conducted by HQ Western Command (Gen. Sunderjee). Approximately 70,000 troops employed under the leadership of Maj. Gen. Brar included NSG, CRPF, BSF, police, in addition to army units.

The operation had three components. Operation Metal – confined to Harminder Sahib, and Akal Takht; Operation Shop – to seek Punjab countryside for any militants; and Operation Woodrose – to target those carrying weapons, etc. Tanks, artillery, helicopters, APCs were used.

The army lost 83 soldiers and had approximately 220 wounded. 492 civilians were killed. Though this number, as per the media, was 5000 civilians killed. Bhindranwale, Shahbeg Singh, and many supporters were also killed. There was a media blackout, and Amritsar was placed under curfew.

Mistakes made: There was as usual, an intelligence failure. The defenses of the Golden Temple were organized into infantry battalions, Shahbeg Singh was no ordinary soldier. He had trained Mukti Bahini in Bangladesh operations. He had so organized the defenses (with LMGs, MMGs, and even a rocket launcher) to inflict maximum casualties, and gain time so that Bhindranwale supporters could come from villages and converge to support him.

The Army was not aware of such strong fortifications. The planners and Generals gave into an erroneous belief that Bhindranwale and his supporters wouldn't fight. That they would either surrender or run away. So, operations would be swift.

This conclusion shows bankruptcy of thought. Indira Gandhi was advised accordingly, but Bhindranwale and his supporters fought until the very end. Inflicted maximum casualties until they were killed. The Army brass, short on facts, miscalculated during planning, and failed to appreciate the type of resistance that they would meet. Although, there was never any doubt as to who would win.

But the cost, anger and political consequences were not analysed. Indira Gandhi was not briefed objectively. Generals were in a disastrous hurry, like regimental officers, to finish the task swiftly, showing inability to stand up to the politicians. They took things for granted. Did not consider the likely resistance and difficulties that they would face.

What were the consequences? The Sikhs felt that this was an assault on their religion. Harminder Sahib, and Akal Takht were severely damaged. There was mutiny in the Sikh regimental centre, and many Sikh units became difficult to control. Four months later, on 31st Oct 1984, Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her two security guards. Vaidya too, was assassinated, two months after his retirement.

Sunderjee and R.S. Dyal, his Chief of Staff, were provided special protection, by NSG. Atleast five assassination attempts have been made on Brar. Finally, approximately, 3000 Sikhs were killed in Delhi alone. Could this have been avoided?

To conclude, here was another operation, which had great similarities to India's failure in the Sino-Indian conflict in 1962, or the launching of an unprepared IPKF in Sri Lanka in 1997.

Observations and lessons

There is much to learn from past campaigns. Both which ended in a disaster, and those which succeeded.

- Intelligence is a crucial factor, which has been neglected time and again. Not only about enemies' strengths, dispositions, and intentions, but also what is in the Army Commander's mind. His strategy and tactics? Not only did Napoleon fail in this respect, but we neglected this factor while planning for Blue Star, or the induction of the IPKF. In 1962, we had no warning regarding the Chinese invasion. Besides its own resources, the Army must be forceful in getting intelligence from the various agencies that we have

created. If not, then we will get surprised.

- Commanders must conduct and fight their adversary based on facts and military considerations, and not because a political leader wants it his way. To put it bluntly, military commanders must have the character and guts to stand up to political pressure, and not accept a wrong policy decision which would lead to casualties.
- Commanders must study and reflect on the psyche of their opposing commander. They must not forget that all battles are fought and won in the minds of opposing commanders. Here, the example of Field Marshal Montgomery of El Alamein, who had even kept a photograph of his adversary, Field Marshal Rommel, in his caravan, as to how he would behave and react in various situations and circumstances.
- There is a tendency to take things for granted. That Bhindranwale won't fight, that China will not attack, that V. Prabhakaran will lay down his arms, that Pakistan can't attack in Kargil. We must realize that if I can't do it, someone else can, and will do it.

Recommendations

Finally, there is an inescapable necessity to study past mistakes, to avoid the same in the future. Higher Commanders (Brigade to Corps) should and must study important military campaigns. To do so, it is suggested that the Army War College could conduct a week's capsule, which is specifically devoted to studying and analyzing campaigns of the past. 🇮🇳



Major General VK Madhok (Retd)

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Remembering the Iconic Battle of Burki

A look into the iconic 'Battle of Burki' in which Indian Infantrymen proved their mettle and displayed tremendous courage under fire.

by Staff Correspondent

The Battle of Burki (Barki) was a battle fought by Indian infantry and Pakistani armour in the Indo-Pakistani War of 1965. Barki is a village that lies south-east of Lahore near the border with Punjab, India and is connected with Lahore by the Bridge of Ichogil canal. During the fighting, the relative strengths of the two sides were fairly even and Indian infantry clashed with Pakistani forces that were entrenched in pillboxes, dug outs and slit trenches that had been carved into the canal banks. The Pakistanis were supported with many tanks, as well as fighter jets. The battle resulted in an Indian victory.

Background

Pakistan had launched Operation Grand Slam on 17 August 1965 in an effort to relieve infiltrators who had

been surrounded after the failure of Operation Gibraltar on 15 August and to attempt to cut off the Indian supply lines. With supply lines under severe stress due to Operation Grand Slam, India launched an offensive towards Lahore to open up a second front in the war and distract Pakistani attention from Kashmir. After opening the Lahore front, Indian troops advanced towards Lahore along three axes— Amritsar-Lahore, Khalra-Burki-Lahore, and Khem Karan-Kasur roads—overwhelming the small Pakistani force.

Indian infantry, supported by the only Indian armoured division, quickly pushed back unprepared Pakistani defenders with the aim of encircling and possibly besieging Lahore. Due to the element of surprise, India was able to capture a large amount of Pakistani territory

from the town of Khalra, an Indian border town which lies on a straight road to Lahore through Burki. In the meantime, the Pakistani Army mobilized the troops in the region and mounted a three-pronged counter-attack to recapture lost ground. The Battle of Burki was subsequently fought on Khalra-Burki-Lahore road.

Pakistan's main goal was to force the Indian infantry into retreat before their armoured support and supply lines could catch up. The Pakistani Army's aim also was to capture much of the territory it had lost earlier in the fighting. The Indian infantry's aim was to capture and hold the town of Burki until reinforcements, including armour and supplies, could arrive.

How the Battle Unfolded



Fighting from well entrenched positions; Archival Image

India began their advance from Khalra under Major-General Har Krishan Sibal and tank operations under Lieutenant-Colonel Anant Singh with a village called Jahman being the first major Pakistani outpost to fall. Pakistani troops pulled back towards the next major town, which was Burki, leaving small pockets of resistance at each village to slow down Indian advance.

On 8 September, Pakistan began the counterattack with Pakistani artillery pounding the Indian advance on 8, 9 and 10 September. This constant shelling slowed down the Indian advance but was unable to stop it completely. This was followed by a counterattack by Pakistani armor consisting of considerable part of Pakistan's 1st Armored Division. Indian infantry eventually clashed with Pakistani tanks at Burki, which resulted in most of the Pakistani armor being mauled by 10 September.

The Indian infantry was able to hold off the Pakistani armored onslaught until Indian tanks from the 18th Cavalry Regiment arrived. They were then able to subsequently launch the main assault on 10 September with armor support. As most of the Pakistani tanks had already been destroyed, the Pakistani defenders had little armored support from the remaining tanks. 84 Pakistani tanks were destroyed, compared to just 4 Indian tanks, much like at Assal Uttar.

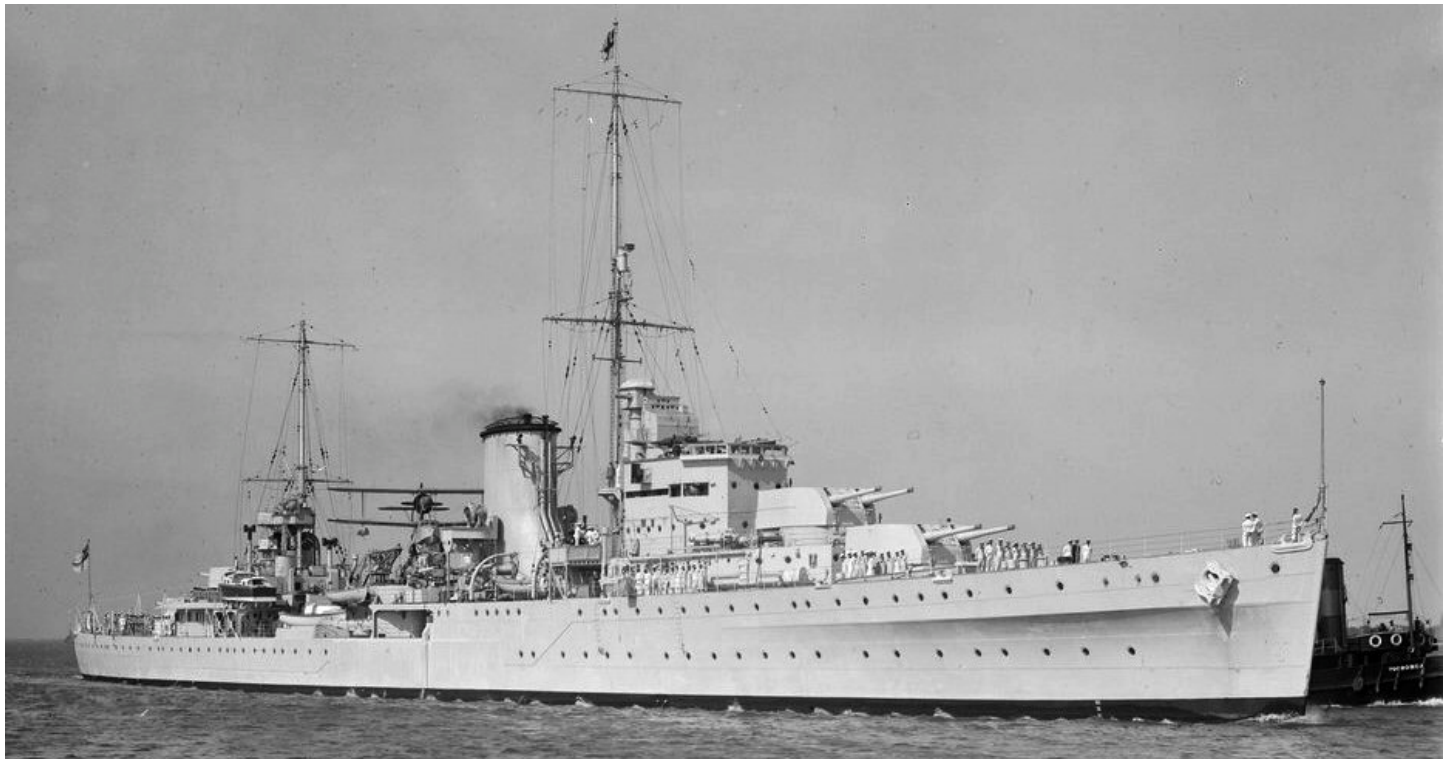
Once again, the much smaller Indian tank contingent, led by Anant Singh, had shown great courage under fire. A few Pakistani fighter jets were called in to provide air cover for Pakistani troops and to target Indian positions. However, the use of fighters against ground troops instead of bombers, and the use of mounted machine guns and ground strafing instead of bombs

and missiles, meant that little was achieved through air support.

The limited number of jets and the easy availability of trench and defensive structures for cover added to the ineffectiveness of Pakistani air operations. As a result, after intense fighting, Indian infantry captured Burki on 11 September and held it throughout the rest of the war despite the use of defensive structures like trenches and pillboxes as well as anti-tank weapons by Pakistani defenders during the defence of Burki.

The Aftermath

After the capture of Burki, the Indian advance continued towards Dograi, a town in the immediate vicinity of Lahore. They subsequently went on to capture Dograi on 20 September, thus bringing the main city of Lahore within range of Indian tank fire. 🇮🇳



Ships of Yore – How Delhi and Mysore Pioneered Indian Navy’s Blue Water Odyssey

“They say, ‘old soldiers do not die, they simply fade away’, but what about old ships? Mariners, since time immemorial, have believed that ships have souls, they have a sense of destiny, and they inhabit and roam around the seas long after their physical demise.”

by Commodore Srikant B Kesnur

Opening Salvo

This day, seventy-two years ago, 5 Jul 1948, was a red-letter day for India and Indian Navy. The newly independent nation commissioned the HMIS Delhi taking its first significant step towards a blue water future. While a ship by the same name, the sleek destroyer INS Delhi today prowls the seas defending India’s maritime interests, this piece is about its earlier incarnation which was Independent India’s first capital ship and, arguably, the most powerful in Asia in those years. A Cruiser with a glorious history (do google HMS Achilles and the Battle of River Plate), acquired from United Kingdom, she brought in the era of big ships in the Indian Navy which until then (and as the RIN) was operating much smaller ships.

The then Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, was himself at the jetty in Mumbai to receive the ship when she came to India, two months later, in Sep 48.

The seeds of today’s blue water Navy were sown, bit by tiny bit, since 1947. It must be noted that the British while developing a reasonably large Army and modest sized Air Force for India, albeit for their imperial purposes, envisaged the Royal Indian Navy (RIN), the immediate predecessor of the Indian Navy, only as a coastal defence force. They were clear that blue water operations, sustained war fighting and ‘defence of the realm’ would be carried out by the Royal Navy. As Prof GVC Naidu in his book ‘Indian Navy and South East Asia’ (Knowledge World, 2000) says “The colonial

British Forces did not find it beneficial to expand the Indian Naval Forces, because the Royal Navy, then the largest navy in the world, was built especially to guard Britain’s overseas possessions and therefore, there was little need to build an Indian Navy” Even though the RIN expanded a great deal during World War 2, it remained, essentially, a coastal defence and convoy protection force.

Thus, even as independence loomed, the British naval planners did not want to consider a strong navy for their erstwhile colony. They desired to continue being in control of the sea areas in Indian Ocean and the Indian Navy was envisaged in a supporting role within the Commonwealth. In his book ‘The Man who Bombed Karachi’ (Harper Collins, 2004) Admiral SM

Nanda, referring to this period, says “The manpower levels especially of the Indian Officer Corps were intentionally kept low and human resource development for manning and operating large ships were nil. If the Indian Navy had to be built it would have to rest on strong foundations. The only course was to create a strong core of professional officers and men who could build up the Indian Navy”.

Demobilisation after the war resulted in great reduction of the force and partition truncated it even further resulting in independent India inheriting barely four sloops, two frigates and other smaller vessels. The biggest ones were in the range of about 1000 tonnes. While such a state of penury may have suggested a conservative approach to naval development post-independence, the Indian Navy was fortunate to have visionaries who dreamt big and far. Thus, our very first perspective plan unveiled in 1947 (Naval Plans paper 1/47), recommended the development of “a balanced Navy consisting of two Fleets, each to be built around a light aircraft carrier, cruisers, destroyers, auxiliary craft, submarine force and Air Arm”. This was dizzying ambition that most people may have scoffed at, but our naval planners persevered and stayed the course despite many odds.

Delhi was the first acquisition that signalled our intent. While the plan was for three Cruisers, limited budgetary support meant that the second ship the INS Mysore (former HMS Nigeria, also with a glorious WW 2 history) could be inducted only in Aug 1957. The arrival of Mysore in India, few months later in Dec 57, was similarly celebrated with a tumultuous welcome and a reception hosted by the Prime Minister. While the Indian Navy acquired other ships such as the R class and Hunt class destroyers, it was the Delhi and Mysore that were the ‘jewels in the crown’.

The erstwhile Delhi and Mysore were our first big ships, our first Flagships. They had majestic looks and radiated menace with their bristling 6-inch guns and other firepower. They sailed around the world showing our Flag and earning us encomiums. They took part in wars and other operational

missions. They trained the entire new leadership of Indian Navy and many who served on them went on to become Flag officers or served in high posts. They had a distinguished career in the Navy ending as training ships. In fact, the stories and legends associated with both ships are so many that they can fill a book. Almost the whole Navy shed a tear when they were decommissioned – Delhi in July 1978 and Mysore in August 1985. Above all, they had a huge role in the evolving Indian Navy and in our blue water journey.

Paradigms Shift

Delhi and Mysore brought in a paradigm shift in the way the Indian Navy operated, in at least three particularly important ways. First, to be in the far seas we need ships that can do so and we didn’t have that before Delhi and Mysore. The Black Swan and modified Black Swan class sloops, that we inherited, did not have the sea legs to venture far whereas Delhi brought in that capability with its big engines and boilers that yielded propulsion power of 72000 bhp on four shafts and a top speed of 32 knots, fuel capacity of 1800 tons and accommodation spaces for nearly 700 people. To further illustrate, Delhi had a full load displacement of nearly 10000 tons, almost ten times that of the Black Swans. Mysore was a shade bigger and more modern than Delhi, in all these respects.

The second aspect was in combat power. The 6-inch main guns of Mysore and Delhi were a huge capability leap in terms of the power projection. Each ship had three turrets including one in aft which dramatically increased their radius/arc of fire. In addition, these ships carried eight four-inch guns, fifteen 40 mm guns, four three pounders for AA defence and eight 21-inch Torpedo tubes. In an era when power flowed from the barrel of a gun, this was a staggering leap from what earlier ships possessed.

Third, with this kind of combat power and sea legs you could not only venture to far seas but also show our flag in distant ports abroad and consolidate relationships. Much before our indigenous space or nuclear programmes came of age, it was the Navy

that was showcasing our might in distant parts of the world. While the ships were no doubt British built, the fact that we had mastered operating and maintaining them were noteworthy as the world was just emerging from the shadow of colonialism. These ships engendered a, kind of, Asian and third world pride. It is no wonder that the Delhi was often described as ‘Empress of the Indian Ocean’ and Mysore was called the “Queen of the Orient’.

Thus, they heralded the era of the big ships and laid the foundation for a growing navy. So whether it was in terms of Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs) or Standing Orders, the memoirs of Admiral RD Katari and AK Chatterjee (both of whom served as the Executive Officers of Delhi) bring out the challenges of transitioning to a big ship navy. Admiral Nanda who was the commissioning First Lieutenant of Delhi and Commissioning Commanding Officer of Mysore said “Till then, all of us had been apprehensive of the world big. Everything seemed to be ‘big’ those days – even the anchor cables were ‘big’ and catting the anchor was a ‘big’ evolution”.

These two ships brought that change in mentality and we must remember that it happened at the dawn of independence and the initial years thereafter. Hence, they proclaimed India’s intent to be blue waterpower quite early on. In the words of Vice Adm Narpati Datta who commanded Mysore “Our generation of Indian naval officers had served mainly in small ships like sloops, minesweepers and corvettes in WW 2. Therefore, our first big ship, the cruiser INS Delhi was an instant favourite. As the Fleet grew and so did our experience in modern naval warfare, Mysore was there, a sleek cruiser with state-of-the-art communication and command facilities’.

Operational Highlights

Delhi as HMNZS Achilles and Mysore as HMS Nigeria were baptised in the fire of battle at sea during World War 2. They performed equally well for a nascent Indian Navy in our many operations and missions. Both the ships saw action in Op Vijay for liberation of

Goa, Daman and Diu in 1961. Mysore was given the task of capturing the Anja dip Island and liberation of Goa while Delhi was tasked to support the Army in Diu. Both played significant role in quick and successful completion of operations, within 40 hours of commencement. It was the first recorded instance post-independence wherein the ships of the Indian Navy had fired on enemy in anger.

In the 1965 war, the Navy was given a restricted mandate of coastal defence, protection of SLOCs and directed not to operate north of latitude of Porbandar, to not widen the scope of war. Mysore was the flagship of the Indian Fleet (Rear Admiral BA Samson) and successfully accomplished the mission despite the limitations. In 1971, Mysore was the flagship of the Western Fleet (Rear Admiral EC Kuruvilla), which achieved full sea control in north Arabian Sea that enabled our missile boat attack on Karachi, SLOC protection, capture of contraband, destruction of Pakistan navy and hastened the final denouement. In 1976, Delhi was involved in the salvage of the Godavari off Male, which was considered an extremely challenging task. As brought out by Dr Prabhakaran Paleri, the former Director General Coast Guard (DGCG), who served on both the ships "They have fought real battles. Navy is meant for reach and warfighting. These two ships have done just in their lives. And that is why I will say that the INS Delhi and Mysore are models for the Indian Navy".

It also bears mention they brought in new concepts into our operational lexicon. Command, Control, Communication (C3), Action Information Organisation (AIO), centralised external communications, modern fire control systems, concept of citadel and Nuclear Biological Chemical Damage Control and Firefighting (NBCD), all the terms in vogue now, came into being in some ways through the Delhi and (more through) the Mysore. As Vice Adm Datta brings out "Nowadays we take these facilities for granted. But in the late 50s it was a Fleet Commander's delight to have his own and opposing forces disposition presented to him at

a glance and to be able to talk to his ships and aircraft from the Ops Room'.

Above all, the real value of these two ships was as brought out by Vice Admiral Subimal Mookerjee, former FOCinC Western Naval Command, who said "Delhi, Mysore and Vikrant were the principal elements of balanced deterrent Navy East of the Suez. This was a sine qua non for not only safeguarding our core national interests but also peace and stability in the region". By the mid-sixties, a medium sized task force comprising these three ships and other destroyers and frigates came to take shape. Within twenty years of independence, our Navy came to be transformed from a coastal configuration to a force to be reckoned with.

Technical Development

It is axiomatic that such big ships and, modern ones by their contemporary standards, would have fairly complex machinery and equipment needing maintenance and repair. Delhi and Mysore, thus, engendered the development process that resulted in many changes and improvements in the Naval Dockyard at Mumbai. To maintain such a task force, the dockyard and the repair needed to be upgraded accordingly. The Bombay Dockyard, which had been in existence since 1735, hastened to modernise owing to these ships. The entire plan of the modernisation was divided into two phases with the Naval Dockyard Expansion Scheme (NDES) as the first phase, for twenty-year duration from 1948 to 1968. Under this phase, many facilities such as the Ballard pier extension, the barrack wharf, the destroyer wharf, and the Cruiser Graving (CG) dock came up in the Dockyard.

The Duncan dock was upgraded for the first dry docking of INS Delhi and the CG dock was ultimately modified to dock the aircraft carrier Vikrant, which took place for the first time on 22 March 63. The second phase of the modernisation, again a 20-year plan, witnessed various facilities and infrastructure upgradation such as the steam test house, the REC department and the diesel and GT department. One of the major things that have come up during this phase was

the construction of the South Break Water. All these initiatives saved the country millions of dollars which we might have spent to dock and repair our ships abroad.

Thus, the commissioning of these two ships not only triggered the modernisation plan in the Indian Navy but also influenced our top technical leadership towards a 'Blue Water' mindset. This is seen in the huge number of miles steamed by both Delhi and Mysore. For example, in the late sixties, twenty years after commissioning, Delhi steamed almost 30,000 miles, and many thought it wouldn't have been possible. Similarly, Mysore traversed 20,000 miles on an overseas deployment in 1964. Adm JG Nadkarni who served on board the Delhi both as the navigating officer and the Commanding Officer totalled an astounding 100000 plus miles cumulatively in his two tenures. In the words of Cmde SK Bhalla, the Commissioning NBCD Officer and (later) the Engineering officer of Mysore "The Flagship has the onerous responsibility of leading the Fleet with speed and reliability".

Competition between the two ships and others, whether at sea or in harbour, was intense but friendly. Delhi and Mysore would frequently race each other at sea. These ships often ran on josh plus prayer and when the Captains drove them hard, the engineers employed equal doses of innovation, improvisation, jugaad and will power to keep the hulks going. In his autobiography 'Memoirs and Memories' the legendary Daya Shankar, who served as the Fleet Engineer Officer on Delhi and went to onto become the Chief of Materiel and later Controller General Defence Production and is considered as the father figure of Navy's technical branch, recalls "when high power was required and Delhi was running at top speed during manoeuvres the Boiler rooms were terribly unnerving places with all kinds of noise: the incessant roaring of forced draught fans raising the atmospheric pressure above normal, the continual bellowing of the huge sprayers and the scream of turbo feed pumps. Speech was impossible and terrific air pressure caused earaches.

The continuing tension and unending noise racked men's nerves. Since nobody could hear a word, engine room officers relied on gestures such as the flick of a finger or the rap of spanner on metal to get response from the artificers and stokers on watch. They instinctively understood the importance of being attentive to the situation around them and watching out for unforeseen danger signs".

Training and Leadership

It has been brought out earlier that these ships were converted to training ships in the autumn of their lives. However, even before they donned that role, they were excellent training ground for many in the navy because of their unique mix of capabilities and adequate living spaces for personnel. Almost everyone went through their portals. The venerable late Vice Admiral MP Awati once said, "If Delhi is the cradle of naval leadership, Mysore was the kindergarten." So, together, these two ships were the nursery of the modern Indian Navy.

Every activity on the ship whether it steaming the high seas, gunnery shoots, replenishment at sea, damage control exercises, hosting high dignitaries in India and abroad, seamanship evolutions including mooring to the buoy, watchkeeping in the bridge or the engine rooms, manning the weapons and systems, were enormous training value for everyone from Captain downwards to the junior most sailor simply because it was either new territory or being done on unprecedented scale.

Thus, it should be no surprise that almost all the Admirals of yore, our Chiefs, icons, war heroes – take your pick – almost all of them had spent some time onboard the Delhi or the Mysore and had earned their sea legs there. Almost the entire who's who of the early Indian Navy - Katari, Karamarkar, Chakravarti, Soman, Chatterjee, Samson, Daya Shankar, Nanda, KR Nair, KL Kulkarni, Kohli, Cursetji, Krishnan, Vasu Kamath, Kuruvilla, SH Sarma, PS Mahindroo, Kirpal Singh, Narpati Data, Ronnie Pereira, Barboza, Swaraj Parkash, Ghandhi, Schunker, Awati, SL Sethi, Nadkarni, Tahiliani, KK Nayyar,

IJS Khurana, Subir Paul, Ramdas, Shekawat, Bhagwat, Madhvendra Singh, PA Debrass, JTG Pereira, Bilu Chowdhury, Bhushan and so many others who are not mentioned only due to constraints of space - passed through the corridors of these ships and learnt the ropes of warfighting and leadership here. In fact, most of current top naval leadership have commenced their naval journey as midshipmen on Mysore learning the ropes of their trade on it, holystoning the deck, playing pranks in the gun room, and bunking through the huge portholes.

Diplomatic Dividends

The significant contribution of Indian navy in our diplomatic endeavours is,



The Indian Navy's frontline Delhi-class destroyer INS Mysore has sailed from Mumbai to flood-hit Kerala carrying relief material; File Photo

by now, considered a truism. In 2004, a very visionary navy Chief, Admiral Arun Prakash, instituted formal mechanisms for foreign cooperation by creating a dedicated Directorate for the same and establishing adequate staff structure under a two-star officer. However, foreign cooperation and diplomatic interactions began for the Navy at the onset of independence and was given maximum impetus by Delhi and Mysore.

These ships traversed all over the globe visiting nations in Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia engendering goodwill for the nation and building bridges of friendship. A panoply of monarchs, heads of nations and

governments, defence ministers and military Chiefs, local elites and common citizens and the Indian diaspora visited these ships or hosted them in their port cities and each one left behind his or her own imprimatur and took away precious memories.

In fact, each of these visits, called Cruise in those days and Overseas Deployments (OSD) now, are worth separate monographs for their historical significance and rich kaleidoscope of experiences. For example, Delhi's first cruise in 1949 and then in 1951 to East Africa, Prime Minister Nehru's visit to Jakarta in 1950 on Delhi, Delhi's cruise to Australia and New Zealand in 1969, Mysore's cruise to East Asian ports in 1958 when she became the first Indian ship to

visit China and Vietnam, Mysore's four month visit to West Asia, Mediterranean, West Africa and East Europe nations in 1964 which included the first ever visit of our navy ship to erstwhile Soviet Union, are recollected even today for the many milestones they achieved.

However, there were also political and social significance in these visits. While the big guns, and the brass and pomp impressed one and all, these ships also helped to create pride in Afro-Asian identity. Nations that had recently become free from their colonial masters or were still in the process of doing so looked upto India as the role model. Doubts were raised about

“
Today, the Indian Navy is in the big league of blue water navies. Let us take a moment to salute the spirit and memory of the two ships that were the bedrock of our Navy and enshrine that moment on 5 Jul 1948 when the magnificent journey began.
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the political unity of these entities; questions were asked about whether they could assimilate technology, and this naturally created apprehension amongst the peoples in these nations. Vice Adm Katari, the first Indian Chief of Naval Staff who was also the commissioning Executive Officer recalls a talk by Admiral Arthur Power, the C-in-C Mediterranean, during the visit of INS Delhi, on her homeward leg, to Malta, “where he fulminated about developing countries having ideas above their station”.

As the Indian Navy showcased our democratic ethos, our cosmopolitanism, and our ability to master technology, it provided hope to many underdeveloped and developing nations. As Rear Admiral SG Karmarkar, who was both Captain of Delhi and as Fleet Commander flew his flag on her brought out “We proved to the world that we are a force to reckon with. We achieved what in the Royal Navy was labelled the ‘Mediterranean smartness and efficiency’. Our visits to foreign and friendly countries were always looked forward to with great pleasure and anticipation. The ‘Delhi’ stood out majestically with great dignity and slick appearance.

Admiral SM Nanda who was the commissioning First Lieutenant of Delhi and Commissioning Commanding Officer of Mysore recalls of a visit by Delhi to Mauritius in 1949 “For the Indian community in Mauritius the arrival of Delhi marked an emotional experience. Their forefathers had come as indentured labour. Now a warship from their forefathers’ country was paying them a visit. I recall three old men of Indian origin sitting on quarterdeck under the Indian naval ensign. They did not leave till much after sunset when all the other visitors had left”. Or take the case of a visit to Mombasa in 1951 by Delhi when she hosted Jomo Kenyatta, the leader

of Kenyan liberation struggle (and later the President of Kenya) when East Africa was still a British colony. Karmarkar reminisces “I will always remember the look on Jomo Kenyatta’s face when he boarded the Flag ship. He said ‘Captain, the last time I boarded a British Cruiser it was as part of the chipping party. Thank you for all your kindness”.

Nanda also recalls the visit to Egypt by Mysore saying, “The Egyptians shared our pride in the power of our growing navy’. Manohar Awati recollecting the visit to East Asia in 1958 says “People came in thousands.... to see Mysore, the largest warship then serving in any Asian Navy. In fact, everywhere Mysore went she was besieged by curious and admiring throngs from littoral East Asia come to see the new Indian Navy. No mean distinction for India which until just ten years before was a thraldom”. He adds “Mysore’s company was a virtual mini India. Well turned out, well behaved, and excellently represented in sports and at social functions ashore, they were truly the Ambassadors of their country”. Incidentally, our performance in many of these sports competitions used to be outstanding further adding to the goodwill and respect for our navy and nation

X Factor and Interesting Trivia

Beside all this, these ships also had a strange alchemy with their crew, the elements and with mother luck itself. It is what I would describe as the X Factor. These ships were the closest to the Army in terms of regimental spirit and engendered huge amounts of loyalty and great spirit for the ship which come to fore in various ways. One of the most famous incidents relates to the fiercely fought boat pulling regatta at Cochin, in 1967, where

the Delhi team came first but were disqualified having pulled in the wrong race. In one of those great annals of leadership, Ronnie Pereira the Captain of Delhi spoke to his team motivating them to pull again in the final race. Though limp with fatigue, the men raced against fresh crew of other ships and, incredibly, won the race again.

They produced some lovely literature. And lots of nautical trivia relates to these ships which could of interest to history buffs and anecdote hunters. For example it is said that the character of M from the James Bond movies is actually inspired by William Edward Parry who was the Commanding Officer of Achilles during the legendary battle of River Plate and then, by wonderful happenstance became the second C-in-C of the Royal Indian Navy. He was present at Chatham in July 48 when Achilles became Delhi and, two months later, he was in India receiving the ship along with the Prime Minister. In a serendipitous occurrence, his Flag Lieutenant Swaraj Parkash went onto command the Delhi in late sixties followed by command of Vikrant during the 1971 war. Swaraj Parkash also happened to be the commissioning Navigating Officer of Mysore.

In the fifties Delhi very briefly went back to being Achilles while filming for a movie on the ‘Battle of River’ directed by the legendary David Lean who embarked the ship for many days. Delhi also had the legend of the red headed ghost and the crew seriously believed that he always looked after the safety of ship and, especially, the engineers and engines. Through the late fifties and sixties, the Mysore was a tourist attraction when anchored off the Gateway of India and it is said that tour operators on the boats operating to Elephanta Island charged extra for ‘commentary’ and ‘telescope view’ of Mysore. Both the ships were also reported to have excellent galleys and bakeries where the best fresh bread and cookies were baked, and culinary excellence was the norm.

Adm AK Chatterjee had the rare distinction of being the Executive Officer of INS Delhi followed by taking over as the Commanding officer of the ship between Feb 1949 and

Oct 1950. He had a second tenure as the Commanding Officer from 1953 to 54. Vice Adm N Krishnan too had two tenures as Commanding Officer of Delhi, the second when he was briefly recalled for Op Vijay. Capt SN Kohli was present in UK as our Naval Attaché in 1957 when Mysore was commissioned and Capt SN Nanda was the first CO. Subsequently, he took over Mysore from Nanda. He also took over the Command of Indian Fleet and few years later, the Indian Navy from Nanda.

While most navy historians say that Indira Gandhi was the first woman to sail on Delhi, the distinction actually goes to Maniben Patel, the daughter of Sardar Vallabhai Patel, then Deputy Prime Minister who sailed on the ship in April 1950 with Maniben and his secretary Mr V Shanker. The distinction of being the first Indian woman to go across a jackstay is that of Meena Nagarkar, in Sep 1959, during a transfer from Mysore to Delhi. Meena was a lady plotter in Tactical School (now renamed MWC) at Kochi and the wife of the Officer in Charge ND School Cdr WS Nagarkar.

Mysore has the rare 'status' (if one can call it that) of having fired in anger on Indian soil as HMS Nigeria during an attack on Port Blair in Jun 1944 and on Nicobar in Aug 1945 and then as India's flagship firing in anger against our antagonists. Incidentally, both Delhi and Mysore have the unique distinction of their commissioning and decommissioning falling on same days. For Delhi, it was 05 Jul 48 to 05 Jul 78 and for Mysore it was 29 Aug 57 to 29 Aug 85.

The Second Generation

While many old timers may have wanted their continued existence as national relics, it was not to be. However, the Indian Navy names new heirs after ships of yore to perpetuate the fine traditions and carry forward their legacy. Thus, Delhi, Mysore and, a new sibling, Mumbai, were reborn years later as destroyers. When the new INS Delhi was commissioned on 15 Nov 97, the then skipper Captain (later VAdm) Anup Singh said "Delhi" has a unique role in the Navy, her name being synonymous with the

Navy's power and prestige. The predecessor of this ship carved herself with glory and we, the successors, are obliged to further enhance it. '

Future naval historians would probably see the commissioning of the three Project 15 destroyers in quick succession between 1997 and 2001 as equally landmark events. They ended a near decade long drought of accretion in our force levels. More importantly, these imposing, state of the art ships bristling with high tech weaponry were designed by Indian navy's design bureau and built in Mazagon Docks in Mumbai; thus, they were true 'Make in India' initiatives in which the Navy has been a pioneer.

While the first Delhi and Mysore were inducted at the dawn of Independence, the second generation were commissioned between the times when we celebrated the golden jubilee of our independence and becoming a Republic. The first generation signified the stirrings of hope and ambition of a nation and its navy; the second spoke of the long journey it has traversed and its achievements. This was time space continuum reflecting transition and transformation. The Delhi class and, their follow-on ships, the Kolkata class continue to remain our most formidable assets and the Principal Surface Combatants around which the Fleet is built with the Aircraft Carrier as the fulcrum.

Conclusion

They say, 'old soldiers do not die, they simply fade away', but what

about old ships? Mariners, since time immemorial, have believed that ships have souls, they have a sense of destiny, and they inhabit and roam around the seas long after their physical demise. While this may seem strange in the supposedly modern world that we live in, it is perfectly in sync with the ancient Indian belief of transmigration of soul and reincarnation. But ancient or modern, soul or no soul, not a single navyman will dispute that ships, particularly warships, have a more tangible quality called the 'spirit' that is seen on a million different occasions. It, therefore, follows that ships with a great sense of spirit would be more remembered, more treasured, and more admired than their counterparts.

Delhi and Mysore were such ships with spirit. Their respective mottos 'Sarvato Jayamichami (I Covet Victory Everywhere) of Delhi and 'Na Bibethi Kadachan' (Never Afraid or Forever Fearless) of Mysore provided inspiration to all those who lived and sailed on them. Their role in the nascent stages of our navy and nationhood needs recognition. Generations of 'navy men' had utmost reverence, love, nostalgia, and affection for these grand dames. Today, the Indian Navy is in the big league of blue water navies. Let us take a moment to salute the spirit and memory of the two ships that were the the bedrock of our Navy and enshrine that moment on 5 Jul 1948 when the magnificent journey began. 🇮🇳



Commodore Srikant B Kesnur

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Views expressed are the authors own, and do not reflect the editorial policy of 'MVI.'



Onward to Dacca: The Great Meghna Crossing Leading to Dacca Surrender

“We made the Night Heli Borne Operations a reality and our entire ‘Operation Jackpot’ ensured that East Pakistan fell in record time despite all hurdles put by their blowing up the bridges on the massive Meghna river. The army on its part conducted their operation very professionally aided by the local Bangladeshi’s as also with assistance from Kilo Airborne Attack Flight created by India for Bangladesh, providing crucial support against enemy positions and other enemy installations.”

by Air Commodore RM Sridharan (Retd)

The first night special Heli-borne Operations were over, and I had a short nap after returning from the last sortie to Sylhet and back. The spirit and enthusiasm of the 110 Helicopter Unit was infectious. The fuel had run out for us, yet our technical staff innovated refueling from barrels which had just stood for 24 hours against the normal of 48. The fuel was pumped through the MI-4 auxiliary fuel tank to the service tank! Thus, this problem was innovatively overcome by our engineering officer and his men.

Throughout this operation none of us were not concerned with rest or meals we just did whatever sorties came our way - whether day or night. The clampshells were fitted back on

all our helicopters and we were ready to move to our next destination - Agartala from Kailashaher. I was detailed with Flt Lt PN Rao to carry out casualty evacuation of some casualties of the Sylhet operation to Teliamura and then reach Agartala with another helicopter doing the same.

Rest with the CO, Flt Cdr and the air and ground crew set course for Agartala. It was another beautiful clear day and we continued with our missions flying at deck level just clear of any obstructions to reach Agartala after offloading our Gurkha casualties who were in high spirits. Our entire complement of 10 helicopters were at Agartala including the one badly shot up at Sylhet.

Once on ground at Agartala with all the helicopters parked on the side of the runway the Clampshell doors were removed once again. All aircrew were housed in an old ATC building and ground crew in tents. Once settled, the CO and Flt Cdr went on a ‘Recce Mission’ by a Chetak to select landing areas at Raipura, Narsingdi, and Bhairab Bazar deep into Pakistani Territory.

In the meanwhile, two helicopters each with air and ground crew joined our force from 105 and 111 helicopter units led by Sqn Ldr PN Chabra and Sqn Ldr Nanda Cariappa. So, we had a total of 14 helicopters for the missions to come.

The Recce Chetak Helicopter returned, and we rushed to discover that the helicopter had been hit badly by ground fire but miraculously only the Copilot Fg Offr GPS Sidhu had been shot in the leg. The Chetak had 38 Bullet shots but Lt Gen Sagat Singh, Gp Capt Chandan Singh along with our CO and Flt Cdr escaped unhurt. All looked quite shaken but Gen Sagat was cool and he wanted the Chetak to evacuate Sidhu to Teliamura and after external checks the Chetak went onto Teliamura Hospital. GPS did not take any further part in the war, but he recovered to regain his fitness.

The landing grounds had been selected and this episode made us all more determined to press on with our task. We were briefed that 57 Mountain Division under Gen Ben Gonsalves was to be Heli-lifted from Brahmanbaria to Raipura in Stage 1 of our Task. Brahmanbaria was a few Kilometers inside East Pakistan already with our 57 Div. We positioned our helicopters at Brahmanbaria and briefed 4 Guards about Heliborne Operations. None of the battalions that we operated had any Experience of operating with us. But they all learned on the job with us and soon were most proficient.

Me and PN positioned at Brahmanbaria for further lift of troops and equipment to Raipura. Ample briefing was given by our CO Charu Sandhu and Flt Cdr Palokha Vaid about the Landing Zones at Brahmanbaria and Raipura. Initially we flew in Vics of three helicopters like Sylhet Flying at Deck level the LZ 's were like Sylhet with some dust and dry grass as crops had been cut recently. Once again, our engineers and gunners briefing the troops was spot on this the Army learnt amazingly fast and we operated without any accident or incident. There were however some close shaves.

The LZ at Brahmanbaria and Narsingdi were quite comfortable and after initially operating in Vic's of three we started operating with four and five helicopters in 'Line Abreast Formation.' The clearance between Helicopters was tight as we did not want the troops and equipment too spread out. For night operations the LZ's were suitably lighted with glim

lamps and goose necks set up by our FAC, Pilot Officer DS Shaheed.

On the 9th I flew four sorties by day to Brahmanbaria and two to Narsingdi with PN. Navigation to Raipura was comfortable with the river Meghna as the reference. I also kept a sharp look-out for enemy gunboats on the river. I was generally flying the helicopter which was carrying the wheeled Arty gun which took time to load and off load as loading ramps were to be used. This did pose a problem at night when due to poor lighting the delay would pose problems of at times navigating back to Brahmanbaria individually even at times to Raipura on the way up. But the Army Battalions and the Artillery elements displayed great understanding and coordination. I also did carry back army casualties on the return.

On the 10th I flew four sorties with Palokha Vaid carrying the Arty gun load. Those sorties gave me great confidence in both station keeping in formation flying and landing with load and squeezing into the corners of the LZ's at Narsingdi.

On 11th December I flew six sorties by day and seven by night with PN and later with Fg Offr Shiv Krishna-Shibu - of 105 HU. The bright and clear moonlight was a good help to me but haze closer to landing while landing and taking off was problematic at times. I found that during our sorties at Narsingdi the locals were great help in off-loading our helicopters and helping and guiding our troops on the ground. On 12th December I did not fly any sortie as I was given a task on ground with our ground crew.

One of our Helicopters flying back to Kumbhigram had to force land due to transmission failure safely but there was a fire in the engine. There were no casualties, but the Helicopter was not available for operations. In between there was a shortage of engine oil for helicopters which was brought from Kumbhigram by the Dakota of Kilo Flight flown singly by Fg Offr Arun Karandikar.

I resumed flying on 13th Dec when I flew with Fg Offr Jagdeep to Narsingdi 7 sorties from Raipura. By

then we were Heli lifting 10 Bihar and 18 Rajput who also became remarkably familiar and good at Heliborne Operations both by day and night. I carried out eight sorties on 14 Dec to Baidya Bazar from Daudkandi with Fg Offr BLK Reddy. Now we had come close to Dacca and at the end of 14 Dec we were told that the next army objective would be Dacca.

The next morning, we had a briefing by Task Force Commander Gp Capt Chandan Singh who said that now the fighting would be on the streets of Dacca and helicopters would become easy targets and we better be prepared for attrition a plenty. But the situation changed due to our Special Heli-borne Operations that had Heli-lifted 57 Mountain Division with their Artillery element and three Battalions across the Meghna as the Bridges had been blown up by the retreating Pakistan Forces. But the brilliant strategy of Gen Sagat Singh who found a gaping hole in the Pakistan Defence with the rapid movement of 57 Division coupled with the para drop at Tangail that on 15 December we received news that a surrender was being brokered in Dacca by Lt Gen Jacob with the enemy Pakistan on 16 Dec there would be a surrender ceremony.

The onslaught to Dacca which was given the codename 'Operation Jackpot' had succeeded. So, India would be victorious, and a ceremony was planned at Dacca on 16 Dec 1971. Palokha Vaid made the crew for the five MI-4's which would carry the surrender party to Dacca from Agartala in the late afternoon. No 1 would be Charu Sandhu our CO with Lamboo Ali, No 2 was Nanda Carriappa with Self, No 3 was Pran Chabra with NL Verma, No 4 was Palokha Vaid with Chippy Desouza and lastly No 5

Jaya with BLK Reddy. Three Chetaks would be carrying all the army commander Gen Arora, The Air Force AOC, C-in-C & the Naval FOC-in-C, Gen JS Arora, Air Mshl HS Dewan and Vice Adm Krishnan besides Gen Sagat, Gp Capt Chandan Singh and other Generals & some Command Staff from Calcutta and Shillong. Our out-station VIP'S arrived after lunch & we set course late afternoon for Dacca in formation with our CO in the lead.

The copilots were selected by the maximum sorties done during the war. So, I was fortunate to get selected to fly with Sqn Ldr Nanda Carriappa to Dacca for the historic surrender ceremony.

Feverish activity went around all the eight helicopters which were about to depart for Dacca! All aircrew were feeling relieved that the war was about to end but I was on top of the world as I was to fly with Sqn Ldr Nanda Carriappa, whom we young helicopter pilots idolized as a smart, suave & dashing CO of 111 Helicopter Unit. I had met him a few times but now I would be flying with him on this historic sortie taking the surrender party to Dacca. Our unit had worked extremely hard prior to the war to attain standards of excellence and all that had paid rich dividends and we made the strategic plans of the master genius General Sagat Singh happen!

We made the Night SHBO a reality and our entire 'Operation Jackpot' ensured that East Pakistan fell in record time despite all hurdles put by their blowing up the bridges on the massive Meghna River. The army on its part conducted their operation very professionally aided by the local Bangladeshi's as also with assistance from Kilo Airborne Attack Flight created by India for Bangladesh, providing crucial support against enemy positions and other enemy installations.

The entire 'Victory Formation' of eight helicopters were ready for takeoff with our CO Charu Sandhu fittingly in the lead. It was late afternoon on 16 Dec that we set course for Dacca, 40 minutes away from Agartala. It was a bright and clear day as all helicopters headed to Dacca for the grand finale. The outbound flight was uneventful as we flew low across all the territory that our forces had captured as also places that had been so familiar for us as we had Helilifted the 57 Div across the Meghna onward to Dacca. As we approached Dacca, Nanda asked me if I could spot the Dacca Golf Course close to the Kurmitola Airfield. He was an avid golfer then while I just hated that game then. Ahead I spotted the Tejgaon Dacca Airfield and as we approached saw the big craters made by our fighters and bombers.

They were the ones that gave us and the army the freedom to operate in whatever way we chose to. The air superiority edge that we held from the second day of 'Operation Cactus Lily' helped our armed forces to speed up 'Operation Jackpot' to seize East Pakistan and force Gen Niazi & Pakistani Army to lay down their arms on 16 December. We saw the reception party on ground and adjusted to land one by one with our CO leading the way. Once on Ground all 8 Helicopters switched off & the Pakistani entourage led by Gen Niazi & Farman Ali came forward to receive our three service heads led by Gen JS Arora.

There was loud cheering by the locals as we all were herded into different cars and vehicles to be taken to Dacca Racecourse. Nanda, Cariappa, and I were in an open Jeep as we rushed towards the ground. The road was lined with cheering Bangladeshi Crowds as also we could see the ravages of the war caused by our Air Force and Army enroute. By the time we reached the huge Racecourse ground it was early evening and the surrender ceremony was getting set with all the dignitaries gathering around the tables that had been laid out by our forces.

Gen Niazi took his seat along with the civilian governor and across the table sat Gen Arora and all the other commanders of all three services crowded around the table with surrender document in front of them. There was plenty of pushing and pulling while I tried to get a look in at the proceedings. Only Fg Offr Kruts Krishnamurthy amongst all of us small fry spectators could make it to the front, to push Gen JFR Jacob the Eastern Command Chief of Staff, the man who negotiated the surrender with Gen Niazi, almost out of the historic picture. We all were left at the back peering over tall hefty figures of the army and other local people.

Wild cheering went on as the signing ceremony was on. I was talking to some Bangladeshi Air Force Officers who were giving graphic accounts of the cruelties of the Pakis and the Indian Army's victory moves into the streets of Dacca with authority. They wanted us to stay back and celebrate our triumphant onslaught. But we had to get back to the Dacca Airfield to return to Agartala after these massive historic moments that we all would cherish for all our lives. A new nation Bangladesh was born, and we had helped in creating this new country.

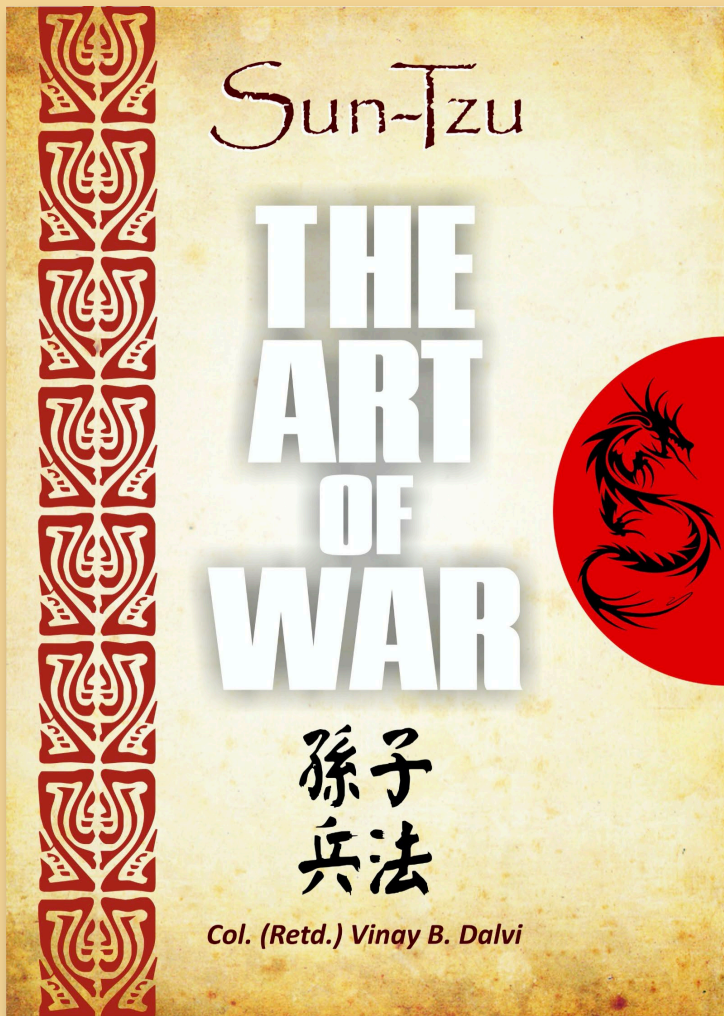
The surrender ceremony got over and it was getting dark by that time. On our return road journey spotted the Dacca Intercontinental Hotel Building and a Huge White Dacca Jamma Masjid Mosque amongst the few heritage buildings that had been unaffected by our bombings. The Jeep brought us back to the airport with our army in escort and I ran to my helicopter. All the other dignitaries and our passengers returned to the 8 Helicopters at the dispersal. Gen Sagat Singh met all of us aircrew before boarding the helicopter.

He said that he was very happy with our performance in 'Operations Cactus Lily' and 'Op Jackpot' and as promised before the war, He invited our unit to the Hotel Dacca Intercontinental for the New Year's Eve party, each and every one of us as we were; as he put it, the champagne moments of his glittering successful strategic march to eventual swift victory to Dacca. We took off soon afterwards and flew back by night to Agartala and 40 minutes later all eight helicopters were back in India after liberating People from the clutches of tyranny to a brand-new country in the World - Bangladesh. 🇧🇩



Air Commodore RM Sridharan (Retd)

Air Cmde Sridharan is a 71 War Veteran and renowned IAF Helicopter pilot with over 8,000 flying hours. He has served in HQ Comm Sqn where he flew top dignitaries among other important appointments. Views expressed are the authors own, and do not reflect the editorial policy of 'MVI.'



Sun Tzu's –The Art of War

by Team Victory India

Historical Backdrop

“The Art of War” by Sun Tzu is one of the world’s most widely read works on military strategy. Written during one of the most turbulent times in Chinese history, the warring states period, Sun Tzu’s classic built the platform for wars to come, not just in Asia, but internationally. A master general, Sun Tzu rose to power under emperors who valued his opinions on military strategy and training. He reportedly never lost a battle and fact or fiction, is one of the most well-known figures in Chinese history. Ironically, Sun Tzu’s broad but succinct strategies on warfare probably gave western leaders much insight into this complex subject and possibly helped them to defeat the Far East nations in the subsequent wars. This short book containing 389 thoughts in 13 chapters embodying the fundamentals of strategy and tactics covered by B.H. Liddell Hart in more than twenty books is undoubtedly the best short introduction to the study of war. The clear vision, profound insight and eternal freshness of Sun Tzu’s wisdom can be grasped by anyone who strives to study this ancient military classic.

Ancient Wisdom for Military & Corporate Leaders

Sun Tzu, the greatest strategist of all time wrote “Art of War” 2500 years ago. The work is a unique combination of ancient wisdom in the art of warfare. Comprising thirteen chapters of numerous thoughts, their strategic and tactical applications continue to hold good for the present times since the basic principles of warfare have remained unchanged. This ancient and timeless wisdom of Sun Tzu is deceptively simple to understand but powerful in content and bring out the soundest military lessons. Every thought is simple, brief and meaningful with a profound and overwhelming power in its application. The quotes also offer excellent resources to corporate executives for formulation of winning strategies. An intensive study of Sun Tzu’s thoughts by students will surely produce more effective and efficient leaders not only for the military but also the corporate world.

Universal acceptance of the thoughts of Sun Tzu is also evident from its numerous translations in many languages. Its English translations have particularly benefitted in their application not only in military warfare, but also in business, sports, and personal success. Sun Tzu’s thoughts have been the cornerstone of Eastern military and business strategy for centuries and offer invaluable lessons for our military leaders, corporate executives, government officials and politicians. Perhaps the most pertinent thought of Sun Tzu stresses “the importance of winning the war without actually fighting it” and thus merits its analytical study with comparisons drawn between the East and West, as the western philosophy advocates “actually fighting the big battle” as the only way to win the war...

Contents of Book - 13 Chapters & 389 Thoughts

The book is divided into 13 chapters and encapsulates 389 profound thoughts embodying the fundamentals of strategy and tactics and the best short introduction to the study of war:

- Laying Plans
- Waging War
- Attack by Stratagem
- Tactical Dispositions

- Energy
- Weak Points and Strong
- Maneuvering
- Variations in Tactics
- The Army on the March
- Terrain
- The Nine Situations
- The Attack by Fire
- The Use of Spies

Five Select Quotes of Sun Tzu

“The general that hearkens to my counsel and acts upon it will conquer; let such a one be retained in command! The general that hearkens not to my counsel does not act upon it will suffer defeat: let such a one be dismissed!”

“Thus, it may be known that the leader of armies is the arbiter of the people’s fate, the man on whom it depends whether the nation shall be in peace or peril”

“He who can modify his tactics in relation to his opponent and thereby succeed winning may be called a heaven-born captain”

“The art of war teaches us to rely not on the likelihood of the enemy’s not coming, but on our own readiness to receive him, not on the chance of his not attacking, but rather on the fact that we have made our position unassailable”

“If you know the enemy and know yourself, your victory will not stand in doubt; if you know Heaven and know Earth, you may make your victory complete”

Systematic Treatise for Successful Conduct of War for Political Rulers, Bureaucrats & Military Commanders

Sun Tzu wrote ‘The Art of War’ in China 2500 years ago. It is the earliest known treatise about war which has never been surpassed in comprehensiveness and depth of understanding.

Even today this book is the most concentrated essence of wisdom on war and the source of all Chinese strategic and tactical doctrines.

For the rapid and uninterrupted economic growth of a vast country like India there is an indispensable need of a strong and robust defence establishment with an effective mechanism to ward off frequent and multifarious threats imposed upon us due to the geo-strategic nature of our country having vast frontiers, live international borders and long vulnerable sea coasts.

If only our political rulers, bureaucrats, and military commanders study this systematic treatise on the successful conduct of war, it would not only enable and facilitate overcoming of present challenges but also help steer our country through turbulent times ahead.



The Long Pending Need for a Well Defined Defence Policy & Strategic Doctrine

“We will do well to remember that there will always be a soldier on our land, if not ours, it will be theirs!”

by Major General VK Madhok (Retd)

Considering the external and internal threats India faces today or will face tomorrow together with abundance if not an excess of security forces (Paramilitary & Regular) which we have raised, along with a tendency to raise a new force at the drop of a hat besides many flaws in our defence apparatus, the question is, does India have a long term Strategic Doctrine or a Defense philosophy and finally a Defence Policy, based on our National Aim and Doctrine? And which is updated continuously?

On May 16, 1995, the then Prime Minister and Defence Minister P.V. Narsimha Rao, on being asked in the Lok Sabha as to what is India's Defence Policy to which he had replied, that his government did not have a document called 'Defence Policy' but had sufficient guidelines

to meet threats. This statement won't be acceptable today, because, we have now constituted a National Security Council (NSC), over which the PM presides, led by an appointed National Security Advisor (NSA) (who visits Russia and China & other countries along with the PM) have an National Defence Advisory Board (NDAB) besides having a National Intelligence Agency (NIA).

The primary task of these agencies is to define security issues and find solutions. But there is no Defence Policy and if there is one, then the Nation is entitled to know about it.

Furthermore, we have many flaws in our defence apparatus. Major ones being a wide communication gap between the soldier and the politician. Wherein the Politician gets watered

down advice/version through the bureaucrats instead of direct assessments from the Chiefs of Staff. Our dependence on weapon and equipment imports from France, Russia, Italy, Sweden, Israel, UK and now the US, which work out to nearly 70-80%.

The emphasis being on acquisitions instead of Indigenisation. Have we realised that our Air Force flying 7-8 types of different combat aircraft purchased from 3-4 countries (Russia, France, and UK) can be grounded in 2-3 weeks if replacements or spares are denied from arms factories during war. What about military leadership where the Army's officer corps remains deficient by 14,000-15,000 officers, nearly 50% of its authorised strength? Thus, leaving Army's combat units to be led by JCO's.

Today Defence has become too serious a business to be left at the discretion of non-professionals. To start with, we need to have a Defence Minister who makes concrete recommendations for National Security objectives and Defence Policy. Who knows the difference between a section and a flight, a motor, and a mortar, a naval and an army division and the difference between an Exocet, Stinger or a Patriot missile?

Without such knowledge, his credibility will be suspect and reduced to mere ceremonial functions or signing of defence contracts, and he will not be able to assess the morale (fighting spirit) of the Army without which any Army will be useless. The bottom line is, that we have a situation today where no Army Commander or Chief equivalent in the other services can state as to what is India's Strategic Doctrine or Defence policy? We will do well to put this right.

What are the threats India faces today or likely to face in future and what should we do to find solutions to these (Defence Policy) as perceived from outside the Government machinery?

Current, Future External & Internal Security Threats

A fact which cannot be refuted and on which there can be no argument, controversy or dispute is that China and Pakistan are our main adversaries. Who are united in a devious and crafty plot to achieve their respective objectives against their common opponent India?

Many, if not most of our internal security and other problems arise from this carefully plotted and clever alliance. While Pakistan strives to get Kashmir, Beijing wants to ensure that its chief competitor's (India) influence in the region and elsewhere is diluted. Believe it or not with its proactive policies and strategy Beijing has succeeded in not only surrounding and engaging India but also has conveyed a strong message that Delhi better forget about PoK-once and for all. Thus, allaying Pakistan's fears that India might one day threaten it militarily to take back PoK.

An issue which calls for a debate and discussion by the NSC, NDAB, NIA and our NSA & CDS, is as to Whether China has really surrounded and engaged India and in what way has helped its ally 'Pakistan? Further what are its intentions (objectives)?

The facts are that with Myanmar now reduced to a Chinese satellite on our eastern flank, and a well-armed and fully supported ally Pakistan on our western flank, Tibet fully militarized with an effective capability to move across the LAC, with the Sino-Indo border dispute left unresolved deliberately for the last 48-50 years, an anti-India Nepal with an effective Chinese connectivity, Bhutan at China's mercy-with a live border dispute, anti-India initiatives in Bangladesh.

With separatist elements getting arms and supplies both in the east and west from China and Pakistan respectively with potential to wage a second Proxy war in our east, development of important ports at Sittwe (Myanmar), Hamantota (Southern Sri Lanka) initiatives to establish influence in Chittagong (Bangladesh) and operationalisation of Gwadar deep sea port and naval base south west of Balochistan and now development of anti-satellite weapons (ASAT).

It is left to the readers discretion as to whether China has surrounded India and developed a capability to engage it politically or militarily in furtherance of its own and its ally's intentions?

What are China's intentions? Briefly these are to

- Contain India by building Pakistan with aircraft, missiles, nuclear technology, and other aid and also Nepal and even encourage the Taliban.
- Dilute Pakistan's fears of India ever stepping in to claim PoK by investing millions of
- dollars in Baltistan-Gilgit and other Northern areas, upgrading KK Highway to connect Gwadar port via KK Pass to Sinkiang and construct Hydroelectric Schemes in Bunji and Swat.

- Build economic markets in Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, and Myanmar.
- Implement its strings of pearls policy by establishing bases at Sittwe, Chittagong, Hamantota and Gwadar.
- Support separatist movements in India's Northeast to the hilt. Give them direction and arms to fight cohesively against India.
- Draw buffer states towards China and use them for economic purposes, trade, and anti-India movements.
- Counter India's major moves like at the Nuclear Suppliers Group (no unconditional waiver) or obtaining of loans from the Asian Development Bank for projects in AP.
- Finally, to keep its options open, test Indian reactions to incursions across the LAC (nearly 100 have taken place every year across Ladakh alone since 2006), dictate terms of cooperation and not to delineate the LAC.

As regards our current threats? Probes across the LAC will continue and may even increase in AP and Ladakh primarily to test India's reactions. Support to ULFA, NSCN and even Bodos with arms, ammunition, clothing, and logistics will be intensified. Paresh Barua has already become a guest in Beijing. Efforts will be increased to establish diplomatic relations with Thimpu with the aim of bringing it under China's influence like Nepal.

Schemes to build up infrastructure in PoK are likely to take concrete shape with India sitting on the fence. Border talks will continue to be delayed while Indian troops continue to remain under stress

both in J&K and in the Northeast thus bleeding India's overstretched Defence establishment.

What India Should Do?

Eighteen (18) suggestions are listed below:

- Speed up the building up of infrastructure and development, particularly in the northeast. We have lost nearly 40 years. And even now, 73 roads sanctioned in 2006 (27 in AP, 19 in Uttarakhand, 14 in J&K, 6 in Sikkim and 7 in HP) which were to be completed by 2012. Only 9 have been completed. Besides, we were thinking of an 1840 Km Trans AP highway by 2013. All this cannot be done unless we raise more BROs and take dynamic steps.
- Give clear orders to our soldiers at the LoC and LAC far dealing with intrusions. Why are there no prisoners from China?
- Prepare for a confrontation if one day Chinese soldiers stay back on Indian soil.
- Prepare for a two front war and two Proxy wars (one, the ongoing one in J&K and the second which may become a reality in the northeast).
- Give Indigenisation priority and get Japanese, French, or British engineers to be involved in our private industry in manufacturing Defence equipment.
- Redefine pro-active terms of engagement with China and Pakistan. Let them know India is preparing and is ready to fight for its demands, if necessary.
- Take initiatives such as asking China to talk to the Dalai Lama & oppose the projects China is working on in PoK instead of keeping quiet.
- Decide now what we should or will do in case Chinese take a military initiative in Bhutan or start training the Nepalese Army because we cannot afford to lose these buffer states. We have already lost Tibet and are paying for it.
- Intensify interaction and initiatives to befriend Myanmar. Today, there

are some cracks in Sino-Myanmar relations.

- Let us get out of our reactive policies/attitude and be proactive. Let the nation see our reaction to Chinese intrusions. Why not intrusions by us?
- Reorganize Paramilitary forces—from 14 to 2. They are a drain on our economy. What we should ultimately have are: An Internal Security and a Border Security Force (BSF) along with TA (Citizens Militia), compulsory NCC and create Reserves for the regular forces. One reason for our failure to tackle terrorism is the number and diverse types of Paramilitary type forces that we have created.
- Restore prestige of the armed forces which is at rock bottom at present.
- Make the Army, officer led instead of JCO led. There are 50 JCOs in a combat unit opposed to 7-8 officers. The average age of JCOs would be between 40-45 years. India needs a young Army which is officer led.
- Wake up DRDO: They must deliver instead of making statements. The organisation cannot produce even bullet proof vests. Why?
- Reassess our NFU nuclear policies. Why not a policy of first use if the need arises instead of a second-strike capability?
- Beef up Andaman-Nicobar Islands into an unsinkable aircraft carrier

capable of neutralizing Chinese initiatives.

- We are behind in our Space programs for military application.
- Finally, it is most desirable that the youth of our country sees our borders before they sit in front of computers in air-conditioned offices after their studies,

The Way Ahead

As regards to our future. Much hard work lies ahead to save India's sovereignty. We will do well to remember that "There will always be a soldier on our land, if not ours, it will be theirs!" China is in occupation of 38,000 Sq. Kms of Indian territory in Ladakh (including Aksai Chin), 4100 Sq. Km of PoK west of KK Pass given by Pakistan, 30 Sq. Kms in Wongdong in AP and 40Sq Kms of Barahoti grazing grounds in UP besides claiming 90,00C Sq. Kms of AP has indeed placed itself in an excellent bargaining position. The Nation seeks an answer to all these issues.

There is no reason as to why the PM or the RM should not speak on these issues to the Nation. The Defence establishment must read and re-read the causes of failure in 1962 and Kargil (1999). Finally, if the Indian establishment continues to oscillate between the loose talks that we have been hearing on the TV or superficial assurances by officials, China is bound to turn up the heat on a range of difficult issues and then the UPA Government will find there is no place to hide. 🇮🇳



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A Case for Corporatisation: OFB Needs Major Overhaul Suggests Army's Internal Report to MoD

“The lack of accountability and poor quality of production results in frequent accidents. This results in injuries and death of soldiers. On an average one accident takes places per week.” Highlights an internal report by the Indian Army

Disclaimer: (This internal report by the Indian Army to the Ministry of Defence (MoD) calling for the ‘Corporatisation of the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) has been acquired through government sources. The veracity of this document has been confirmed by the Indian Army spokesperson. The report has been reproduced in the larger interest of the Indian Armed Forces and the citizenry; especially the combat soldier on the ground whose task it is to close in with the enemy, despite grave risk to life and limb, and the taxpayers whose hard earned money provides the financial backbone of the nation’s war-fighting ability. ‘Mission Victory India’ does not claim to endorse the view presented in the document below and shall not be held liable.)

by MVI

The Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) with its 41 Factories, 13 Development centres and 9 Institutes of learning is expected to be a national strategic asset with the potential of not only meeting national military hardware requirement and also contributing to overall Comprehensive National Power.

- The sub-optimal efficiency of this potential strategic asset is one of the major contributing factors to the hollowness threatening the ammunition and armament holdings of the Indian Army.
- It is also a matter of concern that certain countries have refused to

accept ordnance factory manufactured ammunition and equipment offered against Defence Lines of Credit due to concerns regarding quality of output, procedures in the factories and the in efficient post sale service.

Poor Quality Production

Accidents: Lack of accountability and poor quality of production results in frequent accidents. This results in injuries and death of soldiers. On an average one accident takes places per week:-

Year	Air Defense	Artillery	Armoured Corps	Infantry	Total
2014	4	17	15	78	114
2015	3	17	7	59	86
2016	3	10	8	39	60
2017	3	13	4	33	53
2018	1	25	6	46	78
2019	1	5	2	8	16
Total	15	87	44	267	403

Casualties: Casualties due to OFB manufactured Ammunition and Armament are as below: -

Year	Fatal	Non-Fatal
2014	01	15
2015	00	14
2016	19	28
2017	01	18
2018	03	43
2019	03	28
2020	00	13



Armed forces being the biggest customer of ordnance factories are likely to benefit immensely from corporatisation with better pricing and improved product leading to an improved equipment state and better customer satisfaction.



Loss to Exchequer due to Poor Quality Production

- Rs. 658.58 crore worth of disposed of within shelf-life between April 2014 and April 2019.
- Rs. 303.23 crore worth of Mines disposed of within shelf-life post Pulgaon Accident in May 2016.
- Rs 960 crore loss roughly means one hundred 155 mm Medium Artillery guns could have been bought for this amount.

Corporatisation is the Way Ahead

The Corporatisation of OFB announced by the Government has been debated for a long time. The corporatisation was first suggested by the Nair Committee in 2000 and thereafter by Kelkar Committee in 2005, and Raman Puri Committee in 2015. The Corporatisation of OFBs formed part of the Modi 2.0 government '167 transformative ideas' to be implemented in 100 days i.e. by Oct 2019.

The Modi government had floated a proposal for corporatisation in July/Aug 2019, but the trade unions called for an indefinite strike against the decision on 20 Aug 2019. However, the strike was called off from 26 Aug 2019, after assurances by the Secretary of Defence Production that the government has not taken any decision yet towards corporatisation of OFB.

The government, thereafter, sets up a committee to address the concerns of the employees in Sep 2019 and subsequently in Nov 2019 issued a press release notifying the "proposal to convert Ordnance Factories under the OFB into a 100 percent Government owned Public Sector Unit to provide functional and financial autonomy and

managerial flexibility so as to enable the organisation to grow at a faster pace and play a greater role in defence preparedness of the country while also adequately safeguarding the interests of the workers".

The Modi government looks determined to implement the decision which was finally announced by the Finance Minister as part of the Defence Reforms package. The trade unions have now once again called for an indefinite strike calling the government decision as "arbitrary, illegal, and unjustified".

The biggest concerns of the OFB employees is that 'Corporatisation' is the first step towards 'Privatisation' and is likely to result in layoffs and job cuts. However, as of now Government has made it very clear that it is not thinking of 'Privatisation' in the near future and OFB will function akin to the various PSUs in the country post Corporatisation.

The OFB has regularly performed below its potential over the last few decades and has also been found to be draining the Defence Budget with over pricing of material produced. It has a monopoly over several products required by the armed forces, minimal innovation and technology development and hardly any incentive to improve quality and cost efficiency, with almost nil accountability for its products.

The biggest problem with the OFB has been attributed to its limited autonomy, it being an attached office of MoD, vis-à-vis the DPSUs. The Corporatisation of OFB will put it at par with other DPSUs managed by its own board of directors with broad guidelines from the government.

The government has envisioned growth of OFB post corporatisation expecting it to raise its turnover to Rs 30,000 crore by 2024-25 annually against exiting Rs 12,000 crore, and has set up a high-level panel to work out a roadmap to achieve the same.

Post Corporatisation, OFB will be allowed to forge partnerships with the private sector as per the MoD's approved policy and will continue to receive orders from the country's security forces. It will also be granted a special preference of 15% above L1 price for "Make" and "Buy and Make" category products.

The Centre will support OFB in case of losses, by way of loan for 30% of the total shortfall and by way of equity investment for balance 70% of the amount. The working capital for the next five years will be provided by the Department of Defence Production (DDP) as a one-time corpus fund. Capital investment for ongoing and sanctioned projects will also be provided.

Benefits of Corporatisation

There are numerous benefits likely to be accrued after the corporatisation as dwelled by various committees recommending the same. Some of the prominent benefits envisaged after corporatisation are highlighted below:-**Improved Efficiency:** The corporatisation of OFB is likely to result in better management of its functioning with greater autonomy in functioning and dynamic decision making, also resulting in timely delivery and better quality supplied by factories.

Competitive Pricing: At present, a cost-plus mechanism is followed by OFB to fix the prices. In this system the price is fixed by taking the max estimated cost-plus 20 percent to cater for contingencies which are further raised by another 8 to 15 percent next year.

This led to over pricing with CAG even pointing out that in some cases OFB is charging even more than the import value of the equipment. It is envisaged that corporatisation will lead to reduced and competitive pricing, since OFB will be competing with



Indigenously developed Dhanush artillery gun on display during Def Expo; File Photo

private players in defence industry, albeit with some advantages.

Flexibility in Technology Acquisition: OFB will be free to form strategic alliances with Indian and overseas companies to boost innovation and develop new products. The factories, if modernised and managed properly, will be able to unlock its true potential and be the main key in the 'Make in India' project.

Financial Independence: OFB may no longer be dependent on the government for funding as it will be able to generate funds through other means like being listed on the stock exchange similar to other DPSUs. This will enable it to achieve financial independence and the money can be efficiently used for modernisation, R&D and boost innovation.

Optimum Use of Idle Capacities: The idle or under-utilised capacities of the factories will be better utilised post corporatisation.

Increased Defence Export: Corporatized Ordnance factories can use the idle capacities to generate surplus production over and above the

requirement of armed forces, which can be exported to generate better revenues.

Improved Equipment State: Armed forces being the biggest customer of ordnance factories are likely to benefit immensely from corporatisation with better pricing and improved product leading to an improved equipment state and better customer satisfaction.

Concerns

Some of the concerns highlighted in various forums against corporatisation of OFB are given below:-

Commercial Viability: The argument given by OFB employees is that corporatisation of OFB will not be commercially viable since there is no fixed demands by the armed forces, coupled with issues of long gaps between orders, uneconomical order quantity, and life cycle support required for 30-40 years after the introduction of equipment. However, OFB can take a leaf out of the functioning of the DPSUs, which seems to be

managing these issues without any problem.

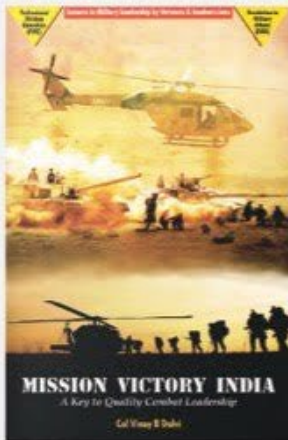
Surge in Demand during War: OFBs supposedly have some idle capacity as a war reserve, to cater for surge in demand during war, as was demonstrated during Kargil. The government will need to look into this aspect while formulating laws for corporatisation to not compromise with the logistic support to the forces during war.

OFB will need to work at its maximum capacity and look for exports of its surplus capacities during peacetime, which will necessitate it to become more efficient and produce world class quality to survive in this competitive world. Corporatisation of OFB is likely to wake it from its slumber and transform ordnance factories into a modernised, state of the art facility with flexible and better decision making in its functioning.

This move is likely to make them more competitive and self-reliant in production of arms and ammunition and convert it to a profit earning organisation within the next few years. 🇮🇳

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