

# U.S.I. JOURNAL

INDIA'S OLDEST JOURNAL ON DEFENCE AFFAIRS



## PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

- Changing Nature of Limited Wars: - Major General (Dr) GG Dwivedi  
Impact of Technology and Ramifications (Retd)
- Voices from the Prison: Indian Soldiers in - Dr Narender Yadav  
German Prisoners of War Camp, 1915-1918
- The Corps of Madras Pioneers - Colonel Harjeet Singh (Retd)
- Grooming of Military Officers for - Commander M Arun  
Joint Services Environment Chakravarthy

Vol CLIII

APRIL-JUNE 2023

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## USI LATEST PUBLICATION DURING 2023-2021

Pub Code	Title of Book & Name of Author	Price(Rs)	Year
Adm-SYB/23**	“STRATEGIC YEAR BOOK 2023” Editor-in-Chief Maj Gen BK Sharma, AVSM, SM & Bar (Retd), Editors Lt Gen GS Katoch, PVSM,AVSM,VSM (Retd), Gp Capt Sharad Tewari, VM (Retd) & Dr Jyoti Yadav	2250	2023
M-1/ 2023**	“India Tibet Relations (1947-1962)” By Mr Claude Arpi	395	2023
OP-1/ 2023**	“The Ukrainian Conflict : Heavy Metal still Rocks the Charts” By Maj Gen Jagatbir Singh, VSM (Retd) & Maj Gen VK Singh, VSM (Retd)	250	2023
OP-2/ 2023**	“The Great Helmsman and the Generalissimo : A Personal Feud That Endures” by Col Sanjay Kannothe,VSM	250	2023
OP-3/ 2023**	“Changing Operational Scenario and Evolving Rules of Engagement” by Wg Cdr UC Jha (Retd) and Gp Capt Kishore Kumar Kherra (Retd)	250	2023
Adm-UNPO/ 2022	“Keeping the Peace –UN Peace Operations and their Effectiveness : An Assessment” by Maj Gen (Dr) AK Bardalai (Retd) M/s Pentagon Press	995	2022
Adm-UNPK/ 2022	“INDIA AND UN PEACEKEEPING : THROUGH THE PRISM OF TIME” Edited by Maj Gen PK Goswami, VSM (Retd) M/s KW Publishers Pvt Ltd	1880	2022
CS3 R-114**	“Geo-Politics of Water in South Asia : Implications For India” By Col Anurag Jyoti	1250	2022
CMHCS-6*	“GALLIPOLI REVISITED” Edited by Sqn Ldr RTS Chhina,MBE, (Retd) and Amb Asoke Mukerji, IFS (Retd)	800	2022
OP-4/22**	“Theaterisation : A Way Ahead” By Maj Gen BK Sharma,AVSM,SM & Bar (Retd) and Maj Gen RS Yadav,VSM (Retd)	250	2022
Adm-SYB/22**	“Strategic Year Book 2022” Edited by Maj Gen BK Sharma, AVSM,SM & Bar (Retd), Lt Gen GS Katoch, PVSM,AVSM,VSM (Retd) and Gp Capt Sharad Tewari, VM (Retd)	2250	2022
Adm-6 (UNPO)/ 2022)**	“UN Peace Operations Part - VI : Challenges of Mission Leadership in UN Peace Operations in delivering the mandate” Edited by Maj Gen AK Bardalai and Maj Gen PK Goswami, VSM (Retd)	350	2022
OP-2/ 2022**	“India and Blue Economy : Challenges and Way Forward” by Dr Roshan Khanijo & Ms Samridhi Roy	325	2022
OP-3/ 2022**	“Military Manual on Laws of War” by Wg Cdr Umesh Chandra Jha (Retd)	250	2022
M-1/ 2022**	“Eastern Military Thought” by Colonel Harjeet Singh (Retd)	325	2022
Adm-5 (UNPO) /2022**	“UN Peace Operations Part - V : Women, Peace & Security” Edited by Maj Gen AK Bardalai and Maj Gen PK Goswami,VSM (Retd)	350	2022
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OP-1/ 2022**	“Military Legal System in China” By Wg Cdr Umesh Chandra Jha (Retd)	250	2022
CMHCS-4**	“BATTLE TALES” – Soldiers' Recollections of the 1971 War” Edited by Sqn Ldr RTS Chhina, MBE (Retd)	1350	2022
R-111**	“STRATEGIC YEAR BOOK 2021” Concept and Structure by Maj Gen BK Sharma, AVSM, SM & Bar (Retd), Edited by Lt Gen GS Katoch, PVSM,AVSM,VSM (Retd), Gp Capt Sharad Tewari, VM (Retd) and Dr Roshan Khanijo	1850	2021
R-112	“Maritime Corridors in the Indo-Pacific : Geopolitical Implications for India” By Cdr Subhasish Sarangi M/s Pentagon Press	1295	2021

\*Available at USI of India

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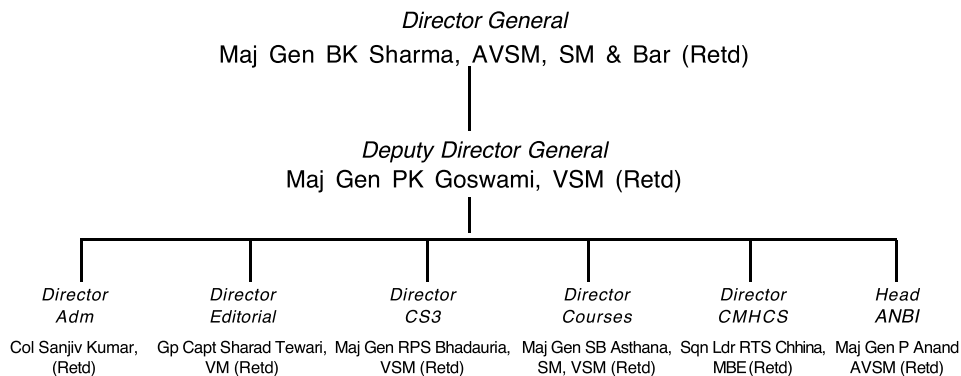
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**Editor**

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2. It is mandatory that the author furnishes complete details of the book/journal referred to in the article as end notes. A guide to writing endnotes is given on the next page. Besides endnotes, if the author so desires, a bibliography may also be included, though it is not mandatory.
3. The article should be in Arial Font, size 12 and English (UK). Avoid use of symbols like %, & and so on unless unavoidable to explain a point. The date style should be 24 Jun 2020, except in the citations where it will be Jun 24, 2020. Abbreviations, if any, should be used in their expanded form the first time and indicated in brackets.
4. The full name and address of the author along with a brief Curriculum Vitae should be given. Serving officers are advised to follow the prevailing Services instructions for publications of their articles.
5. The author will receive a copy of the issue of the Journal in which his/her article appears along with three offprints. A suitable honorarium will also be paid after the article is published.



## GUIDE TO WRITING ENDNOTES

1. Endnotes are notes added to the main body of a paper or an article, in which the author directs readers to sources referred to or to add extra comments of his or her own. Endnotes are placed at the end of the paper/article. A superscript number (1,2,3,4) at the end of the sentence signals the reader to look for the corresponding endnote at the end of the article. The endnotes should be numbered consecutively, starting from '1'. Citations should include the author's name, title of the book (in italics), publishing information (in parenthesis) and pages consulted, all separated by commas. Citations should be in the Chicago Manual of Style (CMS) format. A quick reference is available at:

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Some examples are given below:-

<sup>1</sup> Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy : A Prime in the Social History of Pictorial Style*, (Oxford University Press, London, 1988), p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> Lina Bolzoni and Pietri Coral, *The Culture Memory*, (Bologna : Societa editrice Il Mulino, 1992), p. 45.

2. Use of *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, and *loc. cit.*

*Ibid.* refers to the immediate preceding reference; *op. cit.* refers to the prior reference by the same author and *loc. cit.* is used instead of *op. cit.* when reference is made to a work previously cited and to the same page in that work. For example :-

<sup>4</sup> R Polrer, *Learning Physics*, (Academic, New York, 1993), p.4.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> T Eliot, *Astrophysics*, (Springer, Berlin, 1989), p.141.

<sup>7</sup> R Millan, *Art of Latin Grammar*, (Academic, New York, 1997), p.23.

<sup>8</sup> Elliot, *op cit.*, p148.

<sup>9</sup> Elliot, *loc, cit.*

3. Where websites have been used to access information, the complete web address of the website should be cited, followed by the date the website was accessed by the author.

e.g. Accessed Jun 24, 2020 from <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1947degana.html>.

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During this period a total of 19 new books have been added. Details of the new books are available on USI Website.

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### **New USI Members**

During the period Apr–Jun 2023, 29 registered as New Life Members; 04 Ordinary Members renewed membership and 04 registered as new Ordinary Members.

### **Course Members**

During Apr-Jun 2023, 94 Officers registered for Course Membership.

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## Editorial

Dear Readers,

It is with great pleasure that we present to our readers the USI Journal for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter of the year 2023. For 153 years, the USI has chronicled military affairs, encouraged and inculcated the love for writing and reading in the officers of the armed forces and, most importantly, spread the knowledge among its readers. There are 11 well researched articles, a book review article and four short reviews of recent books in this issue.

Disruptive technology has emerged as the key driver in transforming the conduct of modern-day warfare. So, in the first article, 'Changing Nature of Limited Wars : Impact of Technology and Ramifications' written by Major General (Dr) GG Dwivedi, SM, VSM & Bar (Retd), the author argues that the wars of 21st century may take multiple forms wherein, a soldier will be equipped to fight as entity-optimising the man-machine interface. India has to be fully prepared with techno savvy armed forces to fight and win the future 'hybrid-high tech' limited wars.

The second article titled 'Voices from the Prison: Indian Soldiers in German Prisoners of War Camp, 1915-1918' is written by Dr Narender Yadav. The article seeks to study the voices of Indian soldiers recorded during their internment at a POW camp in Germany during World War I. These voices were recorded between 1915 and 1918 by researchers of 'Royal Prussian Phonographic Commission' with an aim to study different languages for phonetics, dialects, and linguistics purposes. The next article titled 'The Corps of Madras Pioneers' is written by Colonel Harjeet Singh (Retd). Pioneers have been defined as the men who lead the way and ahead to prepare the way for others. The Madras Pioneers were the first fighting force raised by the British in India, in 1780. The article covers the brief history of the Corps of Madras Pioneers highlighting the prominent role the pioneer regiments played in several campaigns as well as in many construction projects.

The next article titled 'Grooming of Military Officers for Joint Services Environment' is an edited version of the first prize winning

entry of the USI Gold Medal Essay Competition 2022. Written by Commander M Arun Chakravarthy, the article brings out how the Indian Armed Forces need to harness and harvest assets jointly to fight future wars, which are increasingly becoming divergent in character. This article identifies the existing fault lines and provides a roadmap for grooming and shaping future military leaders to thrive in a joint ecosystem. This is followed by an article by Major General Jagatbir Singh, VSM (Retd), titled 'Ukraine: A Land Crossed by Empires'. He highlights the root cause of the current crisis by diving into the history of the land called Ukraine and points to the existing and emerging fault lines between Russia and Ukraine.

China's Himalayan ambitions are nuanced and precariously balanced between its neighbourhood outreach and national security ambitions. The article titled 'China's Himalayan Strategy: Between Handshakes and Tug-of-War', by Dr Jagannath Panda, looks into the trajectory of China's Himalayan strategy, what constitutes it and what are the implications? The next article, 'Re-imagining MRO for Defence: Realistically Leveraging Technology' by Lieutenant General KK Aggarwal, AVSM, SM, VSM (Retd), analyses a couple of major triggers which have emerged over the last few years and emphasises that now is the time for transformative changes in the Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) set up in the Indian Defence Forces, incremental changes will not suffice.

The execution of the airborne operation at Poongli Bridge, in the vicinity of Tangail, in what was then East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), on 11 December 1971 is considered the golden chapter in the history of the Indian Army. The article 'Fifty Years after India's First Airborne Operation at Poongli Bridge, Tangail: What we know of its Planning?' (Part-1), written by Lieutenant Colonel RS Bangari provides insight into the planning process of the airborne operation at Poongli Bridge, along with its execution, to achieve the desired objectives. The article is in two parts and Part-2 shall be covered in the next issue of the USI Journal.

The next article titled 'FDI in Defence Sector: Re-shaping India's Military Industrial Complex', jointly written by Dr Sanjay Kumar and Group Captain (Dr) Rajesh Kumar Singh (Retd),

examines the changes in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the defence sector, how it is reshaping India's Military Industrial Complex and the positive framework for foreign investors to invest in India. This is followed by an article, 'Afghanistan under Taliban 2.0: Strategic Trends and Trajectories' written by Dr J Jeganaathan. The author here examines the emerging strategic and security trends and trajectories in Afghanistan post-Taliban takeover and how they impinge on India's national security.

The last article of this Journal is 'Civil Military Fusion for National Security' by Lieutenant Colonel Saumya Ghatak. The article highlights how Civil-Military Fusion (CMF) can optimise the use of civil and military resources to achieve national objectives, proposes few recommendations to increase and synergise CMF at national level and be part of National Strategy.

This is followed with a Review Article where, Major General Jagatbir Singh, VSM (Retd) writes about the book 'The Fighting Fourth – A Personal Narrative of the History of 4 KUMAON' by Brig Jasbir Singh, SM. The reviewer writes that the book is remarkable as it presents a personal account of the glorious history of the battalion written by someone who has had a ring side view of its ethos and this is a narrative that needs to be read for the manner it portrays the character of this famous battalion and its contribution over the centuries.

This issue also carries short reviews of the following books:

- G20 @ 2023: The Roadmap to Indian Presidency  
By V Srinivas  
Reviewed by Dr Rajan Katoch, IAS (Retd)
- The Military Heroes of Haryana – Gallantry Award Winners, Volume 1  
By Lt Col Dilbag Singh Dabas (Retd)  
Reviewed by Ms Surbhi Chakraborty
- War to Peace Wisdom and Leadership: Ex-Servicemen's Role in Good Governance and Rural Development  
By Lt Gen (Dr) SK Gadeock, AVSM (Retd)  
Reviewed by Dr Aparajita Pandey

- Two Decades of US-Taliban War in Afghanistan  
By Major General Samay Ram, UYSM, AVSM, VSM  
Reviewed by Gp Capt Sharad Tewari, VM (Retd)

As always, we look forward to your feedback and suggestions.  
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Happy Reading!

Gp Capt Sharad Tewari, VM (Retd)  
Director Editorial



# Changing Nature of Limited Wars: Impact of Technology and Ramifications

Major General (Dr) GG Dwivedi (Retd)<sup>®</sup>

## Abstract

*Historically, wars have been fought to achieve political objectives by employing power. The art of warfare, however, has continuously evolved, driven by doctrinal and technological advancements. Post World War II, numerous wars have been fought, all limited in scope. The current conflicts are carefully calibrated, enabled by high-tech weaponry marked by strong element of public opinion. The conventional limited wars figure in the middle of the spectrum of violence; below the level of limited nuclear war but above the sub-conventional conflict. Such wars demand high state of preparedness as these are required to be prosecuted at a short notice. Limited wars have become increasingly hybrid in character; mix of conventional and unconventional, in certain situations under looming nuclear shadow. Disruptive technologies, like the 'Internet of Things' (IoT), 5G, Nano Technology, are set to play a major role in shaping the nature of warfare and deciding the outcome of operations. Chinese revised military doctrine envisions fighting and winning local wars under 'Informatised' and 'Intelligentised' conditions, in conjunction with 'Grey Zone Warfare' (GZW) strategy. Pakistan's strategy of 'limited war' is India centric, hybrid in character. The western nations have also reviewed the war fighting doctrines, deviating from the trend of*

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*extended campaigns on foreign lands. India is facing multiple security challenges; proxy war by Pakistan, and GZW by China. Given the emerging nature of future wars, India needs to shed its conventional strategic model and adopt transformational approach; this includes formulation of 'limited war doctrine', 'organisational restructuring' and 'capacity building' to ensure war prevention through deterrence. The wars of 21st century may take multiple forms wherein a soldier will be equipped to fight as entity-optimising the man-machine interface. India has to be fully prepared with techno savvy armed forces to fight and win the future 'hybrid-high tech' limited wars.*

### **Introduction**

**H**istorically, the wars have been fought to achieve political objectives by employing power, compelling the adversary to yield. As per Carl Von Clausewitz, "Each age had its own peculiar form of war". Hence, the art of warfare has continuously evolved, influenced by the politico-socio dynamics, driven by new doctrines and advancements in technologies. The traditional ways of war fighting, designed to capture territory and annihilation of war waging potential of the adversary have under gone metamorphosis. Today, the distinction between war and peace stands blurred. David Halberstam has described the current conflicts as 'war in time of peace', carefully calibrated, enabled by high-tech weaponry, with strong element of public opinion.<sup>1</sup>

Last century witnessed numerous wars of varying characteristics, starting with World War I. It got labelled as a great war, given the intensity and quantum of resources committed; root cause being the contest between status quo power and the rising one. Soon the World War II followed, involving far larger geographic space and scale of destruction. During the Cold War period, numerous wars were fought in Asia including the Indian subcontinent. These were all limited in scope with superpowers playing a key role, either directly or by proxy. Post the Cold War, West Asia was the scene of limited conflicts. Currently, we are witnessing limited war in Ukraine as a result of the Russian invasion in February 2022.

War still remains a legitimate instrument of state policy while the very concept of security stands redefined as external and internal dimensions, alongside the non-traditional threats, have got closely interwound. Limited localised conflicts have become the new norm. 21<sup>st</sup> Century is characterised by disruption attributed to hyper pace of change. Military domain is witnessing new doctrinal concepts with 'state-of-the-art' technologies proving to be the game changers in shaping the very course of war. In today's international milieu, it is the 'balance of interest' which overrides every other consideration. Comprehensive National Power (CNP) of a nation determines its war-waging potential. War prevention has gained pre-eminence, wherein capacity building and capability demonstration are the key elements to achieve credible deterrence. This article analyses the changing nature of wars, impact of cutting-edge technologies on the character of warfare and its ramifications.

### **Changing Nature of Limited Wars**

The conventional limited wars as per John C Garnet, figure some where in the middle of the spectrum of violence; below the level of limited nuclear war but above the sub conventional conflict.<sup>2</sup> While waging limited war, the adversaries engage each other through graduated military responses, exercising mutual restraints, obviating destruction to achieve a negotiated settlement on favourable terms. While the basic nature of war remains violence and destruction, the character of war has continuously evolved.<sup>3</sup> Limited wars demand high state of preparedness as these are required to be prosecuted at a short notice. In view of the speed and complexity of operations, there is an overlap between strategic, operational and tactical dimensions of warfare. Hence, speedy decision-making process requires decentralisation and flatter organisational structures. This mandates high degree of civil-military structural fusion for effective execution of 'higher direction of war'.

The 'limited wars' have become increasingly hybrid in nature, mix of conventional and unconventional, characterised by uncertainty in terms of timing and location; in some cases, in the shadow of nuclear overhang. In fact, sub-conventional conflicts have acquired prominence, wherein identifying the adversary itself poses a challenge. The age of information warfare is marked by network centricity and fluid nature of operations. This requires

high-tech multi skilled forces capable of preventive deployment, pre-emptive strikes, conventional war fighting, counter terrorism, and peace keeping operations; in nutshell fighting efficiently across the entire spectrum of conflict.

### **Emerging Battlefields-Impact of Disruptive technologies**

Given the tri-Service nature of warfare characterised by simultaneity, the battlefields have become non-linear with compressed time and space, requiring high degree of situational awareness. In view of greater transparency, strategic deception becomes an imperative. The networks designed for 'sensor to shooter' capability, alongside high precision weapon systems, have resulted in swift and intense engagements. Effect Based Operations (EBOs) entail achievement of strategic outcomes by applying physical, cognitive, and informational methods against the adversary.

Technology plays a major role in shaping the nature of warfare; a key determinant of military superiority. Some technological breakthroughs being extremely overwhelming are referred to as 'Revolutions in Military Affairs' (RMA). In 21st Century, it is the advancements in the disruptive technologies and their effect on the ways of war fighting that are proving critical in deciding the outcome of operations. The disruptive military technologies can be categorised either 'revolutionary' or 'transformative'. The revolutionary technologies can be further classified under two sub sets of RMA:-

- 'Information and Communication Technologies' (ICT) are based on 'Network Centric Warfare' (NCW) and 'Information Operations' (IO). The NCW leverages own networks and applications for enhancing the combat potential by telescoping 'Observe-Orient-Decide-Act' (OODA) loop. IO, on the other hand, aims to achieve information dominance and significantly shift the arena of conflict from the physical to the information and cognitive domains. ICT includes space segments and those elements which enable Cyber Space Operations (CSO) and Electronic Warfare (EW).
- Looming 'Artificial Intelligence' (AI) and RMA i.e. combination of AI and robotics technologies is widely believed to be harbinger of next stage of RMA in the coming decades. AI

powered 'Autonomous Weapon Systems' (AWS) will lend new dimension to the 'Non-Contact Warfare'. AI in 'Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance' (ISR), together with 'decision making and war gaming', will enormously improve the quality of OODA loop and AI in CSO, thus, taking war fighting in Cyber Space to a whole new level.

There are numerous other technologies which are anticipated to have transformative effects on war fighting in the coming times. 'Internet of Things' (IoT) and 5G are envisioned to give a further boost to 'Nuclear Chemical Warfare'. Hypersonic and 'Directed Energy' (DE) weapon systems will necessitate review of operational concepts in the employment of missile defence and 'Anti Satellite Weapon' (ASAT) systems. Quantum technologies, with applications in communications (both encryption and cryptanalysis) and sensing, are envisaged to lead to disruptive effects on secure communications and stealth systems. Nano and biotechnologies are anticipated to have limited impact in the near and medium terms may result in transformative or even revolutionary effects in the long term.

China has initiated radical military reforms to enhance capabilities of People's Liberation Army (PLA) since 2013, after President Xi Jinping came to power. Its revised doctrine envisions "fighting and winning local wars under 'Informatised' and 'Intelligentised' conditions". While 'Informatised' warfare has the Command, Control, Communication, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) as the main driving force, AI is at the core of the 'Intelligentised' warfare.<sup>4</sup> It is premised on the fundamentals of 'human-machine teaming' and AI. Salient features of China's military modernization to fight and win 'high-tech local wars' are:

- China is amongst the top tier of nations to develop disruptive technologies, such as big data, cloud computing, IoT, quantum, nano, hypersonic and DE weapon technologies, as a national priority. It is probably China's response to the 'Third Offset Strategy' of US, announced in 2014, which seeks to maintain its supremacy. China's 'New Generation AI Plan' was formalised in 2017.
- The Chinese war fighting doctrine envisages short and swift engagements, targeting opponent's will. The conventional

doctrine is complemented by China's concept of 'Unrestricted Warfare' (UW) which meets the criteria of 'Grey Zone' conflicts. It is in sync with the Chinese concept of 'strategic configuration of power-Shi; where aim is not annihilation but relative positioning of resources to gain advantage.<sup>5</sup> The underlying rationale is to target the opponent by employing alternative means i.e. politico-diplomatic actions, economic clout, cyber warfare, and incorporation of 'Non-State Actors' (NSAs).

- The future warfare as per Chinese strategists will be largely non-contact and non-symmetric. Recent addition to PLA's GZW strategy is 'Three Warfare's' concept which encompasses psychological, propaganda and legal warfare's. It has been formally incorporated in PLA's education and operational planning.<sup>6</sup> Chinese assertiveness in the East China Seas, South China Seas, and, on the LAC are the most notable example of GZW operations.

Pakistan's strategy of 'limited war' is primarily India centric, hybrid in character, unconventional warfare being the preferred option; case in point is the ongoing proxy war against India. However, should conventional operations become unavoidable, its limited war doctrine perceives short swift engagements, characterised by offensive-defence. It entails fighting multi-dimensional war in conventional and asymmetric spectrum in the realm of credible nuclear deterrence. Pakistan's force modernisation is driven by the necessity of creating lean, 'state of art' conventional force structures with Command, Control, Communications, Computer, Intelligence and Interoperability (C4I2) set up, complemented by missiles and Precision Guided Munitions (PGMs) capability. As Pakistan military guides nation's foreign and defence policies, it has created viable joint command structures to prosecute 'high-tech limited war' at a short notice.

Western nations have also been reviewing their war fighting doctrines as there is strong public opinion against the trend of extended campaigns on the foreign lands. General Mark Milley, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff, US Army, on the preparation of future wars had stated, "The way we train won't be the same because the environment now is totally different".<sup>7</sup> America has reoriented its training to fight hybrid wars – a mix of conventional,

insurgencies, and cyber warfare, amidst highly complex environment. In the ongoing Ukraine War, alongside conventional operations, irregulars force like Wagner Group are fiercely engaged in waging 'low intensity warfare' in the eastern Donbas region, particularly Bakhmut.

### **Ramifications for India**

With hostile neighbourhood, India is facing multiple security challenges. Having failed to achieve its strategic objectives through conventional means, Pakistan switched onto waging 'proxy war' against India while China has used unresolved border dispute to keep the pressure on the LAC. Post the 1962 War, the Communist leadership has resorted to 'nibble and negotiate' tactics, part of GZW. Incidents such as Doklam in 2017 and large-scale transgressions in May 2020 are cases in point. Ironically, a major flaw in India's approach is the inability to comprehend the complexities of hybrid threats and adopting extemporaneous-fragmented approach. Given the emerging nature of future wars, it is evident that India needs to shed off its conventional strategic models and rigid force structures. There is an urgent requirement to adopt transformational initiatives, salient ones are summarised below:

- Formulate limited war doctrine incorporating the essential dimensions of 'hybrid warfare'. The process ought to be top driven, emanating from well-defined national defence policy. This will facilitate development of much needed strategic culture of jointness. While technology is the key driver in RMA necessitating holistic review of doctrines, however, war fighting remains contextual. For example, to ensure sanctity of the borders - LoC/LAC, the troops have to be physically deployed on the ground regardless of 'non-contact warfare' or high-end technology systems.
- War prevention through deterrence entails building capacity to undertake calibrated pre-emptive actions in real time. This implies transition from incremental modernisation to deep rooted transformation. Major impediments to this end are dwindling budgetary allocations, mediocre indigenous R&D performance, individual Service driven procurements, and status quo mentality. There is a crying need to scale up defence budget from current sub 2 per cent of GDP to at

least 2.5 per cent. Recent initiatives to incentivise the private sector are the steps in the right direction.

- As the ambit of wars today spans across the wide spectrum, hence, effective institutionalised apparatus involving civil-military integration at the highest level is crucial to ensure timely responses. This shortcoming has been underscored by various commissions and committees in the post conflict or security lapse reviews.
- The conclusive outcome is contingent upon the application of requisite combat potential at the decisive points in a telescopic time frame. Given the two-front threat, exploitation of time differential in the pace of operations between the 'Eastern and Western Theatres' is critical.

India is faced with in a two front scenario as it is required to maintain the sanctity of LoC and LAC in the wake of aggressive behaviour of Pakistan and China. To be able to successfully undertake limited operations and ensure sound border management, operational doctrine is most essential. Concurrently, major structural changes are needed for reorganisation into theatres, with all resources under one commander. The key technologies which will have critical role in effective execution of tasks will be electronic surveillance, EW, precision guided munitions, and drones. There is also requirement of integrated logistics and robust supply chains which require massive infrastructure upgrade with all-weather connectivity to the forward areas.

### **Conclusion**

Given the prevailing geo-political environment, limited conflicts have gained pre-eminence although the end-state is often unpredictable; precluding decisive outcome, often degenerating into state of stalemate.<sup>8</sup> The On- going war in Ukraine is a classic case in point. Deterrence and war prevention is essence of the 'limited war doctrine'. As war today is a contest between the opposing governments, the nation's employ maximum CNP to achieve the intended objectives. Due to the overlapping modes of armed conflicts, the operations could start in the form of a full-fledged war or escalate from an asymmetric or 'low intensity conflict' scenario. Alternately, forces may be engaged in fighting at several levels simultaneously-'high-low mix'.



'State-of-the-art' disruptive technologies have emerged as the key drivers in transforming the conduct of modern-day warfare. Synthesis of new doctrines and high-tech weapon systems has resulted in hyper pace of operations, leading to intense engagements with high rate of attrition. Despite the RMA, it is a fallacy to conjecture that future wars will be fought by the techno warriors. While a soldier equipped with ultra-sophisticated technological weapons package may fight as a system; yet will remain irreplaceable.

Given the multiple security threats India is faced with, evolving of holistic national defence policy, in the long-term perspective, is an urgent security imperative. In consonance with the changing nature and character of war, formulation of integrated 'limited war fighting' doctrine merits highest priority. Existing institutions, systems, and organisational setup needs to be streamlined. The current ad-hoc structures to prosecute full scale war remains a major shortcoming. On the other hand, our two hostile neighbours have centralised control mechanism to orchestrate higher direction of war at the strategic and operational levels.

The force structuring must be capability based, with inbuilt capacity to meet multiple contingencies across the spectrum. Creation of theatre commands is an urgent operational imperative. Integrated logistics system and well-developed infrastructure, especially in the border areas, need to be fast tracked to ensure timely application of combat potential at the critical areas. This requires requisite strategic and tactical airlift capability besides all-weather connectivity. Specifically with respect to the northern border in the wake of two front collusive scenario, current reactive strategies evidently have not delivered. To defeat the evil designs of the belligerent neighbours, comprehensive doctrine is a strategic imperative. The border management requires a comprehensive review, duly incorporating the development of border villages to act as the forward defence line. Given the changed ground situation wherein 'Patrolling Points' (PPs) are being replaced with buffer zones in eastern Ladakh, the LAC will be increasingly contested and has to be manned in strength. Therefore, effective surveillance mechanism complemented by all-weather sustainable infrastructure is the need of the hour.

As per Frank Hoffman, "The wars of 21st century may take multiple forms. As conflicts reflect high degree of convergence

and complexity, so must our mental models and frameworks”.<sup>9</sup> In the future warfare, a soldier will be equipped to fight as an entity-optimizing the man-machine interface. While technology is a good servant, it is a bad master; indicating that soldier will remain predominant battle winning factor. Given the hostile security environment, India has to be fully prepared with techno savvy armed forces to fight and win the future ‘hybrid-high tech limited wars.

### Endnotes

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<sup>2</sup> Garnet John (1979), *Limited Conventional War in Nuclear Age*, in Michael Howard *Restraint on War*, Oxford University Press, London, p 82-83.

<sup>3</sup> Schelling Thomas (1960), (*The Strategy of Conflict*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

<sup>4</sup> Kania Elsa B, (7 June 2019), *Chinese Military Innovation in Artificial Intelligence*, Centre for New American Studies, p1-5.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas G Mahnken (2011), *Secrecies & Strategies: Understanding Chinese Culture*, The Lowy Institute of International Policy, p8.

<sup>6</sup> Wu Jinping & Liu Zhifu (2014), *An Introduction to Public Opinion Warbase, Psychological Warbase and Legal Warbase*, National Defence University, p1.

<sup>7</sup> Cooper Helene, (12 June 2016). *US Shifting Back to Conventional Warfare*, New York Times.

<sup>8</sup> Steven Metz, (18 December 2015), *Future Wars Could be Nightmare Scenario for US Military*, World Political Review.

<sup>9</sup> Frank Hoffman, (8 November 2018), *Examining Complex Forms of Conflict: Grey Zone and Hybrid Challenges*, PRISM Volume 7, No 4. <https://cco.ndu.edu/Newsarticle/1680696/examining-complex-forms-of-conflict-gray-zone-and-hybrid-challenges>. Accessed on 27 January 2023.

# Voices from the Prison: Indian Soldiers in German Prisoners of War Camp, 1915-1918

Dr Narender Yadav<sup>@</sup>

## Abstract

*Over 1.4 million Indian soldiers joined the Indian Army during World War I. They were deployed at various war fronts including France, Mesopotamia, East Africa, Egypt, Palestine, and Gallipoli. Despite their important role, the stories of these soldiers remained almost unstudied until the turn of the century. The fact remained that the Indian soldiers were generally not literate enough to record their experiences. Colonial rulers also kept them as extras on the 'stage' of the historical narrative. During the centenary commemoration of the War (2014-2018), some studies about Indian participation have been conducted leading to some good publications. This Paper was also part of one such study. The Paper seeks to study the voices of Indian soldiers recorded during their internment at a POW camp in Germany during World War I. These voices were recorded between 1915 and 1918 by researchers of 'Royal Prussian Phonographic Commission' with an aim to study different languages for phonetics, dialects, and linguistics purposes.*

## Introduction

Some voice recordings of Indian soldiers interned in Prisoner of War (PoW) camps in Germany, during World War I, are archived at Humboldt University in Berlin. These voices were recorded between 1915 and 1918 by researchers of the 'Royal Prussian Phonographic Commission'. The objective was to study different languages for phonetics, dialects, and linguistic purposes and teach foreign languages in German universities. Strategically,

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the production of knowledge on colonial races and languages could help train the German officers to be posted to these colonies to set up a bigger German empire after winning the war. The voices captured in shellac discs have survived for over a century despite Germany being ruined by two world wars. Perhaps, these are the oldest voice recordings of Indian soldiers anywhere in the world.

Unfortunately, we were unaware of these voices even after the turn of almost a century. These recordings became known thanks to some German scholars who dug out and brought forth this rare material.<sup>1</sup> These voices have acquired a tremendous historical value over the period. Thomas Edison's invention of phonograph, in 1877, led to capturing of voices in disc which could be heard even after the life of the person. These voice recordings are an unusual source for compilation of history of our soldiers of the Great War. As Franziska Roy and Heike Liebau point out that the colonial soldiers were doubly marginalised, they are forgotten in memory and left out of history.<sup>2</sup>

The Indian soldiers, indeed, were not literate enough to leave behind written records. Their history, therefore, remained mostly blurred. Despite their crucial role in this war, they were kept as extras on the 'stage' of historical narrative. These voices break the historical silence and register their presence, reminding the historians about Indian participation in the Great War. This article endeavours to revisit the Indian soldiers of World War I by probing some of their voice recordings archived at Germany.

### **Who were these Internees?**

Who were these internees? The British Indian Army was mobilised and deployed on the western front (France) soon after the declaration of the war in August 1914. They landed at Marseilles, France in October 1914 and fought some fierce battles at Ypres, Festubert, Givenchy, Loos, and Neuve Chappelle during the next one year.<sup>3</sup> Over 130,000 Indians were deployed on this front of the war.<sup>4</sup> While fighting the Germans here, about 1,000 Indians were taken prisoners and brought to Germany.<sup>5</sup> They comprised men mainly from Punjab, United Provinces (present day Uttar Pradesh), and Nepal.<sup>6</sup> The Germans had hundreds of POW camps for Entente (Britain, Russia, and France) powers and their dependencies. The South Asians were later segregated,<sup>7</sup> and

shifted to Wunsdorf camp, near Berlin, along with other colonial POWs for political indoctrination.<sup>9</sup> The camp was setup in temporary hutments, surrounded by a barbed-wire fence. Subsequently, the Indians interned here were sent to Romania in 1917.<sup>9</sup>

The main purpose of the Halfmoon camp was to turn its internees against their British and French colonial rulers, and recruit them for German and Ottoman forces. Simultaneously, the camp also became the site of extensive anthropological research, carried out upon prisoners interned there including Sikh and Muslim soldiers from India, Gurkhas from Nepal, and African soldiers from French colonies.

### **Process of the Voice Recording**

The prison camp with men from different ethnicity were considered as colonial laboratory on German soil.<sup>10</sup> In 1915, some professors of Berlin University approached the military authorities for permission to conduct research on the prisoners to study their race, languages, dialects, etc. The initiative led to the appointment of a body called 'Royal Prussian Phonographic Commission' in October 1915 by the Prussian Government. The Commission included some thirty academics working in the fields of linguistics, anthropology, and musicology, among others. They selected 31 POW camps among hundreds in Germany. One camp was Wunsdorf (also called Halfmoon camp)<sup>11</sup>, where Indians were interned. This camp was more widely covered and visited because of the rich socio-cultural diversity of POWs here from the Indian subcontinent. Wilhelm Doegen, a researcher (a Philologist) in the Commission, looked after the task of voice recordings. The recordings were done very systematically as follows:

- **Preparation of script.** First the prisoners were asked to prepare a script of the material they desired to speak about. They could seek the help of their fellow internees in this work.
- **Recording process.** Then, each POW was asked to stand in front of the phonographic funnel and read out the script. He could also sing a song or tell a story on the funnel of the gramophone.
- **Details of records.** The research team would then fill in a designed proforma detailing the name, age, caste, language,

permanent address of the internee, as also the date and type of recording like poem, song, story, etc.

- **Preparation of Phonetic notation of recorded voice.**
- **Fair copy of the original script.**
- **German translation of the script.**

German researchers were very meticulous in documentation. The Commission recorded 2,672 audio-media (gramophone discs and wax cylinders) of about 250 languages, dialects, and traditional music of PoW interned in Germany. The recordings ranged between few seconds to about four minutes. As for the Indian recordings, the collection at Lautarchiv (Sound Archives) comprises 282 titles on 193 shellac discs. These cover more than a dozen languages and dialects, including Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali, Baluchi, Pashto, Khasi, Limbu, Magari, Gurung, Sylheti, Rai, etc.<sup>12</sup> Mass of the Indian POWs in this camp belonged to areas like Fatehpur, Gonda, Etawah, Rai Bareilly in United Provinces; Amritsar, Patiala, Ferozepur in Punjab; Gurkhas from Nepal, and Baluchis from Baloch region (of present-day Pakistan). The men from United Province generally recorded *chhand*, *bhajans*, *choupai*, etc., in Hindi with their local dialect.

### **The Content of the Indian Recordings**

The recordings of the Indians include legends, fairy tales, fables, poems, religious content, biographical content of speaker, about their home country, and their experiences of war, etc. As the prisoners formulated their own texts, some chose to record folk stories. Sepoy Seoraj Singh, a Thakur from Sairpaur, Rai Bareilly, of 9th Bhopal Infantry, on 03 January 1917 recorded one of the famous *kissas* from Akbar-Birbal stories.<sup>13</sup> Sib Singh, a soldier from Amritsar revealed his ignorance about the rulers of the world. He recorded:

“The German *Badshah* (Emperor) is very wise. He wages war against all *Badshah*. The Englishman is *Badshah* in India. We did not know that there were other *Badshah* also. When the war began, we came to know about several *Badshah*. In India, people do not know anything on this aspect”.<sup>14</sup>

Sib Singh here observes that contrary to the general perceptions of ordinary Indian villagers, besides the British

Emperor, there were other emperors also and they were equally wise and powerful. He points to the ignorance of many Indians in that regard.

The scrutiny of the voice recordings indicate that most internees were uncomfortable narrating their stories before the phonogram. They found singing songs and writing poems easier and, therefore, most chose to recite. Many sang religious songs. To illustrate, Sepoy Chhote Singh, from Fatehpur, United Provinces, recited the story of Lord Rama from the Ramayana.<sup>15</sup> Some group songs were also recorded. In one recording, three Indian POWs, Mahtap Singh, Shivdular Singh, and Baldev Singh from United Provinces, sang a group song related to different avatars of the God Vishnu. Some recordings relate to ghost stories. On 08 December 1916, one Bhawan Singh, from Almora recorded that when a person dies, he turns into a ghost and his soul constantly roams around in the air. He claimed to have encountered many ghosts of his colleagues who had died in the war.<sup>16</sup>

The study of the recordings suggests that Indian soldiers generally chose to narrate stories or songs based on religion, classical tales, and mythology. However, as we know, the soldiers were young, in their late teens or twenties, and away from their families, and we find some stories and recitations related to romance and the pain of separation. Sepoy Kalikadin Pande, a 27 years old soldier from Sultanpur (United Provinces) who belonged to the 9th Bhopal Infantry, described the beauty of a damsel in his recitation.<sup>17</sup> The use of similes in his articulation compared the black dye of eyes with dark cloud *bhado* (rainy month); shining of *bindi* with the sunshine of *Kartik* month, and the shape of her chest with moulding of a goldsmith. Suffering from pangs of separation, the soldier expresses his pain to his fiancé that he is in prison in a foreign land, like a bird in a cage, adding that his flesh and blood might be in the German camp but his heart is always with her.

While narrating his story of being made POW, Sepoy Mal Singh of Punjab spoke about his fondness for home-made food. He wished to eat it again when repatriated after the war. Nevertheless, he did not mention the condition of food at the POW camp. He had been away from his home for the last three years and was apprehensive about when the war would end. He

wished to return to his home as soon as possible.<sup>18</sup> A Gurkha soldier reminisces the beautiful Himalayan terrain stating that he did not want to live in Europe anymore. He wished to reach out to his home as soon as possible.<sup>19</sup> Unfortunately, he died in captivity and could never make it to his village in Nepal. His voice captured in wax disc became last record of his existence and his last will.<sup>20</sup> Sepoy Bela Singh, from Amritsar, recorded about his deployment by the British on the war front. He narrated that the weapons of Germany were superior, and he was taken prisoner. He mentions that he felt happy when he met the German interlocutor, Mr Walter.<sup>21</sup> In fact, Paul Walter was a former missionary who was dispatched to the western front to work as an interpreter and receive the Indian POWs. He later became instrumental in transferring the Indian POWs from various POW camps to Halfmoon camp in Wunsdorf for political reasons and worked as translator to them. Bela Singh explains his story of being captured and taken to Germany.

### **Recordings Sanitised**

It is important to note that recordings are almost silent about camp life, camp conditions, basic amenities, etc. It suggests that the narratives were either censored before recordings on the gramophone funnel or the POWs were instructed in advance on dos and don'ts. POWs hardly mention their units, which every soldier invariably speaks while introducing himself. This trend was in vogue during the era of World War I. *Fauji Akhbars* of the period are full of letters from soldiers and they cited the name of unit every time they made correspondence. Further, hardly ever anyone spoke about mistreatment, hunger, diseases, and deaths in the camp.<sup>22</sup> A Sikh soldier, Sepoy Sundar Singh, however, took the Germans to task by recording his pain.

Expressing his happiness of being provided with the Guru Granth Sahib, Sepoy Sundar Singh pointed out that the *Rumala Sahib* cloth did not accompany Granth Sahib, and this hurt the sentiments of Sikhs in the camp. He also revealed that the food was not adequate for the prisoners in the camp. Sepoy Sundar Singh, perhaps, dared to record his feeling despite the fact that he knew that the recordings ultimately would be translated into the German language.<sup>23</sup> About 226 Indians out of some 1,000 died in German captivity. According to a report, mortality rate of POWs was highest amongst the South Asians.



## Conclusion

One fact common in all narratives of the Indians, is, that there should be an end to hostilities, and they should be repatriated to their motherland. But none of them could be sure whether they would live to witness the end of the war. They suffered the forced labour, scarcity of food, the recurring diseases, and the emotional torment. The possibility of imminent death always loomed on their mind on a daily basis. Some Recordings speak of the mental state of the soldiers in the PoW camps. The voices, in all, conclusively touch upon contemporary tastes. Interestingly, some of the recorded *bhajans* and stories (*kisse*) are still in use, notwithstanding the test of the time, and people take much interest in them.<sup>24</sup> The change and continuity in folklore and tradition, thus, can be gauged by these voice recordings. One of the *bhajans* which I heard, in one recording of 1917, is sung in villages in north India even today.<sup>25</sup> There could be some more such songs and stories.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> See Franziska Roy, Heike Liebau & Ravi Ahuja, *When the War began We heard of several Kings: South Asian Prisoners in World War I Germany*, Social Science Press, New Delhi, 2011. Also the documentary film 'The Halfmoon Files: A Ghost Story' by German filmmaker Philip Scheffner. Irene Hilden has also worked extensively on the subject in her book 'Absent Presences in the Colonial Archive: Dealing with the Berlin Sound Archive's Acoustic Legacies', published by Leuven University Press in 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Roy, Liebau & Ahuja, *When the War began We heard of several Kings*, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Meerut and Lahore divisions reached Marseilles in Oct 1914. Indians were responsible for manning one-third of the British line in France.

<sup>4</sup> *India's Contribution to Great War*, Government Press, Calcutta 1924, pp. 96-7.

<sup>5</sup> Ravi Ahuja, Lost Engagements? Traces of South Asian Soldiers in German Captivity, 1915-1918, in *When the War began We heard of several Kings*, p. 20. Also see Andrew Tait Jarboe, The Prisoner Dilemma: Britain, Germany, and the Repatriation of Indian Prisoners of War, in *Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*, 2014, 103/2, pp. 201-210.

<sup>6</sup> Some of the units the men belonged to include the 58th Rifles, 9th Bhopal, 1/3 Gorkha Rifles, 127th Baluchis, and 129th Baluchis. See A Voice recording, a portrait photo, and three drawings: Tracing the life of a colonial soldier, by Heike Liebau, Working Paper, No. 20, 2018, p. 4.

According to a report in *The Tribune*, some of the men were from the 15th Ludhiana Sikhs, 47th Sikhs, and 4th Gurkha Rifles. See Sarika Sharma, 100 Years Later, Voices from World War I, in *The Tribune*, dated 20 May 2018.

<sup>7</sup> In April 1915, some 400 Indian POWs (95 Muslim, 160 Gurkhas, 65 Sikhs, and 71 Thakurs in April 1915) were interned in Halfmoon Camp. In June 1917, when a large group of South Asians had been transferred to Romania, another 631 Indians (most were lascars/seamen) were registered in Halfmoon camp. Wundorf had some 10,000 prisoners in total.

<sup>8</sup> Most of the Asian and African colonial soldiers in German captivity were transferred for political reasons to special camps in the neighbouring towns of Zossen and Wundorf south of Berlin. In the Halfmoon Camp, they were to undergo political and nationalistic indoctrination and be persuaded to rebel against their colonial rulers. The propaganda was nationalistic and pan-Islamic. See Britta Lange, 'South Asian Soldiers and German Academics: Anthropological, Linguistic and Musicological Field studies in Prison Camps,' in *When the war began we heard of several kings*, p. 150.

<sup>9</sup> Prisoners of War (India), by Heike Liebau, see [https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/prisoners\\_of\\_war\\_india](https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/prisoners_of_war_india)

<sup>10</sup> Roy, Liebau & Ahuja, *When the War began We heard of several Kings*, p. 12.

<sup>11</sup> Halfmoon Camp at Wundorf was named after crescent of the mosque erected for POWs.

<sup>12</sup> See Website of Lautarchiv <http://www.sammlungen.hu-berlin.de/schlagworte/3687/dokumente/?p=0>. Accessed on 5 April 2017.

<sup>13</sup> PK 653, dated 3.1.1917, Lautarchiv, Humboldt, Germany.

<sup>14</sup> PK 610, dated 9.12.1916, Lautarchiv, Humboldt, Germany.

<sup>15</sup> PK 648, dated 3.1.1917, Lautarchiv, Humboldt, Germany.

<sup>16</sup> PK 591, dated 8.12.1916, Lautarchiv, Humboldt, Germany.

<sup>17</sup> PK 655, dated 3.1.1917, Lautarchiv, Humboldt, Germany.

<sup>18</sup> PK 691, dated 11.12.1916, Lautarchiv, Humboldt, Germany.

<sup>19</sup> PK 307, dated 6.9.1916, Lautarchiv, Humboldt, Germany.

<sup>20</sup> Britta Lange, Post restante, and messages in bottles: Sound recordings of Indian prisoners in the First World War, in *Social Dynamics: A Journal of African Studies*, vol 41 No. 1 (2015), pp. 84-100.

<sup>21</sup> PK 589, dated 8.12.1916, Lautarchiv, Humboldt, Germany.

<sup>22</sup> Britta Lange, Archival Silence as Historical Sources, in *Sound Effects*, vol. 7, no. 3, 2017, pp. 47-60.

<sup>23</sup> PK 676 dated 5 Jan 1917, Lautarchiv, Humboldt, Germany.

<sup>24</sup> PK 648, dated 3.1.1917, Lautarchiv, Humboldt, Germany.

<sup>25</sup> Raghuvar Koshalya ke lal, tumhi ho jag rachane vaale ...

# The Corps of Madras Pioneers

Colonel Harjeet Singh (Retd)<sup>®</sup>

*"They which build on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, everyone with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon".*

**-Nehemiah**

## Abstract

*Pioneers have been defined as the men who lead the way, who go ahead to prepare the way for others. The Madras Pioneers were the first fighting force raised by the British in India, in 1780. On 10 February 1933, the Pioneer Regiments of the British Indian Army were disbanded for reasons of financial stringency. The Madras Pioneers were the senior most in the Corps. Their history is a chequered one, highlighting the prominent role the pioneer regiments played in several campaigns as well as in many construction projects, most of which exist today as witness to their achievements.*

## Origins

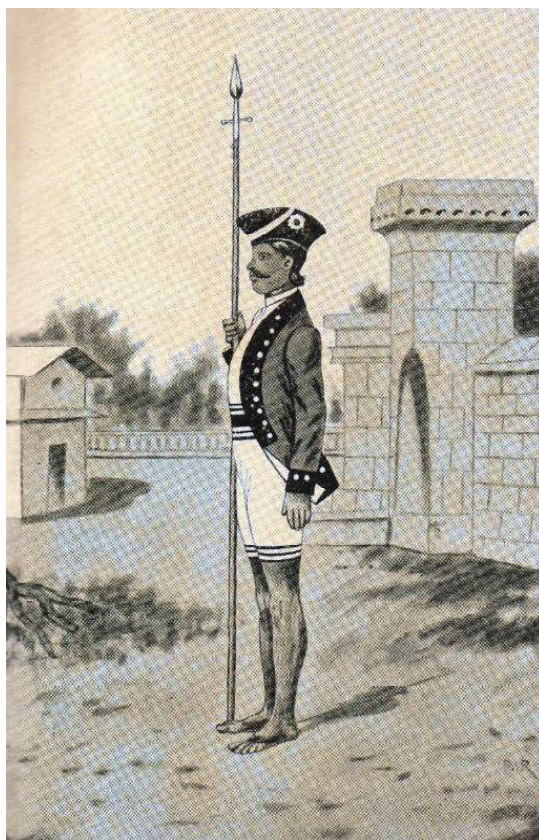
Since 1639, the East India Company had its business headquarters at Fort St George, near the village of Madraspattinam. The French were then the only other European trader in the region to give the British competition. The death of Charles VI, in 1743, led to the War of Austrian Succession in which Britain and France were in opposite camps. It took a year for the news to reach the Coromandel Coast. The commercial rivalry between these two warring nations was sufficiently intense for them to enter into a power game in India. In 1746, the French, under Dupleix, seized Fort St George from the British, which was handed back, two years later, by the terms of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle.

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The East India Company established their factories on the coasts of India in the 17th century. In their efforts to extend trade into the interior, they were faced with European rivals and then the rulers of the country. They realised that trade must be supported with force and so, by 1759, the first company of sepoys was established. Some of these sepoys were used to construct mud walls around the factories, under the supervision of a gunner who was recognised as the military engineer. During the next 15 years, British and French traders in south India were in a perpetual state of war with the aim of taking over the opponent's trade. This series of clashes is known as the Carnatic Wars which transformed the East India Company from a trading body to a territorial power.

During the siege of Fort St George, Madras by the French, from December 1758 to February 1759, it was realised that the infantry working parties could not cope up with the damage inflicted by the enemy artillery on the fort. To cope with the situation, Captain Call, the Chief Engineer, formed a Pioneer Company from European volunteers and employed them on repairing the fort walls. Later, two more Pioneer companies of sepoys were formed on the same plan. These units appear to be the first Pioneer companies raised with a proper organisation. From 1759 to 1780, Pioneer companies were formed whenever required and disbanded when no longer needed. They were used to develop tracks for the movement of gun carriages, digging trenches and saps, and clearing hedges. They were employed at many sieges but they were neither armed nor trained to fight which led to their abandoning the task on hand and fleeing as soon as the first shot was fired. A more formal armed organisation with proper military training was required. The Pioneer Corps, thus, has its origins in the Madras Presidency.



**Sepoy, Madras Pioneers, 1780**

(Coat, blue with black facings; shirt and drawers white; *pagri* black)

## **Campaigns**

### **Carnatic Wars (1780-81)**

As early as 1770, the first Pioneer companies were formed to replace the '*matti men*', i.e., labourers with some form of spade and pick (*mamoottie*). Lieutenant Joseph Moorhouse of the Madras Artillery Commissary of Stores, in 1780, put forward a proposal of raising two companies of native Pioneers. He suggested that putting them in uniform and arming them with light pistols and pikestuffs and training them would instil military discipline different from the Engineers *coolie*. From then onward, the need for these trained soldiers increased as the various Presidency Armies carried out their campaigns to take over the country and establish their rule.

Their first bleeding in a regular military campaign occurred when Haider Ali, the ruler of Mysore, marched into the Carnatic plain with an 80,000 strong force. A brief campaign, the First Mysore War, followed which was totally disastrous for the British. This led to reformation in the Company's Army, when the Board of Directors of the East India Company, issued instructions for raising a 'Corps of Pioneers' officered from the line. On 30 September 1780, two companies of Pioneers, each consisting of 2 Sergeants, 3 Corporals, 5 Havildars, 5 Naiks and 100 Pioneers, were raised at Dawleshwaram. 50 of the Pioneers were to be armed with light pistols, and the remainder with 6 feet long pikestuffs. They were to be employed to march ahead of the army to clear and mend roads, and take part in siege operations. The defeat of the Mysore Army at Sholinghur in 1781 was commemorated by the Battle Honours of 'Carnatic and Sholinghur'.

A third company was raised in 1783, during the Mysore War, after the ruler, Haider Ali, died. His son, Tipu Sultan, continued to wage war against the British for another 17 years. In 1790, the strength of Pioneers was increased to five companies of about 100 Indian ranks each, who were provided cutting and digging tools. In 1791, the impregnable fort of Sewandroog, 19 miles from Bangalore, was attacked and taken by the British assisted by the Pioneers. In 1793, they were formed into a 'corps' of six companies with an establishment of four Officers, and four Assistant Surgeons with the companies having 1 Sergeant, one Jemadar and 106 Indian Other Ranks. The strength was progressively increased, and by 1803, the Corps had two battalions of eight companies each. A scale of equipment was also laid down. Over the next few years, as requirements increased, the number rose to eight companies, first named from 'A' to 'H' then '1' to '8' and finally '9' to '16', the status at which they remained for close to 150 years. Almost as soon as they were formed, the two companies, under Lieutenant John Lanes, participated in what was known as the Second Mysore War. The main objective was the fort of Seringapatam.

### **Seringapatam (1799)**

The island of Seringapatam (Srirangapatnam) lies on the river Kaveri approximately 120 km from Bangalore. In February 1799, companies of the Madras Pioneers under Captain Dowse and

Lieutenant Cormick marched towards Seringapatam. They were part of the 31,000 strong 'Grand Army' under Lord Harris, Commander-in-Chief of the Madras Army. The 6,400 strong Bombay Army operated under Lieutenant General James Stuart. The campaign strategy was to approach the town simultaneously from the east and the west. Prior to the storming of the fort, on 08 April, the Madras Pioneers were kept busy working on the construction of enfilading batteries and the excavation of several zigzag approach trenches or saps. For the final assault, they were part of the two assaulting groups under the command of General David Baird. For their role in the campaign, the Madras Pioneers were awarded the Battle Honour 'Seringapatam'.

### **Egypt (1800-02)**

The first instance of deployment of Indian troops outside Asia came in December 1800, with an expedition to Egypt. The purpose was to drive the French Army out of the Red Sea ports, from where an invasion of the Indian subcontinent was a serious threat. The Expeditionary Force sailed from Bombay in a 7,000-strong contingent commanded by General David Baird, landing at Kosseir on 08 June 1801. Included in the force was a company of Madras Pioneers, under Captain J Fitzpatrick, which had been serving in Ceylon. This unit had embarked at Trincomalee in December 1800 but was delayed for several weeks at Bombay while the transports were being prepared for the voyage across the Arabian Sea.

On landing in Egypt, it found itself on a bare and inhospitable coast with a desert march of 120 km, ahead to Kenna. Water was in short supply wherever available; it was brackish and caused dysentery among the troops. In those days, the journey frequently outlasted its purpose; while the contingent was traversing the desert, the French surrendered. The Pioneers, however, were ordered to proceed to Cairo. They stayed in Egypt until June 1802. For their efforts the honour 'Egypt 1801' was bestowed on the Madras Pioneers.

### **The Mahratta War (1803-05)**

The Mahratta War was a result of the distrust of the increasing influence of the British. The two main opponents were Scindia of Gwalior and Bhonsle of Berar, who were part of the Mahratta Confederacy. In January 1803, the Madras Pioneers, under Major

Joseph Hill, were at Bangalore when they were made part of the force under Lieutenant General John Stuart. On arrival of Major General Arthur Wellesley on 06 March, part of Lieutenant General Stuart's force was divided, the former being given a division – about 10,600 strong – to strike towards Poona – which was occupied on 20 April. Wellesley's next plan was to attack Ahmednagar to secure his communications with Poona and Bombay. After the capture of Ahmednagar on 11 August, Wellesley set out north for Aurangabad and contacted the Mahratta force there.

On 23 September 1803, a decisive battle was fought by the British forces under Major General Arthur Wellesley, against the combined Maratha Army led by Dowlat Rao Scindia. The battlefield was Assaye, a small village near the Ajanta caves, off Aurangabad. Two companies of the Madras Pioneers, under Captain Heitland, were part of the attack launched by General Arthur Wellesley, with 4,500 men against the 40,000 strong Maratha army. The Madras Pioneers, 755 strong, were in the thick of the fight and had 26 killed and 90 wounded. (General Wellesley later became the Duke of Wellington. Even after his victory at Waterloo, he regarded Assaye as the most difficult battle he ever fought). For this battle, the Madras Pioneers were granted the battle honour 'Assaye' and the badge of 'The Elephant'.

### **The Travancore War (1808-09)**

Towards the end of 1808, a subsidy payable by the Raja of Travancore fell into arrears. For this, the Resident, Lieutenant Colonel Macaulay, insisted on the removal of the Dewan. This resulted in an attack on the latter's house but he managed to escape. At the same time, 31 sailors were killed at Alleppey. This led to a general rebellion by the Nairs with an attack on British troops in Quilon. In January 1809, the British forces (of which the Madras Pioneers, under Colonel Chalmers, was part) converged on Quilon from three directions. The resultant battle led to the total defeat of the enemy with heavy loss and capture of 14 guns. There were other smaller actions later which resulted in the occupation of Trivandrum.

Later, the Madras Pioneers went on expeditions to Java in 1811 and Burma in 1824. Until 1811, the only Pioneer units employed overseas came exclusively from the Madras Presidency.



In 1831, the first battalion of the Madras Pioneers was converted into the 'Corps of Madras Sappers and Miners'. It was entitled to all honours and distinctions that they won as Pioneers. The second battalion of Pioneers was absorbed into the Corps in 1834, without any increase in the establishment. The Headquarters and three companies were located at Bangalore, two companies each were in the Nilgiris and Hyderabad, and one company was at Madras.

### **The Afghan War (1879-80)**

With the failure of the British mission to Kabul and the massacre of the British garrison there, on 03 September 1879, the campaign against Afghanistan was ordered. The 4th Regiment of Madras Native Infantry (Pioneers), then in Bangalore, proceeded to Jhelum by rail and then marched to Ali Masjid by way of Peshawar. In January 1880, the Mohmands rose up against the British and the 4th Regiment of Madras Native Infantry (Pioneers) was part of the force deployed against them. They had the onerous and difficult duty of being the rear guard and saw action at Fort Battye in March 1880 and later against the Waziri tribes. The battalion was awarded the honours of Afghanistan 1879-80.'

### **Egypt (1882)**

A second opportunity for service in Egypt came in 1882 when an Indian contingent was mobilised to join an expeditionary force under Lieutenant General Sir Garnet Wolseley, to suppress a military revolt against the ruler or Khedive of Egypt and Sudan, Tewfik Pasha. The safety of the Suez Canal was the primary concern. For their role in the campaign, they were awarded the honour 'Egypt'. They were also awarded the badge of 'The Sphinx'.

### **Suakin and Tofrek (1885)**

In 1885, a force was sent under Sir Gerald Graham, VC. RE, to clear the Sudanese Coast and build a railway from Suakin to Berber, on the Nile. At that time, the warlord Osman Digna was very active in the region. One company of Pioneers was part of this force of 4,000 men and an enormous convoy of camels and reached Sudan, in March 1885, where they set to work. As a safeguard against surprise attacks, two thick-thorn bushy fenced enclosures or *zarebas* were built five miles apart. While building a *zareba* at Tofrek, six miles from Suakin, the cavalry guarding the troops rushed towards the enclosure followed by swarms of

Sudanese at their heels. When the Sudanese moved into the central square, a party of Madras Pioneers gathered around a pile of stores and biscuit boxes and, firing with great steadiness, checked the assault. For this action, the honour 'Suakinand Tofrek' was bestowed on the Madras Pioneers.

### **NWFP (1891-99)**

The tribal areas of Afghanistan and NWFP were in constant turmoil. From 1821 onwards, the Madras Pioneers were pressed into service in Tirah, Hazara, Malakand, Buner, and Zakka Khel. They also built the Khushalgarh-Kohat railroad. They were awarded the honours 'Punjab Frontier', 'Malakand', and 'Tirah'.

### **Burma (1913-15)**

The 64th Pioneers moved to Burma in November 1913. Landing at Rangoon, they moved to Myitkina by rail. They were involved in action against the Kachin uprising in January and February 1915.

### **Mesopotamia (1916-19)**

The 64th Pioneers moved to Basra on their return from Burma. The main tasks they participated in during the campaign in Mesopotamia were constructing flood bunds on the Tigris River, supporting the advance to Kut-al-Amara, and constructing retaining bunds along the river. Thereafter, they were involved in work for the extension of the railway line to Baghdad and constructing bunds on the River Diala. Finally, they were involved in the construction of the railway line to Fellujah. Thereafter, in 1919, they were moved to Persia and located at Kermanshah. Their main task was the construction of the Kermanshah-Hamadan road and garrison duties to protect the line of communication. They returned to India in May 1921, in time to be involved in action against the Moplah Rebellion.

### **The Corps of Madras Pioneers**

In 1929, the Pioneer regiments were taken out of the line infantry and grouped into the Corps of Madras Pioneers (three battalions), the Corps of Bombay Pioneers (five battalions), the Corps of Sikh Pioneers (four battalions), and the Corps of Hazara Pioneers (one

battalion). Being the senior-most, the Madras Pioneers became the 1st Madras Pioneers. Its components were:

- 1st Battalion (raised in 1758) earlier known as 61st KGO Pioneers
- 2nd Battalion (raised in 1759) earlier known as 64th Pioneers (The Elephant)
- 10th Battalion (Training) raised in 1786 as 81st Pioneers

### **Designations of the Madras Pioneers**

#### **61st King George's Own Pioneers**



- 1758 1st Battalion of Coast Sepoys
- 1769 1st Carnatic Battalion
- 1784 1st Madras Battalion
- 1796 1st Battalion, 1st Regiment of Madras Native Infantry
- 1807 1st Battalion, 24th Regiment of Madras Native Infantry
- 1818 1st Battalion 1st Regiment of Madras Native Infantry
- 1824 1st Regiment of Madras Native Infantry
- 1883 1st Regiment of Madras Native Infantry (Pioneers)
- 1885 1st Regiment of Madras Infantry (Pioneers)
- 1901 1st Madras Pioneers
- 1903 61st Pioneers

- 1906 61st Prince of Wales's Own Pioneers
- 1910 61st King George's Own Pioneers
- 1922 1st Battalion Madras Pioneers, formed from 61st King George's Own Pioneers and 81st Pioneers

### **Battle Honours**

- Carnatic, Mysore, Seringapatam, Seetabuldee, Nagpore, Ava, Pegu, Central India, Afghanistan 1879-80, Burma 1885-87, and China 1900

### **64th Pioneers**



- 1759 5th Battalion of Coast Sepoys
- 1769 5th Carnatic Battalion
- 1770 4th Carnatic Battalion
- 1784 4th Madras Battalion
- 1796 1st Battalion, 4th Regiment of Madras Native Infantry
- 1824 4th Regiment of Madras Native Infantry
- 1883 4th Regiment of Madras Native Infantry (Pioneers)
- 1885 4th Regiment of Madras Infantry (Pioneers)
- 1901 4th Madras Pioneers
- 1903 64th Pioneers
- 1922 2nd Battalion, 1st Madras Pioneers (formed from 61st King George's Own Pioneers, and 81st Pioneers)

### Battle Honours

- Sholinghur, Carnatic, Mysore, Assaye, Afghanistan 1879-80 The Elephant badge superscribed "Assaye".

### 81st Pioneers



- 1786 28th Madras Battalion
- 1796 1st Battalion, 11th Regiment of Madras Native Infantry
- 1824 21st Regiment of Madras Native Infantry
- 1885 21st Regiment of Madras Infantry
- 1891 21st Regiment of Madras Infantry (Pioneers)
- 1901 21st Madras Infantry (Pioneers)
- 1903 81st Pioneers
- 1922 10th (Training) Battalion Madras Pioneers

### Battle Honours

- Mysore, Seringapatam, Nagpore, Afghanistan 1878-80, Burma 1885-87, Tirah, and Punjab Frontier

### Conclusion

During 1897-98, the Madras Pioneers were involved in the Ootacamund Lake Reclamation Project. In 1904, they were given the responsibility for the construction of the Coonoor-Ootacamund Railway, the only rack railway in India, which now has a UNESCO World Heritage status. Construction was completed in 1909. General SM Srinagesh, the 3rd Chief of the Army Staff of the Indian Army, served in the 2nd Battalion of the 1st Madras Pioneers (erstwhile 64th Pioneers) from 14 October 1924, mostly in Burma, until it was disbanded, in 1933 for reasons of economy.



**Wellington Nilgiri Railway, 1908**

The war memorial of the Madras Pioneers is located on the Brigade Road-Residency Road Junction in Bengaluru, built in the memory of the officers, NCOs, and pioneers who laid down their lives during the various wars fought between 1885 and 1917. It is the only memorial that is in a public place in Bengaluru, The memorial is a four sided block and each side is dedicated to a different theatre of war in which the Pioneers fought.

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# Grooming of Military Officers for Joint Services Environment

Commander M Arun Chakravarthy<sup>@</sup>

*Tomorrow's military leaders need to understand the concept of jointness and synergy ingrained into their professional ethos right from their commissioning.*  
-Lt Gen Satish Dua, PVSM, UYSM, SM, VSM (Retd)

## Abstract

*Indian Armed Forces need to harness and harvest assets jointly to fight future wars, which are increasingly becoming divergent in character. To counter the existing external security threats and futuristic challenges, the forces need to combine their resources, strengthen their joint plans, continually evolve their joint strategy, and train jointly, to project combat power as an optimal response. Focus on the human dimension of warfighting, especially grooming the military officers, is imperative considering the march towards Integrated Theatre Commands. The current joint training structure for the officers needs to be more modern. The lack of a Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) programme complementing the joint training continuum impacts the mental ripening of future military leaders who are expected to be strategic and critical-minded. Grooming and shaping future military leaders to thrive in a joint ecosystem, the service-specific Professional Military Education (PME), joint training, and JPME programmes should be modified and amalgamated to include joint content and exposure to a joint environment at all stages of training. Incorporation of joint and Service-*

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*specific doctrinal studies commencing from the basic phase, cross-service postings in static formations in lower ranks, standardisation of various key administrative and functional aspects through joint policies, and introduction of Joint Capsules (JOCAP), and inter-phase interactions are likely to foster jointness mindset and achieve desired integration in joint operations.*

### **Introduction**

The Indian Armed Forces have been the backbone of the nation's overall security apparatus since Independence. Whether it was the five gallant wars or aiding the civil authorities during an internal crisis, the armed forces have stood tall as an institutional pillar. The three Services fought these wars with pride in a primarily conventional setting. Future wars are likely to be fought in a very complex and dynamic environment. The advent of technology has led to the conceptualisation and practice of divergent art, viz. multi-domain warfare, hybrid warfare, grey zone warfare and non-kinetic warfare. Further, the fragile security situation along India's northern and western land borders and increased traditional and non-traditional threats in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) require the Indian Armed Forces to harness and harvest assets jointly to fight future wars. Such harnessing and harvesting entail foundational reforms at the organisational and operational levels.

Towards marshalling such foundational military reforms, the Indian government signalled intent by appointing the first-ever Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) on 01 January 2020, a long pending recommendation since the Kargil War.<sup>1</sup> The CDS' mandate was clear institute measures towards modernising the armed forces, initiate and reinforce steps to achieve jointness and integration in warfighting, and restructure the military commands, including establishing theatre/ joint commands. The Indian Armed Forces, therefore, find themselves at the cusp of a significant transformation— a pending transition into a well-integrated warfighting force. The change entails *inter-alia*, grooming the military officers to embrace, implement and achieve jointness.

The article aims to address the following: -

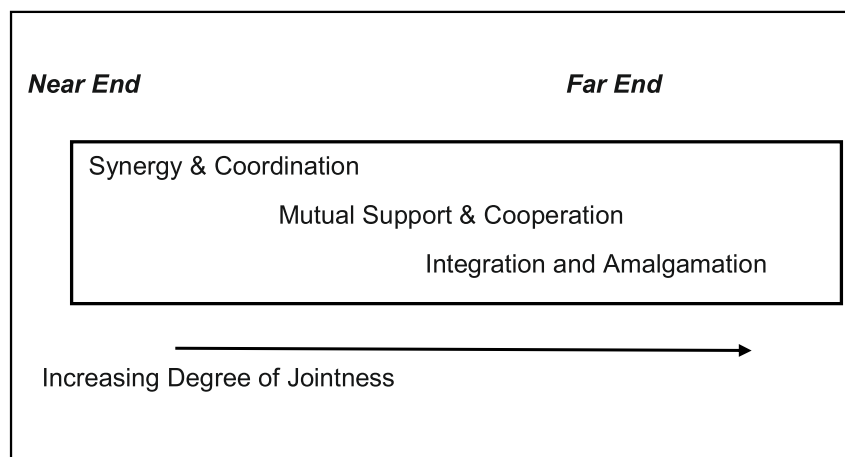
- Identify the fault lines in the existing joint training methodology, PME and joint structures.
- Examine the current state of jointness and provide a roadmap for grooming military officers for joint Services.



### Jointness and Integration

Often, jointness and integration are used *interchangeably*. However, they vary in their meaning. Jointness, as per Joint Doctrine Indian Armed Forces (JDIAF 2017), is a concept aimed at achieving a high degree of cross-service synergy in planning and execution, enhancing the success potential in warfighting, which, in turn, would ensure high morale, camaraderie and spirit. Jointness enables all resources to achieve the best results in a minimum time. As a unifying factor, it allows the armed forces to focus their energy, across a range of military operations, at all levels of war.

Conversely, integration is an amalgamation of all operational domains (land, maritime, air, space and cyber) towards enhancing readiness and optimising resources. It embodies all functions - logistics, operations, intelligence, perspective planning, and Human Resource Development (HRD). Also, it aims to fuse the military paradigm with the diplomatic, intelligence, and economic construct of national power, at all levels.<sup>2</sup> Together, jointness and integration form a jointness spectrum wherein an increasing degree of jointness leads to integration. If coordination and synergy are at one end of this spectrum, integration is at the other. Therefore, within this spectrum, it is essential to identify and associate where the armed forces would like to be in future and, thus, focus on collective efforts in achieving the desired degree of jointness.



**Source** : Created by the author

**Figure 1: Spectrum of Jointness**

**Importance of Jointness.** The last two decades have witnessed increased technological sophistication in military affairs, which has led to the evolution of intelligent solutions to very complex battlefield problems. For example, based on the intelligence provided by the human element on the ground, armed drone pilots operating their stations in Nevada, the US, have successfully tracked and targeted militants and their hideouts in Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, and Iraq. The success of such strikes echoes the importance of jointness in planning and execution. The changing face of warfare, complex battlefield environment, and the proliferation of Command, Control, Communication, Computer, Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance (C4ISR) systems coupled with reduced response time entails even greater synergy, systematic application of resources, and coordinated execution of military operations, in the future. *The face of the battlefield is likely to be more complex tomorrow than it is today.* Therefore, the Indian Armed Forces need to combine their resources, strengthen their joint plans, continually evolve their joint strategy, and train jointly, to project combat power as an optimal response.

### **Reality Check of India's Joint Services Environment**

*Indian military's organisational culture, doctrine and strategic worldview raise some controversial issues, and we must pause for reflection.*

- Admiral Arun Prakash, PVSM, AVSM, VrC, VSM (Retd)

Towards understanding the extant of Indian Joint Services environment, it is imperative to re-visit the post-independence joint structure and the five wars India has fought since Independence. Crystal gazing of the last seven decades would aid in understanding the broad jointness fault lines and help arrive at practical solutions.

**Post-Independence Joint Service Environment.** India adopted Great Britain's Second World War inter-services model to achieve integration and cohesion among the three Services. The senior most serving chief among the three Services became the Chairman of COSC (Chiefs of the Staff Committee).<sup>3</sup> The mandate of the COSC was very limited, largely nominal, and had little control over the combined affairs of the three Services. Each service was oblivious to the joint effort. They mainly worked in isolation during various conflicts and pursued parochial interests during the inter-

war period. The lack of jointness and inter-Services cohesion had several implications for India's five wars since its Independence.

**'Jointness' Lessons from the Five Wars and the IPKF Mission.**

Literature on India's campaign has one common bearing during all the wars that were fought – '*Lack of Jointness*'. In the 1947-48 Indo-Pak War, the Indian Army (IA) primarily fought with limited Indian Air Force (IAF) support, mainly to air transport troops and equipment. During the 1962 Sino-India war, the IA was again the primary force fighting the war, with the government forbidding the use of the offensive capability of the IAF to avoid escalation.<sup>4</sup> The 1965 Indo-Pak conflict was the first instance wherein all three Services were involved in some action. Still, the planning and fighting were undertaken at the individual Service level with little support and coordination from others. During the lightning victory in the 1971 war with Pakistan, the three services achieved coordination mainly due to personal camaraderie and not institutional mechanisms.<sup>5</sup> During the Indian Peace Keeping Forces (IPKF) mission in Sri Lanka in 1987, the Overall Force Commander (OFC)<sup>6</sup> model for joint Services operation fell apart as the operation progressed. IAF and Indian Navy (*IN*) projected legal impediments in the joint framework and replaced the component commanders with liaison officers.<sup>7</sup> Soon, the joint effort returned to the *erstwhile inter-Services coordination model*. Even during the 1999 Kargil conflict, differences between IA and IAF continued to exist, both during the planning and execution of operations. However, for the first time since Independence, the Indian government was quick to appoint a Kargil Review Committee (KRC) to identify the fault lines in the national security apparatus and draw important lessons from all the wars fought in the last five decades.

**Reality Check**

Having seen the broad jointness fault lines in the five wars that India has fought, it is critical to gaze at the joint service environment prism through the Doctrine, Organisation, Training, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel, Facilities, and Policy (DOTMLPF-P)<sup>8</sup> construct to arrive at robust solutions. DOTMLPF mechanism helps evaluate the issues at the operational level and arrive at possible solutions for implementation. The article limits its focus to doctrinal, organisational, and training precepts of DOTMLPF-P towards framing a roadmap for promoting jointness, and grooming of officers, for a joint service environment.

**Reality Check No 1 – Joint Doctrine.** Towards fostering jointness, the starting point must be a well-formulated joint doctrine with great intellectual depth drawn from a sound knowledge hierarchy (a process designed to validate historical learnings into concepts before formulating into doctrine). The respective service doctrines should, after that, be developed from the joint doctrine. For the Indian Armed Forces, it has been the other way around. The COSC, in his foreword to JDIAF, echoes this problem—the JDIAF remains aligned with single service doctrines.<sup>9</sup> Further, the joint doctrine should enunciate the doctrinal end states, issues in pursuit of the end states and the doctrinal approach to promote and attain jointness. The JDIAF fails in this aspect and is more a joined doctrine than a joint doctrine, remarks Air Vice Marshal (Dr) Arjun Subramaniam (Retd).<sup>10</sup> With an apparent lack of enunciation of end states and ways to achieve them, the *JDIAF fails to unify the jointness efforts and symbolises the joint Services environment's current 'confusion state'*.

**Reality Check No 2 – Organisation and Joint Structure.** A review of the joint Services structure in the last 75 years suggests that India has been fortunate to paddle through rough waters without damaging its territorial integrity and sovereignty. The Services created their niche to pursue their interests and worked in isolation. Today, the situation at large is a similar story but with little synergy. Post Kargil, based on recommendations of the Arun Singh Taskforce, India created two tri-Services commands, the Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC), a geographic/ theatre command, and the Strategic Forces Command (SFC), a functional command. Without due studies and criteria for the formation of such commands, they were created to display intent and merely show progress on the jointness path. The ANC was treated as a test bed for ideating the concept of Joint/ Theatre Commands at all levels. With time, ANC was steadily deprived of adequate resources and the support it needed from the Services to bloom. Yet again, the Services failed the ANC experiment.<sup>11</sup> *The reluctance to work together complements the current disjointed structure that has been embraced.*

**Reality Check No 3 – Joint Training.** India established the tri-Services training establishments, viz. National Defence Academy (NDA) at Khadakvasla and the Defence Services Staff College (DSSC), in the late 1950s, to promote jointness and foster inter-

Services camaraderie. Subsequently, the Services introduced the College of Defence Management (CDM) and the National Defence College (NDC). Though these institutions managed well to bind the services on the camaraderie front, they are yet to create the desired jointness among the Services. Joint training is first imparted to the cadets in NDA before commissioning, and the subsequent joint training to select officers is imparted after 10-12 years of service. The CDM and NDC courses served to educate senior officers (about 20 years of service). The gap between any two joint training programmes is way too long, which severely restricts the *impact* of joint training. Such gaps result in a lack of the desired understanding of others' combat capabilities, which is critical to achieving jointness. Further, exposure to such joint training is limited to a small percentage of officers selected based on merit. *The relevant question is, many officers are not exposed to these joint training programmes and are expected to hold appointments in a joint organisation.*

#### **PME and Training of Officers for Jointness**

*Professional attainment, based on a prolonged study and collective study at colleges, rank by rank and age by age – those are the title reeds of the commanders of future armies and the secret of future victories.*

- Winston Churchill, 1946

**Military Training Vs PME.** Military training by the armed forces focuses on developing skills, attitudes, and knowledge to attain the desired skill set to perform assigned duties. Military training mainly focuses on individual and collective training to develop proficiency. On the other hand, PME focuses on a learning continuum which comprises military training, experience, education and self-improvement. Through this continuum, PME facilitates shaping and producing strategic-minded and critical-thinking officers who form the critical element in the human dimension of warfighting. PME aims to equip the officers with the following:<sup>12</sup>

- To imbibe core values, culture and ethos of one's service.
- To attain technical and tactical skills in warfighting.
- To apply wisdom and judgement in demanding and evolving situations.

**Extant Joint Training in Indian Armed Forces.** Jointness is *sine qua non* in fighting future wars. Hence, joint training and a joint PME (JPME) become imperative in grooming military officers. It is pertinent to highlight that the Joint Training Doctrine (JTD) only enunciates the joint training aspects and does not discuss JPME. All officers commissioned into the armed forces undergo various phases of joint training<sup>13</sup> at some point in their careers. Depending on the entry type, some do not get exposed to joint training. Therefore, *the current joint training structure is critically flawed, as only a tiny percentage of officers are exposed to the programme. Also, the lack of a JPME programme complementing the joint training continuum severely impacts the mental ripening of future military leaders who are expected to be strategic and critical-minded. The Services individually have a service-specific PME programme aligned with the joint training phases enunciated in the joint doctrine. Since these programmes are service specific, they have very little to nil joint content. Therefore, to make training simple and effective, and aligned with jointness, the joint training, the service-specific PME and the JPME programmes are to be suitably amalgamated. Necessary studies are required to be undertaken to streamline the joint training continuum.*

**Way Ahead.** For grooming officers for a joint environment and enabling the shaping of future military leaders, the service-specific PME, joint training and JPME programmes *should be modified and amalgamated to include joint content and exposure to a joint environment at all stages of training.* The designed curriculum should increase one's ability to think innovatively and futuristically, acquire intellectual interoperability among the Services, and foster excellent professionalism. The JTD professes such a training curriculum across the Services;<sup>14</sup> however, it lacks addressing the PME gaps and fails to lay the objectives succinctly. The below suggested JPME continuum, aimed at bridging the gaps, may be divided into four phases (aligned with JTD). *Each phase aims to lay the objectives, focuses on service and joint military education, and emphasis jointness and leadership toward joint warfighting.*

Focus Area	Pre-commissioning	Basic Phase	Mid-service Phase	Senior Officer Phase, including Flag Rank
<b>Institutions</b>	NDA, Respective Service Academies	Respective Service Institutions	DSSC, CDM	Respective Service War colleges/ NDC
<b>Courses</b>	Ab-initio, Science/ Arts Graduation	Junior Command Course (Army), Basic Professional Knowledge Course (IAF), Long courses (Navy) and other equivalent courses	Staff Course, Technical Management Course, Technical Staff Officers' Course	Higher Defence Management Course, NDC and other equivalent Courses
<b>PME</b>	Introduction to Constitution Indian Govt. Structure and functioning Introduction to service-specific roles and missions	Vertical specialisation in respective arms, Services, domains and understanding of other operating environments.  Introduction to Service-specific doctrines and strategies  Critical understanding of other Services' roles and missions  Introduction to the functioning of various national civil agencies involved in national security  Introduction to multinational exercises	Introduction to National Security Strategy  In-depth understanding of Service-specific doctrines and strategies  Op Art and operational warfare in all domains  Theatre Strategy  Interaction with national civil agencies involved in national security  Planning of multinational exercises	National Security and International relations  Functioning of National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS), Defence, Finance and External Affairs ministries  Deeper understanding and impact of geo-political relations  Inter-Services Coordination  Civil-Military coordination Conduct Multinational operations  Force building nuances
<b>Jointness</b>	Introduction to joint Services, organisation, role and importance of joint warfighting	Joint warfare fundamentals  Studies of joint campaigns Participation in joint exchange programmes and exercises to understand the operating environment	Joint doctrine and strategy  Joint Op Art  Joint planning and execution process  Joint warfare Cross-domain tour of duty for consolidation of Joint Studies	Joint functioning and higher joint administration  Conduct Military operations in a joint environment  Tenure in a joint service institution
<b>Career Long Development</b>	← Life-long learning/ education/ self-development/ improvement →			
<b>Leadership Attributes</b>	← Socio-Cultural Education – Ability to understand and operate in a varying cultural and social environment →			
	← A broad understanding of the national security environment and functioning of various national security tools →			
	← Futuristic, critical and strategic thinking. Application of jointness at all levels of warfare →			
	← Ability to lead significant organisational transitions →			
	← Strong follower of international/ national laws and ethical decision maker →			

Source: Created by the author based on inputs from JTD and discussed attributes of an ideal military leader.

**Figure 2 : JPME Continuum**

### Roadmap for Promoting Jointness

Jointness, as per JTD, hinges on the three evolving frameworks viz, Joint Operations, Joint Doctrines and Joint Training. Joint training is the most fundamental requirement for achieving 'Jointness' in operations.<sup>15</sup> This basic framework needs to be augmented by pillars in the form of robust joint doctrines, strategies, policies, and structures to achieve jointness. Towards promoting jointness and grooming military officers for a joint service environment, it is imperative to design a roadmap that simultaneously addresses all the DOTMLPF-P precepts. This approach would help the armed forces unify the efforts toward building a robust and future-proofintegrated force. However, the recommendations in this article are limited to Doctrine Operations and Training aspects only.



Source: Created by the author

**Figure 3 : Pillars of Jointness**

**Doctrinal Studies.** As articulated previously, a well-formulated joint doctrine and a joint military strategy are essential prerequisites to foster jointness among the three Services. The joint doctrine and military strategy unify the armed forces' efforts in all aspects of jointness, viz. operations, training, and organisational. Therefore, these capstone documents are to be carefully formulated by Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and retired senior military officers and not merely left to be drafted by serving officers. Towards this, collective intellectual/ academia should be brought to bear on deliberations, drafting, and formulation. *The serving officers, from the basic phase*



*onwards, are encouraged to undertake doctrinal studies and critically understand their application at all levels of warfare.* The following are pertinent concerning doctrinal studies by military officers: -

- A well-developed joint doctrine, rightly oriented to pursue national security objectives, *would usher the necessary attitudinal and cultural changes required to integrate forces towards warfighting.*
- Impetus on reading and in-depth understanding of these doctrines, and strategies (both joint and service-specific), is essential to align the human element with organisational goals. Therefore, it is prudent to incorporate doctrinal studies in various PME programmes and emphasise officers challenging the status quo. *The Services may incentivise officers to undertake quality research on existing doctrinal concepts.*
- The studies on joint doctrinal subjects are to be moderated by SMEs/ permanent faculty at respective training institutions. The interaction would help understand and integrate joint concepts and strategies.
- The Services should strive to create a talent pool out of the serving officers in due course to improve the functioning and efficiency of the envisaged Training and Doctrine Functional Command<sup>16</sup> and to formulate joint doctrines in future.

### **Joint Organisation/ Structure**

**Higher Defence Management.** The three Services function, train, operate, and build their forces in their unique 'service' way. There is an intense inter-service rivalry for budget allocation and capability building. The current service-centric attitude, inter-service rivalry, and lack of jointness reduce the country's overall military effectiveness and degrades fiscal efficiency. Towards plugging these attitudinal deficiencies and the jointness 'gaps', it is imperative to quickly adopt the envisaged joint/ theatre command structure. Therefore, the key to a quick adoption is a well-defined joint service structure, chain of command, command relationships and an enunciated politico-military hierarchy driven by the political leadership. The Indian leadership must quickly outlay the transition

planthrough legislation, with clearly stated roles, the role of joint/theatre commands, command relationships, chain of reporting and other pertinent issues. The road to strengthening the existing joint structure to a more robust joint/theatre command structure is long and arduous. Therefore, the leadership must give the CDS sufficient time to reorganise the higher defence management.

**Service Level Administrative Reforms.** Along with restructuring the higher defence management, the CDS must mandate organisational reforms at the service level. The reforms empower the officers to efficiently handle the transition to a joint environment. The Services should collectively work to enable cross-service Lt Col/ Equivalent postings in static formations for administrative duties viz. at Base Depots, Logistics Centres, Victualling Depots, and Medical. Key joint operational appointments may be identified to depute officers for operational tasks to acquaint the officers with a deeper understanding of other's combat capabilities and requirements. The cross postings would help spread awareness once the officers return to their respective Services. Parallely, the Services should align to a joint service environment and work together to *standardise various key administrative and functional aspects through promulgating joint policies and orders*. This holistic approach would help groom the officers with the necessary mindset to thrive in a joint service environment and help the ecosystem flourish.

### **Joint Training**

Training is the backbone for the successful accomplishment of operations. As discussed previously, the joint training programme adopted by the armed forces only impacted the inter-service camaraderie, not jointness. Therefore, the joint training modus operandi must evolve to alter the status quo for seamless tri-service integration. *The joint training must be aligned with the proposed JPME programme in Fig. 2 to have a decisive impact on the overall integration*. The following recommendations may help the Services to foster greater Jointmanship through impetus on joint training: -

- **Creation of Joint Training Command.** In addition to service-specific training commands, a joint training command (currently under deliberation) must be adopted with tri-service staff to carefully draft and ensure the

fructification of joint training and JPME programmes. Regular interaction with Services is undertaken to align with service-specific vertical requirements. Identification of areas of shared Services interests and division of responsibilities be fixed through deliberations and on mutually agreed terms. *The focus of the joint training command should be on integrating common subjects such as intelligence, logistics, administration, communication, IT, and cyber security.* Once the joint training command has evolved, the CDS may dispense the service-specific training commands.

- **Joint Capsules.** All three Services have the equivalent of Junior Command (JC) and Long Courses, attended by officers with five/ six years of service, respectively. A Joint Capsule (JOCAP) for two/ three weeks be tailored made, and fit into the curriculum. *The emphasis should be on interaction, understanding and applying other Services' combat potential and operational requirements.* Mindful mixing of inter-service courses may achieve this for the JOCAP. For example, the officers undergoing Long Gunnery Course at Kochi may be mixed with those undergoing JC at Deolali and the AD officers of IAF. *These capsules should be followed by an attachment to the field areas for better assimilation of JOCAP content.* During the attachment, the officers should be mandated to undertake journal writing and be encouraged to find operational solutions to the issues. The submissions are assessed critically to accord impetus to the programme.
- **Inter Phase Interactions.** Between the basic and mid-career phases, there is a gap of about six years during which the officers are neither undergoing joint training nor JPME. During this period, the officers engage in their respective specialisation duties. Though this is considered critical, the Services may plan formal interactions in the form of JOCAP at regular intervals to increase the exposure to jointness across ranks. Also, the Services should adopt *long-distance learning avenues as part of JPME* for continued impetus on jointness.
- **Inter-Service Affiliations.** The Services must encourage mandatory affiliation of all ships, IAF Squadrons and IA

units on a regimental/ regional basis. Regular cross-training, visits, and participation in various events may be encouraged. All adventure activities within the Services should be mandatorily tri-Services expeditions only.

### **Conclusion**

The Indian political leadership took the much-vaunted step towards military reforms with the creation of the CDS office on 01 January 2020. The CDS is mandated to foster jointness and integration in the armed forces to supplement the nation's rising stature as a military power. Therefore, the importance of jointness and integration needs no emphasis. Jointness leads to synergised resources, training, planning, and operations efforts. It maximises the combat power and effectiveness of the forces in achieving an objective. With changing nature and character of warfare, and to meet the security challenges along the land borders and in IOR, integrated warfighting is *sine quo non* to a growing superpower like India. To shape future military leaders for integrated warfighting, carefully crafted and evolving joint training and the JPME programmes should be the *raison d'être* of the Services. This would shape the jointness mindset and achieve desired integration in joint operations. The officers, on their part, have to critically transform themselves into futuristic and strategic thinking leaders through these organisational programmes to spearhead India's rise as a military superpower.

### **End Notes**

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Standing Committee on Defence deals, contained in their Thirty-sixth Report (Fourteenth Lok Sabha) on 'Status of Implementation of Unified Command for Armed Forces, which was presented to Lok Sabha and laid in Rajya Sabha on 24 February 2009. Available at <https://eparlib.nic.in/>. Accessed on 23 July 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Vice Admiral PS Das (Retired), Jointness in India's Military —What it is and What it Must Be. *Journal of Defence Studies*, August 2007, Vol I, Issue 1, p.4.

<sup>4</sup> Anit Mukherjee, Fighting Separately: Jointness and Civil-Military Relations in India, *Journal of strategic studies*, Vol 40, 2017 Issue 1-2, p.16.

<sup>5</sup> Vinod Anand, Evolution of jointness in Indian Defence Forces, p.174

<sup>6</sup> Vice Admiral PS Das (Retired), Op cit. p 3.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> US CJCS, Guidance for developing and implementing joint concepts, Policy No CJCSI 3010.02E dated 17 August 2016, Available at [https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/concepts/cjcsi\\_3010\\_02e.pdf](https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/concepts/cjcsi_3010_02e.pdf). Accessed on 09 August 2022.

<sup>9</sup> Joint Doctrine Indian Armed Forces, COSC 'Foreword' (New Delhi: Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff (HQ IDS), 2017

<sup>10</sup> Arjun Subramaniam, "Indian Military and Jointness," Episode 16, 24 June 2019, in National Security Conversations, Available at <https://podtail.com/podcast/national-securityconversations/ep-16-indian-military-and-jointness>. Accessed on 10 August 2022.

<sup>11</sup> Patrick Bratton, 'The Creation of Indian Integrated Commands: Organizational Learning and the Andaman and Nicobar Command,' Strategic Analysis 36, no. 3 (May-June 2012): p.447, Available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/09700161.2012.670540>, Accessed on 13 August 2022.

<sup>12</sup> Steven H Kenney, Professional Military Education and the Emerging Revolution in Military Affairs. Available at <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA529676.pdf>. Accessed on 01 August 2022

<sup>13</sup> Joint Training Doctrine, Indian Armed Forces, (New Delhi: Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff (HQ IDS), 2017, pp. 16.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Joint Training Doctrine, p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> Maj Gen SB Asthana, SM, VSM (Retd), Indian Model of Theatre Commands: The Road Ahead, Strategic Perspective, Period (April – June 2020), Available at <https://usiofindia.org/publication/cs3-strategic-perspectives/indian-model-of-theatre-commands-the-road-ahead/>. Accessed on 15 August 2022.

# Ukraine: A Land Crossed by Empires

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## Abstract

*To understand the current ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, it is necessary to understand the centuries old relationship between the two countries. A panoramic view of the Ukrainian history suggests it has shared deep relations with Russia. However, there is no doubt that the people of Ukraine have suffered from invasions over the centuries. It has persistently been a victim of war and deprivation. Ukraine, has been a victim of countless invasions from all sides, the North, the South, the West and the East; Mongols, Swedes, Lithuanians, Poles, French, Germans have all invaded this land. This is a land that has been crossed by Empires. The article aims to highlight the root cause of the current crisis by diving into the history of the land called Ukraine and the author has summed it up by saying: to understand the war one needs to reflect on history. It also points to the existing and emerging fault lines between Russia and Ukraine.*

## Introduction

Ukrainians are at the heart of Russian history. They are the famed Cossacks and the noblest of Eastern Slavic families. Ukrainians were also top rulers of the Soviet Republic. Nikita Khrushchev was born in Kalinovka, a village in what is now Russia's Kursk Oblast, near the present Ukrainian border but was raised in eastern Ukraine. In time, Khrushchev became the head of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR). After Joseph Stalin's death, he led the Soviet Union between 1953 and 1964.

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While Khrushchev was ethnically Russian, he was Ukrainian in many ways. “In 1954, the Crimean Region of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR) was given to the Ukrainian SSR, in gross violation of legal norms that were in force at the time,” Putin said of Khrushchev’s act, which the latter described as a “symbolic gesture”.<sup>1</sup>

Leonid Brezhnev hailed from Kamianske, a city in Central Ukraine on the Dnieper River. He ruled the Soviet Union between 1964 and 1982, the second longest-reigning Communist leader of the state after Stalin who incidentally was born in Georgia.<sup>2</sup>

Konstantin Chernenko was another Ukrainian, whose ached the upper echelons of Soviet power. Though born in Siberia, he was a Ukrainian by descent. He led the State for a brief period from 1984 to 1985. Mikhail Gorbachev, the last Soviet leader, was half-Ukrainian. His maternal family had Ukrainian descent and migrated from Chernihiv, a city in northern Ukraine, he succeeded Chernenko as the General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party. Gorbachev established the office of the President of the Soviet Union in 1990. He was the first and the last President of the Soviet Union, overseeing its dissolution. He ruled the Soviet Union from 1985 to 1991.

From Stalin’s death in 1953 to the disintegration of the USSR in 1991, the Soviet Union was led by Ukrainians for 31 of those 38 years. Clearly, Ukraine punched above its weight when it came to political influence within the Soviet Union.

### **Relationship between Ukraine and Russia**

To understand the war in Ukraine, a necessary starting point is to look at the centuries-old relationship between Ukraine and Russia. It’s in Kyiv where one of the holiest places of christianity stands: the great Medieval-era Saint Sophia Cathedral, currently a museum, was built under the reign of the most revered rulers of Kievan Rus, Vladimir the Great, originally a follower of Slavic paganism, Vladimir converted to Christianity in 988 and Christianised Kievan Rus’. This, along with other landmark shrines in Kyiv, is religiously significant to both Ukrainian and Russian Orthodoxy. In this period, it was in Kyiv that Christianity was brought from Byzantium to the Slavic people.

The birth of Kievan Rus, central to Russian, Ukrainian, and Belarusian history – came in tandem with other great kingdoms moulded into shape by Vikings, also known as Normans or Norsemen in Europe. Following the fall of the Roman Empire, Norman warriors became some of Europe's most able and trusted fighters and rulers. In the short span of a century, they founded flourishing kingdoms in France, England, southern Italy and also in Kyiv. They cherished the idea of reconstituting the peace and prosperity enjoyed under the Roman Empire. Norsemen solidified their footing in the 9th century, traveling on large wooden river boats, conquering as they went farther South. On the banks of the Dnipro River, they founded what is now Kyiv, the jewel of early East Slavic history.<sup>3</sup> The modern nations of Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine all claim KievanRus' as their lineage with Belarus and Russia deriving their names from it.

The State eventually disintegrated into rival regional powers and was ultimately destroyed by the Mongol invasions of the 13th century. The area was then contested, divided, and ruled by a variety of external powers for the next 600 years, including the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Austrian Empire, the Ottoman Empire, and the Tsardom of Russia.

The Cossack Hetmanate emerged in central Ukraine in the 17th century, but was partitioned between Russia and Poland, and ultimately absorbed by the Russian Empire. From the steppes of Ukraine, the Cossacks helped turn Moscow into a great European power. Their grit and fighting spirit was legendary and the fighting spirit being demonstrated by the Ukrainians can possibly be traced back to their Cossack past. The Cossacks were a tough people who had mastered the art of horseback fighting. Theirs was a multi-ethnic, semi-nomadic, anarchic and democratic society that emerged in the late Medieval period; in a loose semi-democratic military federation, they ran affairs on the Ukrainian plains for centuries. They were early followers of the East Slavic Christian Orthodox faith and withstood assaults from both the Russian and Turkish Empires, each vying for control of the Black Sea.

Today, the Black Sea is back in focus as one of the principal reasons for the Russian invasion of Ukraine is control of the Black Sea. Russia's Black Sea fleet remains harboured in Sevastopol in



the Crimea. Russia's expansion on the Black Sea was beneficial to the Russians as they developed Ukraine's warm-water ports, and gained access to the booming world trade in the Mediterranean Sea. The lands surrounding the Black Sea have for centuries been a crossroads of empires, voyagers, diseases, wars and revolutions. It was on the eastern shores of the Black Sea in present day Turkey where Marco Polo launched his great overland voyage to Cathay. The Bubonic plague also known as Black Death, arrived in Europe via Crimea.

Over the course of Moscow's imperial expansion, the Cossacks entered into alliances with the Tsars of Moscow and provided crucial military strength. They fought on the side of the Kremlin in the Great Northern War, the Seven Years' War, the Crimean War, the Napoleonic Wars, the Caucasus War, and in the many Russo-Persian Wars and Russo-Turkish Wars, becoming the backbone of the Russian Empire.<sup>4</sup>

### **Chequered Past**

In Kiev, a granite stele commemorates the Pereyaslav Council of 1654 at which the Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky and other leaders of the autonomous Cossack Hetmanate pledged allegiance to Russia in exchange for protection against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth – leading to the eventual Russification of the region that is now Ukraine.<sup>5</sup> In the late 1700s, they fought for Russian Empress Catherine II and it was largely to their military prowess that Moscow was able to push back the Ottomans from Crimea and Ukraine.

Catherine the Great was indebted to the Cossacks and bestowed them with favours, wealth, and noble titles and they played a major role in turning a large but land-locked Russia into a European power. But in Ukraine, Catherine's legacy is mixed and a source of deep division. Catherine sent the Russian General Peter Tekeli to disband the Zaporozhian Sich, a semi-autonomous and republican-style government in Southern Ukraine run by Cossack Chiefs. Russian forces surrounded the Sich in May 1775, forced its surrender and razed what buildings they had to the ground. With the sacking of the Sich, Catherine renamed Southern and Eastern Ukraine 'Novorossiia' or New Russia. After the 1783 Russian annexation of Crimea from the Ottoman Empire and liquidation of the Cossack Zaporozhian Sich, Grigory Potemkin, a

nobleman, became Governor of the region. Crimea had been devastated by the war and the Muslim Tatar inhabitants of Crimea were viewed as a potential fifth column of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>6</sup>

Potemkin's major tasks were to pacify and rebuild by bringing in Russian settlers. In 1787, as a new war was about to break out between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, Catherine II, with her Court and several Ambassadors, made an unprecedented six-month trip to New Russia. Famously, Grigory Potemkin brought the Queen by river boat to see her new possessions, an episode best remembered as Catherine's 'Potemkin village' trip.

The destruction of the Sich led to Ukrainian resentment against the Tsars and, in time an important narrative about why Ukraine needed to become independent again from Russia. During the spread of Ukrainian nationalism in the 19th century, references to the sacking of the Sich were a rallying call. Going back in history, the word 'Ukraine' first appeared in 1187 AD, upon the death of Volodymyr Hlibovych, a great ruler of the Principality of Pereyaslavl in the South Eastern extreme of the Kievan Rus dynasty.

During the Russian Revolution, an independent Ukrainian Republic briefly survived before it was crushed by the Bolsheviks. To allay the seething anger raging across so many regions of the now-decapitated Russian Empire, the Bolsheviks created new 'Soviet republics' roughly corresponding to regional, ethnic and geographic boundaries. Thus, the borders of Ukraine were formalised. Ukraine, then, became a semi-state within the Soviet universe in 1922. During World War II, Hitler invaded Ukraine and millions were killed in his bid to possess the Black Sea, Ukraine's fertile wheat fields, and the untold riches farther East. In fact, in Babyn Yar, a ravine in Kyiv, more than 33,000 Jews were killed within 48 hours in 1941, when the city was under Nazi occupation in one of the largest mass killings at a single location during World War II.<sup>7</sup> Napoleon Bonaparte had made a similar attempt more than 200 years before, though he invaded Russia with an eye to joining forces with Ukraine's anti-Tsarist population still fuming over the destruction of the Sich.

The Soviet years saw Ukraine transformed from a once wild and unspoiled steppe into an industrial heartland. Under Stalin's Soviet rule, Ukraine became the industrial engine as well as an

environmental wasteland with the Chernobyl nuclear disaster topping them all.<sup>8</sup> Ukraine was a powerhouse among the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Many of the biggest Soviet's dams, highways, government complexes, factories, mines, oil refineries, chemical plants, ships and space rocket facilities came up in Ukraine. However, this was also marked by one of Ukraine's worst tragedies, the Holodomor or 'death by hunger'. In the drive to quickly industrialise and modernise, Stalin oversaw mass starvation across the Soviet Union. The famine of the early 1930s hit Ukraine particularly hard. To most, it remains a consequence of human made factors which included the collectivisation of agriculture. Anne Applebaum, in her book 'Red Famine: Stalin's War on Ukraine', states, "It's a piece of history, and it's remembered by Ukrainians as an attempt to eradicate them".

### **Post Parting of the Iron Curtain**

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Ukraine became an independent state, formalised with a referendum in December 1991. Earlier on 21 January 1990, over 300,000 Ukrainians organised a human chain for Ukrainian independence between Kyiv and Lviv. Ukraine officially declared itself an independent country on 24 August 1991 when the Communist Supreme Soviet of Ukraine proclaimed that Ukraine would no longer follow the laws of USSR but only the laws of the Ukrainian SSR, de facto declaring Ukraine's independence from the Soviet Union. On 01 December 1991, Ukrainian voters, in their first Presidential election, elected Leonid Kravchuk.<sup>9</sup> During his presidency, the Ukrainian economy shrank by more than 10 per cent per year (in 1994 by more than 20 per cent). The Presidency (1994–2005) of the second President of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, helped the transition of Ukraine from a Soviet Republic to a capitalist society, privatising businesses and working to improve international economic opportunities. But in 2000, his presidency was rocked by a scandal over audio recordings which revealed he ordered the death of a journalist. It was also surrounded by numerous corruption scandals and lessening of media freedom.

In 2004, Kuchma announced that he would not run for re-election. Two major candidates emerged in the 2004 Presidential election. Viktor Yanukovich, the incumbent Prime Minister, supported by both Kuchma and by the Russian Federation, wanted

closer ties with Russia. The main opposition candidate, Viktor Yushchenko, called for Ukraine to turn its attention westward and to eventually join the European Union (EU). In the election, Yanukovich won by a narrow margin but Yushchenko and his supporters alleged that vote rigging and intimidation cost him many votes, especially in eastern Ukraine. The opposition started massive street protests 'Orange Revolution' in Kyiv and other cities, and the Supreme Court of Ukraine ordered the election results null and void. A second runoff found Viktor Yushchenko the winner. Five days later, Yanukovich resigned from office and his cabinet was dismissed on 05 January 2005.<sup>10</sup> During the Yushchenko period, relations between Russia and Ukraine were strained as Yushchenko looked towards improved relations with the EU and less toward Russia. In 2005, a dispute over natural gas prices with Russia caused shortages in many European countries that were reliant on Ukraine as a transit country. A compromise was reached in January 2006.<sup>11</sup>

By the time of the Presidential election in 2010, Yushchenko and Yulia Tymoshenko — allies during the Orange Revolution, had become foes. Tymoshenko ran for the Presidency against both Yushchenko and Viktor Yanukovich, creating a three-way race. Yushchenko, whose popularity had plummeted, persisted in running, and many pro-Orange voters stayed home. In the second round of the election, Yanukovich won the elections. In November 2013, President Yanukovich did not sign the Ukraine–European Union Association Agreement and instead pursued closer ties with Russia. This move sparked protests on the streets of Kyiv. With the protesters setting up camps in Kyiv's Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square). Battles between protesters and police resulted in about 80 deaths in February 2014.<sup>12</sup> Following the violence, the Ukrainian Parliament on 22 February 2014 voted to remove Yanukovich from power, and was replaced by Oleksandr Turchynov, who was subsequently installed as the interim President. Yanukovich fled Kyiv, and subsequently gave a press conference in the Russian city of Rostov-on-Don.

In March 2014, the annexation of Crimea occurred. The Crimean Parliament voted to secede from Ukraine and join Russia. A public referendum followed with 97 per cent of voters favouring secession, although the results were denounced by the European Union and the United States as illegal.<sup>13</sup> The Crimean crisis was

followed by pro-Russian unrest in East and South Ukraine. In April 2014, Ukrainian separatists self-proclaimed the Donetsk People's Republic and Lugansk People's Republic and held referendums on 11 May 2014; the separatists claimed nearly 90 per cent voted in favour of independence.<sup>14</sup> Later in April 2014, fighting between the Ukrainian Army and pro-Ukrainian volunteer battalions on one side, and forces supporting the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics on the other side escalated into a war in Donbas. By December 2014, more than 6,400 people had died in this conflict, and, according to UN, over half a million people became internally displaced within Ukraine, and two hundred thousand refugees fled to Russia and other neighbouring countries.

On 25 May 2014, Petro Poroshenko was elected President. He was pro-West politician and promoted reforms, including measures to address corruption and lessen Ukraine's dependence on Russia for energy and financial support. By the second half of 2015, independent observers noted that reforms in Ukraine had considerably slowed down, corruption had not subsided, and the economy of Ukraine was still in deep crisis. In April 2019, Volodymyr Zelenskyy was elected President in a landslide rebuke of Poroshenko, which included a stagnating economy and the conflict with Russia. During his campaign, Zelenskyy vowed to make peace with Russia and end the war in the Donbas.<sup>15</sup>

In its three decades of independence, Ukraine has sought to forge its own path as a sovereign state while looking to align more closely with western institutions, including the EU and NATO. However, Kyiv struggled to balance its foreign relations and to bridge deep internal divisions. A more nationalist, Ukrainian-speaking population in western parts of the country generally supported greater integration with Europe, while a mostly Russian-speaking community in the East favoured closer ties with Russia.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 marked an escalation of the eight-year-old conflict that began with Russia's annexation of Crimea and signifies a historic turning point for European security. On the eve of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the country was the poorest in Europe, the cause was attributed to high corruption levels and the slow pace of economic liberalisation and institutional reforms. Since its separation from the Soviet Union, Ukraine has wavered between the influences of

Moscow and the West, surviving scandal and conflict with its democracy intact.

### **Conclusion**

In the annals of time, there is no doubt that the people of Ukraine have suffered. Victims of war, deprivation, and lost history. In 1991, they obtained their independence as a Republic with the dissolution of the USSR. Yet, since gaining independence, the past 32 years have seen the country continue to suffer with the decline of 10 million people, a flat economic curve, and endemic corruption.

In understanding this war, it seems wise, therefore, to reflect on its history. History which is now repeating itself as has happened so many times before. Ukrainians are born in a land crossed by Empires. The struggle over control of Mackinder's 'Heartland' and Russia's need to reclaim control over Ukraine, is now resulting in Europe's worst war since World War II, where the conflict is raging without an end in sight. Yet, for as much as they've been at the centre of Russian history, Ukrainians resent that history. The 'historical reality' of modern-day Ukraine is undoubtedly complex. Encompassing 'A thousand-year' history of changing religions, borders and peoples, conquests over the years and Ukraine's diverse geography have created a complex fabric of multi-ethnicity.

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# China's Himalayan Strategy: Between Handshakes and Tug-of-War

Dr Jagannath Panda<sup>®</sup>

## Abstract

*India-China relations are nosediving, not having regained balance after the fatal Galwan Valley conflict in 2020. Propelled by Xi Jinping's military modernisation, China's trans-Himalayan handshake' outlined in 2013 has given way to an insidious strategy. It includes the use of several non-standard tools such as 'salami-slicing', civil-military fusion, and new laws to legitimise China's territorial claims, buttress its superiority, and give psychological credence to its objections. Notably, the Himalayan strategy draws from the 'charm offensive' of Xi's 'good neighbour' diplomacy, wherein the threat of impending military and economic coercion overrules the benevolent rhetoric. All in all, China's Himalayan ambitions are nuanced and precariously balanced between its neighbourhood outreach and national security ambitions. This article looks into the trajectory of China's Himalayan strategy, what constitutes it and what are the implications?*

## Introduction

In the first week of April 2023, China released a list of 'standardised' names of eleven places in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh in the eastern Himalayan region, a territory it calls 'Zangnan' or southern Tibet.<sup>1</sup> And this is not the first such instance but the third in seven years. For the first time, in 2017, the drive covered only six places; in the next phase, post the Doklam and Galwan crises, 11 places were renamed, expanding the scope to include residential areas, rivers, and mountain passes. Importantly, the April 2017 renaming was in large part a reaction

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to the Dalai Lama's visit to Tawang earlier the same month – five of the six places were within the Tawang district.<sup>2</sup>

In a terse rejoinder that mirrors China's own diplomatic rhetoric, India's foreign ministry castigated the renaming move by stating that "Arunachal Pradesh is, has been, and will always be an integral and inalienable part of India".<sup>3</sup>

As China refuses to recognise the north-eastern Indian State, it has time and again objected to the visits of Indian high-level officials or dignitaries, and of course, the Tibetan leadership, primarily the Dalai Lama, on grounds of breach of China's territorial sovereignty. In the same vein, renaming of places is one of the several tools – including 'salami' tactics and ever-emerging new (maritime and land) laws to name a few – used by the Chinese Government to legitimise its territorial claims, buttress its superiority, and give psychological credence to its objections. Moreover, China's adroitness in giving ultimatums, like asking India to cease actions such as leaders' visits to disputed border areas or risk the wrath of escalating the boundary question, forms the backbone of its cooperation-confrontation dual strategy with India.

However, this is neither a new phenomenon nor targeted specifically against India. China has renamed a multitude of places in the South and East China Seas (in 2020 alone, 80 features in the disputed South China Sea Region were renamed).<sup>4</sup> Such unilateral moves have enabled China to successfully claim more disputed territories across the neighbourhood, forming an essential part of Xi Jinping's neighbourhood strategy across the Himalayas or in the South and East China Seas.<sup>5</sup> It helps in the power projection and perception games for China's need to retain its status as a regional hegemon. Moreover, these 'grey-zone' tactics do not even require standard military means, but certainly insinuate the threat of impending military action should Beijing be trifled with. That lies at the heart of the 'charm offensive' of Xi Jinping's 'peripheral' or 'good neighbour' diplomacy. The Himalayan strategy is but an offshoot of its neighbourhood diplomacy; hence, the two complement each other.

### **Xi's Tactics an Extension of Hu-Era Trends?**

It is often contended that the aggressive foreign policy traits exhibited during Xi's terms did not originate with Xi, but are an

acute manifestation of past trends, particularly, of the era of Hu Jintao.<sup>6</sup> Hu's presidential term coincided with China's spectacular growth, and he consolidated China's western development strategy, initiated by Jiang Jemin in 1999, with a focus on Tibet; Xi has given the strategy a global dimension by including connectivity links with neighbours.<sup>7</sup> However, the 'peaceful' economic transformation was accompanied by Hu's inability to rein in internal party factionalism and the rise in domestic unrest, particularly, in restive provinces.<sup>8</sup> In addition, the simmering of flash points along China's borders never abated including a rise in tensions with South Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asian countries like the Philippines and Vietnam, as well as no respite in the conflict with India, leading to domestic critics to emphasise on the failure of Hu's 'good neighbourhood policy'.<sup>9</sup>

Notably, the use of 'infrastructure and economic coercion' as leverage, especially, for overly dependent and poor Asian economies had already begun to take shape under Hu – though the role of the military in foreign policy making was rather limited and even decreased.<sup>10</sup> Thus, China's turn into 'the backyard bully of the Asia Pacific' has not been a totally abrupt phenomenon, although the intent, scale, scope, and speed of 'rejuvenation' and repression during the 'new era' has been unprecedented.<sup>11</sup>

### **The Trans-Himalayan Territorialism**

China's trans-Himalayan 'handshake', which overtly covers among other cooperative aspects, development initiatives, trade, investment, connectivity, and regional collaboration, has its origins in 2013 during the then Chinese Premier Li Keqiang's visit to India. In an article in the Hindu, Premier Li offered India a "handshake across the Himalayas," citing the usefulness of a neighbour (China) as opposed to "a distant relative" (the US).<sup>12</sup> However, gradually the true geopolitical agenda was unmasked as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) downed in criticisms of its corruption and unethical mode of working that induces 'debt traps'. The July 2020 meeting of the foreign ministers of China, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Nepal brought forth another dimension. The meeting between the four Himalayan states, likened as the 'Himalayan Quad', highlighted China's goals toward coalescing newer alignments, as a rejoinder to the US-led Indo-Pacific collaborations such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad

comprising Australia, India, Japan, and the US).<sup>13</sup> It certainly hinted at the impending repercussions on India's security/strategic landscape.

The Chinese state media, however, denied accusations of China establishing a security bloc with Chinese characteristics, and criticised the 'hype' surrounding China's 'mechanism of cooperation'.<sup>14</sup> Yet, under the circumstances, nothing reflects the intention to build a 'bloc' than an aim like 'building a community with a shared future for mankind'. China's 'more activist and security-oriented' diplomacy was evident from Xi's first term itself, which has today paved the way for his 'Comprehensive National Security' governance paradigm that pervades all spheres in Chinese politics.<sup>15</sup> This will naturally be reflected in Himalayan diplomacy. With the Himalayan strategy getting a new strategic fillip under Xi Jinping's hastened military modernisation, namely the People's Liberation Army (PLA) reforms that started in 2015-2016, China has been labelled "More militarily capable than ever".<sup>16</sup> The PLA's "continuous reform and innovation" and enhanced techno-military capabilities aim to not only defend China's territorial sovereignty with focus on the restive regions of Tibet, Taiwan, and Xinjiang but also further the CCP's overarching economic and political goals, domestically and globally.<sup>17</sup>

One of the most important aspects of China's non-standard military actions is its blatant law fare (primarily, coast guard, maritime traffic safety, and land border laws) in the Indo-Pacific – the use of domestic laws to undermine international disputes, and, in turn, international rules-based order. The one most relevant for the Himalayan Region is the 'Land Borders Law' passed in 2021. It not only supports China's territorial claims, transgressions, and gradual encroachments but also builds a case for 'civil-military fusion' along the borders.<sup>18</sup>

For India, particularly after the 2017 Doklam stand-off, the bloody Galwan Valley crisis in 2020 (which has resulted in an ongoing negotiations stalemate), and, the latest in series, the Tawang skirmish in December 2022, such a security-obsessed Himalayan outreach, in tandem with actions that highlight China's little regard for the rule of international law, does not bode well, to state the obvious. In particular, China's growing ties with Bhutan and Nepal will likely result in uncommonly escalated border skirmishes, perhaps in length or in intensity or both. The already

established convergence with Pakistan is, of course, deeply concerning due to the fear of facing a potential two-front war.

In the difficult mountainous terrain, the superior PLA logistics capabilities, largely thanks to the post-reform era Joint Logistics Support Force (JLSF) will be critical for safeguarding or destroying supply lines. Besides, the informatised total military restructuring places China in an 'invincible position', especially against India.<sup>19</sup>

In short, Beijing's current trans-Himalayan strategy effectively covers economic investments, political backing, personal diplomacy, as well as quasi-military and military involvement. 'Soft' diplomacy and infrastructure expansion in these states are being used as tools not only to simply cut across regional barriers but also to further the so-called 'invisible invasions; which are employed to establish China-approved cultural, language, religious, and ideological superiority vis-à-vis the respective indigenous counterparts.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, the impact of projects such as the Trans-Himalayan Multi-dimensional Connectivity Network (THMCN) and the Chinese-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is way beyond the financial aspect but into the very socio-political fabric of the relevant states. Hence, initiatives such as the THMCN and the CPEC become strategically integral to Xi's 'good neighbour diplomacy' and 'peripheral diplomacy' aims.<sup>21</sup>

All in all, China's Himalayan strategy and aspirations are nuanced and precariously balanced between its neighbourhood outreach and national security ambitions. China's strategic calculus is to prepare a comprehensive pressure scale across the Himalayan Region. Since 2013, in fact, there has been an increasing likelihood of a larger Sino-Indian conflict over the disputed Himalayan regions of Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh, which has so far culminated in the Doklam standoff of 2017 and the conflicts at Galwan Valley and Pangong Tso in May-September 2020 and in Taiwan in 2022. China's motives have also evolved based on India's rising global and regional profile; the military, psychological, and diplomatic manoeuvres in the Himalayas are surely a means to check India's ambitions.

### **Beyond the LAC: Countdown to the Water Conflict?**

Further, tensions between China and its neighbours in the region, notably India, have also risen as a result of China's construction

of large hydropower and water diversion projects. In the ecologically vulnerable region, the risks of mega dams, besides airstrips, and road and rail networks, are being totally neglected with the astounding infrastructure development. Ironically, China's 60-gigawatt mega hydroelectric dam on the Yarlung Tsangpo River (Jamuna in Bangladesh; Brahmaputra in India) in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) is an effort at reaching carbon neutrality (by 2060).<sup>22</sup>

Nonetheless, the geopolitical significance of this dam, located just 30 kilometres away from the Indian border, is not lost. India, in response, has decided to build a less powerful dam (10 gigawatts) to showcase China's lack of environmental sensitivities.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, for India, China's proposed dams bring forth questions on flood risks and water insecurity, besides the weaponisation of hydro data.<sup>24</sup>

Notably, infrastructure projects on the transboundary waters are a means to control neighbouring states. For example, China's control over Nepal, where China has invested in the 30-megawatt Chameliya Hydropower Project, is a means to diminish India's regional dominance in a region where it has traditionally enjoyed prominence. India's reluctance to buy electricity from dams that have Chinese investment is part of the waterpower tussle.<sup>25</sup>

### **Growing Assertiveness under Xi Jinping's New Term**

China's escalating regional operations have significant geopolitical repercussions. Beijing has an obvious geostrategic and security justification for investing in trans-Himalayan connectivity. It is important to note that several large-scale road developments in the Himalayas appear to be designed to facilitate PLA mobility/logistics support, in addition to local transit. Even the BRI-funded hydroelectric projects, which are essential to the trans-Himalayan power corridors, must be considered a defining feature of China's territorialism and regional power play. China uses similar exploitative tactics in the neighbourhood, rather successfully, both on land and at sea: incremental territorial encroachments followed by militaristic building.<sup>26</sup>

China's border village infrastructure development along the Himalayan borders with Nepal, India, and Bhutan has openly contradicted Beijing's official rhetoric of 'good neighbour'

diplomacy.<sup>27</sup> The creation of these *xiaokang* (meaning 'well-off') border villages has brought Xi's expansionist policy back into the regional limelight, which can be expected to receive a stronger push under the Chinese president's unprecedented third term. In his speech at the 20<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), Xi spoke of winning 'local wars' and promoting "development in border areas to boost local economies, raise local living standards, and ensure local stability" highlighting the consolidation of civil-military fusion.<sup>28</sup> The intensity of such behaviour will only increase in the coming years along the length of China's borders in the Himalayas.

China's priority areas in the Himalayan Region include territory, water, and influence; these combine to make a strong geo-political dominance mechanism that it can use against countries like India to promote Chinese national interests. In his new term, Xi Jinping is going to continue pressing for infrastructure connectivity (mostly linked with the BRI) regionally and domestically. Here, projects like the Sichuan-Tibet and the Yunnan-Tibet rail lines will "*circumvent India's eastern frontiers*" and "*play a key role in shaping China's regional power*".<sup>29</sup> The Sichuan-Tibet line via linkages to Tibet's Yadong and Nielamu ports will allow entry into India and Nepal, enabling China's connectivity with South Asia, as well as raising security questions.<sup>30</sup>

Meanwhile, China's proposed Tibet-Nepal railway is another red flag for India.<sup>31</sup> Besides diminishing India's trade control over Nepal, there would be concerns about the spike in border conflicts. For example, just weeks prior to instigating the Galwan crisis, China finished blasting all 47 tunnels on the 435-km rail line from Lhasa to Nyingchi in TAR, which is part of the Sichuan-Tibet railway.<sup>32</sup> Notably, the rail link will facilitate logistics support to the PLA between the Lhasa and Nyingchi (near Arunachal Pradesh) bases in the case of an emergency.

India's response has been to boost defence capabilities and infrastructure development along borders.<sup>33</sup> By pursuing schemes such as the Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP), officially the government is trying to 'reverse out-migration' by identifying economic drivers that can uplift the quality of life in border areas.<sup>34</sup> However, it certainly seems modelled on the Chinese civil-military fusion tactics. India is also consolidating and diversifying security

arrangements with multiple partners and forums. Its enhanced defence ties with the US are particularly thrust China. However, some have contended that the Indian policy is 'faltering', and that India needs to step up by using 'incentives and disincentives' to strong-arm, if needed, China into not misbehaving.<sup>35</sup>

### **Conclusion**

China has economic, diplomatic, security, regional, and even global stakes in the Himalayas with its coveted water and other natural resources; lack of basics, including infrastructure, and development; and governments in need – a scenario ripe for abuse by an economically and military thriving China. Hence, its trans-Himalayan strategy, underpinned by Xi's prime infrastructure project, the BRI, is closely interlinked with Xi's 'China Dream'.

In this context, an issue that is central, yet, plays in the background, is the politics surrounding Tibetan region. In this restive region, China continues to rule with an iron fist, disregarding basic human rights, while showcasing to the international audience the region's economic prosperity under the CPC rule. Moreover, with the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama's reincarnation looming, China has been preparing to manipulate and take over the Tibetan Buddhist Institution through Chinese disinformation narratives and law fare.<sup>36</sup> The Chinese Government already has a law on reincarnation wherein the chosen Dalai Lama needs to be approved by the CPC regime. The disappearance of the six-year-old reincarnated Panchen Lama in 1995, deceptively remote as the event may seem now, still casts a long shadow on China's Himalayan intent.

Notwithstanding the Tibetan complications, the consolidation of Xi's hegemony by first extending Chinese strategic influence in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, and now even Bhutan, will not only deepen China's footprint but also the Himalayan states' support will justify Beijing's growing global governance ambitions. At a time, when India is looking to be the champion of the Global South, China's increasing influence in its traditional stronghold assumes vital importance.

Naturally, it transcends the officially scripted platitude of 'win-win cooperation', hovering instead within Xi's imperialistic vision of a Sino-centric sub regional, regional, and, in turn, global order. However, India's firm objections to the BRI, its rising profile in the

Indo-Pacific, and important states like Japan and South Korea, and growing defence/security cooperation with the US, including in US-led leading forums like the Quad, is a thorn in the side of China's regional goals, including the Trans-Himalayan ones. The constantly blazing border dispute makes it imperative for India to focus on thwarting China's game plan in this vital Asian sub-region.

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# Re-imagining MRO for Defence: Realistically Leveraging Technology

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## Abstract

*Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) set up in the Indian Defence Forces is responsible for rendering engineering support to the widest possible inventory of military weapon systems/platforms/equipment with multidisciplinary state-of-the-art technologies, albeit on an individual Service basis. Over the years, there has been limited modernisation and automation while the systems and processes have largely remained static. In future, apart from the shortage of assemblies/modules/spares for equipment of foreign origin, the system is likely to face even greater challenges with higher resource constraints on the horizon. In order to retain/enhance the existing levels of Equipment Readiness and Mission Reliability, it is felt that re-imagining/total restructuring of the MRO set up will be required.*

## Introduction

Over the last two decades, militaries the world over have been swept over by the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA), predicated by the rapid advances in technology which have altered the Doctrines and Tactics of war fighting. The transformation has gathered further steam with the lessons learnt from more than a year-old Russia – Ukraine conflict. Technology has also led to ‘Revolution in Logistics’ involving supply chains and military inventories. However, a generation of technology has passed by (at least two decades or ‘Techades’) without touching the military Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO), at least in the Indian context. The only change has been manpower optimisation (there have been several rounds) with an objective to improve the teeth

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to tail ratio. Even the Committee of Experts (Shekatkar Committee) has ended up only optimising manpower with its recommendations on Corporatisation yet to gain traction. The in-house initiatives for modernisation and technology insertion in repair/overhaul set up haven't found adequate support. Although, all appears well on the equipment availability front in defence, the professionals know that the problems of MRO are getting exacerbated and will now need to be tackled on a war footing if the defence forces have to achieve equipment readiness desired for operations. The urgency also stems from a couple of major triggers which have emerged over the last few years, which when analysed will make it clear that now is the time for transformative changes in MRO, incremental changes will not suffice.

### **Triggers for Transformative Changes in MRO for Defence**

The first impulse for a transformative change in MRO is the Defence Budget itself. While in absolute figures, the Defence Budget keeps hitting new highs every year, yet as a percentage of GDP, it is in a secular decline over the last two decades or more. From a figure of 3.5 per cent of GDP, once upon a time in the eighties, it is down to almost 1.4 per cent of GDP (excluding pensions). Defence allocation in the latest Union Budget 2023-24 marks a paltry 1.5 per cent increase from Revised Estimates (RE) 2022-23 figures.<sup>1</sup> It implies that in real terms, lower financial resources are available for defence and that the Capital Budget needs a fillip. The govt is now aptly focusing on modernisation of the Forces, increasing the Capital expenditure while limiting the Revenue Budget. The corollary of an increase in Capital Budget in a largely stagnant Defence Budget (real value after inflation) is a reducing Revenue Budget, which will compress the resources available for operational maintenance of the Forces. This is borne out by an increase of just 3.76 per cent<sup>2</sup> in Revenue head of Defence Budget 2023-24 over RE 2022-23, not sufficient to even cover inflation. The salaries component of Revenue Budget being rather inelastic and by itself contributing to almost 10 per cent annual increase, based on additional Dearness Allowance (DA) granted by the govt, the brunt will obviously be borne by the budget allocated for MRO (stores and repairs), impinging adversely on procurement of requisite spares, components, and assemblies. With likelihood of continuously declining availability of financial resources, foreseeable in future for MRO, a complete re-think on the MRO set up is

imperative now so that 'war like equipment readiness of forces' is not compromised.

The next trigger for requirement of a transformative change is the *Agnipath* scheme of recruitment introduced by the govt for the Defence Forces in June 2022. The number of *Agniveers* to be recruited in the balance six months of year 2022 was 46000.<sup>3</sup> Thus, on an annual basis, the intake of *Agniveers* for the three Services becomes 92000. After completion of four years of service, "Up to 25 per cent of each specific batch of *Agniveers* will be enrolled in regular cadre of the Armed Forces".<sup>4</sup> The held strength of the armed forces, uniformed personnel excluding officers, in year 2019 (pre Covid) was 13,72,666, while armed forces recruits under training were 74575.<sup>5</sup> With the *Agnipath* scheme likely to recruit 92,000 *Agniveers* annually, after four years, only 23000 will become regular Sepoys/equivalent on an annual basis. This is a much lower number than the annual intake number of regular Sepoys/equivalent hitherto fore and will have an impact on the overall strength of the defence forces. It is estimated, as per a quantitative model developed for *Agnipath* scheme, that unless there is an increase in annual intake of *Agniveers* in future (i.e., higher than 92000) or the retention percentage is enhanced from existing 25 per cent, there will be a gradual reduction in the overall strength of the Forces. As per the current intake and retention parameters, this force optimisation will stabilise after 20 years and the combined strength of defence forces in 2046 will be approximately 40 per cent of the existing strength (see Appendix at the end). Whatever be optimisation level of the Forces over next two decades, it is reasonable to infer that manpower engaged in MRO will also get pared proportionally. The moot question is that can the existing setup of MRO function effectively with drastically reduced manpower but an ever-increasing repertoire of weapon systems and equipment, or will it require a total rethink to be future ready?

Together, the significant cuts in MRO budget, foreseeable as of now, as well as reduction in MRO manpower present a challenge which appears insurmountable unless it is accompanied with transformative changes in the MRO domain. The existing set up has to be discarded/totally reengineered and a new construct, a new lean and mean structure, tailored to the needs of Defence 2050 has to be imagined and gradually implemented over next 20

years. Technology insertion in military MRO for ensuring a resource efficient system will be a *sine qua non*; however, it has to be planned realistically as cutting edge technology involves heavy upfront costs which the govt, unlike the private sector, cannot afford, given the budgetary limitations.

### **Reimagining the MRO System**

The existing legacy MRO system in Defence is characterised by an echeloned system, manpower intensive nature, limited automation, little modernisation, inadequate overhaul capability with perennial shortages of requisite spares/assemblies/modules. With the fresh major constraints now getting placed on the system, it will have to be totally restructured, if the otherwise inevitable deterioration in overall Equipment Readiness of the Forces in future has to be checked. In such a scenario, where technical manpower resources availability in future may halve and MRO budget compressed, the Theory of Constraints makes it imperative that an altogether new MRO system is designed around the twin constraints as incremental changes are no longer adequate. Accordingly, ten tenets of the new system have been formulated, and are briefly enumerated below:

- **Separate Tri-Service MRO Computer Network.** Automation is the key when any organisation has to do more with less manpower. A pan India, secure, tri-Service MRO network is going to be the backbone of the new system. It is proposed for war like equipment only; civil end-use items like vehicles can be excluded so that the focus is firmly on readiness of war fighting assets. The tri-Services character will assist in pooling skills, infrastructure, and capacities for equipment used by more than one service, such as helicopters, small arms, air defence and communication equipment etc. The network can be suitably segmented into separate Services and further into equipment verticals, organised into Units/Regiments on War Establishment. A secure system is of paramount importance and a distributed database with block chain technology with top-of-the-line crypto algorithms like RSA need to be employed.
- **War Like Equipment Centric System.** The MRO system will be centred around war like equipment; 'Equipment Readiness' will be the *mantra* and optimum 'Mission Reliability'

will be the objective. Each equipment will have a designated operator whose bounden duty it will be to key in the equipment status into the MRO network on a daily/status change basis. The formation repair echelons will also be hooked on the network. Thus, commanders at all levels will be able to monitor the 'Mission Capable' status of each of their war like equipment in their jurisdiction. At the central level, there will be an Analytics Module hooked on to MRO network and a specialist Analytics Team which will keep a tab on equipment readiness and mission reliability of various category of equipment. They will be responsible for pre-empting problem areas and tendering advise to senior commanders.

- **Collapsing the MRO Echelons.** The existing four echelons of repair, i.e., light, field, base, and Factory Repairs corresponding to 'O', 'I', 'D' and 'FR', have stood the test of time but in the drastically altered scenario of severely compressed availability of resources, the MRO echelons also need to be collapsed. Accordingly, the 'O' level will no longer be manned by equipment specialists; with more tech savvy soldiers being inducted and retained through the *Agnipath* scheme, it will be possible to finally implement the User Repair Concept. Thus, effectively, there will be only two echelons of repair 'I' and 'D'/FR'. For any assistance required in repairs, the operator of the equipment will be able to reach out to the equipment specialists on a help line riding on the MRO network and utilise remote diagnostics. For training on any new modifications/technicalities, there will be provision for Extended Reality (Virtual and Augmented) modules, Artificial Intelligence (AI) based chat bots and digital twins for major equipment.
- **Minimal Move of Equipment for Field/'I' Level Repairs.** The new system will be designed to be 'Equipment Centric'. In a major departure from the existing system, it is envisaged that war like equipment does not move for 'I' level repairs, but in-situation 'Repair Teams' move for the job. It is anticipated that this system will be more cost effective, enable focused use of equipment specialists and have higher user satisfaction. The only exception is when the equipment requires special infrastructure (i.e., clean rooms, jigs and fixtures etc.), in which case the equipment is transported to the nearest



Equipment Specialist Workshop/Facility. For 'D' level repairs/overhaul, the existing system continues.

- **Pool of Equipment Specialists.** The Formation Engineering Support Units will hold a pool of equipment specialists as per the formation equipment profile. They will be responsible for in-situ repairs as also repairs of equipment transported to the Engineering Support Unit. In case of shortfall of this manpower during peace time functioning, equipment specialists from neighbouring or higher echelons will be summoned. However, during operations, the formation affiliations of this manpower will be ensured.
- **Greenfield Private Sector Projects for Augmenting Capability of 'D' Level.** There is a need to ensure that there is no backlog of Recapitalisation of major war fighting equipment which has a direct bearing on combat potential of the Forces. In the simplest analysis, the national capability for 'D' level repair needs to be enhanced since the existing tri-Services set ups cannot liquidate the backlog with existing capacities, even if requisite assemblies/modules are made available. The defence Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) also have their capacity and resource constraints. Financial crunch prevents expansion of capacities of this Defence Industrial Complex in the govt sector; thus, the only rational alternative is to encourage private industry to establish greenfield projects in order to augment national capacity of 'D' level repairs/Recapitalisation in various equipment domains. Although, the industry does not have any ready expertise in overhaul of complex weapon systems and platforms, yet, they have the flexibility of speedily entering into collaboration with foreign Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) for training, technology transfer, and procurement of requisite spares. Ultimately, the aim should be to have a healthy mix of intrinsic in-house defence capability and private sector enterprise so that under no circumstances, war time requirements are compromised while ensuring most efficient utilisation of limited financial resources.
- **Manufacture/Indigenisation of Spares/Modules by Private Industry.** Availability of components of weapons/equipment of foreign origin is a major constraint in existing capacity

utilisation. The defence PSUs, responsible for supply of such spares, have developed a vendor eco-system, in addition to their intrinsic capacities, but are still unable to meet the demand. Still, many items have to be imported which causes outgo of foreign exchange as well as time penalty. In recent years, govt has encouraged private sector and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to meet the shortfall. However, for giving a mega boost to indigenisation and manufacture of such assemblies/modules, much more needs to be done, including separate procedures in the Defence Acquisition System, especially for revenue procurements. This, by itself, merits separate detailed deliberations.

- **Modernisation of MRO Infrastructure.** Repeated attempts in the past to modernise the MRO infrastructure have met with limited success due to the resource crunch and the consequent lower priority being accorded. However, it needs to be realised that, beyond a point, antiquated set up has an adverse impact on output as well as quality and is counter-productive. The argument is only for outcome-based modernisation of MRO infrastructure in the initial phase and not straightaway aiming for the latest technology like ubiquitous IoT based sensors and AI for predictive maintenance, which has very high upfront costs for pan India deployment which the govt can ill afford. For the same reason, even introduction of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) based systems may be planned for subsequent phases while the MRO system is hooked on a tri-Service network with central analytics, as outlined earlier.
- **Inventory Support by Logisticians.** While the three Services have made progress in recent years in computerising the inventory control systems, the same need to be reconfigured in consonance with the tenets of the new MRO system. Primarily, there has to be a paradigm shift in three dimensions. Firstly, change to a Push System, shifting the onus of delivery, wherein, the requisite items, based on a demand originating from computerised network, are delivered directly to the Air Base/Ship/Unit or at least the Formation HQ in case of far-flung deployment. Secondly, the speed of delivery for at least the critical items, which are available, could be fixed, say 48 hours (except remote areas), using all available means of

conveyance (including private couriers) and drones. And, thirdly, the supply chains have to be configured for non-linear, non-hierarchical modes of operation based on the most economic model. Given these three terms of reference, the logisticians should be asked to propose a reorganised warehousing and inventory control system, which will feed the new MRO system. The implementation of this reorganised set-up can run concurrently with the execution of the transformed MRO system and planned to be completed within a decade.

- **Establishment of MRO Hubs for ‘D’ Level and Factory Repairs.** For all major weapon systems/equipment/rotables with state-of-the-art propriety technology, tri-Service MRO hubs for ‘D’ level/‘FR’ need to be established. The planning should be an integral part of Defence Acquisition Procedure, the objective being to eliminate need for sending the items to foreign OEM, reduce expenditure and turnaround time, fill the engineering voids, and give a fillip to technology transfer. The tri-Services nature, whenever applicable, will help economies of scale and efficient use of resources. These hubs can be established by foreign OEMs (propriety technology for major equipment), DPSUs, or private industry for respective equipment. They may even be established by DPSUs or private sector in collaboration with foreign OEM.

### Way Forward

The significant impending compression of financial and manpower resources for the defence MRO vertical will be a double whammy for the ‘equipment readiness’ and ‘mission reliability’ of weapon systems/equipment. The prognosis is quite evident; if the present levels of equipment readiness have to be sustained, existing MRO system has to be totally revamped/transformed. The re-imagined system has to leverage technology realistically to reduce MRO operational costs significantly, while limiting the upfront financial outgo. Automation at all levels will enable frugal utilisation of human resources and the new collapsed echelon MRO system will be able to adapt to drastic reduction in available technical manpower. The system has to be ‘Equipment Centric’, emphasise minimal move of weapon systems and maximum in-situ repairs. The tri-Service nature will pool human and technical resources, while

private sector should augment the capacities of govt Defence Industrial Complex. The logisticians will have to simultaneously evolve an efficient warehousing and inventory supply system, conforming to the rigours of the new system.

There is a requirement of constituting a committee of MRO Subject Matter Experts in defence, which has to define the broad contours of this new MRO system re-imagined on the terms of reference of overall drastic reduction in resources over next two decades, while retaining/enhancing existing 'equipment readiness' and 'missionreliability' levels. The Committee could co-opt a suitable civili MRO automation expert while being tasked to formulate an implementation roadmap over next two decades. Almost simultaneously, there will be a requirement of constituting another committee of logisticians for designing a new Warehousing and Inventory Supply Chain, which will support this new MRO system. The Committee will have a MRO Subject Matter Expert and be tasked to evolve an automated system based on 'Push Model'and 48 hours spares delivery. It is envisaged that with the successful implementation of these transformative changes, archaic systems and procedures will be finally laid to rest and a new lean and mean organisation will emerge towards MRO Defence 2050.

**Appendix**

**FORCES STRENGTH: AGNIPATH SCHEME**  
**(Simplified Quantitative Model)**

**75:25 Scheme**

For modelling this scheme (strength excluding officers), the following assumptions are made:

- *Agniveers*, selected after 4 years, (25 per cent) will serve for another 20 years as NCOs/OtherRanks.
- Thereafter, they will retire if not already promoted to the rank of a JCO.
- The number of *Agniveers* recruited annually is 'A'.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Agniveers</u>	<u>Numbers Retained after 4 Years</u>	<u>Total</u>
	(a) (b)		
	(a) + (b)		
1	A	0	A
2	2A	0	2A
4	4A	0	4A

**After initial 4 years of Agnipath Scheme**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Agniveers</u>	<u>Numbers Retained after 4 Years</u>	<u>Total</u>
1	4A	A/4	17A/4
2	4A	2A/4	18A/4
16	4A	16A/4	32A/4
20	4A	20A/4	36A/4
21	4A	20A/4	36A/4

It is evident that the scheme matures (numbers stabilise) after 4+20 years (year 2046 approx). The total strength of soldiers (NCOs/OR) can be computed by assigning different values to A.

	<u>A Strength in 2042-43</u>	<u>Strength in 2046-47</u>
	(4+16)	(4+20)
92000	<b>32A/436A/4</b> 7.36 Lakh	8.28 Lakh* (remarks below)

\*Strength includes all *Agniveers* till 4 years of service and JCOs/OR of *Agnipath* scheme, 20 years of service and below.

The soldier's strength (pre *Agnipath*) is in addition. But, by year 2046, overwhelming majority of them would have retired after rendering colour service and, hence, not added to the strength of 8.28 Lakh.

**Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> Based on figures from Page 9, Serial 19-22, Demand for Grants 2023-24

<sup>2</sup> Analysis of figures from from Page 9, Serial 20, Demand for Grants 2023-24

<sup>3</sup> In a transformative reform, Cabinet clears 'AGNIPATH' scheme for recruitment of youth in the Armed Forces [https://pib.gov.in/Press Release Page.aspx?PRID=1833747](https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1833747)

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*

<sup>5</sup> Estimating India's Defence Manpower <https://idsa.in/issuebrief/estimating-indias-defence-manpower-040820>

# Fifty Years after India's First Airborne Operation at Poongli Bridge, Tangail: What we know of its Planning?

(Part 1)

Lieutenant Colonel RS Bangari<sup>®</sup>

## Abstract

*The objective of this article is to try and uncover what we know about the planning process of the airborne operation at Poongli Bridge, along with its execution, to achieve the desired objectives. This was the first classic parachute operation mounted by the Indian Army since Independence and in its success we need to know what went into its making: with the starting step being the planning stage. This article first looks at the different accounts of the 1971 war by various authors, specifically relating to the chosen area of interest, including as many possible key participants and other critical observers and researchers. Based on these, one could apply logical analysis and counterfactual arguments to identify the most likely scenario(s) to arrive at what may have been the case. Once we have some idea of the key planning factors and evolution sequence, we could also briefly correlate our understanding with the initial execution of the plans as they were put into motion.<sup>1</sup> This preliminary study will, hopefully, lay the foundation for a more informed debate on certain highlights and issues that this article will bring up. This article is in two parts and Part 2 shall be covered in the next issue of USI Journal.*

## Introduction

**T**he execution of the airborne operation at Poongli Bridge in the vicinity of Tangail, (referred to at places simply as the airborne

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operation at Tangail, in what was then East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), on 11 December 1971 is considered the golden chapter in the history of the Indian Army and, especially, the Parachute Regiment. A generation of young officers has grown up reading about it and wondered if those days are now truly past when such operations could be planned, mounted, and successfully executed. To appreciate this realistically in situational context, we need to first understand what went into the making of the successful airborne operation and ask critical questions about its planning, execution, and effectiveness. Thereafter, we can more methodically review the lessons learnt and what they tell us about the future to come. This article collates what we today know about the planning of this operation on the basis of publicly available information that we have been able to access (and the one acquired during the course of the writer's service in the Parachute Regiment and the Para Brigade) and draw out a some key points for consideration and critical analysis. The underlying purpose is to apply an analytical lens and invite further deliberations and debates to extract useful learning for the future since an army that does not learn from its past operational experiences (and, additionally, those of others) will only do so at great cost to itself when faced with exigencies ahead.

### **The Airborne Operation**

To set the context, let's briefly see how this operation unfolded. After the war in the east had begun on 03 December 1971, the thrust by 101 Communication Zone Area (101 CZA) in Northern Sector commenced consisting of 95 Mountain Brigade, (Mtn Bde, and Bde for Brigade) and F-J Sector (an ad-hoc Infantry Bde level force).<sup>2</sup> Of the four major thrusts along the four sectors in the Eastern Command Theatre, it was the weakest as compared to the others which were all Corps-sized offensives. The initial move of 101 CZA was slow against enemy resistance, with its associated logistic problems and resource constraints. By 10 December, 101 CZA's advance was held up along the Jamalpur-Mymensingh line (see Figure 1<sup>3</sup>). However, two things were to happen shortly. One, Pakistan's Brigadier Abdul Qadir Khan, Commander of 93 Pakistan Infantry Brigade, overseeing the defence in this sector, was asked to fall back to Kalaikar (south of Tangail) on 10 December.<sup>4</sup> So, both garrisons of Jamalpur and Mymensingh were evacuated on night 10-11 December. At the same time, in a pre-planned



operation, 2 Para Battalion (hereafter, Bn) Group was para-dropped north of Tangail at 1650 hours on 11 December to occupy the Poongli Bridge and a nearby ferry over the Lohaganj River in order to cut-off the retreating enemy forces (see Figure 2). It was sheer coincidence that 11 December was chosen for this drop quite in advance.<sup>5</sup> This task was successfully accomplished and 1 Maratha LI of 95 Mtn Bde linked up with 2 Para Bn Group by 1700 hours on 12 December thus, speeding up 101 CZA's advance towards Dacca, leaving only very hastily organised Pakistan resistance enroute.

### **Review of Accounts covering planning of proposed Airborne Operations (on the Eastern Front)**

In this part, I first summarise the findings from relevant literature by the various institutions, key participants and other observers/authors, roughly organised in a hierarchical order, i.e., from the Army HQ downwards to the operational formations, to help us trace how the planning for the airborne operation, including its need and possible payoffs, played out.

### **Official History of the 1971 India Pakistan War**

Dr SN Prasad, a respected military historian, was called back from retirement in 1983, to helm this project for the Ministry of Defence.<sup>6</sup> The first draft was completed before the target date in 1985 and this version was finally put out for 'limited circulation for official use' in June 1992. As Prasad mentions in the Preface to this effort, the historical record is based on "studying the secondary or published sources and some 5000 files of the Government, and after interviewing 66 of the important participants in the war".<sup>7</sup>

Prasad states that "HQ Eastern Command developed its war plans based on a series of war games and joint planning in the period leading up to the war, culminating into four major thrust lines "directed at nodal points and communication centres rather than important towns" (p. 503). For purpose of getting an overall perspective, sector-wise allocation of forces was approximately as under (p. 499 and following pages):

- **2 Corps in South-Western Sector**, consisting of 4 Mtn Div and 9 Inf Div; 50 Para Bde less Para Bn (6-10 Dec. only); 45 Cav less Sqn and a Sqn 63 Cav; other supporting elements;

- **33 Corps in North-Western Sector**, consisting of 20 Mtn Div, 6 Mtn Div (limited use—9 Mtn Bde) and 71 Mtn Bde; 63 Cav less Sqn and a regiment PT-76 tanks; other supporting elements;
- **4 Corps in South-Eastern Sector**, consisting of 8 Mtn Div, 23 Mtn Div and 57 Mtn Div; two Sqn tanks; other supporting elements; and
- **101 CZA in Northern Sector**, consisting of 95 Mtn Bde and F-J Sector (ad-hoc Bde level equivalence)

It was envisaged that, “101 CZA with 95 Mtn Bde Gp of four battalions, 2 Para (Bn) Group, followed by 167 Mtn Bde, would advance to Dhaka from the North.” (p. 504) He briefly summarises the airborne asset allocation and planning as follows: “It was appreciated that the most important area for the main drop was Tangail in order to ensure the early capture of Dhaka. Second priority was given for two-coy drops to assist in securing Magura if necessary. Due to the limited availability of Mi-4 helicopters, all these helicopters were allocated to 4 Corps to enable them to ferry troops as required” (p. 504).

The para drop operation to secure Poongli Bridge, north of Tangail, was planned for D+7 (p. 573). During its advance on this axis, despite successive delays imposed on the advance of 95 Mtn Bde, it had captured Jamalpur to (north of Tangail) by 0730 hours on 11 Dec. (p. 578). The same day, 2 Para Bn Group was dropped near Poongli Bridge by 1650 hours for its operations. Here, Prasad’s account does not go very much into the process of selection of the airborne objectives other than a brief reference to the airborne asset allocation and utilisation plan resulting from the discussions at HQ Eastern Command. There is also no mention of whether any discussion went into modification of the initial plans once the operations of the formations were underway.

**Lieutenant General JFR Jacob, the then Chief of Staff, Eastern Command (in the rank of Major General)**

Among the direct participants in these operations, we have written accounts by Lieutenant General JFR Jacob, then Major General and Chief of Staff, Eastern Command that specifically refer to the selection of objectives and employment of the airborne assets with the Eastern Command.

Lieutenant General JFR Jacob writes in his book "Surrender at Dacca: Birth of a Nation"<sup>8</sup>, first published in 1977, that having received early warning, he had made a draft plan by end of May 1971 (p. 60). Providing details of the next steps (though, the datelines are not very clear here), he talks of being assured of resources to achieve their objectives, which included "a battalion group of 50 Parachute Brigade" (p. 61), which he allocated to their envisaged tasks "to drop at Tangail" (p. 63). For crossing of the river Meghna, while discussing the South-Eastern sector's plans, he mentions as the existing landing crafts were unsuitable due to their draught, we shifted our attention to the possibility of obtaining additional helicopters" (p. 62) (a point that subsequently contributed significantly to the course of war in 4 Corps zone, but that's another story).

Jacob also writes in his book "An Odyssey in War and Peace"<sup>9</sup>, (first published in 2011), that "The operation order for the drop was prepared in mid-October by Air Vice-Marshal Charan Das Guru Devasher, Brigadier Mathew Thomas then commanding 50 Para Brigade, and me. We planned the drop to take place on D plus 7 and the link up within twenty-four hours" (p. 86). He goes on to state that "I had earlier briefed the GOC 101 CZA in Fort William on the details of the plan. He was optimistic and told me he would capture Dacca by D plus 10. I sent him a demi-official letter detailing the outline plan as Manekshaw was yet to agree to the employment of brigades from the Chinese border". (p. 86) Though 101 CZA initially only had a brigade of four battalions under it, the plan was to place two more brigades to be relieved from the Chinese border under it, in addition to the battalion under Brigadier Sant Singh (F-J Sector) to support Mukti Bahini operations (p. 86). Lieutenant General Jacob also mentions that the plan was jointly formalised in consultation with Major General IS Gill, who was the Director General of Military Operations at the Army HQs then<sup>10</sup>. It is understandable that Maj. Gen. IS Gill, who was also the Colonel of the Parachute Regiment at that time, must have been keen to give his battalions a chance to contribute to the writing of the nation's history.

Elaborating on why specifically Tangail, Jacob writes, "We planned to drop a battalion group at Tangail, selecting Tangail as a safe drop because it was held by Tiger Siddiqui with his force of 20,000. Tangail afforded a suitable jumping off area for the

attack on Dacca and was also suitably located for a link up by forces from the north". (p. 86)

As to the pertinent question about options considered, Lieutenant General Jacob further writes, "Gill, on receiving the order for the airdrop, asked me to consider the airfield at Kurmitola in Dacca rather than Tangail, and Brig. Mathew Thomas also agreed with his view. I told Gill to remember Crete and the very heavy losses suffered by the Germans. Kurmitola was well defended with air defence batteries. [...] stressing that we could not link up with Kurmitola but could at Tangail. In the inter-service operation order issued, Gill included Kurmitola as an alternative. Later Gill said, "Jake, you were right about Tangail and I was wrong about Kurmitola". (p. 88).

#### **Lieutenant General IS Gill, then Offg DMO (in the rank of Major General)**

Lieutenant General IS Gill, who as Major General was Director of Military Training at that time, was moved to the Directorate of Military Operations as 'Officiating Director' (Offg DMO) at the end of August 1971, in which capacity he served through the 1971 operations. He was personally very reticent about writing his autobiography after his retirement, saying, "What have I done? What's so special about any of it?".<sup>11</sup> So, while there is no personal written account available of his experiences during the 1971 war, we have his biography written by Subbiah Muthiah, first published in 2008<sup>12</sup>, which includes a number of relevant details for our purpose.<sup>13</sup>

Major General Gill as the Offg DMO, appears to have played a key role in the employment of the airborne forces in the Eastern Command as his name appears repeatedly in various other accounts referenced for this analysis. However, Gill sets the record straight in a letter written after his retirement to Major General Tej Pathak, (who had asked him a question relating to his then Division's role in the 1971 war), that the operation instructions had already been issued by the Army HQ and operation plans of the Commands made and discussed with the Chief of the Army Staff, before he took over as the Offg DMO; hence, he did not have as much say in "certain aspects which appeared to me to be defective" (p. 190). But he had "strong convictions on the usefulness of Special Services Operations in successful conduct of war, based

on his experience in Greece” (p. 183). A paper presented by him to Chiefs of Staff Committee in April 1971 led to the training and employment of Mukti Bahini (though not quite as envisaged by him). The other was the employment of airborne and heliborne forces where he certainly seems to have shared his advice on their employment, which is also confirmed by other key participants. On this, Muthiah writes that when Tangail was being identified as an ideal drop-zone during the planning, Gill “had wanted the drop further ahead, at the erstwhile airfield of Kurmitola on the outskirts of Dacca (now Dhaka), but the Air Force considered it too risky. Inder believed, a drop in Kurmitola, coordinated with pushes by the two divisions of 4 Corps that had moved within striking distance of Dacca in the east, would have brought the war to an end by 12 or 13 December. But Tangail proved good enough”.<sup>14</sup> (p. 188)

In the only public comment made by Gill on his role in the 1971 war, at the release of Vice Admiral MK Roy's book in Chennai, he said, “Based on the agreement of the Chiefs of Staff to co-operate with each other for the common good, joint planning of operations proceeded in 1971. My work in this direction was mainly with the Air Force — related to air support for army operations and the conduct of airborne operations, both in the East and the West”. (p. 189) Perhaps, it is just Gill being himself — giving credit where due, not interfering in others' tasks but supporting them all the while. In any case, he would have had too much going all around him to micro-manage such aspects once the ball got rolling.

Finally, to make two brief mentions here about what is missing from the big picture relating to Major General Gill's role as the Offg DMO. One was his habit of writing “neatly handwritten slips in a large, clear hand, distributed to all sections every morning” in the DMO, which presumably set the tone for the day.<sup>15</sup> Whether these notes exist anywhere today is not known; they would indeed provide an excellent authentic record of how he thought through what was happening on the operational front in those critical days. Next is, reference to a detailed ‘After-Action Report’ of the 1971 conflict which he supervised after the war, of which “he prepared ‘a brilliant summary’, every word his own”, which, as Muthiah writes, “is not available to even military personnel” and where certainly all his efforts to get to it failed as well (p. 202).

**Regimental History: “India’s Paratroopers: A History of The Parachute Regiment of India”**

Major KC Praval was commissioned to write the history of the Parachute Regiment by the then Colonel of the Regiment, Major General IS Gill (later Lieutenant General) in January 1970. It was first published in 1974.<sup>16</sup> So, it is fortuitous that this historical record was already being assiduously compiled by Praval<sup>17</sup>, when the 1971 war began. Therefore, it is natural to expect that the parachute operations therein would be carefully documented to preserve as a record for future generations.

Praval’s coverage of the Poongli airborne operation is more an account of its execution by 2 Para. He gives an overview of the prevailing scenario and then moves to operations undertaken by 50 Para Brigade and 2 Para Bn Group. He states that, “To cater for the contingency of war over Bangladesh, plans for several airborne operations had been under consideration. As the campaign proceeded, it became obvious that only two of them would yield worthwhile results. A portion of the brigade was therefore released for ground operations under II Corps”.(p. 288) Subsequently, the airborne task envisaged for two companies of 8 Para was cancelled and the companies reverted back to the battalion (p. 290).

Coming to 2 Para Bn Group, he writes that “[...] a number of airborne operations had been planned as part of the campaign in Bangladesh but the Tangail operation had the highest priority, and it was the only one carried out” (p. 291). He adds that “early in November, a Joint Coordinating HQ had been set up at Calcutta to coordinate the execution of the airborne operation and the Air Transport Force Commander Group Captain Gurdip Singh was involved with the Commander Para Brigade in the conduct of a series of war games to fine-tune the operational execution”.(p. 291-2) He then describes the conduct of the operation, mentioning that the time of the drop was advanced to 4 pm to make it a day-drop in view of India’s complete supremacy in the air.

**Lieutenant General Mathew Thomas, then Commander, 50 (I) Para Brigade**

In what was the preparatory period leading up to the 1971 War, Brigadier (later Lieutenant General Mathew Thomas took over command of 50 Para Brigade from Brigadier TS Oberoi in August

1971. It was he who would have had a ring-side view of the planning process. Till very recently, there was no independent published version of the events leading up to the airborne assault on Tangail, put out by him that I had come across, even though his assent can be counted upon with regard to Praval's account and the account of the operation contained in the history of 2 Para which he edited<sup>18</sup> and was published in 2002. Therein, he has written an introductory note to this airborne operation's planning and followed that up with Praval's account published earlier (referred above), agreeing with that narration as being a faithful account close to factual reality. As to the planning process, he indicated that "In the conceptual and planning stages several airborne operations had been considered. But as the campaign proceeded, it was appreciated that out of these only two would yield appreciable results." (p. 466; possibly, Tangail and Kurmitola, though not clearly mentioned here). As only 2 Para's airborne task was finally chosen for execution, the Bn HQ and two Company Groups of 8 Para reverted back to the Para Brigade for ground operations. He also points to the critical role of Major General IS Gill, at the Army HQ, in pushing for the employment of airborne forces for effect (p. 469).

Fortunately, he is currently working on his personal memoirs, covering his time in the services, and there is new material in the online blog that is publicly accessible<sup>19</sup>; hopefully, we will see it in print in the near future.<sup>20</sup> In it, he provides clear timelines which more or less match Jacob's account given above, other than the one-on-one meeting with Lieutenant General Jagjit Singh Aurora, which Jacob does not refer to, as where the Tangail idea sprang up.

Lieutenant General Thomas mentions of a one-on-one meeting with the GOC-in-C Eastern Command, Lieutenant General Jagjit Singh Aurora in September 1971, where he discussed the possible airborne objectives, before narrowing down on the area in the vicinity of Tangail to help speed up the advance towards the final battle for Dacca. This was keeping in mind the time-frame when the Air Force could make sufficient air resources available. He also mentions the other objective that was considered, Kurmitola:

"The question of a 'Coup de Main' such as the capture of Kurmitola airfield (Dacca) by an Airborne Assault Operation

and, thereafter fly in the rest of the Brigade in the air transported role, to assist in the battle for Dacca, was also considered. A major air effort would be required for this latter task and such an operation could only be executed towards the closing stages of the war to hasten the end, especially, if world opinion and UN Security Council pressure was mounting for a ceasefire, particularly if Dacca was threatened and ripe for the taking.” (p. 11)

Thomas was later called to the Army and Air HQs in the third week of October 1971, to discuss and coordinate the planned airborne operations, during which he also met with the Offg DMO and discussed the same. On the question of the availability of the required air effort, it emerged that the following was possible:

“It transpired at this discussion that up to D plus 3, the IAF would be committed solely in the gaining of air superiority. Therefore, any Airborne Operation would only be feasible D plus 5 onwards as between D plus 3 and D plus 5, the transport aircraft that were needed for paratrooping and heavy drop would have to be moved from base airfields to interim airfields and only thereafter to mounting airfields. ... [A] Task Force of a Tac HQ and two Rifle Company Groups could be mounted in an Airborne Operation on D plus 5. The lift of an entire Parachute Battalion Group would only be possible on D plus 7 while the lift of a Parachute Battalion Group for an Airborne Assault Operation and the subsequent fly-in of the remainder Brigade in the Air-Transported mode would only be feasible on or after D plus 14.” (p. 14)

He also adds that on 20 November 1971, he visited HQ 101 CZA to discuss with the GOC, Major General GS Gill, the ground operational plans once 2 Para Bn Gp completed its airborne assault operation and came under command of 95 Mtn Bde, commanded by Brigadier HS Kler. (p. 20-21). With the ruling out of employment of the remainder Para Brigade in an air-transported mode, 50 Para Bde, less the earmarked airborne force, was released for ground operations under 2 Corps, where the brigade moved for their allocated tasks.







Figure 2 : Area of Paradrop at Tangail

(Sketch overlaid on contemporary Google map of the general area)

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> My interest in this study was aroused as I worked on writing an account of the participation in the Poongli bridge airborne operation by two young officers of the 2 Para Battalion Group, Capt. TC Bhardwaj, who was the Pathfinder group commander and Capt. KR Nair, who was the reserve pathfinder group commander; this was in addition to their other roles upon landing at the drop-zone. Some of these initial observations came up there and I got interested in developing this line of thought further. Account under reference now published as follows: Lt. Col. RS Bangari, Col. TC Bhardwaj and Col. KR Nair, Spearhead into Tangail: An Account of the Pathfinders and their Subsequent Operations, in Sqn. Ldr. RTS Chhina (Ed.), *Battle Tales: Soldiers' Recollections of the 1971 War*: Chapter 2; Vij Publishers, New Delhi, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> I am laying out the larger picture of the operations in this sector very briefly, as much is required for us to follow-up here. This can be traced in the maps and sketches enclosed with the review article for better understanding of the situation. More details are readily available in the references that are listed in this paper going forward or any other authentic account of the 1971 India Pakistan war in the Eastern sector.

Note that, broadly, the eastern front war of 1971 was conducted in four main geographical sectors as per the lay of the ground and waterways: the South-Western sector; the North-Western sector; the Northern sector; and the Eastern sector. Some more details are given in the following sections.

<sup>3</sup> Figure 1 is an extract from a larger map of Indian Army's operations undertaken in East Pakistan (1971) prepared by the author in the mid-1980s while preparing to take the Part B exam; it is based primarily on Maj Gen DK Palit's *The Lightning Campaign: The Indo-Pakistan War, 1971*, (Thomson Press, 1972). Figure 2 shows the area of the paradrop operation at Tangail, overlaid on contemporary Google map.

In addition, one can also explore the following links to Google maps of the area of operation as described alongside each, for those interested in relating the places named in this account on more current maps/terrain.

a) <https://goo.gl/maps/sarTRemYiqu> : Link to general area of operation from the Indian border to the north, showing Tura, Jamalpur, Mymensingh, Tangail and Dacca.

b) <https://goo.gl/maps/UJZQAHKtsRWnhZtN6> : Link to the area of the 2 Para battalion group paradrop operation at Tangail.

<sup>4</sup> S Salik, *Witness to Surrender*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1998, Third Impression, Lancer Publishers, 2000, p. 188.

<sup>5</sup> Lt Gen JFR Jacob writes in *Surrender at Dacca: Birth of a Nation*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 1977/2018 (13<sup>th</sup> reprint) that while issuing out the Operation Instruction for the air drop, “even at that early date we spelt out that the para drop would occur on D plus 7 and the link up within twenty-four hours. Subsequent events were to prove the accuracy of this time frame.” (p. 77)

<sup>6</sup> SN Prasad, *Official History of the 1971 India Pakistan War*, Preface, v. Available online, e.g., at [https://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/lory1.ethz.ch/collections/coll\\_india/1971War3593.html?navinfo=96318](https://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/lory1.ethz.ch/collections/coll_india/1971War3593.html?navinfo=96318); accessed August-October 2020; April-May 2022. Full official citation: History Division, Ministry of Defence, Government of India: *History of the 1971 India Pakistan War*, ed. SN Prasad et al., New Delhi, 1992.

(This has now been published in 2019, as: SN Prasad and UP Thapliyal (Eds.), *The India-Pakistan War of 1971: A History*, Natraj Publishers, Dehradun, 2014/2019. However, the print version is currently not available and hence has not been referenced. Hence, some corrections from the draft referenced here are likely, though the broader picture is not likely to vary much.)

<sup>7</sup> Prasad et al, op. cit., Preface, v.

<sup>8</sup> Jacob, op. cit.

<sup>9</sup> Lt Gen JFR Jacob, *An Odyssey in War and Peace*, Roli Books, New Delhi, 2011.

<sup>10</sup> Jacob, 1977/2018, op. cit., p. 88; Lt. Gen. J F R Jacob, *Liberation of Bangladesh*, dated 1 September 2007, available at <http://jacoblectures.blogspot.com/2007/09/liberation-of-bangladesh.html>, accessed May-December 2018, Sept.-Oct. 2020.

<sup>11</sup> S Muthiah, *Born to Dare: The Life of Lt Gen Inderjit Singh Gill PVSM*, MC, Viking, Penguin Books, New Delhi, 2008, Author’s Note.

<sup>12</sup> S Muthiah, *Born to Dare: The Life of Lt Gen. Inderjit Singh Gill PVSM*, MC. Muthiah was a journalist, later turned historical-cum-heritage writer based in Chennai.

<sup>13</sup> Muthiah had become close friends with Gill after he settled down in Chennai upon his retirement in 1979 and got to know him well over time to draw him to share many anecdotes of his service life. While he may have begun work on this book when Gill was still alive, major part of the research for the book appears to have been done after Gill passed away, including permission from the Army HQ to access Gill’s service records, etc.

<sup>14</sup> It is not clear from Muthiah's account where this statement comes from. Is it a recollection that Gill shared with him during one of their conversations or does it come from Lt Gen Jacob's Surrender at Dacca: Birth of a Nation, first published in 1997?

<sup>15</sup> Also, referred to by Lt Gen Satish Nambiar in his account, With the Jangi Paltan in the 1971 War for the Liberation of Bangladesh, in Sqd Ldr RTS Chhina (Ed.), Battle Tales: Soldiers' Recollections of the 1971 War, 2022, pp. 61-86.

<sup>16</sup> KC Praval, *India's Paratroopers*, Thomson Press, New Delhi, 1974.

<sup>17</sup> Praval writes about the challenges he faced in compiling this account, where he almost drew a blank even at the Ministry of Defence Historical Section, Delhi to begin. He eventually tracked down British officers from the pre-Independence era who shared with him detailed notes, maps and photographs to piece together the early history of India's paratroop forces during the World War II, covering the retreat in Burma and later the heroic stand of the paratroopers at Ukhrul's Sheldon's Corner-Shangshak and Imphal in 1944 (refer chapters 5-7).

<sup>18</sup> Lt Gen Mathew Thomas, *The Glory and the Price: The History of 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment (Maratha)*, Kartikeya Publications, 2002.

<sup>19</sup> Lt Gen Mathew Thomas, *The Planning and Conduct of Airborne Operations in the Indo-Pak War of 1971 Part 2: The Air Assault Op at Tangail (East Pakistan)—11 December 1971*, accessed on 4 Sept. 2020 at <https://htpijump4joy.wordpress.com/>.

<sup>20</sup> This has subsequently happened. The chapter from his online blog that I have referred to in this review article is finally in print: Lt Gen Mathew Thomas, *The Planning and Conduct of the Air Assault Op at Tangail – 11 December 1971*, in Sqd Ldr RTS Chhina (Ed.), *Battle Tales: Soldiers' Recollections of the 1971 War*, 2022. Page numbers referred hereafter while quoting Thomas refer to the 2022 publication here as there is no pagination in the draft at the blog.

# FDI in Defence Sector: Re-shaping India's Military Industrial Complex

Dr Sanjay Kumar<sup>@</sup> and  
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*"A nation with a strong defence industry will not only be more secure, it will also reap rich economic benefits – it can boost investment, expand manufacturing, support enterprise, raise the technology level and increase economic growth in the country".*

**– Hon'ble PM Narendra Modi at the Aero-India Show (2015)**

## Abstract

*In the past few years, the prime objective of the government has been to make India a hub of manufacturing and global investments, to boost local production and deploy young talented population to lead the charge on indigenisation in the Defence Sector. The 'Make in India' mission has gained momentum to the extent that it is now embedded in the very hearts and minds of the population. The campaign aimed to "facilitate investment, foster innovation, enhance skill development, protect intellectual property and build best in class manufacturing infrastructure".<sup>1</sup> This article highlights the changes in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the defence sector, how it is reshaping India's Military Industrial Complex and the positive framework for foreign investors to invest in India.*

## Introduction

**T**he government is trying to lead the defence manufacturing sector for 'Make in India' while the second largest armed force

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is going through a technological transfiguration. The government has identified sets of areas where stakeholders can collaborate and solidify the vision under the 'Make in India' scheme, duly supported by a requisite research and development ecosystem. India is the third largest military importer with a defence spending of 2.15 per cent of the total GDP, and intends to spend a hefty \$ 130 billion on modernisation for all three Services. Accordingly, the government has trotted out a variety of reforms and rejigged procedures to support the domestic defence industry- domestic capital procurement share has been enhanced from 64 per cent to 68 per cent of the Capital Acquisition Budget of the Defence Services for the FY 2022-23; delicensing and digitising of procedures; import embargo on procurement of weapons that can be made by domestic industry; increased Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) limits to 76 per cent through the automatic route and, in some cases, upto 100 per cent after government clearance. It is centred on the following four pillars:

- **New Processes**
- **New Infrastructure**
- **New Sector**
- **New Mindset**

“A report by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has pegged India to be a bright spot in an increasingly gregarious global environment and in a better position to deal with global headwinds than many other countries, as per the World Bank”.<sup>2</sup> India has shown in the past three years its resilience to adverse situations and the numbers speak for themselves, India has been setting new records in terms of its FDI holdings.<sup>3</sup>

### **Liberalisation and the Scope for FDI**

It was only in the year 2001 that the country opened up FDI in defence sector. Initially, the cap was put at 26 per cent in equity holding of joint ventures. Since defence is one of the most critical aspects of National Security, it was the forte of Ordnance Factories Board (OFB) and Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs). The private sector was not allowed to manufacture equipment and had a very limited role in some basic supplies to the armed forces. In 2001, private industry was permitted to manufacture and was

issued industrial licenses, but the primary concern of decision-makers was in letting them in the 'top-drawer'. Therefore, when the FDI was initially opened up, certain practices were induced to make sure that the Indians have control of the joint ventures/strategic partnerships for instance, higher Indian representation in the management/board could qualify the foreign company's candidature. India had been dependent on foreign technology/equipment/weapons for a long time and continued to falter in building a robust policy base that would promote its local manufacturing, e.g., despite its offset policy of 2005, the first case of offset agreement happened two years later. As policies evolved and liberalisation brought its touch, FDI policies transformed to inculcate diversity of the investors and, hence, in 2013, the government allowed for 26 per cent access in the equity shares on a case-to-case basis, only if they offered access to cutting-edge technology.

#### **FDI in Defence and Transfer of Technology (ToT)**

The concept of FDI inflow in an economy does not necessarily correlate to having funds only but being also able to cash on the latest technological innovation in any field. It is not merely the exchange of know-how but it acquires a purposeful association between the domestic and global entity. This also builds a pattern of cyclic relation wherein, the domestic manufacturers improve their techniques with the latest technology and, in the process, eventually attract more global partners, hence, if we look at the defence industrial base in India through the lens of FDI, perhaps the decision makers will be able to understand the need for higher FDI inflow.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, FDI in defence becomes even more necessary in today's complex environment because:

- Technology is changing at an unprecedented rate, hence, the defence sector is more susceptible to obsolescence. This requires the decision-makers to carefully assess which technology will be applicable in the Indian scenario without delaying the acquisition and the timelines of a said project.
- One of the many problems associated with defence manufacturing is the complexity of the defence systems and because of the intricacies involved in the process, it makes it even harder to procure it from a single vendor. In addition, there are technological agreements/regimes that limit these



mergers/acquisitions keeping in mind the volatility of the geo-political environment. Therefore, to combine the systems/sub-systems/components, together we need 'system integrators'. This requires the government to bond with multiple global partners and accentuate the FDI framework to extract maximum benefits with suitable rewards for the foreign vendors too.

- Since the relationship between the countries is largely determined by the incentives or advantages that the alliance may provide, it is also exacerbated by the volatility of the global market. Foreign policy also plays a huge part in the entire dynamics as it will advance the nation's national interest by forging alliances with like-minded partners to provide opportunities to find common avenues for growth and look out for its domestic industries.
- Another predicament in the concept of FDI is strict regulations surrounding the definition of representation of a foreign entity. For instance, there has to be a majority in terms of Indian representation in the board of management of foreign firm, a necessity of an Indian company in partnership in order to qualify for FDI. In order to get access to any kind of technology, the Foreign Original Equipment Manufacturers (FOEMs) would want some kind of assurance of production of system/equipment at a large commercial scale and to become part of the decision-making.

FDI is the largest source of a non-debt financial resource for the economic development of the country. FDI is an important component of foreign capital as they create long-term sustainable capital, technology transfer, gives impetus to innovation and competition, assists in furthering the development of strategic sector, and, primarily, a huge source of employment. The current policy framework, is incorporated in a Circular for a consolidated FDI Policy 2020<sup>5</sup>, lays down the following conditions:

- FDI up to 74 per cent under automatic route shall be permitted for companies seeking new industrial licenses.
- Infusion of fresh foreign investment up to 49 per cent, in a company not seeking industrial license or which already has government approval for FDI in defence, shall require

mandatory submission of a declaration with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) in case change in equity/shareholding pattern or transfer of stake by existing investor to new foreign investor for FDI up to 49 per cent, within 30 days of such change. Proposal for raising FDI beyond 49 per cent from such companies will require government approval.

- Licence applications will be considered by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in consultation with MoD and Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).
- Foreign investment in the sector is subject to security clearance by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and as per guidelines of the MoD.
- Investee company should be structured to be self-sufficient in the areas of product design and development. The Investee/ Joint Venture (JV) company, along with the manufacturing facility, should also have maintenance and life cycle support facility of the product being manufactured in India.
- Foreign investments in the defence sector shall be subject to scrutiny on grounds of national security and government reserves the right to review any foreign investment in the defence sector that affects or may affect national security.

#### **Standing Committee Report on the Status of FDI (2021-2022)<sup>6</sup>**

Responding to a query in the Parliament on the number of foreign companies who have shown interest in manufacturing defence equipment under FDI in the country, the Minister of State for Defence, Shri Ajay Bhatt said, "The government has given approval to 45 companies/JVs operating in defence sector with FOEMs".<sup>7</sup>

The three armed Services are now focusing on buying from domestic defence players, whether private or public sector. These higher percentages can be attributed to the multiple reforms being initiated to strengthen our defence sector; higher multipliers in the offset policy, periodic consultations with FOEMs, defence corridors, defence investors cell etc. The Committee has also lauded the MoD in this regard, "*Committee appreciates the efforts of the Ministry in this direction by bringing down the imports of defence equipments which is a step towards the goal of Self Reliance and Make in India*".<sup>8</sup>

The Committee noted that during the financial years (2017-18 to 2020-21), out of total 239 contracts, 87 contracts worth about Rs. 1,18,111.98 crore have been signed with foreign vendors including USA, Russia, Israel, France, etc. for procurement of defence equipment for the armed forces.<sup>9</sup>

### **Defence Spending and its impact on Strategic Choices**

Although, strategic competition and conflict shape a nation's choices to deter an adversary, it also provides a platform to demonstrate the technology and manufacturing capabilities of a nation. Indian defence manufacturer, Kalyani Strategic Systems Limited (KSSL) obtained an export order for its 155mm artillery gun platform.<sup>10</sup> The order worth \$ 155.5 million will be completed within three years. The 155mm artillery gun is capable of firing NATO standard shells. Previously, Armenia had also purchased four batteries of the Pinaka Rocket Artillery systems, including ammunition associated with the product. The commitment also involved the purchase of Konkurs Anti Tank Guided Missiles (ATGMs) manufactured by Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL), and multiple range of ammunitions (mortar shells) as part of their replenishment of Armenian inventory. Armenia had also placed an order for the purchase of Swathi weapon locating radars which are manufactured by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL). As Armenia restocks its land force after the conflict in the Nagorno-Karabakh Region, it has also shown interest in purchasing BDL Akash Surface-to-Air Missiles (SAM), loitering munitions by Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL), and Economic Explosives Limited (EEL)<sup>11</sup>

It seems now that FDI and export of defence systems are picking up in tandem. The Indian Government has been constantly putting in the fore-front its intention to make India an export powerhouse. Its ambitious \$5 billion worth of exports will progress through the trust that India has garnered over the years because of its ability to transform and its respect across the globe for a variety of reasons. Some of these are:

- Malaysia has shortlisted the Tejas light fighter jet for an order of around 16 planes, and Argentina, Egypt and Botswana have also expressed interest, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited

(HAL) Chairman and Managing Director CB Ananthakrishnan told reporters at a conference during Aero India, the country's biggest aviation event.<sup>12</sup>

- HAL has completed the delivery of an Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) Mk-III and other deliverables to Mauritius as part of a ₹ 141 crore defence deal.<sup>13</sup>
- In a recent move, the Guyana has shown interest in the purchase of indigenously produced equipment, Dornier 228 and fast patrol vessels, Hindustan Turbo Trainer-40 (HTT-40), Light Utility Helicopters (LUH) and Light Combat Helicopters (LCH).<sup>14</sup> The Guyanese President had separate bilateral talks with Prime Minister Modi on the sidelines of the 'Pravasi Bhartiya Divas'. Exports to Guyana can be a game changer for India not only in the defence sector but also Guyana is now emerging as an 'oil Power' with 11 billion barrels of reserves, it can be one of the answers to our energy needs as we transit amidst the war in Europe.

Sale of BrahMos to other countries not only pushes India's exports but also holds promise of strategic partnerships. Vietnam won't be the first country to buy BrahMos. Last year, India inked an export deal with the Philippines, signing a \$375 million contract for the BrahMos shore-based anti-ship missile system. Now Indonesia is also interested in BrahMos.<sup>15</sup>

### **Recommendations for adopting Smart Manufacturing in the Defence Sector**

These recommendations are as enumerated below:

- India is a potential hub with its large demographic dividend in terms of availability of a large technologically laced labour, tech graduates, and low cost manufacturing. The government is already readying itself with a roadmap for building India into a hub for innovation with a growing startup community. Schemes and incentives for industry and global manufacturers need to support the industrial bodies to accelerate this vision.
- Creation of a dedicated wing under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the MoD for the adoption of Industrial Revolution Four (IR4), that will monitor the global changes and standards.

- Defence industry to re-evaluate its managerial roles, invest in developing skills for its employees in leadership roles as well, targeting soft skills like- critical thinking, creativity, emotional intelligence, judgement, and cognitive flexibility.
- Revitalising curriculums. Academia will have to align their learning to the needs of the industries, with a heavy emphasis on practical knowledge. Learners would need to unlearn and push themselves to develop original research. Vocational training is to be given importance to partner with industry. In the near future, the technological needs of the defence forces will provide abundant opportunities to the domestic defence industry and government run manufacturing units.<sup>12</sup> Other favorable avenues for domestic production include the following:
  - Needs of the mechanised forces that operate with Main Battle Tanks (MBTs) and Infantry Combat Vehicles (ICVs), and Light Armoured Vehicles (LAVs). Although the T-90 Tanks are in wide use, yet their assembly and production have to reach the optimum level of indigenisation.
  - Similarly, the Bofors gun (155mm medium) breathed its last and needs to be replaced with advanced systems and indigenously produced gun systems with a quantum jump in technology.
  - Unmanned Aerial Vehicles ( UAVs) are the future and would be required for providing an 'improved' level of battlefield transparency since our air defence systems are still being dominated by the use of old-generation technology.
  - Combat engineers desperately need advanced bridging equipment, mines, minelaying and breaching equipment, armoured vehicle engineers, loaded with multiple capabilities, demolition guns, and self-neutralising attack mines on an urgent basis.
  - Non-Lethal Weapons that can be used to disable military technology in urbanised terrain, stun grenades, and optical and acoustic weapons.

- o Artificial intelligence (AI) to build target identification and classification, image interpretation, and maintenance of sensitive weapon systems.

### **Conclusion**

It can be concluded that in order to build a holistic defence industrial base and proactive manufacturing defence sector, it is essential firstly to implement the Defence Production and Export Promotion Policy (DPEPP) 2020, which is till date in a draft stage. Second, specific Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes and incentive clauses for Disruptive technologies, Cyber Security, AI, Semiconductors etc will attract greater FDI inflows and also become part of the national security ecosystem. Third, Smart Manufacturing also needs to be brought in early with foreign collaboration to ensure highquality reliable manufacturing of defence equipment under field conditions. As we work our way through an era of uncertainty and volatility in the geo-political environment which determines the relationship with allies, let us find the right partners to bring in their investment in our strategic defence sector in the following specific areas of niche technology, which is the need of the hour for India if it is aspiring to be a global power:

- Gas Turbine Engines
- Hypersonic Missiles
- Ballistic and Cruise Missiles
- Submarines
- Fifth Generation Fighters
- Transport Aircrafts to meet military requirements
- Secure communication devices, secure microprocessors and secure routers
- Cyber Security Infrastructure
- Surveillance Systems

### **Endnotes**

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# Afghanistan under Taliban 2.0: Strategic Trends and Trajectories

Dr J Jeganaathan®

## Abstract

*In August 2021 Taliban seized power in Afghanistan soon after the US troop's withdrawal. The new Taliban regime has not yet been recognised by the international community including the US and the regional powers. New Delhi appears more cautious about charting a new Afghan strategy that would secure its vital national security interests without jeopardising the regional geopolitical environment that emerged in the post-pandemic era. India has been playing a constructive role for a stable and secure Afghanistan since the Taliban was ousted by the US-led War on Terror. The Russia-Ukraine war has drawn the great power focus into the European theatre. In this context, this article examines the emerging strategic and security trends and trajectories in the post-Taliban takeover and how they impinge on India's National Security.*

## Introduction

Taliban has returned to power by capturing Kabul in August 2021 after two decades of fighting a fierce guerilla war with the US-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Though the new Taliban regime has consolidated various provinces militarily under its rule, its economy is in shambles and depends on external aid or funding. Taliban regime under the leadership of Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada<sup>1</sup> is struggling to run the country. The Taliban administration is sternly implementing the *Sharia* practices, which

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prohibits women from access to education and jobs. After the Taliban took over the reins, New Delhi appears serious about charting a new Afghan strategy that would secure its vital national security interests. As an emerging power in the region, India's role in shaping the regional security architecture is inevitable. India has been engaging with the so-called Good Taliban much before they came to power in 2021. Indian officials and interlocutors had a series of meetings with Taliban leadership in Qatar and expressed India's stand and concerns.<sup>2</sup> New Delhi announced a development assistance of Rs 200 crore (\$24.3 million) for the Afghanistan in the Union Budget 2023-24.<sup>3</sup>

India is largely concerned about the terrorist groups operating from Afghan soil. The rise of ISIS-Khorasan Province (ISIS-KP) and Al-Qaeda in the Indian Sub-continent (AQIS) poses security threat to India. The post abrogation of Art 370, India is focusing on territorial integrity and does not want any sort of fallouts in Kashmir with the external support to subvert peace and stability.

### **The New Taliban Regime**

The new Taliban regime seems to have embraced the Iranian political Model of Islamic theocracy wherein the political legitimacy is derived from the religious leader rather than from the people. What puzzled everyone was the appointment of other ministers in the newly formed Cabinet to run the country which was once mired in a democratic process with rampant electoral malpractices. Given the fact, that the tribal customs and rules are largely respected and deep-rooted in the Afghan society, any sort of Western model of democratic practices were less popular among the masses.

Many of them in the Taliban cabinet are either figured in the UN-designated terrorist list or have bounties on their heads<sup>4</sup>. The most notable appointment is the interior minister in the new regime, Sirajuddin Jallaloudine Haqqani the head of the notorious Haqqani network that has been quite active in effectively resisting the ISAF since 2004. Sirajuddin is the most wanted terrorist by the FBI.<sup>5</sup> It is pertinent to mention that it was the Haqqanis<sup>6</sup> who provided shelter and training for the dismembered Taliban cadres during war on terror campaign. They have had strong ties with the Al – Qaeda leadership including Osama Bin Laden. There are reports which indicate that Haqqani escorted Bin Laden to Abbottabad,

where he was later killed in a US operation. Miram Shah in North Waziristan in Pakistan is the main base for the Haqqani.<sup>7</sup> What makes interesting of his appointment to the interior ministry is his close association with Pakistan's deep state, which has been backing the Haqqanis for quite a long period at the same time being part of the US-led war on a terror campaign against the Taliban and other related terrorist networks<sup>8</sup>. Once a terrorist always remains as a terrorist. According to Jeffrey A. Dressler, "although the Haqqani network was subsumed with the Taliban under his Quetta Shura, they maintain distinct command and control, and lines of operations".<sup>9</sup> During the period between 2002 and 2011, the Haqqani emerged as the core element of the revival of the new Taliban.

The other significant appointment to the cabinet is Mawlawi Muhammad Yaqoub, the defence minister and also one who used to control the finance department of the Taliban organization. He is the youngest in the new team and also the eldest son of the late Taliban chief, Mullah Omar. He is believed to be the next heir to take over the top leadership shortly. Though he was hardly seen in public he is quite popular among the ranks and files of the Taliban force. Rests of them are just a bunch of loyalists to either Haqqani or Yaqoub.

Given the fact that the International community had not recognized this new team so far, doubts were raised whether the new Taliban regime would continue to stay in power?<sup>10</sup> Taliban has been pursuing regressive economic policies such as keeping the women out of workforce and economic activities. The biggest challenge that the new regime faces is economic and the key economic indicators provide a dismal outlook about Taliban governance. According to a Reuters report, "Eighty per cent of Afghanistan's budget is funded by the US and the (other international) donors".<sup>11</sup> So, if the US and international donors cut their aid, the Taliban regime will plunge into a deep crisis similar to that of the early 90s. Adding to this misery, the Taliban's new finance minister, Gul Agha, again an UN-designated terrorist who was involved in terror financing in the past, has no roadmap to revive their economy or rebuild a self-sustainable economy. It is reported that the Taliban still rely on Opium export for revenue.<sup>12</sup>

Much of the Afghan central bank's \$10 billion in assets are parked overseas and the Biden administration has no plan to

release those assets in terms of investments, gold, or foreign reserves that were frozen after the Taliban take over in 2021.<sup>13</sup> The US and the western countries may use this as a tool to leverage the current regime to pay adequate respect to women's rights and the rule of law and human rights issues. Even the Taliban leaders are very much aware of this fact and they are willing to negotiate with the US and other countries including the neighbors for economic aid. The hospitals in Afghanistan are facing an acute shortage of vital life-saving medicines and also there is a severe shortage of food grains. Unfortunately, Pakistan, the next-door neighbour of Afghanistan is also going through a severe economic crisis and is unable to even provide any sort of humanitarian assistance at this juncture. The only benign actor in the region which has been consistently supporting the needs of the people of Afghanistan is India.

### **Taliban 2.0 and the US – A Tactical Ally or Strategic Partner?**

The US relationship with the Taliban 2.0 - the new leadership that emerged in the post-Osama Bin Laden and Mullah Omar has been transactional since the Obama Administration decided to withdraw its forces by 2014. The US-Taliban dialogue began in 2018 in Qatar where the Taliban had expressed their willingness to talk to the US for a road map for peace in Afghanistan. But the actual impetus was given to the peace talks during the Trump administration when he signed the historic 'peace deal' agreement with the Taliban in 2020.<sup>14</sup> As per the deal, the Taliban has agreed not to allow Afghanistan soil for Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups and also to continue to work with the US for future cooperation in counter-terrorism efforts. As a result, the US has completely pulled out its troops by late November 2020 much before the US presidential elections. But, the Biden administration oversaw the implementation of the deal by the Taliban and by August 2021, the Taliban has slowly taken over entire Afghanistan including Kabul without any major bloodshed.

Taliban also held a series of talks with Moscow for garnering international support to recognise its regime.<sup>15</sup> It appears Taliban 2.0 has chosen to play as a tactical ally of the US against terrorism and fundamentalism but the US continue to value the Taliban as a strategic asset in the region replacing Pakistan, which once used to enjoy non-NATO ally status with the US. The Ukraine

crisis has intensified the cold war sort of conflict between the US and Russia. In case of an open military conflict with Russia, the US will not hesitate to use its assets in Afghanistan against Russia or that matter against China. Taliban is slowly emerging as a potential US ally in the region. The killing of Al Qaeda leader, Ayman Al Zawahiri in the heart of Kabul indicates that the Taliban's still supporting and providing shelter to Al Qaeda leadership.<sup>16</sup>

Nevertheless, the Western allegations against the Taliban for violating human rights and deteriorating woman's rights in the country remain unchanged. Interestingly, there is a not even single woman representative in the Taliban's new regime. Girls are not allowed to attend schools and colleges. More than seven thousand women were working in the Afghan security forces and now they fear for their lives.<sup>17</sup> In 2022, a delegation was led by the Afghan Foreign minister to Oslo for a talk with Western government officials and Afghan civil societies. The delegation was urged on promises to uphold Human Rights in return for \$10bn Afghan money with the US.<sup>18</sup> Reports are emerging in the Western think tanks that see the Taliban as a potential strategic asset to the US particularly to deal with the aggressive Russia and authoritarian China in the region. The future relationship will be guided by geopolitical factors rather than domestic civil liberties issues.

### **New Taliban Regime and China – Unholy Bonhomie?**

China's relationship with the Taliban's new regime is somewhat tricky and complex. It initially betrothed by none other than its "all-weather friend" – Pakistan way back in 2015. According to a media report, "Chinese officials and representatives of Pakistan's spy agency – the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) directorate - also attended the talks on May 19 and 20 in Urumqi, the capital of China's western Xinjiang region."<sup>19</sup> China's interest was to prevent any sort of external support or propaganda against China on Uyghur Muslims' protest against Beijing's religious persecution. The first-ever formal meeting with the Taliban happened during the Taliban taking over Afghanistan. In 2022 a nine-member Taliban delegation led by Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, who headed the political office in Doha, Qatar met with the Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in the port city of Tianjin.<sup>20</sup> Wang Yi said that the Taliban is "a pivotal military and political force in Afghanistan"<sup>21</sup> China has also enhanced its engagement with the new Taliban regime over

the period and closely working to build a strong strategic partnership with the Taliban's new Afghanistan and Pakistan, which would facilitate China, a strategic inroad into the Middle East and fill the vacuum created after the withdrawal of US-led western troops. Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi's secret visit to Kabul in February 2022 heralded a new chapter in China's Afghan policy.<sup>22</sup> Besides such bilateral thrust, Beijing is also playing a lead regional role in organising and participating in a series of foreign ministers' meetings of Afghanistan's neighbouring countries excluding India.

According to Jennifer Brick Murtazashvili "for China, relations with the Taliban are "not a luxury but a necessity," and China's sole interest is security"., said Jennifer Brick Murtazashvili.<sup>23</sup> It was evident in the SCO meeting held in 2022 where Chinese President Xi Jinping urged all the members to support Afghanistan's new regime to build a robust political structure.<sup>24</sup> This reflects China's active engagement with the Taliban regime to stitch a robust network. Interestingly, the Taliban also reciprocated China's overwhelming gesture to support and endorse the new Taliban regime by expressing their interest to join the ailing China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) under China's flagship initiative of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).<sup>25</sup> This is indeed an interesting geo-economic twist in the region that would favour China to leverage its geostrategic interests using Taliban-ruled Afghanistan as a base. China is aware that Afghanistan cannot be brought under direct rule of any foreign country.

Is China trying to fill the strategic vacuum in Afghanistan? According to John Calabrese, "For China, engaging the Taliban is more a matter of managing threats than seizing opportunities because Beijing's perennial concern remains Afghanistan to become a sanctuary for militant groups targeting Chinese territory, economic assets in the surrounding region, and/or diplomats and workers".<sup>26</sup>

China seems to have heavily relied on Pakistan especially ISI for tactical maneuvering in Afghanistan and one cannot rule out Pakistan's quid pro quo to extract significant military support from Beijing. For China, "Mere geopolitical and economic imperatives do not define China's engagement in post-US Afghanistan and it is hard for Beijing to buy the new, more pragmatic, less ideological Taliban 2.0 narrative".<sup>27</sup> China's role is

still limited and largely rely on Pakistan's assets in Afghanistan. Given the changing geopolitical dynamics in the aftermath of the Ukraine crisis, the US and the West are redefining their role as net security guarantor and protector of democratic values of human rights and individual liberty and freedom. The Ukraine crisis is a big blow to China's ambition to become a global power in terms of rapid strategic realignments in Eurasia.

### **Conclusion**

The Islamic Emirates of Afghanistan led by the Taliban's new regime finds it hard to run the government for two simple reasons: no recognition from the international community and any funds or financial support to deliver governance. It has been a challenging period for the new regime run by erstwhile hardcore terrorists to engage in a negotiation with the US and the European powers diplomatically to get international recognition. Taliban are very well aware that there is no ideological compromise for the sake of recognition. The US and other international powers including the regional powers would recognise the Taliban if they strictly adhere to international human rights and women's rights. Nevertheless, the Taliban's hoped that they would be recognised by their neighbours or regional powers to establish a formal relationship that would address the security concerns of the regional powers.

As far as India is concerned, there is no major change in her Afghan policy. It continues to support the people of Afghanistan through humanitarian aid and other support. India's core interests are very well articulated in the new regime. Taliban's stand on Kashmir for instance assures New Delhi's concern about Afghan soil being used for terrorist activities on Indian territories. India has also been weighing geopolitical options to recognise the Taliban shortly despite encouraging official-level of talks with the various administrations in the present regime in Kabul. The Ukraine crisis seems to have overshadowed the Afghanistan issue and the Taliban's human rights violations. Moreover, the Taliban also seems to have been cooperating with the US and other European powers to counter the expansion of Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) and to an extent, AQIS. However, the killing of Al Qaeda leader Ayman al Zawahiri exposed the Taliban's commitment to the peace deal with the US. Taliban still needs to rely on AQIS for finance and funds to run the government. The economy is in

shambles and no plan has been unveiled by the new regime to revive the economy. If the Ukraine crisis gets prolonged there is a possibility that Afghanistan could become a geopolitical hotspot for superpower contestation, especially the US-led west and the Russia-China and Pakistan. In such a scenario, India will be a fence sitter rather than a prime actor in the region.

The trends are manifold. First, the international community may not recognise the Taliban regime at least in the medium term. Recognising the Taliban's regime logically means recognising the UN-designated terrorists and endorsing their past terror records. Second, the Taliban slowly gravitated towards China and Russia to evade the human rights questions or preconditions put forward by the US and the western powers. Third, the Taliban are sensitive towards the international community's overall concern that it should not become a haven for terrorist organisations. Last, the collapse of the Taliban's already fragile government would mean total anarchy that would not only destabilise the entire region but also deters international peace and security. Afghanistan under the new Taliban rule seems to have achieved a certain amount of political stability but not security. For the Taliban, it is still a long way to go to get recognised by the international community.

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# Civil Military Fusion for National Security

Lieutenant Colonel Saumya Ghatak®

## Abstract

*Civil-Military Fusion (CMF) optimises use of civil and military resources to achieve national objectives. Drawing lesson from China and US, the article discusses the fault lines with respect to CMF in India. The article puts forward few recommendations to increase and synergies CMF at national level. The article proposes greater CMF to be part of National Strategy. The civil-military equation is a complex and dynamic domain which has lineage not only in political science and sociology but also in many other fields including history, philosophy and psychology etc. This article attempts to examine some of these factors in order to, firstly obtain a better understanding of the nature of civil-military relations in India, including its fault-lines, and secondly to identify the outcomes of the existing discord. The prognosis contains some options and recommendations, for consideration of the decision-makers.*

## Introduction

Civil-Military Fusion (CMF) across the leading militaries of the world is gaining gravity and connotation in view of battlefields getting substantiated with state of art technologies in multiple domains. Indian Army has also come up manifolds when one talks about modern armies or technology driven militaries. Current approach to absorb and sustain such technologies and modern weapon systems in Indian Army has no dedicated Civil-Military organisation which accrue certain limitations. General Rawat had

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said, “The existing segregated nature of defence and commercial industry ecosystems restricts our capabilities and capacities in making defence equipment.<sup>1</sup> Integrating civil and military technology efforts is the way forward towards for self-reliance”.<sup>2</sup> Hence a dedicated Civil-Military set up is the need of the hour for any military to be established as redoubtable, whose fundamental role will be two folds, first is to absorb, exploit and observe technological systems and second is to recover, repair and replace them. Such an organisation will form part of the bigger CMF at national level, and its authority will range from assimilation to sustenance of technology in the modern battlefield. At national level, an extensive national effort is the anchor of such a system where India’s civilian research and commercial sectors, and its military and defence industrial sectors will have to work in an integrated manner without impediments.

### **Fault Lines with Respect to CMF in India**

#### **Limited interaction between wings of the Armed Forces.**

Prior to focussing on CMF, the dynamics of limited interaction within tri-Services needs to be dwelled upon. The present structure allows integration between tri-services at operational level only. Seamless integration at tactical level is the need of the hour. First step towards this initiative may be aligning the geographical boundaries of Command Headquarters of tri-Services and placing component of tri-services under Divisional Headquarters as applicable.

#### **Lack of awareness among Civilian Counterparts about the functioning of Military.**

The armed forces and civil services are not aware of the challenges the other services face while performing their duties. The lack of basic understanding about the Indian Armed Forces in schools and educational institutions is a major challenge to be addressed by including basic knowledge about defence forces in the curriculum from high school onwards.

**Lack of Mutual Trust.** Lack of understanding results lack of mutual trust which would lead to distress between organisations and this should be addressed with participation by Civil-Military representatives from policy making stage till execution stage.

**Management of Perception of Senior Leaders.** Persons at influential positions in civil and military would be able to better align their perceptions provided they have a reasonable understanding of the functioning in both domains, civils as well as military.

**India's CMF framework is skewed in favour of the Civilian Bureaucracy.** Defence services, the key players in the national security matrix, are excluded from the decision-making process, the discourse is bound to be troubled. Since the defence services have a major venture, they should also have a licit say in matters of national security. There is a resentment against the uniformed and obstructionist bureaucracy by the military excessive control promotes a deep divide in the civil military relationship.

**No Communication/ Interaction between Civilian, Research, Industrial, Commercial, Military and Defence Sectors.** The most important factor in Civil Military Fusion is eliminating the barriers and establishing a linkage with multiple channels of communication. Breaking of barriers to achieve fusion and not just integration has to be the focus.

### **CMF Models**

As a general principle, a fine balance needs to be created between the military and civilian administration. The CMF is not just about making militaries strong but about encouraging economies to make nations great. In case India wants to make the changeover to be a power of consequence, it has to undergo a focussed CMF process.

India need to eliminate the barriers between civilian, research, industrial, commercial, military, and defence sectors. CMF seeks to speedup military modernisation through integration of latest technologies with operational concepts, increased scientific research and personnel reforms. CMF infrastructure connects the military and civilian sectors to catalyse innovation, economic progress and advance dual-use technologies, especially those suited for Network Centric warfare.

The CMF system needs extensive linkages between various organisations and government entities. At the apex level, there are linkages between ministries (Defence, Foreign Affairs, Education, Science and Technology, Industry and Information

Technology etc.) and their subsidiary establishments. However the linkages should be dynamic with respect to their levels of hierarchy to ensure fusion in the following six facets:-

- Merger of defence and civil technology and industrial base.
- Science and technology creations be integrated and unified across military and civilian sectors.
- Military and civilian expertise and knowledge to be intermingled and talent to cultivate across the board.
- Civilian framework and construction to strengthen for military purposes by building them to military requirements and standards.
- Civilian services and logistics be used for military purposes.
- All aspects of society and economy to be used for mobilising resources for defence of the nation.

### **Chinese CMF Model**

China studied the models of USA and other developed nations. Initially they sought 'Civilian-Military integration' by greater collaboration between the defence and civilian sectors. However, 'integration' did not make progress due to a lack of centralized control and organisational barriers between the party and state and their various organisations.

In 2007, China decided to replace 'integration' with 'fusion'. It started eliminating barriers to fusion through a 'whole of the nation' approach. CMF grew in scope and scale as China started viewing it as a means to bridge economic and social development besides security development. The result was national development.

In 2015, CMF was raised to a national-level strategy to build an 'integrated national strategic system and capabilities', to sustain the goal of national rejuvenation. The overall management and implementation of the CMF is monitored and managed by the Politburo, the State Council (including the National Development and Reform Commission), and the Civil Military Commission (CMC).

China's CMF model fuses its economic, social, and security development with a two fold objective. To fortify all instruments of

national power and to attain a world class military. It includes development and acquisition of advanced dual-use technology for military and civilian applications. It also includes reform of the national defence, science and technology industries to intermingle them into one.

All military organisations are related on the CMF platform. Provincial and local governments are also factored in right from inception stage. State-sponsored educational institutions, research centres, and key laboratories are part of CMF. Private companies that focus in unmanned systems, robotics, artificial intelligence, cyber security, and big data have been co-opted into CMF. These include Huawei and ZTE. CMF efforts involve partnerships between central, provincial, or city government entities with military district departments, PLA departments, academia, research entities, and companies. Provincial and local governments have CMF industrial plans and have launched 35 national-level CMF industrial zones. CMF-linked investment funds have been created by central and local governments and private investors.

### **Civil Military Fusion for India – Pointers**

Chinese model is too autocratic for our democracy. However, the necessity of Civil Military Fusion for India is undoubtedly vital.<sup>3</sup> Genuinely, in our country, it will well neigh be impossible to launch and sustain a mega model across the board like it happens in China. But the takeaways from Chinese model certainly needs to be drawn attention to albeit with some modifications as given below:-

- In India, Civil-Military Fusion has to be a mass approach and incrementally achieved.
- The first cluster could be of successful and key sectors of national importance. This cluster invariably should be of Defence, Space, Atomic Energy, Energy, and Communications and information technology.
- The second cluster should be based on disruptive and modern technologies like AI, Cyber, robotics, unmanned Systems, new materials and so on.
- The third cluster should be infrastructure and logistical in nature to include rail, roads, airports, ports, ware housing, freight services, transportation, housing, buildings and so on.

- The fourth cluster should be financial fusion.
- The fifth cluster should be related to conventional 'bread and butter' technology, goods and manufacturing where dual use can be exploited.

The span in each cluster should include concerned ministries, military departments, academia, PSUs, public sector industry, DRDO, CSIR labs, Science and Technological institutes of repute, Industry icons and more. Emphasis must be on key technologies, key products and key personnel. Talent capture and retention will be a major challenge in our system. We must pay sufficient attention to this aspect.

### **Way Ahead**

If Defence has to be a function of diplomacy, military capabilities and above all the Political will, the structure needs to be cross attached at various tiers. Brigadiers/ Colonels and equivalents are a reasonable first level of cross postings. The tenures, however, need to be reasonably long, since it is in the interest of the Armed forces to have competent people to take care of their interests, there should be no problem with regards to the standard of the human resource. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) should similarly earmark a Secretary level post to a military officer to provide competence for strategic military balance with respect to our adversaries. The details can be worked out easily as long as the Higher Defence Structure concerns itself with the following areas:-

#### **▶ Resource Optimisation.**

- Resource provisioning including all aspects of finance, defence industry, manpower and other national infrastructural and industrial resources including those concerning space, cyber and atomic energy.
- Policy guidelines and long term planning to establish the structure, objectives and processes for resource allocation and utilisation. This should include prioritisation between competing demands and establishing linkages between trade and industry.

▶ **Qualitative Guidance and Monitoring.**

- Development of human skills in specialised areas like aeronautics, R&D, production engineering, identification of attributes for formulation of product specifications as also trials and testing.
- Formulation of Standard Operating Procedures to stipulate a five years compulsory contribution of IIT pass outs in defence production industry is a major step towards initiating the technology drive in Indian Army.
- Profiling of inventory to include aspects of interoperability, maintainability and sustainability. Commonality of equipment and technology.

▶ **Responsiveness.**

- Contingency planning based on a systems approach with a long term perspective. Increase of options and alternatives.
- Agility of structures and processes, Synergising all instruments of power through a whole Government approach.

▶ **Integration.**

- Linkage of military force application with national security objectives and perspective.<sup>4</sup>
- Development of Joint and integrated strategy in areas in contingencies of probability, possibility and improbability.
- Agility of policy modification and policy implementation.
- Ability to draw from common resource, multiple usages of single resource and drastic reduction in overheads.
- Strengthen civil-military interface and relationship.

**Aggregation of Resources and Capacity.** Qualitative aggregation of resources and capacity from both the civil and military domains is the cornerstone of CMF. The wall that exist between the silos of civil and military institutions must collapse in order to allow flawless infusion of talent and capacities in the military, civil services, scientific community, academia, industries, domain experts, technologists and entrepreneurs.



**Top Down Approach.** Civil-Military Fusion needs an empowered structure and a well-defined hierarchy to break these walls with a hammer. The structure has to be spearheaded by a clearheaded political leadership, an unshackled military and a bureaucracy which is prepared to shed its non performing lassitude.<sup>5</sup> It has to be a top-down approach. In fact, the first step is Politico-Military-Bureaucratic fusion. If this can be achieved even in some measure, we will be on our way.

**Integrated Efforts of Technology Board, Armed Forces, Scientific and Business Community.** Example of technological prowess being embedded into statecraft is Selçuk Bayraktar who is the chief technology officer of the famed Turkish technology company. Baykar first started out as a student in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Subsequently, the topic of his Masters' thesis was "Aggressive Manoeuvring of Unmanned Systems". After returning to Turkey he developed the Bayraktar TB2 drones which are considered to be a game changer in drone technology. He cited the Turkish President Erdogan's statement in which he stated that the Bayraktar drone has bestowed Turkey with power projection capabilities to eliminate inimical threats at the source in Nagorno-Karabakh War.

### **Understanding the Challenges**

- **Organise Training Capsules in Different Training Institutions.** The existing setup offers an insight into military functioning for the civil services. There can be a vice-versa arrangement for sending teams from defence training institutions to Indian Administrative Service, Indian Police Service and other training academies to provide an insight for the defence personnel about the bureaucracy setup.
- **Service Headquarters.** Officers at service HQ to enhance interaction and engage more with their civilian counterparts (Director and below) who have longer tenures in the office.
- **Lack of Basic Awareness About Armed Forces in Educational Institutions.** The lack of basic awareness about the Indian Armed Forces in schools and educational institutions is a major problem. School

curriculum should include information on the organisational structure of armed forces, ranks, arms and equipment, and services under the Social Science subject.

### **Conclusion**

The implementation of CMF needs to be a plan spanning over a time period that encompasses its inclusion from national security strategy to the Long term perspective planning (LTPP) of Tri-services. While the actions at military level falls under the medium and short term goals, the fusion in its correct perspective would entail intervention of NSC to duly incorporate policy changes, organisation reforms and ensuing procurement directions to achieve a whole of nation approach.

### **Endnotes**

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**Review Article & Book Reviews**



## The Fighting Fourth: A Personal Narrative of the History of 4 KUMAON\*

Brig Jasbir Singh, SM

### Introduction

Amongst the most highly decorated and illustrious battalions of the Indian Army is 4 KUMAON or 'Fighting Fourth'. Major Somnath Sharma of the battalion was awarded the Param Vir Chakra (PVC) in 1947 for his exceptional bravery. During this conflict, the unit also won three Maha Vir Chakras (MVC), including one to their Commanding Officer (CO), Lieutenant Colonel (later Lieutenant General) MM Khanna, who led the battalion from the front and was a highly distinguished soldier and exemplary leader. They also have the unique honour of having two Chiefs who served in the battalion namely, General SM Shrinagesh and General KS Thimayya. Raised in 1788, its rich and enviable history traces its roots to being part of Salabat Khan's Army in the Deccan; they were also the first troops to be inducted into Siachen.

### The Book

'The Fighting Fourth' is a personal narrative of the history of this battalion from its raising in 1788 to maintain order in Berar and protect the Northern borders of the Princely State of Hyderabad till its bicentenary in 1988. Written by the Late Brigadier Jasbir Singh, SM, who was inspired to write this account when his father, Brigadier Balbir Singh, MC told him that "They were the only father and son duo in the unit's history to have been awarded for gallantry".

The battalion fought in diverse terrain and conflicts over the two hundred years of its history, but what stands out is the manner in which they have always responded even in the most adverse circumstances. The first known action fought by the battalion was the 'Battle of Moormoosa' on the banks of the Godavari in 1814 during the Pindari Wars where they lost their Commanding Officer Major Drew.

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\*The Fighting Fourth: A Personal Narrative of the History of 4 KUMAON. By Brig Jasbir Singh, SM; (Noida: Occam (An imprint of BluOne Ink) September 2021); Pages: 216; Price: Rs 525/-; ISBN: 8194954754.

In 1900, the battalion proceeded by train for the first time from Hyderabad to Madras; 'where the clackety clack of the wheels fascinated the men who had been used to slow marches'. From Madras, they went by ship to Hong Kong and, thereafter, were part of the China Expeditionary Force to crush the Boxer Rebellion. Incidentally, the German contingent of this Force had Lieutenant Lettow-Vorbeck, who would command the German and Askiri Forces in East Africa in World War I and fight bitter battles against the battalion. The 'China Cup', an intricate silver trophy prepared by Chinese craftsmen, still adorns the Officers Mess.

In 1914 during The Great War, the unit was part of the Africa Expeditionary Force 'B' and sailed to Mombassa eating 'unpalatable food' during the voyage, where after a brief stay, when they were not allowed to disembark, they then landed at Tanga. Here the Germans bought time to build up their defences by deceiving the British that the harbour was mined. The battalion then fought a difficult battle at Tanga, where they were not only defeated by the Germans and Askiris but also attacked by Bees, suffering seventy-seven casualties, including thirty-seven killed and excluding four missing, as a result of 'ineffective leadership by the 'British Higher Command'. The unit, thereafter, fought in Lake Victoria, where it won acclaim for the 'impressive operations and great gallantry'. The soldiers had proved their 'mettle in battle', their 'bravery is considered more impressive as the fighting occurred in distant lands far removed from their homeland. On return to India, they were part of the Third Afghan War in 1917 where their CO was awarded a bar to his Distinguished Service Order (DSO).

Earning a well-deserved rest in India after a long operational service, the battalion moved to Iraq in 1927. This is where Second Lieutenant KS Thimayya joined the battalion on commissioning. In 1932, while at Allahabad, 'Indianisation' progressed further and a large number of Kings Commissioned Indian Officers (KCIOs) were present in the unit including Captain SM Shrinagesh and Second Lieutenant K Bahadur Singh. Incidentally, this is where the senior most Indian officer, Captain Daulet Sen had to 'sadly leave the Army for demanding that 'Indian dishes be cooked in the Officers Mess'.

In August 1939, the battalion sailed to Singapore which was supposed to be a 'peace time posting'. However, soon they were

fighting a series of actions against the Japanese in the jungles of Malaysia from 09 December 1941, at Ketereh, where in their first encounter they were able to hold their positions and then they fought a rear-guard action at Machung where a Company was left stranded across the Kelantan River when the bridge was demolished. However, what stands out is the CO crossing the river to instil confidence in his troops. Though they lost many men, the gallant action by the battalion amidst the chaos of withdrawal stood out. The unit's determined actions during the withdrawal from Malaysia, following the Battle of Slim River, and last stand at Singapore on 14 February 1942 were testimonial of their training and fighting spirit. All that remained at the time of surrender were three officers and 180 men.

The author then covers the story of the escape from the Prisoner of War (POW) camp in May 1942, by his father, (then) Captain Balbir Singh, Captain GS Parab, and Captain Pritam Singh. They endured extreme hardship going through Malaysia, Thailand, and the trek through the jungles of Burma to finally reach India. All three were decorated with the Military Cross. Later Brigadier Pritam Singh would go on to be the saviour of Poonch in 1947-48. The ordeal they underwent and the difficulties they faced are remarkably illustrated.

In 1947-48, the battalion fought in J&K where the stand by Major Somnath Sharma, who was awarded the PVC, is well documented. It is in this conflict that Lieutenant Colonel (later Lieutenant General) MM Khanna, the CO, with his group of fifteen, was ambushed, losing one JCO and twelve men on 19 June 1948 and it was a Kashmiri villager, Jumma Mohammed, who carried the wounded and hid them while he went to inform the nearest army unit, 2 DOGRA. Khanna was awarded the MVC for showing great bravery and determination.

What is also wonderfully captured is the daring patrol in early 1957, which has generally remained highly classified, undertaken by Lieutenant Colonel RS Basera into Aksai Chin to find out about the strategic Sinkiang – Tibet Road. In adverse conditions, overcoming all odds the patrol reached the road, observed Chinese vehicles and took samples of the track. Unfortunately, while the military hierarchy was appreciative of the task undertaken, the then Defence Minister, Krishna Menon, and Prime Minister Nehru,

both of whom were apprised about the report, 'wanted to know if a map had been carried to confirm the location'. Naturally, no map could be carried for security reasons, and they directed that "no more such patrols were to be sent to Aksai Chin". The strategic picture would have been very different if the report had been trusted by the then political hierarchy.

The book also gives an insight into the character qualities of Brigadier Nasim Arthur Salick, who won his Vir Chakra (VrC) at "Master" in J&K in January 1948, and later commanded the battalion during the 'Battle of Bugina Bulge' in north Kashmir in 1965. Here the battalion was involved in a series of actions where they overcame great odds of terrain, enemy, and extreme weather conditions to successfully capture and push back the Pakistanis in the area beyond Tangdhar, in a region known as Bugina Bulge. It was a significant achievement as the Pakistani regular and Special Forces troops were in reinforced positions, at dominating heights including Point 9013 (named due to its altitude in feet). The hill was subsequently renamed as 'Kumaon Hill'. His inspiration, motivation, courage, and personal example were some of the contributing factors to the battalion's spectacular success, along with his outstanding team of officers, JCO's, and soldiers. Lieutenant Colonel Salick stood out as a true leader who lived by a set of values and beliefs he wanted his men to emulate. The battalion lost two officers, three JCOs, and forty-five other ranks in the 1965 war. Unfortunately, he never got the MVC, which the Brigade wanted to recommend him for, as he refused to reduce the number of citations for his men saying, "If my men are not recommended for the gallantry awards, they so richly deserve, Sir I do not deserve an award".

### **The Author**

Brigadier Jasbir Singh, SM was commissioned into the battalion in December 1970, when he was yet not twenty, and joined the unit in Nagaland. He was soon involved in actions against Naga insurgents and these have been covered in great detail. The battalion under Lieutenant Colonel Lakha Singh and Lieutenant Colonel (later Major General) DPS Raghuvanshi did exceedingly well, killing twenty-two insurgents, wounding twenty-three, and capturing over six hundred and won twelve gallantry awards. Second Lieutenant Jasbir Singh was in the thick of many



encounters and his courage, determination, initiative, and leadership stood out. He was awarded the Sena Medal (SM) for his actions in February 1972 while eliminating self-styled Lieutenant Pusato. Apart from this, there are anecdotes that cover his time in the battalion including his 'Dining in' and the unit Raising Day. The 'Dining In' includes the tale of him telling the CO that he had already signed the 'visitors book' while being a cadet at RIMC, when he visited the unit at Tregham, J&K, along with his father in January 1965 and the privilege was accorded to him by the then CO. Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Salick permitted him to sign the visitors book provided he joined 4 KUMAON.

In 1971, the battalion was part of 8 Mountain Division and operated behind enemy lines by establishing a road block on 29 November 1971 at Shamsheer Nagar to isolate it and prevent it from being reinforced. It is during the firefight here that they lost Havildar Hari Shankar, whose son, born after he passed away, followed his father's footsteps and joined the battalion. In the road block action, they lost twenty-one men and thirty-two were wounded. For 'the outstanding operations' during the 1971 War, the unit was awarded the 'Battle Honour Shamsheer Nagar'.

### **Conclusion**

There is no doubt that late Brigadier Jasbir Singh has captured the soul and the spirit of the battalion due to his insight with them over the years. The book is remarkable as it presents a personal account of the glorious history of the battalion, written by someone who has had a ring side view of its ethos. There is no doubt that the strongest bonds are created by the unique sense of esprit de corps that prevails, which overcomes all challenges, and it is this intrinsic strength of our army that needs to be nurtured. This is a narrative that needs to be read for the manner it portrays the character of this famous battalion and its contribution over the centuries.

*Major General Jagatbir Singh, VSM (Retd)*

**G20 @ 2023: The Roadmap to Indian Presidency.** By V Srinivas; (New Delhi: Pentagon Press LLP, March 2023); Pages: 304; Price: Rs 995/-; ISBN: 9390095743.

The Group of Twenty, better known by its acronym G20, is an intergovernmental forum of the world's largest economies originally set up in 1999 to address challenges and coordinate action on pressing global financial and economic issues. Annual summits of the leaders of the G20 countries have been regularly held every year since 2008. Over the years, it has evolved into a major force often setting the direction of decision-making by established multilateral institutions like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and United Nations. The year 2023 is special for India as it is the year of India's Presidency of this global forum, with sectoral discussions being held over the year in each State of the country, and the annual summit of world leaders to be held in Delhi in September 2023. In this context, a book that seeks to highlight the background and build understanding of the significance of this event is welcome.

V Srinivas' deeply researched book 'G20 @ 2023: The Roadmap to Indian Presidency' comprehensively sets out the evolution of the G20 from its inception in 2008 to its present position as the premier forum for international economic cooperation. The author is a notable scholar-administrator who has closely worked with top political levels in the Government of India. Further, he has a deep understanding of the multilateral process, having worked at a policy level in a multilateral financial institution, and written extensively on multilateralism. This background gives him a unique perspective that is reflected throughout this seminal work.

The book traces, step by step, the expansion of the scope of the G20 meetings over the years. The happenings at the key Summits held are analysed in considerable depth. The book highlights the stellar role played by the G20 in actively responding and successfully tackling severe global financial crises, most notably the Global Financial Crisis of 2008. The forum's leading role in coordinating the response to the Eurozone Crisis of 2010 and the Covid 19 Pandemic of 2020 is set out lucidly. The book contains a wealth of useful documentation and perspectives that provide useful insights into the decision-making processes of G20 and on the complex workings of multilateralism in practice.

In this aptly titled 'Roadmap', the author brings out India's approach and perspective to the presidency of this key global forum. The book sets out the reform agenda for the forum, and the initiatives that are likely to define India's presidency of the G20. In a currently divided and increasingly multipolar world, he brings out how India's presidency is being viewed as a great opportunity to guide the global order towards strengthening multilateralism and also to nudge the global powers towards processes that facilitate more consultative and inclusive global policy making.

India's presidency of the G20 is being widely covered and is the subject of much media and popular attention. In this backdrop, the book is an invaluable reference not just for scholars/academics but is also extremely relevant and highly recommended for anyone, even remotely, interested in the background and the profusion of happenings related to the crucial Indian presidency of G20. For those directly or indirectly associated with the G20 process in any capacity, this book is an essential reading.

*Dr Rajan Katoch, IAS (Retd)*

**The Military Heroes of Haryana – Gallantry Award Winners, Volume 1.** By Lt Col Dilbag Singh Dabas (Retd); (New Delhi: Rolleract Press Services); Pages: 387; Price: Rs 950/-; ISBN: 9789355262622.

India is a representation of many cultural, religious, linguistic and social structures, it is home to 1/3rd of the world population, and has been known for being one of the most diverse countries in the world. It is also the oldest civilisation in the world, with rich cultural heritage, attributed to its many States. As a country surrounded by the Great Himalayas to the north, Bay of Bengal to the east, Arabian Sea to the west, and the Indian Ocean to the south, even its geographical boundaries are an amalgamation of its regional differences. One such organisation exhibiting a similar structure is its land force, the Indian Army.

If we look closely, the Indian Army is symbolic of India and its States where each regiment embodies the cultural, and ethical values the respective State holds. The Infantry regiments today are based on the pre-independent 'Martial Race' concept that divided the fighting class from the non-fighting class and, hence,

these infantry units came to be known as Punjab, Madras, Rajput, Jat, Sikh, Dogra, Garhwal, Kumaon, Assam, Mahar, and Gorkha Regiment, that exemplifies co-existence and assimilation of values of each other's culture. In the spirit of unity and valour that our brave men have proved time and again, the author has specifically written about the fallen heroes of Haryana. A land known for its abundant agricultural and historical battle tales. Open sources cite that almost 1/4<sup>th</sup> of total soldiers belong to the – Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and Chandigarh belt. Haryana, specifically, accounts for 5.7 per cent of rank and file with a total tally of 65,987 soldiers as per ministerial data.

The book is essentially a repository of the undaunted spirit of countless men in uniform, who remain buried in old records and dusty files, but have now been revived by the author's inquiry. The book chronologically dates the contribution of soldiers as early as the World War Era, that saw significant contribution from India. Risaldar Badlu Singh (14<sup>th</sup> Murray's Jat Lancers), who was awarded the Victoria Cross for his bravery in the Middle East theatre along with seven men who were also awarded the Indian Order of Merit, charged to defend positions of their squadron regardless of the grave danger they faced. Such is the daring spirit of our soldiers who give their today for our tomorrow.

Camaraderie in the military is unique. At times it gives you strength to sustain rigorous environmental constraints, bond over little things to give an essence of family, and at times just looking after one another. One such instance is of Company Havildar Major (CMH) Chhelu Ram Garhwal and Subedar Richhpal Ram Lamba, both Victoria Cross Awardees, who breathed their last in the dusty battlefields of Africa fighting the Axis forces. Both belonged to 4 Rajputana Rifles and were affectionate towards each other. After Subedar Richhpal Ram attained martyrdom in 1941 in Keren (then in Eritrea), CHM Chhelu Ram decided to name his son in respect and admiration of his senior. Battles not only change the fate of soldiers and generals involved in the conflict but impact the lives of many through associations like these and keep reminding us of the unsung heroes.

The book provides many such anecdotal accounts of armed forces personnel who lived '*a life less ordinary*'. It should not only be a source of inspiration to boys and girls who dream of serving

the nation but to all those who wish to understand our men in uniform, keep igniting your minds!

*Ms Surbhi Chakraborty*

**War to Peace Wisdom and Leadership: Ex-Servicemen's Role in Good Governance and Rural Development.** *By Lt Gen (Dr) SK Gadeock, AVSM (Retd); (New Delhi: Pentagon Press LLP, March 2023); Pages: 224; Price: Rs 795/-; ISBN: 939009576X.*

The book, 'War to Peace Wisdom and Leadership: Ex-Servicemen's Role in Good Governance and Rural Development', written by Lt Gen (Dr) S.K. Gadeock, AVSM (Retd), is not only an ode to those who have served this nation as a part of the armed forces, but also a map to a possible future which shows a path that capitalises on the potential of these ex-servicemen.

The name 'War to Peace' is quite accurate in the context of what the book suggests. While one has read about the ravages of war and the longing for peace in many a harrowing and poetic accounts, Gen Gadeock has given an unprecedented account of why it is important to realise the potential of the ex-servicemen and how imperative it is to recognise their unique abilities as well as their potential. The book also focuses exclusively on rural India, elucidating upon the fact that while urbanisation has been a rapid process, rural India remains underdeveloped, however, the character of rural India has changed from that of being dependent on just the primary sector to that of a region just beginning to explore its capabilities.

The author opines that ex-servicemen in rural settings in India possess a unique set of skills and experiences that make them ideal candidates for leadership positions. Their discipline, work ethic, and communication skills, developed through their years of military service are invaluable qualities that can be applied to a range of settings. These skills are particularly important in rural areas where access to basic amenities and infrastructure can be challenging. Moreover, ex-servicemen have a deep understanding of the challenges faced by their communities. They have firsthand experience of the difficulties of living in remote areas and the struggles that people face in accessing basic amenities such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure. This makes them well-equipped to identify the needs of their communities and to develop strategies to address these issues.

The author, who has spent an illustrious and unblemished 40-year long career in the Indian Army, states in the book that the ex-servicemen also possess a strong sense of ethics and integrity, which can be invaluable in combating corruption. Their experience in the armed forces has instilled a strong sense of discipline and a commitment to honesty and transparency. It is also important to note that the age at which most troops of the Indian Army retire ranges from 35–40 years, and this number, which the book suggests is approximately 60,000, will only increase with *Agniveers*. It would be a symbiotic relationship if the ex-servicemen are placed in leadership positions. In this manner they can have a second career and they can use their leadership roles to promote accountability, fairness, and transparency in their communities. They can work to establish systems that discourage corrupt practices and ensure that public resources are used for the benefit of the community as a whole. Their commitment to ethical behaviour and their willingness to speak out against corruption can inspire others to do the same, creating a culture of honesty and accountability.

Additionally, ex-servicemen can serve as role models for the youth in rural India. They can provide a sense of purpose and direction to young people, who may be struggling to find their place in society. Ex-servicemen can share their experiences and lessons learned from their time in the military, emphasising the importance of discipline, hard work, and service to others. They can inspire young people to pursue education, take up a profession or trade, and contribute to their communities. The book also talks about them serving as mentors to young people, helping them to develop the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in life. They can provide guidance on education, career choices and personal development, as well as offer a listening ear and emotional support when needed. This can be particularly beneficial in rural areas where access to mentors and role models may be limited.

Ex-servicemen in rural settings in India have the potential to not only provide effective leadership but also to be strong advocates for anti-corruption efforts and role models for the youth. By leveraging their experience and skills, ex-servicemen can contribute significantly to the development and well-being of their communities and inspire a new generation of leaders who are committed to ethics, integrity, and service. Their leadership potential can make

a significant difference in the lives of people in rural India, improving their access to basic amenities, promoting transparency, accountability and fairness, and inspiring young people to pursue their dreams. The book looks at a way forward to make the most out of the potential of such young men and women of the armed forces in building a future for the nation.

*Dr Aparajita Pandey*

**Two Decades of US-Taliban War in Afghanistan.** *By Major General Samay Ram, UYSM, AVSM, VSM; (New Delhi: Sabre and Quill, January 2022); Pages: 180; Price: Rs. 899/-; ASIN: B0BH5C2H8H.*

This book has been written by a senior Indian Army Officer who has participated in three Indo-Pak wars and also in IPKF operations in Sri Lanka. The book deals with the understanding of the various dimensions of the US-Taliban War in Afghanistan. The author gives credibility and authenticity to his writings based on his experience of four years as the Military Attaché in the Embassy of India, Kabul, at a time when the Soviets were in occupation of Afghanistan. The book is divided into three parts:

- Part I deals with the understanding of Afghanistan, its history, its geography, and its people.
- Part II covers the period when Afghanistan was under the US and its NATO Allies. This part deals with the main US – Taliban War.
- Part III covers the period when the Taliban returned to power and Afghanistan came under their occupation.

In Part I, the author covers the history of Afghanistan in brief. The chronological details show how Afghanistan served as the gateway for all invaders like Alexander and Babur, who came to India from Southern Central Asia. The salient features of the history highlight two issues; one, the history of Afghanistan is written in blood; two, Afghanistan has been the grave yard of the foreign empires like the British and later the Soviet Union, implying that the Afghans never accepted to be under the rule of foreign empires.

Part II covers the period from the time US invaded Afghanistan till its exit along with US and its Allies. It highlights why the US invaded Afghanistan and defeated the Taliban, who withdrew to

the safe heavens provided by Pakistan along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, eliminating all their bases from Afghanistan. Once Osama Bin Laden was caught and killed, the US and its Allies enhanced the scope of war and its objectives to include establishment of a duly elected Afghan Government, strengthening of the Afghan National Security Forces, and carrying out development of infrastructure, which gave time to the Taliban to reorganise and re-equip themselves and resume their offensive against the US and its Allies engaging them into a counter insurgency war, a war that the US wanted to avoid. Perforce, the US was forced into changing its military strategies. The counter insurgency operations continued even after Osama Bin Laden was hunted and killed. After fighting for over a decade, the US realised that they were fighting a war with no end.

Having handed over the responsibility of security of Afghanistan, the US offered a negotiated settlement with the Taliban. Left to fight their own battle, the Afghan Forces began to disintegrate under the pressure of the Taliban leading to their defeat; forcing the Afghan President to flee and abandon his country. The author carries out an assessment examining the reasons why the Afghan Security Forces collapsed and why the US failed to win the War; one of the major reasons being the continued trust of Pakistan as an ally knowing fully that it was playing the dubious role of supporting the Taliban. The US-Taliban War culminated into the hurried exit of the US troops from Afghanistan and the return of Taliban to power in Kabul. The coverage of this momentous period makes very interesting reading to bring home the lesson of history that the Afghans never accept the rule of a foreign power – not even the mighty US.

Part III deals with the resurgence of the Taliban and how they progressively captured part by part of Afghanistan till they captured Kabul in a swift offensive and constituted an Interim Administration in alliance with the Hekmatyar Group –it was an unholy alliance. The Taliban Government then declared its policies not much different from that of 1996, throwing Afghanistan back into the dark era. Thereafter, the Taliban Government engaged itself to seek recognition by the world community so that international aid could flow to improve its financial position. This Part also deals with the threats emanating from various sources to the survival of the Taliban Government. Some part is also



devoted to the efforts of some of the countries in forming an 'All Inclusive Government'. Towards the end, the author reviews the current situation in Afghanistan and, finally, takes the hazardous risk of predicting the future of Taliban.

The subject matter is well researched and the author has covered all the nuances of the US-Taliban War in Afghanistan and presented in a manner that it is easy to comprehend. Attempting any prediction to the future of the Taliban in Afghanistan is rather risky. The book is of immense value to the officials of the Ministry of External Affairs who find themselves posted in the Embassy of India, Kabul. It is of great value to those engaged in Counter Insurgency Operations. The book will be a great value addition to any library.

*Gp Capt Sharad Tewari, VM (Retd)*



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# USI

(Estd. 1870)

## OUR ACTIVITIES

### Library and Reading Room

The library holds over 68,000 books, and journals, including some books of 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, on an astonishing variety of subjects. While the principal emphasis is on strategy and defence, there are a large number of works on different vistas of Indian life. There are memoirs, biographies, recollections, diaries, journals, manuscripts for scholars and researchers. The reading room is air-conditioned, spacious and well stocked in terms of current reading material. Library was automated in 2002.

### Correspondence Courses

The Institution runs regular correspondence courses for officers of the Armed Forces to assist them in preparing for promotion examinations, and for the entrance examinations to the Defence Services Staff College and Technical Staff College. Over the years, this has been a significant and well-received activity.

### USI Journal

The *USI Journal* is the oldest surviving defence journal in the country and in Asia, having first appeared in 1871. In an era when there is a feeling that free expression of views by Defence personnel is not looked upon kindly by the establishment, the Journal in fact provides just such a forum, without regard to seniority and length of service in the Armed Forces, subject of course, to propriety and quality of the written work.

### Centre for Strategic Studies and Simulation

The Erstwhile Centre for Research and its resources have been merged into the new Centre named as USI Centre for Strategic Studies and Simulation (USI-CS3) wef 01 January 2005. The Centre aims at conducting detailed and comprehensive enquiry, research and analyses of national and international security related issues, and gaming and simulation of strategic scenarios, to evolve options for wider discussion and consideration.

### USI Centre for UN Peacekeeping (CUNPK)

The Centre was established in 2000 and functioned with USI till Aug 2014, when it moved out of USI premises and was delinked from USI. Its aims were organising workshops, seminars and training capsules for peace-keepers, observers and staff officers – both

Indian and foreign. It also oversaw the practical training of Indian contingents. It functioned under a Board of Management headed by the Vice Chief of the Army Staff and worked in close coordination with the Service Headquarters and the Ministries of External Affairs and Defence. In August 2014, CUNPK moved out to the accommodation allotted by the Army HQ.

### Centre for Military History and Conflict Studies (CMHCS)

The USI-Centre for Military History and Conflict Studies (USI-CMHCS) was established in December 2000 at the behest of the three Service Headquarters for encouraging an objective study of all facets of Indian military history with a special emphasis on the history of the Indian Armed Forces. It focuses on diverse aspects of the history of Indian military evolution, policies and practices-strategic, tactical, logistical, organisational, socio-economic, as well as the field of contemporary conflict studies in the broader sense.

### Gold Medal Essay Competition

Every year the Institution organises a gold medal essay competition open to all officers. These essays, the first one of which was introduced in 1871, constitute a barometer of opinion on matters that affect national security in general and the defence forces in particular.

### USI-War Wounded Foundation Joint Essay Competition

This essay competition was instituted in 2021 after signing of the MoU between USI and the War Wounded Foundation. The competition is open to all across the globe and must be on the subject of issues relating to the experiences and/or rehabilitation of war disabled personnel of the Armed Forces of India.

### Lt Gen SL Menezes Memorial Essay Competition

This has been instituted from 2015 on a subject related to Armed Forces Historical Research. The Essay Competition is open to all across the globe.

### Lectures, Discussions and Seminars

A series of lectures, discussions and seminars on service matters, international affairs, and topics of general interest to the Services, are organised for the benefit of local members in Delhi.

### MacGregor Medal

This medal is awarded to Armed Forces personnel for valuable reconnaissance and adventure activity they may have undertaken.

## MEMBERSHIP

The following are eligible to become members of the Institution :

- Officers of the Armed Forces
- Class I Gazetted Officers of Group 'A' Central Services.
- Any category mentioned above will be eligible even though retired or released from the Service.
- Cadets from the NDA and Cadets from the Service Academies and Midshipmen.

For further particulars, please write to Director General, USI of India, Rao Tula Ram Marg, (Opposite Signals Enclave) Post Bag No. 8, Vasant Vihar PO, New Delhi – 110 057

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