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India's Pendulum Policy on Pakistan

India-China Cultural Interface

Countering New Maoist Tactics

India's Indigenous Defence Technology

*and many more ....*

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# Be To Pakistan As Its Posture Warrants

- *Kanwal Sibal*

Our international relations experts are divided on how to deal with Pakistan, with a section always advocating moderation in reaction to Pakistani provocations and others favouring more robust responses to Pakistani belligerence. This lack of consensus makes our Pakistan policy look vacillating and irresolute.

It is easy to wear the mantle of moderation as the accompanying vocabulary of peace, engagement, dialogue and restraint sounds mature and wise. Those wanting firmer treatment of Pakistan slip into talk of retaliation, force, reprisal, imposing costs, which sounds aggressive and war-like. Public opinion on the whole is more indulgent towards “doves” even when their judgments are skewed than towards “hawks” even when their views are sounder. Dovish views are less unsettling than hawkish ones in a country that still lacks self-confidence and is more comfortable with caution than with risk-taking even when

provoked.

## Dialogue

The complexity of our problems with Pakistan would justify a degree of prudence in our reactions. What is less justified is our posture of helplessness. We say meekly that we have no choice but to have a dialogue with Pakistan. Some on our side actually advocate “an uninterrupted and uninteruptible” dialogue. Such thinking is pernicious for our interests but serves those of Pakistan, which is why its foreign minister has made this catchy phraseology her own. She has thrown it in our face while berating us for creating tensions over the recent beheading incident. She is hoisting us with our own petard!

We were against negotiations with Pakistan with the gun of terrorism pointed at our head. We, therefore, linked resumption of dialogue with Pakistan’s commitment to end terrorism. Politically cornered

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\* *Kanwal Sibal* - Member, VIF Advisory Board, VIF

when Pakistan failed to honour its commitment, instead of interrupting the dialogue we gave ourselves a way out by agreeing that both countries were victims of terrorism, which implied that terrorist incidents in India were the handiwork of non-state actors with no official connivance. Later, we formally delinked dialogue and terrorism and continued our parleys with Pakistan, despite a spate of terrorist attacks, until the enormity of the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks made such a position politically untenable. After a short interregnum, we again resumed the dialogue because our decision-makers have convinced themselves that a “no-dialogue option” is not available to us.

Between not having a dialogue and a composite dialogue covering all contentious issues, there is considerable space for talking to each other, but we have straight-jacketed ourselves into a structured dialogue that, in fact, reduces the centrality of terrorism and allows Pakistan to put in all elements of its political agenda where it wants territorial and

other concessions from us, whether it is Kashmir, Siachen, Sir Creek or the Tulbul project. In fact, this composite dialogue exposes us to Pakistani demands that we cannot satisfy, with the result that even Pakistani peaceniks express their disappointment at India’s rigidity, especially on Siachen.

What this superficial formula of “an uninterrupted and uninterruptable dialogue” means is that even if another Mumbai-like attack takes place, India’s hands must remain tied and the dialogue must continue, ruling out any retaliatory action.

The perspective of such a draconian restraint on India provides no incentive to Pakistan to take any step to weed out terrorists targetting India, as any future attack would neither mean an end to bilateral engagement nor retaliation.

### Restraint

The perspective of such a draconian restraint on India provides no incentive to Pakistan to take any step to weed out terrorists targetting India, as any future attack would neither mean an end to bilateral engagement nor retaliation. Pakistan will thus retain the freedom to keep India under pressure with the threat of terrorism- as China does by not settling the border issue- and

compel India to temporize, “buy” off Pakistani hostility with friendly gestures, including not taking advantage of its increasing internal difficulties and international isolation. What can suit Pakistani strategy better?

Some diehard apologists of Pakistan in India claim that there is a change in the Pakistani mindset towards India and none in India’s mindset towards Pakistan. Pakistan has supposedly moved away from communal hostility towards India to national hostility. Why the latter, even if true, should re-assure us more is not clear. By the same logic, a nationalist but more politically open China would be better for its neighbours than the existing authoritarian version. Facts, moreover, would suggest that Pakistan is becoming more “communal” or sectarian in character by becoming more intolerant towards the Shias and other minorities, that religiosity in society is increasing and extremism is on the rise.

### **Provocations**

It can hardly be that the internal mayhem being caused by the spread of extremist ideologies in Pakistan implies a more tolerant

religious attitude towards India. Our policies towards Pakistan in the last eight years both under the NDA and the UPA governments show, on the contrary, how far our attitudes towards Pakistan have changed.

In any case, if the Pakistani mindset towards India has changed, in what positive way has it expressed itself? On Kashmir, Pakistan has reverted to the UN resolutions as a solution, on Siachen it feels wronged, and on Sir Creek it rejects international principles. It will not permit Tulbul and will obstruct any power project in J&K, it is creating a new water issue despite the generous Indus Waters Treaty, it is expanding its nuclear arsenal by distorting the intent and purpose of the India-US nuclear deal and it is treating our terrorism concerns with contempt. If it has moved away from its irrational position of not trading with India and giving us MFN treatment [which it still has not done, despite assurances to that effect], we do not need to feel grateful. Pakistan will benefit from this as well as the visa agreement more than we will, though any progress in these areas should be welcomed by us.

We should treat Pakistan as a friend when it is friendly and as a foe when it is inimical. We should be doves or hawks as the situation demands.

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## Dangerously Naïve, Naively Dangerous

- *PP Shukla*

There has been a veritable barrage of opinion, hectoring and outright abuse from the pro-Pakistan segments of our media activists in the print media over the recent flare-up along parts of the LOC. This requires a substantive and fact-based debate, and an answer to some of the arguments put forward by the pro-Pakistan elements that have written and spoken so passionately on the subject in recent days.

The essence of the arguments put forward by the supporters of the Government policy may be summed up in three principal lines of reasoning. The first is that there is a change inside Pakistan, and this is driven by a realisation that hostility towards India has not paid, so it is time to look at the alternative and to improve ties with India. The second line of argument is that if India takes a tough stand towards Pakistan, it will weaken the moderates, those who want good relations with

India. The third line is that this Prime Minister's policy is actually very wise, and is an example of profound realism. Further, that is it this realism that has established an asymmetry between India and Pakistan in the international discourse.

First: the supposed change inside Pakistan has been much commented upon. Among the pro-Pakistan elements, this is coupled with a conviction that the nationalist segment of opinion in India is too blind, or biased, to see this. The core argument is that, after years of sponsoring terrorism, Pakistan has itself become a victim, and is therefore now ready to drop its earlier policy of promoting terrorism, and seeks a new relationship with India. Pakistan, in this telling, has lost forty thousand lives to terror, and is more victim than sponsor. Pakistan's economic problems are also part of the reason for the change in mood. All through 2012, we were also told that proof of this change was that Pakistan had

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\* *PP Shukla - Joint Director, VIF*

given MFN treatment to Indian exports, and there was more to follow.

The reality is different. The easier point to dispose of is that Pakistan has not given MFN status to Indian goods; even though that is an obligation they have under the WTO and was backed up by a Cabinet decision early last year. This, by the way, also illustrates Pakistan's approach to its solemn international obligations, which we would be wise to bear in mind as we go forward in our dealings with them, for example, on the TAPI gas pipeline project. It also illustrates our approach: for sixteen years we have unilaterally extended MFN treatment to Pakistani exports to India, and we have not even taken Pakistan to the WTO dispute settlement for its refusal to give our exports MFN status. In short, as always, we have indulged Pakistani violation of the law. The pro-Pakistan elements are not talking about this now, but it is easy to imagine how they would have touted this – had it happened – as evidence of the change they profess to see.

The reality is different. The easier point to dispose of is that Pakistan has not given MFN status to Indian goods; even though that is an obligation they have under the WTO and was backed up by a Cabinet decision early last year.

As to terrorism, there is absolutely no evidence that there is any change in Pakistan's approach to sponsoring anti-India terrorists. They continue to protect and promote the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the other *tanzeems* that have India as their target. Equally, they continue to sponsor the Taliban and their allies in Afghanistan, and to good effect, judging by the recent developments in the Afghan issue.

Here, too, the core argument needs to be stripped away: the forty thousand killed over the last ten years is supposed to have induced a sense of the danger from their erstwhile irresponsible policies in the minds of Pakistani leaders. The reality is that this statistic covers all sorts of incidents, including the drone attacks, sectarian killings, and innocent civilians. Among the uniformed forces, the death toll is six thousand over ten years – high, for sure, but not all that much, and certainly not enough to make the security establishment change its mind. The direction of events is clear: judges who pronounce verdicts against terrorists have to



flee the country, or seek shelter somewhere; killers of highly-placed officials are showered with petals when they come for trial. It is not surprising that a well-known Pakistani analyst, and an arch nationalist, was forced to lament “the fundamentalist Islam that now seems to hold sway in our unfortunate country.” No, it is more probable that those who advocate a soft line on Pakistan are the ones who are missing the real change inside that country, not the sceptics.

Finally, there is the contrary reality; the growing power and aggressiveness of the religious establishment inside Pakistan. The same people in India, who talk about the growing sectarian killings as one of the factors inducing a sense of responsibility among Pakistani policy-makers, seem to suggest that this is some kind of exogenous phenomenon, and that the poor victims are now asserting themselves. But no, the growing power of the religious extremists is endogenous, and is the more powerful reality inside Pakistan. The minorities - Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, and the Shia -

There is another fact to be considered here. The Pakistan Army has been weakened twice in the recent past, once in 1971, and again after the US raid on Abbottabad in May 2011. Neither happened after the other cheek was turned; they happened after a successful military action against the Pakistan Army.

in that country have the scars to prove it. To suggest that there is a growing sense of moderation in Pakistan, while ignoring this powerful fact, is itself to hide from the reality.

Most important of all, we have an easy test of real intent and real change: the Mumbai 26/11 trials. Whenever the Pakistan establishment gets serious about tackling terror, all it has to do is stop playing ducks and drakes with this issue, and we shall all get the message. Sadly, what we are seeing is the opposite. One Pakistani leader advises us to move on and stop being emotional about it, another suggests that there is some

kind of linkage between 26/11 and Ayodhya; these are clear signs that, for Pakistan, there is no give on anti-India terror. We are also seeing that the Maoists are now getting weapons from Pakistan. It is hard to discern in all this any let-up in the sponsorship of terror by Pakistan. It is up to us to face this reality.

The second argument is about the moderates and the need for India

to strengthen them. The first issue here is – just who are the moderates? It is quite droll to see that when the media in India wish to project a Pakistani moderate, they have to reach out to the cultural fringes of society, a Sufi singer, or an anti-Establishment writer, or some such. All the others who appear on our television screens, former bureaucrats, journalists, lawyers, etc, are all as hawkish as any serving official, civil, political or military. By contrast, you can see any number of Indian mainstream figures among all these professions who argue for a soft approach. There is thus a first issue of exactly who these moderates are, and whether they have any meaningful existence at all.

Secondly, the presumption is that if you turn the other cheek, you strengthen the moderates, while a hard response plays into the Army and the hardliners' hands. This deserves closer examination. Even the most recalcitrant on our side among the friends of Pakistan will concede that turning the other cheek is more or less what we have been doing, at least since the days of the Gujral Doctrine, which – without the name – was continued by the subsequent NDA

and UPA Governments. The Pakistani response was to give us the Kandahar hijack, the attack on Parliament, train bombings, and - the culmination – Mumbai 26/11. Finally, now there is the beheading on the LOC, and not for the first time at that. One question that arises is - how long before the moderates will be sufficiently strengthened so as to give us some degree of civilised behaviour in our bilateral ties? The pro-Pakistanis are silent on this. This is wise on their part, for the reality is that it is not working.

There is another fact to be considered here. The Pakistan Army has been weakened twice in the recent past, once in 1971, and again after the US raid on Abbottabad in May 2011. Neither happened after the other cheek was turned; they happened after a successful military action against the Pakistan Army. And this illustrates the most fundamental principle of statecraft: you defeat the authors of a policy when you defeat their policy. Hitler was not weakened by the policy of appeasement followed by Chamberlain; it took pressure and finally, force, to fix the problem. Our elites, such as they are, are innocent of statecraft, but they

should at least have the humility to learn from history, our own and that of other parts of the world.

The third argument is the suggestion that this appeasement is really an example of “profound realism” – this is an exact quote from one of the pro-Pakistan elements in recent days. While on the subject of “realism”, it really needs to be emphasised that what we have seen in terms of the joint anti-terror mechanism, and the Sharm el-Sheikh Statement, with its incomprehensible reference to Baluchistan, are hard to defend and justify as examples of realism. Both ideas have been ignored and allowed to lapse in the subsequent engagement, and amen to that.

The writer of the above piece goes on to suggest that this policy of profound realism has altered the perception of India and Pakistan in global opinion, and has altered, too, the earlier symmetry between the two countries in the eyes of international opinion, so that India is now seen as the more attractive and responsible country. This is indeed happening to some

extent, and is welcome. But the logic of the argument is highly doubtful: not more than one in a thousand would disagree with the proposition that the asymmetry is a result of our economic growth in the past decade above all, especially contrasted with Pakistan’s poor performance in this field. Our democracy, our soft power, and our military strength, are the other elements in this mix. Realism does not really make the grade. One could make the argument, instead, that the

weakness we have displayed has actually worked in Pakistan’s favour. The western accommodation of Pakistan over Afghanistan is

evidence of this. The sad truth is that all countries, starting with Pakistan, take it as a given that India will remain passive in the face of any security challenge, no matter what.

And then to be accused of jingoism! That is truly the unkindest cut of all. Here is how the term originated, in a bar room song that was popular in the pubs of London in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. “We don’t want to fight but by Jingo if we do/ we’ve got the ships,

And then to be accused of jingoism! That is truly the unkindest cut of all. Here is how the term originated, in a bar room song that was popular in the pubs of London in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

*we've got the men, we've got the money too*". None of our leaders has said anything that even remotely qualifies to be called jingoism. Our Prime Minister, with every show of reluctance, has just said that it cannot be business as usual with Pakistan. This, too, came after intense TV and popular pressure. The point is that this is the minimum that any democratic leader could say. And there are already early hints that we are slipping back into opening a high-level dialogue.

Quite apart from domestic pressure, there is also the straight question of what India should do, if we were to follow the prescriptions of the pro-Pakistan elements. What solution do the friends of Pakistan have to offer? A careful search of all the comment from that side of the argument suggests that there is really no answer, no solution, to this. An editorial in a misleadingly-named newspaper suggests the following:

*"Not every malaise has a cure; some can only be managed better or worse, and certainly not through indiscriminate blood-letting. India's relationship with Pakistan is one of them."*

And that is exactly what is so wrong with the position of the pro-Pakistan segment of our society. Press hard enough and the doves have to admit that they have no solution but to continue to suffer it as long as Pakistan continues to dish it out.

And yet, what the current outrage in India shows is that there is a large body of opinion, neither hawkish nor dovish, that does not accept this counsel of defeat. The problem with the debate is that the pro-Pakistan opinion seeks to posit only a straight two-way choice. We can either talk, or we are war-mongering. As to talking, the problem is first, that they are going nowhere. Clearly, our primary interest is in ending terrorism against us, and it must be clear to all that this is something Pakistan will not give us satisfaction on. Their interest is in Kashmir, and it is clear that we cannot give them satisfaction on this. Of the other subjects, the talks have produced only limited results, and a good case can be made for an altogether new platform for talks in the future.

This is not war-mongering, as the Pakistanis say – and their cry has been taken up by the doves in India. No, between appeasement

and war, there are myriad choices, including, for a start, restricting the level and scope of the talks themselves. There are, besides, many economic, diplomatic, and other means available as well. We could reduce the sizes of the High Commissions in the two countries, and that would curb some of the inimical activities of their Mission; we could also pull out of the TAPI project, which will cripple Pakistan's energy strategy for the future, since no energy project is viable without India as a stable long-term buyer; there are many others as well, including sub-conventional activity, to match what Pakistan has been doing for decades. In other words, it is time to try a different mix, and work some disincentives into the formula, since that has been completely absent for many years now.

Lastly, the fact is that no one wants wars. Yet, they do happen. It is unwise in the extreme to be unprepared for such an event, especially for one who lives this close to a seething cauldron of religious, social, ethnic and economic turmoil. This is a contingency that the country must also be prepared for.

[Author's note: the title is a take-off on a description used by one of the most high-profile appeasers, who approvingly quoted a description of the debates on one of the TV channels, as "dangerously boring, boringly dangerous".]

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# Inhuman Act At LoC : Need For An Appropriate Response

- *Brig (retd) Gurmeet Kanwal*

## Despicable Act

The Pakistan army's dastardly and utterly irresponsible behaviour in crossing the LoC, killing Indian soldiers and mutilating their bodies in an inhuman manner – including the ruthless beheading of one soldier – is reprehensible and worthy of condemnation in the strongest terms.

During the Kargil conflict in 1999 too, the Pakistan army had returned badly mutilated bodies of Indian soldiers and had earned for itself the infamous epithet “rogue army”. Such incidents serve to further damage the dubious professional reputation of an army that has repeatedly let down its nation while claiming to be the sole saviour of Pakistan’s identity and its territorial integrity.

However, there is need for a measured Indian response at the diplomatic and military levels as the incident is in all probability a low-level violation of military

ethics and conventions. India should demand the speedy trial of the soldiers involved in the brutal killings. If Pakistan’s response is unsatisfactory, India should suspend further discussion of peace and security and military confidence building measures (CBMs) in the resumed dialogue process. If Pakistan continues to stall on this issue like it has been dragging its feet on bringing to book the perpetrators of the Mumbai terror strikes in November 2008, the entire eight-point dialogue should be suspended.

The aim of initiating appropriate military measures should be to inflict deterrent punishment so that the Pakistan army learns the right lessons from its repeated violation of the code of conduct of military operations. Several direct and indirect military options can be exercised without unduly escalating the exchanges to dangerous levels. The most suitable response would be to raze

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*\*Brig (retd) Gurmeet Kanwal - Visiting Fellow, VIF*

to the ground the forward post of the 29 Baloch Regiment of the Pakistani Army from which the vicious attack took place. This should be done through the employment of direct firing weapons like bunker busting missiles and rocket launchers as well as devastating artillery and mortar fire.

As had been amply demonstrated during the Kargil conflict, India has a preponderance of artillery firepower – even if the guns are bordering on obsolescence – and this capability must be put to use. The guns are a custodian of the last resort of the country’s borders and send an unmistakable message when such a message is needed to be sent. The Pakistan army will retaliate but cannot hope to match India in a long-drawn exchange of artillery fire. Simultaneously, Special Forces must be used to degrade the Pakistan army’s logistics infrastructure in the areas behind the rogue post, while remaining prepared for all contingencies that might arise.

Over the last three years and particularly in the summer of

2012, infiltration levels from across the LoC have risen sharply. The Pakistan army has been violating the cease-fire with impunity to push through its Jihadis under the cover of fire. It is obvious that protests at the diplomatic level have failed to elicit a positive response. It is now time to act decisively. The message must go home that while India has no grouse against the Pakistani people, its army’s cruelty will no longer be countenanced.

The people of India expect the government to respond appropriately. The government must convincingly demonstrate that there is a limit to Indian tolerance.

The people of India expect the government to respond appropriately. The government must convincingly

demonstrate that there is a limit to Indian tolerance. The sacrifice made by the soldiers who have been martyred must not go in vain.

### **Pakistan’s Internal Turmoil**

The Pakistan army has much to lose by activating the largely quiet Indian border when it is engaged in fighting major internal security challenges, even as the Pakistan government has been embroiled in countering continuing political

turbulence, judicial activism, sectarian clashes and a stagnating economy.

The Pakistan army is facing, perhaps, its deepest crisis since its strategic blunder in Kargil. Its counter-insurgency policy has been unsuccessful and casualties have been mounting. The use of air strikes and helicopter gunships to attack terrorist hideouts has proved to be counter-productive. The Pakistan army has been forced by the TTP to wage a three-front "war": against the TTP and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) in South Waziristan; against the anti-Shia Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) in the sensitive Darra Adam Khel-Kohat area of Khyber-Pakhtoonwa [formerly NWFP] and the Shia-dominated Kurram Agency of FATA; and, against the Tehrik-e-Nifaz-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM), headed by Maulana Fazlullah, and the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) sheltering across the Durand Line in Afghanistan.

Though it has flirted with peace deals with the militants, the army finds it impossible to meet the demands of the TTP and the TNSM. According to B. Raman, a noted counter-terrorism expert,

these demands include the suspension of all military operations in the tribal areas; the withdrawal of army posts from the FATA; the release of all tribals arrested under the Anti-Terrorism Act; the release of Maulana Abdul Aziz Ghazi and tribal students arrested during the commando action in the Lal Masjid of Islamabad in July 2007; and, enforcement of the Sharia in the tribal areas.

The US and its allies have become increasingly more frustrated by Pakistan's failure to deal with al Qaeda and Taliban militants launching raids on US and NATO troops across the Durand Line. The Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff of the US and other officials have been meeting General Kayani frequently to impress on him the need to be more pro-active in counter-insurgency operations. Unilateral trans-border intervention against militants inside Pakistani territory by the US is continuing through drone strikes. President Obama may soon approve trans-border ground action through Special Forces. Under these circumstances, it would be grossly illogical for the Pakistan army to activate the LoC with India.



## **Pakistan must Reduce Tensions**

The Pakistan army must make amends for its grossly unethical conduct and completely stop further violations of the cease-fire along the LoC. It must also stop sponsoring terrorism, as promised by Musharraf in January 2003, or else it must be ready to face retaliation. General Bikram Singh, the Indian Army Chief, said during his press conference on the eve of Army Day that India reserved the right to retaliate at a time and point of its choosing. The IAF Chief has also stated that if Pakistan's response is inadequate, other options will have to be considered. The Indian army has felt for long that the only place where it can gainfully hit back at the Pakistan army is at the LoC and it would make full use of a breakdown in the cease-fire. No

one in India wants a complete reversal of the gains of the last ten years during diplomatic negotiations. However, when the need for self respect and national dignity is weighed against the gains of diplomacy, the balance will weigh heavily in favour of national dignity.

Pakistan's political turmoil, internal instability, a floundering economy and weak institutions make for an explosive mix. It is apparent to even lay observers that the country is in for still greater difficulties ahead. Its leadership would do well to bring down the tension on the LoC.

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# India - China Cultural Interface: An Agenda For Future

- *Brig (retd) Vinod Anand & Dr. Anirban Ganguly*

## Linked Through Civilisation & Culture

**B**oth India and China have fascinated each other - culturally, religiously and civilisationally – over the past two millennia. Across the centuries the two great civilisations have continually communicated with each other and, until recent times, had seen a peaceful co-existence 'for over two thousand years.' As Indian historian of world civilisations, D.P. Singhal observes, 'this amicable relationship may have been nurtured by the close historical and religious ties of Buddhism introduced to China by Indian monks at a very early stage of their respective histories.' (*India and World Civilisation*, vol.1 London, 1969). Chinese scholars in search of wisdom and deeply motivated by the quest of knowledge undertook some of the most arduous continental journeys to India. Indian scholars and teachers similarly travelled to China, taught there, were revered,

feted and established themselves as knowledge-lighthouses. The civilisational exchange and interface thus began and was enhanced by centuries of interaction. In fact, India and China formed a formidable civilisational and cultural coalition long before the rise of the West. One of India's veteran diplomats and former foreign secretary, K.P.S. Menon (1898-1982) once put the relation in perspective, when he said that, 'The hall mark of intercourse of Sino-Indian relations is cultural intercourse and affinity. The two great peoples, wedded to civilized living in the ways of peace, naturally find in the exchange of culture the truest expression of their being. Not for them the covetous eyes of neither rapacious plunder nor territorial aggrandizement.' ('My Tribute to Tan-Yun-Shan' in Tan Chung ed., *In the Footsteps of Xuanzang: Tan Yun-Shan and India*, New Delhi, 1999).

Economic and cultural exchanges between the two civilisations have

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\* *Brig (retd) Vinod Anand - Senior Fellow, VIF & Dr. Anirban Ganguly - Associate Fellow, VIF*

been traced back at least to the Qin (221-206BC) and Han (202BC-220AD) dynasties. The celebrated epics of India, Ramayana and Mahabharata, contain numerous references to China. The Mahabharata in fact 'refers to China several times' and mentions, for example, the presents brought by the Chinese for the *Rajasuya Yagna* (coronation) of the Pandavas. The famous *Arthasastra*, *Manusmriti* too mentions China. Legendary historian of Asian civilizations, René Grousset (1885-1952), argued that the name China came 'from an ancient Sanskrit name for the regions to the east, and not, as often supposed, from the name of the state of Ch'in.' It would be interesting to look at some of these suggestions made on the origins of the name from the civilisational contact dimension. The Sanskrit name *Cina*, it has been proposed, may have been inspired from the small state of that name Chan-si (Shan-si) in the northwest of China, which thrived in the fourth century B.C. Pointing at another clue, other scholars have argued that the Greek word for China

The Mahabharata in fact 'refers to China several times' and mentions, for example, the presents brought by the Chinese for the *Rajasuya Yagna* (coronation) of the Pandavas. The famous *Arthasastra*, *Manusmriti* too mentions China.

*Tzinista*, may have been derived from the Sanskrit *Chinasthana*. (Singhal, op.cit) 'I see no reason to doubt,' commented sinologist Arthur Waley (1889-1966) in his book, *The Way and its Power*, "that the 'holy mountain-men' (*sheng-hsien*) described by Lieh Tzu are Indian rishis; and when we read in Chuang Tzu of certain Taoists who practiced movements very similar to the *asanas* of Hindu yoga, it is at least a possibility that some knowledge of the yoga technique which these rishis used had also drifted into China." (Cited in Singhal, op.cit)

Over ten centuries ago, Chinese monks Xuan Zang (Hsuan Tsang) and Fa Xian (Fa Hsien) journeyed to India for Buddhist scriptures and knowledge, while renowned Indian monks Kumarajiva and Bodhidharma spread Buddhist teachings in China. In modern times, Professor Tan Yun-Shan (1898-1983), the indefatigable director of the Cheena Bhavan at Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, symbolised the continuance of this ancient civilisational-cultural quest through his life and mission.

In what can perhaps be termed as one of the most significant description and tribute to these common cultural and civilisational ties between the two countries, Tan Yun-Shan, while addressing scholars and students at Santiniketan in the presence of Rabindranath Tagore, observed:

India and China are naturally a pair of sister countries. Their similarities and their associations are great, numerous, and intimate. Looking over the geography and history of all the nations in the world, we find there are not any other two nations that can be compared to our two countries. This is true from every respect and from every standard of observation and judgment. Our two countries, both situated in the bright and glorious continent of Asia, India to the south-west and China to the north-east, spread out lordly in different directions but yet are linked up at the main line, just like the two wheels of a carriage or the two wings of a bird, and, even better to say, like the two hands and feet or the two ears and eyes of a person. And the Himalayas, gigantic and majestic, brilliant and magnificent, exactly resemble the common backbone, or the shoulders, or the neck, and also the nerve system of theirs.

Though their boundaries are marked off, yet the physical shape is similar. (*Cultural Interchanges between India and China* in Tan-Chung, *op.cit.*)

### **Renewing the Link**

For historical and geopolitical reasons, there was a hiatus in this civilisational interaction, while both India and China suffered the effects of colonialism and Western imperialism. It brought about an interruption, a break and an eventual cessation in this interaction. Both were preoccupied in dealing with and then resisting colonial and imperialist forces. But even here, the link had not completely ceased. China and India extended each other mutual support in the fight against colonial rule and the struggle for national independence and liberation. In 1937, the Indian National Congress issued a statement condemning the Japanese invasion of China. Doctor Dwarkanath Kotnis travelled all the way to China as a member of an Indian medical aid team and devoted his life to the cause of the liberation of the Chinese people. As a leading light of the University of Calcutta, Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee, later to become Industries Minister in free

India's first cabinet, facilitated academic and cultural exchange between the two countries by inviting scholars from China to come and stay in Calcutta and study Indian culture and languages. After liberation, a period saw some progress at trying to renew this link.

In the 1950s, China-India relations developed smoothly and the two countries co-initiated the famous *Panchsheel*, the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, which are still recognised as the basic principles of international relations. But other political and historical issues intervened and interrupted, for long decades, this phase of cultural re-forging.

But eventually a process of recovery started. Thanks to their joint efforts, China and India diplomatic, trade and people-to-people exchanges were revived in the mid-1970s. The Indian Prime Minister's visit to China in 1988 made a breakthrough in bilateral relations. In the 1990s, high-level visits between the two countries increased, and cooperation in

various fields made steady progress. Two agreements were signed for the maintenance of peace and tranquillity and confidence-building measures in their border areas. In May 1998 came the Agreement on Cultural Cooperation which provided for the implementation of an executive Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP). Thereafter, CEPs have been signed which provide an apt space for cooperation in a gamut of cultural areas including exchanges of visits of artists, officials, writers, archivists and archaeologists, organising cultural festivals, exchanges in the field of mass media, youth affairs and sports. In June 2003, a MoU was signed on reciprocal basis for setting up of Cultural Centres in the two capitals.

In a symbolic continuation of this gradual progress in further reactivating cultural ties in 2007, the restored Xuanzang Memorial Hall was inaugurated at Nalanda, in Bihar. The then Chinese foreign minister, who led a 110 member delegation to the ceremony, had then underlined the need for the

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two countries to work together. 'Let us begin from this beautiful example' he had then said. The year 2007 was also declared the 'Year of China-India Tourism Friendship'. In May 2010, an Indian-style Buddhist Temple in the International Garden on the west side of the White Horse Temple in Luoyang, which was built by India over a period of five years, was dedicated to the people of China. Combining ancient principles of design and modern technology, the Rs.18 crore edifice was a unique gift from India and represented a bridge to the 2000 years old civilisational ties between the two people. While inaugurating the temple, the then President of India had observed that, 'Luoyang is widely considered to be a cradle of the Chinese civilisation.... Historically it (the White Horse temple) has the unique distinction of symbolising an intermingling of Indian and Chinese cultures...I am confident that the Indian-styled temple will also be perceived by generations to come as a testimony of our friendship.'

A Centre for Indian Studies was also inaugurated in Peking University and Shenzhen University as also an annual Visiting Chair in the Humanities

and Social Sciences on 18 June 2008. The first visiting Indian professor has taken over the assignment in Shenzhen University. A bilateral Education Exchange Programme (EEP) also exists for exchange of scholars, mutual recognition of academic degrees, cooperation in the field of teachers' training, exchanges between higher education institutions, and exchanges of Hindi and Chinese language teachers. Some Chinese universities and educational institutions have also entered into MoUs for information, faculty and student exchanges with Indian counterparts. An increasing number of Chinese students are also coming to India for undergraduate studies. The two governments also annually offer 25 scholarships each under the CEP; though meagre and in need of urgent numerical revision, this was also a step forward in cementing academic collaboration.

Some travelling exhibitions by both sides have been organised in each other's cities to promote cultural awareness. The Governments of India and China have also organised the 'Festival of India' in China and the 'Festival of China' in India. Perhaps the time has now come for both India

and China, aspiring to re-emerge as great powers on the world stage, to actively renew and reinvent those past cultural and historic links. Both have in them huge cultural reservoirs that could considerably enhance their emergence. A few pointers to possible measures in this direction can perhaps further facilitate the exploration for cultural cooperation and interface.

### Future Pathways

The following are recommendations which, if implemented, would strengthen India-China cultural relationship so that cultural ties can contribute to improving relations between the two countries.

1. A Joint Cultural-Cooperation-Committee (JCCC) could be officially set up to look into developing a framework of extensive and intensive cultural cooperation with a long term objective in mind. Without a joint framework, cultural cooperation initiatives will lack a defined objective and systematic progress. The respective Ministries of Culture should be tasked to take this forward. In India,

an officer at the level of Joint Secretary can be made responsible for coordinating and monitoring the entire effort. Eminent personalities from the field of culture, academia and media will be members of this Committee. Various joint sub-committees can be formed to take forward the work in the areas enumerated below. These sub-committees will periodically report to the nodal central JCCC the progress of the projects undertaken.

2. A systematic programme for collaboration between leading Cultural organisations on either side needs to be drawn up. Mere travelling exhibitions will not suffice. The formation of a Cultural Exhibition Expert Committee with members from both countries to look into the conceptualizing, planning and coordinating of these exhibitions can be an interesting step forward in this. Leading curators and art historians from either side could be involved in the work.
3. Increased Museum to Museum contacts, diversification of exhibitions

to areas such as: handicrafts, textiles, music, artifacts, artisanal exchanges, exhibitions of cultural products from rural India and some other areas. India is rich in such diverse products and the experience can be really enriching for the Chinese. A Joint-Museum Committee can be formed to oversee this aspect.

4. Festivals of India in China and of China in India can be planned more frequently with increased scope. The Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) is doing something in this regard but this needs to be further enhanced and diversified. Enhancing understanding of Chinese culture in India and Indian culture in China should be the principal objective of this exercise.
5. Joint effort in preserving tangible heritage can be undertaken. India and China can take an initiative in providing expertise for the preservation of heritage monuments that symbolise India-China cultural and civilisational links. Sites such as these can be identified all over India and

China, and a joint collaborative group can be set up to study the status of these and the possibilities of cooperation in their preservation.

6. The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) and leading Indian institutions such as the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) can develop a series of collaborative efforts in various areas of research on Chinese and Indian societal evolution and issues. The Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR), the apex body for historical research in India, can also draw up a series of collaborative projects with leading Chinese institutions of historical research. Exchange of scholars, collaborative projects on preservation and dissemination of manuscripts that highlight past cultural exchanges, forming a joint data-bank of these can be undertaken and then further diversified. It may be an interesting area where an increased cultural cooperation can make an impact. India's flagship effort in this direction, the



National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM) is already doing work in the area of preserving and discovering historical manuscripts and epigraphical material. Collaboration with the NMM will enrich the epigraphical reserves of both the countries. The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) in New Delhi has also been working in this area especially in highlighting and studying the India-China cultural link. The IGNCA has been collecting material on past Chinese scholars who were fascinated by India and contributed to the understanding of the two people and civilisations. It has, for instance, extensively chronicled and documented the works of Professor Tan Yuan Shan, a true cultural Ambassador of China in India. Efforts could be made to further document and commemorate such past initiatives. Universities in both countries that have cultural studies centres need to collaborate and create a consortium of such centres.

7. China has been taking part in India's efforts at creating the new Nalanda International University. The aim is to revive the ancient seat of Buddhist learning in the present day Bihar, as a modern centre of knowledge. A similar sister project could be conceived in China in some ancient Buddhist or Confucian seat of learning, or any other historical area closely identified with the growth of China as a great civilisation. India could be asked to take the initiative in setting up such a university in collaboration with the Chinese ministry of education. Gradually neighbouring countries can also be invited to be part of the cultural-educational initiative. Such a project may not necessarily be in the form of a university but can be conceived as a centre for cultural research and education that will impart special courses on Indian and Chinese culture, language and civilisation and may also confer recognised degrees. In short, it may become a centre for training and developing cultural

ambassadors for both countries.

8. Media Study Centres can be set up in leading Universities in either country. Collaborative efforts at documentary production, educational film making and even mainstream film industries in both countries can be explored.

9. A lot can be learnt from China's model of sports and physical education. The Beijing Olympics

demonstrated that much could be learnt from the Chinese model and retailored to Indian conditions

and objectives. A close and dynamic cooperation framework between the two sports ministries could be worked out in this respect. The Sports Authority of India (SAI) can take a leading initiative in this matter. Since India has a struggling programme of general physical education, the Chinese model can be studied for its adaptability to India. Systematic exchange

programmes of physical education experts, coaches and leading sports personalities can take place with a defined schedule to be followed. In the early 1950s, India had implemented such an exchange programme with the then USSR and it had a remarkable effect in increasing the interest in sports in the country.

The above are but broad pointers which, if given adequate and

sustained thought and planning, could launch and further strengthen efforts at civilisational bridge-building. The agenda of India-China cultural interface

for the future offers a varied scope for collaboration and exchange. A dynamic outreach and initiative must come from both sides in order to take the collaboration to the next stage. Such a step would certainly be for a larger purpose and benefit. Professor Tan Yun-Shan perhaps foresaw the future when he said, pointing to this need:

We Indians and Chinese must wake up at once, and restore our

A lot can be learnt from China's model of sports and physical education. The Beijing Olympics demonstrated that much could be learnt from the Chinese model and retailored to Indian conditions and objectives.

old national relationship. By the interchange of our cultures, we shall achieve our cultural renaissance; by cultural renaissance we shall create a new world civilization; and by the new civilization we shall relieve all mankind. Our two countries having made a glorious world in the past, can't we make again a glorious world in the future?

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*\* The above text is an updated and modified version of the presentation made at Shenzhen University, PRC during the conference "The Fourth China-South Asia Cultural Forum" organized by Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries from November, 14-17, 2012 at Centre for Indian Studies, Shenzhen University.*

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# RBI Relented Under Pressure For A Rate Cut

- *V Anantha Nageswaran*

Reuters has a news-item with the following headline: *“India's finance minister P. Chidambaram is putting welfare, defence, atomic energy and road projects under the knife in a final attempt to hit a tough fiscal deficit target by March, risking short-term economic growth and angering cabinet colleagues.”* Separately, a well-known investment house has just published a report on the prospect for the government achieving a fiscal deficit ratio of 5.3% of the GDP in the financial year, 2012-13. Based on assumptions about the amount of money that the government could raise from spectrum re-auction to be held on March 11, from further sale of government stake in public sector undertakings and from expenditure compression, the report cheerfully predicts that the government could achieve a deficit ratio of 5.3% of the GDP.

The fiscal deficit ratio was 5.9% of the GDP in 2011-12 and the target

was 5.1% for 2012-13. The difference between 5.3% and 6.0% of the GDP is deferment of payment from the government for under-recoveries to oil companies and to fertiliser companies. Deferment of subsidies and compression of expenditure are not credible fiscal deficit reduction measures. The government's fuel pricing 'reforms' have been negated for this year by the rise in the cap on subsidised cylinders from six to nine cylinders. That offsets the steady monthly increase of 50 paise per litre in the retail price of diesel at least for three months.

There is also another issue to contend with. Bulk consumers of diesel are expected to pay the market price of diesel. Recent news articles have recorded the diversion of retail supplies to bulk users as they balk at paying a higher price. If they do, either they become unviable or have to pass on price increases to their end-users, setting off a rise in other

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\* *V Anantha Nageswaran - Visiting Fellow, VIF*

prices too. Some of the users who are resorting to showing up at the retail petrol station to buy diesel are State road transport corporations, shopping malls and hotels. The Delhi International Airport is in a quandary. It is a bulk user. Its cost will rise substantially. If it pays more, it will pass on the costs to the passengers and the airlines. Both will not be amused. Consider another and sadder case:

*“The textile industry in Tamil Nadu, which accounts for over one-third of the total production in the country, directly employs over five million people, and earns over Rs 50,000 crore in foreign exchange every year, is at its wits’ end. S Dinakaran, chairman of The Southern India Mills Association, claims that spinning mills in the state have reduced their power generation (from diesel, of course) from 1,500-1,600 Mw to almost 1,000 Mw after the subsidy was removed for bulk buyers. The cost of producing yarn, he says, has gone up by Rs 4 a kg.”*

(Source: <http://www.business-standard.com/india/news/diesel-drama/500747/>).

Of course, these problems are inevitable. There are no cost-free solutions for an importing country

if global oil prices are high and rising. There will be a hit to economic growth and sectors have to think of innovative solutions, if they can. Some will fail. It is an unfortunate but inevitable consequence. What can be faulted is the failure of governments to provide for infrastructure such as adequate and reliable power supply, forcing businesses and the public to rely on diesel to generate their own electricity and then finding themselves stymied even in that endeavour.

Further, the introduction of dual pricing for commodities is fraught with such inherent risks of diversion and distortion. Similarly, the government raising import duties on gold has brought back smuggling and a black market in gold. These economic costs have to be taken into consideration when one analyses the recent ‘fiscal consolidation’ measures of the government. Notwithstanding these sector-specific pains, if real fiscal consolidation was achieved, then one could be somewhat assuaged. What the government saves on the one hand will be given away through the other hand, as the full impact of the fiscal burden entailed by the ‘Right to Food’ (Food Security Bill) will be felt in

the financial year 2014-15. In other words, genuine fiscal consolidation in India remains as elusive as ever. Cheerleading of the superficial fiscal consolidation efforts in the media and elsewhere only helps to obfuscate the issue. They also create the risk that investors are taken by surprise when the reality cannot be deferred any further.

Why is such a lengthy discussion important to the consideration of the decision by the Reserve Bank of India to cut rates on January 29? One of the motivating arguments for the rate cut was that the government had a grip on the fiscal deficit. The second one is that the non-food manufacturing wholesale price inflation rate had declined to below 5%. Hence, the Reserve Bank of India not only reduced the repo and reverse repo rates by 25 basis points to 7.75% and 6.75% respectively, but also cut the Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) to 4.0% from 4.25%.

Many criticise the Reserve Bank of India for coming up with ad-hoc explanations for its decisions that vary from meeting to meeting. In other words, the RBI is criticised

for lacking a framework. The truth is that the central bank does have a framework. If it went by that framework, it would be unable to cut the interest rate for quite some time. In other words, there is no room to cut rates. Consumer price inflation is in double digits, the fiscal deficit is far from under control and the current account deficit suggests that the rupee needed interest rate support to induce foreigners to hold rupee-denominated assets.

The reason that the RBI referred to the high retail inflation rate for not cutting rates in December and then to the low inflation rate in the wholesale prices of non-food manufactured goods in January for cutting rates is that it is acting against its sound instincts and framework when it cuts rates. Hence, the central bank sounds ad-hoc and arbitrary. Further, the central bank is right to cite the high external deficit as the limiting factor for future rate cuts.

Into 2013-14, twin deficits will remain a risk factor for Indian economic growth, for a meaningful reduction in short and long-term interest rates, for India's credit

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rating and for the Indian rupee. It is unclear as to what foreign institutional investors are celebrating by following up on their net investments in Indian stocks of up to 24.5 billion US dollars into Indian stocks in 2012 with another 4.6 billion dollars in

January. Of course, their myopia is not restricted to Indian stocks and markets. It is universal and that is another topic for another occasion.

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# Systemic Failure Or Organ Failure?

- *Dr M N Buch*

The Chambers Twenty-first Dictionary, which is quite an authoritative lexicon, describes 'system' in the following words, "A set of inter-connected or inter-related parts forming a complex whole". The word 'systemic' is defined as "referring or relating to a whole organism". 'Organ' is defined as, "A part of a body or plant which has a special function, e.g. a kidney, a leaf". Therefore, when an organ fails it is an individual part which becomes inoperative and, perhaps, with proper treatment the organ, or part, can either be repaired or made functional, or it can be replaced. A systemic failure, however, would be much more serious because in such a situation the entire system, or the complex whole consisting of individual organs, begins to give way and this can lead to what can only be called termination which is irreversible. Here all the organs either seriatim or collectively fail. The situation can still be retrieved by repair or replacement. The question which faces India today is whether our body politic is facing

organ failures or is it that we are a looking at a system failure?

The total system under which India operates is what is provided in the Constitution. The body politic consists of three major subsystems, the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary which together constitute the whole system called the Indian State. Within the overall system and the sub-systems, there are a number of organs which are required to perform specific functions. Schools and colleges are required to impart education, medical institutions are meant to look after the health of citizens, the Income Tax Department is supposed to collect taxes levied by the Legislature, the Agriculture Department is meant to promote agriculture, and the Police are required to create an overall environment of security and for that purpose to maintain law and order, prevent, detect and prosecute crime, guard the country against acts of terrorism and generally reassure people that they can go about their normal

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vocations in peace. This functional distribution of responsibility applies to all the organs of the State and to all levels of public servants, elected or appointed. Sometimes a particular organisation or department fails to live up to our expectations. Some civil servants do not carry out their duties faithfully. Quite often, even at subsystem level, there is failure, such as the virtual lock out of Parliament that we have witnessed for the last few months. Sometimes the citizens themselves are so annoyed with a particular organ of the State that they react strongly and, therefore, there is a hiatus between public servants and people at large. These are aberrations which will crop up from time to time in any system, but the system itself has to be resilient enough to apply self-correcting measures so that the organ which is faltering is brought back on track. Organ failure is correctable but when the self correcting mechanism fails it can have a cascading effect on the functioning of organs and an unchecked failure of one organ can

Democracy, therefore, becomes the very base, the very foundation on which the system rests and this foundation cannot be destroyed. This does not mean that the superstructure, which corresponds with the organs of a system, cannot be damaged, but systemic failure cannot take place unless the foundations themselves crack.

cause other organs to come under stress and fall. This can lead to systemic failure, which has to be avoided at any cost.

How sound are our systems? Because the republic is founded on democracy and the fact that every five years people do exercise their franchise in an environment which is basically free of fear means that democracy has taken very deep roots in India. Democracy, therefore, becomes the very base, the very foundation on which the system rests and this foundation cannot be destroyed. This does not mean that the superstructure, which corresponds with the organs of a system, cannot be damaged, but systemic failure cannot take place unless the foundations themselves crack. The foundations of Indian democracy are stable and safe and this can be categorically proved by the failure of the State of Emergency which Indira Gandhi declared in 1975 and had to hastily withdraw in 1977. This is one side of the story, but the other side is that if organs fail and corrective measures are not taken

in time, cumulatively this can lead to a system failure. There are many critics, many pessimists, who say that this is beginning to take place increasingly and that we are in danger of systemic failure. People with extremist views go to the extent of saying that the systems themselves are rotten and we should scrap them and create new systems. In Russia, the Tsarist Government and the Tsarist system had become rotten and, therefore, the Russian Revolution took place and Imperial Russia became the Communist ruled Soviet Union. Every organ of the old regime was destroyed.

The problem with revolutions is that they quite often go against the established nature of things and, in turn, they themselves fail. Two glaring examples of this are Russia today and the modern Peoples Republic of China. Within seventy years of establishment the Soviet Union broke up and disappeared, to be replaced by the Russian Federation which has moved away from the one-party rule of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to something which is attempting to resemble western multi party democracy. The Central Asian Republics have broken away from the Soviet

Union and its successor State, Russia, as have Ukraine, Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and the Caucasian Republics of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia. The system failed and the country split.

The second example is of China, where Mao's revolution transformed a rotten Kuo Min Tang governed China to a Peoples Republic, which consolidated the country but also brought it under harsh one-party rule. Today, however, the picture has changed and is continuing to change. Under Deng Xiaoping and his successors, China has moved away from an extreme Left Wing form of communism and instead wholeheartedly embraced the capitalist economic system. Politically China has remained under one-party rule and the tension is apparent between an economic system which is liberal and a political system which is still rooted in the shibboleths of Marx, Lenin and Mao. Yet, this country has accepted Hong Kong and Macau, former British and Portuguese colonies, as part of China but following their old political systems. Here revolution has turned to evolution, which has kept the country intact and will probably drive it closer to liberal

ideas of political organisation, though not necessarily the Westminster or the American model of democracy. This country is to be watched very carefully, not so much because it is now an economic powerhouse but because political changes are taking place which may have very far reaching effects globally.

It is in the context of what the holders of extreme views on how the Indian State functions have to say about scrapping the system that I have brought up the position prevailing in Russia and China. The Indian system of change is evolutionary rather than revolutionary and, therefore, the change tends to be seamless, painless and very long lasting. For those with short memories I would like to draw their attention to what Jawaharlal Nehru and S.K.Dey achieved through the Community Development Programme. Colonial India with its highly regulatory administration was launched on the path of development, especially rural development, by co-opting the people of our villages into an effort to galvanise rural society and unleash people

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oriented, people driven rural development. Without anyone realizing it, India evolved the system of development blocks, each headed by an officer specifically dedicated to the development agenda. The regulatory mechanism of the tehsil and district remained, but a new unit of administration, the block which was coterminous with tehsils in States which had small tehsils and with more than one block per tehsil where the tehsil was large and could be segmented into more than one block. Extension officers in various disciplines were posted in each block. The BDO was equivalent in rank to the Tehsildar, but because the development administration structure was separated from revenue administration, which could be called coercive to an extent, we had a new cadre of officials who were accountable to the people at block level and whose only agenda was improvement of the rural economy. Setting up a parallel development administration without reducing the importance of the regulatory administration was a remarkable achievement

and India can take great pride in this. It is on this foundation that the subsequent panchayati Raj system has been created. This evolutionary form of passing real power to the people through the Panchayats is an achievement of which India can be justifiably proud. Had we abolished the tehsil and created only a development administration we would probably have had the chaos that now prevails in Pakistan where half baked reforms virtually destroyed the district administration without a parallel Panchayat system to take over. This step disconnected the police from accountability to the Magistracy and converted the Deputy Commissioner of a district to a District Coordinating Officer with virtually no coordinating powers, has led to administrative chaos. Our method is better.

The recent debate has originated from the unfortunate rape of a young woman in a moving bus in Delhi and her subsequent death, which has led to an outburst of horror and rage against the manner in which the Indian State is functioning. People are absolutely fed up with crime, especially against women and the rape of the young lady has led to widespread public revulsion and demand for action. People want

modified lynch law to apply, they are attacking the police, the judiciary and the legislature for failure to enact tough laws and to enforce them and they want sweeping changes in the organs of the State which would amount to systemic changes. The anger of the people is understandable, but what is not understandable is the manner in which government has handled the whole matter. What the people needed was reassurance from the highest officials of the State, including the President and Prime Minister, that in the instant case there would be swift justice, in general there would be a tightening of security and law enforcement in such a way that law breakers begin to have fear of the law and that the general security environment would be improved so that everyone in India, especially women, has the right to effective protection of laws. This demand is absolutely justified and had government taken steps immediately which could convince the people that government is serious, the things which happened in Delhi when the protests started would not have taken place. If the President, the Prime Minister or the Home Minister, as also the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi had not

sheltered behind police barricades and had come to Vijay Chowk to talk to the protesters, not only would the people be reassured but the agitation itself would have ended. None of these functionaries thought it fit to meet the people, not within the four walls of their own office but in the open where people could congregate around them. A little courage shown by the leaders would have defused the situation immediately, but then we are ruled by insensitive people who are also cowards. This is a prime example of the executive organ of the State not performing its duty and to some extent this amounts to an organ failure. However, it is remediable if for the future the lesson is learnt and the administration goes out of its way to meet people, hear them and then provides suitable remedy and takes suitable corrective steps.

There are a few signals about organ failure or at least organ stress on which I would like to comment. The first goes beyond an organ and forms a sub-system which is a vital constituent of the Indian State. I refer here to the

There are a few signals about organ failure or at least organ stress on which I would like to comment. The first goes beyond an organ and forms a sub-system which is a vital constituent of the Indian State. I refer here to the Legislature.

Legislature. Whether it be Parliament or a State Legislature, the legislative organ of the State is really the most important constituent of the democratic system because the House is elected by all the people and, collectively and individually, it and its members represent the people of India. The representatives of the people have at all times to be accountable to the people and, therefore, behave in a responsible manner. The people's mandate to the

Legislature is to deliberate and legislate, that is, give us a system of laws which makes India a society based on law rather than arbitrariness or

whimsicality of the ruler. It is the custodian of the public exchequer in that it votes grants and the budget in its totality, which authorises the Executive to draw funds from the Consolidated Fund of India and make accruals to it through revenue and capital receipts. The Executive can neither impose a tax nor an impost, nor can it spend even a single paisa without the approval of the Legislature. In turn, the Legislature can call the Executive

to account on how the money has been spent and in this it is assisted by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India. The Executive has to account for every expenditure and, therefore, the parliamentary convention is that if government is defeated on a Money Bill and, in particular the Appropriation Bill, it must resign.

The Legislature also calls the Executive to account in its executive functioning through questions, call attention motions, adjournment motions, motions of no confidence, debate, discussions and resolutions. This can only be done if the Legislature meets for extended periods of time, each day's session lasts the whole day and discussions and debate take place in an environment of peace and normal give and take. If the Legislature meets for just 50 to 60 working days in a year, as is the case with most State Legislatures, or proceedings are held up for days and months because the opposition and the ruling party do not see eye to eye on issues and nonissues, then the legislative subsystem comes under more stress. This can affect the working of the Executive and then there is a real danger of a systemic failure.

There are remedial measures which can be adopted. India does need more than one party and, as I have written in the past in extenso, ideally we should have a centrist party, a left of centre party and a right of centre party in which the centrist party becomes a pivot, but also a role model which prevents an excessive swing either to the Left or to the Right. Splinter groups and purely regional outfits should either have no presence in Parliament or a very subdued presence. If we adopt one single political reform, that is, no independent candidate stand for Parliamentary election unless he has won at least one local government election and one assembly election, with a condition applying to regional parties or splinter groups that unless they, as a party, hold at least five seats each in the Legislature of three States, they cannot contest an election to Parliament. The smaller parties would then either have to merge into larger parties, or they would have to expand beyond the narrow confines of their State boundaries, or they would have to confine themselves to State Legislatures only. They would then not be able to exert pressure in Parliament which would be far more in proportion to their numerical strength. If the

larger parties are no longer at the mercy of these small groups one can definitely expect more responsible behaviour by them, both in government and in opposition.

Moving from a whole subsystem to organs of government within subsystems, I would like to comment on three of them. The first is government. As a part of the Executive organ of the State the government is required to function within the mandate given to it by the people, that is, the approval given by the people during elections and the agenda and programmes of the party which is voted to power. The party manifesto, the party ideology and the party agenda cannot and must not be altered case by case and government must adhere to the policy guidelines provided to them by the manifesto and agenda of the ruling party. This will guide future legislation and it will certainly guide policy formulation on specific issues. Within these parameters, however, those instrumentalities of the State which are responsible for implementation of policy will take

This is an organ failure, but if it enlarges itself to encompass the whole range of executive action, then organ failure here can lead to failure of the subsystem and this must be guarded against.

the orders from the law, the people's mandate and the decisions of the Council of Ministers. The problem in India is that government itself vacillates and dithers, with the result that its officers do not have clear-cut orders or a clear-cut policy which they are supposed to implement. This is an organ failure, but if it enlarges itself to encompass the whole range of executive action, then organ failure here can lead to failure of the subsystem and this must be guarded against. The Constitution in Part XIV already gives the Civil Services protection against arbitrary action, the Preamble, Articles 14, 19, 21 and 38 of the Constitution lay down the fundamental duty of government to promote a welfare state and the Rules of Business framed under the Constitution categorically provided for the manner in which public servants will function, impartially and without fear or favour. If we can go back to a system in which every functionary is not only allowed but actively encouraged to do his duty according to the mandate given to him, we would be able to stop the downward slide of the efficiency

and efficacy of our public servants. This is well within our means and if there is to be public protest, it should not be confined to an individual case of rape but must take the form of insisting that government functions effectively.

The second organ I would like to pick up is the judiciary, which is one of the constituent organs of the State and forms a complete subsystem. People talk of judicial reforms. Even the Supreme Court keeps emphasising this, but no one has really articulated what they mean by judicial reforms. Any reform, which aims at reducing or in any way curbing the independence of the judiciary enshrined in Chapter 5, Part V and Chapter 5 and 6, Chapter VI of the Constitution, has to be firmly rejected. If the judiciary, from the court of first instance upto the Supreme Court, becomes in any way amenable to pressure by the Executive or the Legislature, it can neither function independently nor can it be a guardian of the Constitution and the rights of the people against Executive or Legislative highhandedness. Having said this one has also to recognise that there is a great deal of inefficiency and even corruption in the judiciary today and that this has

to be cleansed with a heavy hand. The cleansing process, however, must be a part of the judicial system, with no say of the Executive or the Legislature. The judicial reforms should take the following form.

1. An objective assessment of the strength of judges and magistrates from the court of first instance upto the Supreme Court which should be approved to deal with the huge number of cases now pending or likely to be instituted in future.
2. A process of selection of judges which safeguards the independence of the judiciary, but is transparent, open to examination and time bound in the matter of selection and appointment.
3. A clear-cut understanding by the judiciary at all levels that the provisions of section 309, Cr.P.C, which call for speedy disposal on a day-to-day basis will be applicable to every court in India and every judge and magistrate will be held accountable for delays. In this the High Courts and the Supreme Court must interact with the Bar Council of the State and Bar Council of India to



ensure that these Councils lean hard on their members to help in speedy disposal of cases rather than act as obstructions which indefinitely delay trials.

4. The High Courts and Supreme Court must exercise self-restraint in the admission of appeals and petitions so that trivia is thrown out at motion hearing. Today many petitions are entertained, especially Public Interest Litigation, where the issue is high profile that the judge can garner free publicity. This hits at the roots of the anonymity of judges. Today a normal petition or appeal before a High Court or the Supreme Court remains unheard for years at a time, but Public Interest Litigation gets priority. The Supreme Court must take a good hard look at what really constitutes public interest and must issue suitable directions to the High Courts so that normal cases received due attention. Of course, in order to achieve speedy trial there has to be the cooperation of the prosecuting agency and of the police in ensuring that

process is served and presence of witnesses ensured.

The third instrumentality I would like to speak about is the Police. At one level it is the coercive arm of the State because it is utilised for putting down public violence and maintenance of law and order. This is a legitimate role, provided that the Police is not used selectively. We need to strengthen the Executive Magistracy and the Police in tandem so that, faced with a particular law and situation, the Police and the Executive Magistracy will react in an uniform and predictable manner. Minimum necessary force will be used at the first instance of a law and order situation developing, with the emphasis on preventive action, followed by physical force when that becomes necessary. Neither government nor any other functionary should be allowed to interfere in this part of the duty of the Police, that is, immediate intervention to prevent a law and order situation spiralling out of hand. If such a philosophy has been built into the Gujarat Police and Maharashtra Police the post Ayodhya riots in Maharashtra would have been brought under control very quickly, as would the post Godhra

riots in Gujarat. The coercive arm of the State, in exercising force, must do so in the interest of the person at large, which means that necessary force will be used to curb lawlessness at the earliest juncture, with no one having the power to stop the police from doing its duty.

Another area in which the Police operate is in the prevention of crime, its detection, investigation and prosecution without delay and in maintaining surveillance over criminals, which would prevent them from indulging in criminal activities. Under Chapter XI of the Code of Criminal Procedure the Police is not only authorised but is required to take preventive action so that cognisable offences may be nipped in the bud. Under Chapter XII of the Cr.P.C the Police is required to investigate every cognisable case and to carry the investigation forward upto the stage of filing a challan before a competent court. Under law the power of the investigating officer to investigate a cognisable offence is unlimited. His superior in the Police hierarchy can guide him or even take over the investigation himself, but he can neither order

Under law the power of the investigating officer to investigate a cognisable offence is unlimited.

him to drop an accused against whom a prima facie case is made out nor order him to falsely implicate someone against whom no case is made out. However, as we have seen in innumerable cases investigated by CBI, interference at political levels in the investigation of offences is quite frequent and this is one reason why CBI has such a dismal record of conviction. If the Police is unable to investigate offences or is unwilling to do so, it is inevitable that lynch law will prevail, as happened at the time of the infamous

Bhagalpur blinding case. If we are to be a society of laws then lynch law has no place in India.

This means that for our own sake we have to make the Police an effective instrument of crime control and for this purpose we must give the police freedom of action. I do not agree with a great deal of what Prakash Singh says in the matter of details of police autonomy, but I am in total agreement with him that the operational freedom of the Police must be restored, strengthened and enhanced. Whatever legal changes are necessary in this behalf should be brought on the statute book with great speed.

There is no doubt that the superstructure of the State is under considerable stress. Different organs are distressed and weakened and there are signals about current or potential organ failures. As yet there is no danger of systemic failure, but it is about time that we took note of what is happening to the organs of the State and to apply remedial measures now.

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# India's Pendulum Policy On Pakistan

- *Sushant Sareen*

**M**ore than anything else, experience should inform Indian policy-makers and the legion of analysts and commentators on Indo-Pak relations about the peril of using words like 'irreversible' and 'uninterruptible' to describe the extremely accident-prone peace (more likely, engagement) process between the two South Asian neighbours and adversaries. Even when superficially everything seems to be going well between the two countries, the state of bilateral relations remains quite fragile. A relatively minor incident has the potential to get blown out of proportion and unleash an emotional storm that results in a regression of any forward movement or progress that might have preceded it.

There was of course nothing ordinary about the recent events along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir. Had it been only a ceasefire violation by Pakistan, it would have been treated as something of a routine nature. Even the death of an

Indian soldier as a result of cross-LoC firing would also have probably not been hyped up by the Indian media. The Indian Army would have taken such an incident in its stride, with the proviso that it would return the favour to the Pakistanis in due course. But a raid across the LoC by Pakistan Army regulars, and worse, the medieval barbarism of mutilating corpses of Indian soldiers and beheading one of them, crossed all the red lines.

Not surprisingly, once such an outrageous and unacceptable action became public knowledge, the incident acquired a life of its own, with the media, politicians, talking-heads and columnists all contributing to the rage in the country, and eventually forcing a very reluctant government of India to toughen its stand against Pakistan. Across the Radcliffe Line, however, the incident didn't find the same salience. To an extent, the underplaying of the incident by the Pakistani media and their political class is an indication of how much the focus

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in Pakistan has shifted away from Kashmir.

A decade or so ago, the Pakistani press would have gone hysterical. But now there are so many other things happening – around the time of the LoC violation, there was a huge bomb blast in Quetta killing over 100 Shias, in Islamabad a cleric who had parachuted in from Canada was on the verge of conducting a Long March to force a complete political overhaul, the provincial government in Balochistan was being dismissed, around 20 soldiers were blown up in North Waziristan, the Pakistani Taliban were proposing a ceasefire, political confabulations and manoeuvres in preparation for the forthcoming general elections were in full swing, etc. etc. – that Kashmir, and by extension India, have perforce been put on the backburner.

This, of course, doesn't mean that Pakistan has forgotten all about Kashmir; only it is no longer a priority like it was until some time ago. The Pakistani strategy for now seems to be to keep probing India's defences along the LoC,

occasionally try and push in terrorists and infiltrators by giving them covering fire and generally not let things settle down in J&K. It is also important for Pakistan to keep reminding India to not think that Pakistan is a pushover because it is so embroiled in very serious internal crisis. While an increase in tension along the LoC suits Pakistan because this gives it the opportunity to try and once again convince the international community that the road to Kabul runs through Kashmir, it is unlikely if Pakistan would like to provoke an outbreak of hostilities along the LoC and risk a complete breakdown of the ceasefire agreement.

For its part, India too would like to avoid a resumption of the shooting match and artillery duels across the LoC, partly to avoid unnecessary and undesirable international attention to the Kashmir issue and partly because relative calm along the LoC is helping in normalising the situation in Jammu and Kashmir. Chances, therefore, are that things will settle down on India's western

This, of course, doesn't mean that Pakistan has forgotten all about Kashmir; only it is no longer a priority like it was until some time ago.

front after the latest flare-up. The DGMO's of the two countries seem to have indicated as much. India will make a show of toughness to satisfy public opinion – for instance, the PM's statement and the Army Chief's presser – and for a few weeks keep the engagement process with Pakistan on the hold. But it will be back to business as usual after things cool down, that is until the next flare-up when the entire cycle will repeat itself.

There is a slim possibility that something good might emerge from this incident. The increasing violations of the ceasefire by Pakistan over the last couple of years, which until now have been more or less brushed under the carpet, might receive greater focus in the talks that have been proposed between the two governments. Pakistan would certainly try to push through its proposals for conventional CBM's along the LoC, which India has so far rejected. At the same time, India will get the opportunity to lay down new procedures to ensure that there is peace and tranquility along the LoC.

On the more substantive issue of the state of relations between the two countries and the principles on which India needs to formulate

its Pakistan policy, there are lessons to be learnt from the latest spat between India and Pakistan. The one major take-away of this incident is the fickleness of diplomacy conducted in full public glare and also of diplomacy that seeks to benefit on the backs of greater interaction between the peoples of the two countries. In other words, depending too much on the so-called people-to-people relations to push forward the engagement process with Pakistan is a strategy fraught with consequences which are not in the control of the two States and their establishments.

The people of the Indian subcontinent are very emotional, something that can be of great advantage when things are all sweet and honey in giving a fillip to the engagement process; but when things go bad, these same emotions can swing things in the other direction by generating pressures that governments find too onerous to bear. When public opinion turns hostile on a foreign policy issue like Pakistan, it is quite natural for any government to get swayed by the emotional outpouring of an outraged public. The point is that when people and their emotions get involved in determining the pace and

direction of a foreign policy issue, it results in what can be called a Pendulum Policy in which relations with another country swing from one extreme to another. This is exactly what was on display after the LoC incident.

Just a couple of days before the LoC violation, Pakistanis were being feted in India. The TV networks and newspapers were going overboard in covering the cricket series between the two countries. Trade and travel were the new buzzwords. There was excited anticipation of the new visa regime, including the visa on arrival facility. Businessmen were going to and fro striking deals, holding exhibitions and what have you. Pakistani artistes were being invited for live performances and participating in TV music, game and reality shows. Then suddenly the pendulum swung the other way. Hockey players were sent back. Singers and actors were no longer welcome. The Indian bureaucracy suddenly discovered a lacuna in the visa on arrival facility and put it on hold. The trade along LoC came to a standstill. Visitors to either

country started making a bee-line for going back home. Some politicians started baying for blood and demanded breaking off relations and waging war. In short, from the hyperbole of Aman ki Aasha, the two countries swung to the other extreme of Aman ki Ashes!

This is hardly the way to conduct diplomacy, even less so by a country with ambitions to play a role on the global stage. Surely, for two nuclear weapons states to behave in such an emotional manner is rather strange and unseemly. A large part of the blame for such pendulum swings rests on the Indian government. What some analysts defend as the policy of strategic restraint is perhaps more appropriately described as a policy of strategic fuzziness and strategic irresoluteness, aptly summed up in a recent article by the former RAW chief, Vikram Sood, who asks “why are we talking to them [Pakistan], with whom, about what, to what end and for how long?” It is precisely because of this strategic fuzziness that is guiding India’s Pakistan policy that the government hasn’t

This is hardly the way to conduct diplomacy, even less so by a country with ambitions to play a role on the global stage. Surely, for two nuclear weapons states to behave in such an emotional manner is rather strange and unseemly.

been able to convince a substantial section of the public about its approach towards Pakistan. Add to this the glaring inability of the current dispensation to understand the nature of the beast called new media – electronic, social, cyber, even print – and try and manage the information flow so that it always has a handle over the situation, and it is no surprise that the entire edifice of the government's Pakistan policy has come crashing down.

Perhaps the time has come for India to reduce if not remove the emotional quotient that underscores its Pakistan policy. India's Pakistan policy should not be guided by the heart, but by the head. This means that instead of an ad hoc policy based on a hope and a prayer that ultimately good sense will dawn on the Pakistani establishment, India needs to have a well-structured policy which is based on facts and not emotions. Rather than harbouring silly notions of forging friendly ties with Pakistan – relations between States are based on interests and friendship is incidental, at best a by-product of these interests – India should adopt a clinically professional approach towards Pakistan in which emotions are subjected to interests and not

interests to emotions. In other words, have a relationship without wanting to get related.

This means that, while India should listen to all the sweet nothings that come its way from Pakistan, the substance of relations should be based on actions and not empty words being cooed into India's ears by Pakistan's leaders. There are always lessons to be learned, even from an adversary. Pakistanis never tire of saying that only Allah knows about the intentions (or if you will, mindsets) of people. Therefore, instead of falling for or looking for changed mindsets in Pakistan, as some retired diplomats turned politicians exhort India to do, let Pakistan's actions inform us of their changed mindsets. Until now, Pakistan's actions on the ground really give no indication of either a changed mindset or even a paradigm shift in its approach towards India. In the meantime, keep your powder dry because you never know when you might need to use it to let the adversary know that it crosses India's red lines at its own peril.

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# Developing India's Indigenous Defence Technologies: The Case For Inducting Arjun Tanks

- *Radhakrishna Rao*

A well-entrenched and powerful import lobby operating under the shadow of the political establishment in New Delhi has been silently but vigorously pursuing the strategy of nullifying every Indian effort aimed at developing new and innovative technologies for building state of the art defence hardware and fighting machines required by the Indian defence forces and in the process end Indian dependence on imported military devices. The campaign against the ambitious project for developing the fourth generation fighter jet Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas, which is now winging its way towards the final operational clearance(FOC), is a striking example of the “behind the scene manipulations” of the import lobby keen on defeating self-reliance in the critical areas of defence development and production. Despite delays and cost overruns, the Tejas which not long back was almost written off,

has helped India master many of the frontier technological elements going into the advanced fighter aircraft. Moreover, Tejas has been recognised as one of the finest fighting machines, comparable to the best of the combat aircraft in its class.

Perhaps the most significant achievement of the Bangalore based Aeronautical Development Agency(ADA), which took up the task of designing and developed Tejas virtually from scratch under the illustrious leadership of Kota Harinarayana is that there was not a single “mishap or accident” during the qualification flights of the fighter jet under development. Fighting against heavy odds including a funding crunch, poor industrial support and US sanctions that came in the wake of the 1998 Pokhran nuclear blasts, the Tejas development project assumed wings with many of the home grown critical technologies that could not be imported on

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account of the restrictions imposed on India. It is not for nothing that Defence Minister A.K. Antony described Harinarayana as the “Bhishmapithamaha of Tejas”. The infrastructure, expertise and vital technological systems developed for Tejas have become an invaluable national asset which could be exploited for building more advanced fighter aircraft with a greater degree of confidence. Similarly, spin offs of the technologies developed for Tejas have benefited the civilian sectors including health care to a substantial extent.

As such, one should look beyond just the cost factor while evaluating home-grown defence projects of national and strategic importance. The expertise acquired during the development of Tejas has proved to be vital for pushing ahead with the Medium Combat Aircraft (MCA) project taken up by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). The strategic importance of home grown defence systems lies in the fact that India would not have to worry about the threat

of sanctions associated with the US origin fighting equipment and cost escalation, poor performance and delay in the supply of spares associated with the defence hardware imported from Russia. Moreover, the cost of the imported defence hardware could be shockingly high in comparison to similar fighting equipment developed indigenously.

Indeed, Antony has been making use of every platform to express his dismay and anguish over the fact that a country like India with the fourth largest pool of scientific manpower in the world continues to depend on imports to meet 70% of its defence requirements.

The gloomy ground reality is that even after sixty five years of independence, India could barely produce 30% of its defence needs indigenously”. The country is far, far away from Nehru’s dream of achieving self-reliance in the defence sector,” rues Antony. He wonders why India which has made spectacular strides in space exploration and positioned itself as a “software and information technology powerhouse,” cannot

repeat the success stories scripted in these two crucial areas in the defence production sector. This is indeed a question that needs to be answered with all the seriousness it deserves.

For long, DRDO had remained a whipping boy for all that had gone wrong with India's defence development and production sector. But then, DRDO, which has come out with flying colours in designing, developing and qualifying a range of state of the art missiles of varying categories cannot be solely held responsible for the abysmal failure of the country to attain self-reliance in defence production. For one, DRDO is subject to pulls and pressures from a variety of sources including the Indian defence establishment. Clearly, there has been a glaring lack of coordination and cooperation between DRDO and the end users (read defence forces). For instance, DRDO blames the Indian defence set up for suggesting changes and improvements in a system half way through its developmental course. While DRDO says that this causes delays and cost escalation in the development of the system, the defence establishment insists that fighting systems should be capable of periodic technology

insertions. Of course, there is merit in both these arguments. As such the best way out would be to bring in the Indian defence establishment as a stake holder and partner in the DRDO projects focusing on the development of systems and machines meant for the Indian defence forces. In order to boost self-reliance in defence production, the armed forces need to commit themselves to buying the home grown products and help improve upon their performance after field trials.

Indeed, the saga of India's Arjun battle tank, designed and developed by the Combat Vehicles Research and Development Establishment (CVRDE) of DRDO and produced by the Heavy Vehicles Factory (HVF) at Avadi near Chennai reflects the poor coordination and cooperation between the producer and the user. In the field trials, Arjun tank has proved to be a much better performer than Russian T-72's and T-90's. In particular, high speed, quick mobility and the firing power of the Arjun tank have been proven beyond shadow of doubt. On the other hand, the fire control system of T-90, especially while operating in the sandy stretches of Rajasthan, failed to perform as per specifications. According to the

CVRDE, the firing accuracy of Arjun is far superior to that of the Russian T-90. But then the argument of the Indian army is that the weight of Arjun, at 60-tonnes, is too much to help it move around in the soft soil and riverine terrain of Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir. As such, the Indian army wants to confine Arjun to the arid stretches of Rajasthan. Surprisingly, the Indian army came to this conclusion without subjecting Arjun tank to field trials in the plains of Punjab.

Meanwhile, media reports suggest that there is a move to block the field trials of Arjun in the plains of Punjab as part of the stratagem to clear the path for the import of more T-90's from Russia. Rightly, DRDO on its part has driven home the point that "the time, effort and money spent on developing indigenous fighting equipment including Arjun should not be squandered away in pursuit of glitzy imported hardware." Right now, there are 128 Arjun tanks in operational service with the Indian defence forces with an order for another 118 in the pipeline. On the other hand Indian

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army has under its service 1657 Russian T-90s and 2414 T-72's. A section of the Indian army is rooting for the latest variant of Russian T-90s on the ground that they are well suited for deployment in the cold environs along India's international borders with China. As such, the proposal to buy 354 new T-90M's at an enormous cost could deal not only a severe blow to the Arjun tank project but also impose a severe strain on the public exchequer already reeling under a large deficit.

DRDO has made it clear that there is no basis for the claim that Arjun cannot operate flawlessly in the plains of Punjab. For the argument of DRDO is that the weight of Arjun is distributed evenly over a larger area on account of its larger track and as such its ground pressure is much lower than that of the Russian tanks. Therefore, the idea to do away with the proposed trials of Arjun tank in the plains of Punjab is considered a conspiracy to edge out the home-grown Arjun and smooth the way for the import of Russian tanks. By all means, this charge needs to be addressed and

the future of the home-grown Arjun tank ensured. As it is, after the field trials of Arjun in the Pokhran range, DRDO did introduce a host of new and innovative technologies to improve the performance of Arjun. Rightly, defence experts points out that Arjun is in no way inferior to the T-90 and allege that the Indian army is simply enamoured of Russian battle tanks. Indeed, in the late 1990s, the Indian Defence Ministry had floated the idea of exporting Arjun tanks to friendly countries. Of course, delays and technological flaws did mar the Arjun development project. But this was natural in that it was India's first foray into building a main battle tank. As it is the world over, the tanks introduced for the first time face many shortcomings under actual field conditions. This implies that the performance of the newly designed and developed tanks needs to be improved in a gradual and phased manner through the feed-back from the users. As pointed out by an Israeli defence expert, the tank design is basically evolutionary. The mobility, firepower and survivability of tanks are the features that are improved upon over a period of time with the feed-back coming from the field trials. And the Indian army should adopt

the same approach with regard to Arjun.

Arjun-MKII--an improved version of Arjun tank-- that will enter operational service by 2016 will have an improved missile firing capability. DRDO has incorporated a total of 93 upgrades, including 13 major improvements in the Mark II version of Arjun. As envisaged now, Arjun-MKI will feature explosive reactive armour panels, panoramic sight with night vision, advanced weapon remote firing, track width mine plough and missile firing through the main gun. Surprisingly, while insisting that the 60-tonne Arjun is too heavy to move freely in the terrains of Punjab, the Indian army has asked for features in Arjun-II that would take its weight to 65-tonnes. Another contradictory demand of the Indian army is that the weight of the proposed Future Main Battle Tank (FMBT) be limited to 50-tonne while bettering the features of the Arjun tank. And CVRDE has already pointed out that it is well-nigh impossible to build the FMBT with a weight less than 65 tonnes, while incorporating many novel features demanded by the Army. The Army wants the FMBT to feature improved crew

protection, a more powerful gun that can fire projectiles and vastly enhanced mobility. The moral of the story is that the Indian defence set up should avoid coming out with contradictory observations while formulating nationally important projects. Moreover, the Indian Army should be realistic while specifying too many features in a light weight tank. A balance should be struck between the weight and operational features.

If the work on the FBMT is taken up without any loss of time, the first tank will roll out for operational service by 2025. The FMBT project should be taken up on a priority basis as a national project much the same way as the Tejas project was accomplished. But then with the Indian Army preferring phased improvements in the Arjun tank, the possibility of the FMBT project getting shelved is very much on the cards. However, to sustain knowhow and expertise that India has built up for

Moreover, the Indian Army should be realistic while specifying too many features in a light weight tank. A balance should be struck between the weight and operational features.

designing, developing and producing state-of-the-art battle tanks, the Indian Army should acquire the Arjun tank variants in large numbers. Otherwise, there is a danger of all the resources deployed for tank projects getting frittered away. The Indian Army and DRDO should work closely with each other to continuously improve upon the features of the home grown Arjun tank and help develop categories of Arjun tank suited specifically to varying environmental and topographical conditions. Of course, this is a “complex and challenging” project. But then it is worth its while insofar as building a robust home-grown technological base for a range of battle tanks is concerned. And eventually such an approach could effectively defeat the stratagem of the import lobby working overtime to defeat Indian self reliance in defence development and production.

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# Taliban And Afghan Peace – No Tango After Paris

- *Monish Gulati*

A track II initiative was organized on 20-21 December 2012 by the Paris-based Foundation for Strategic Research (Fondation pour la recherche stratégique or FRS) at the Chateau de la Tour Hotel in Gouvieux, Chantilly, fifty kilometers north of Paris. The meeting was the third such event arranged by the FRS. About twenty Afghans from the quasi-governmental High Peace Council (HPC), the main political opposition parties in Afghanistan, the Taliban, as well as the Hezb-e-Islami militant group met at Chantilly to lay the grounds for more meaningful talks in the future between the Afghan government and the Taliban. The Afghan president had expressed support for the meeting, saying he backed any forum for discussion with the insurgents.

The talks were held against a background of frantic efforts to draw the Taliban and other

opponents of President Karzai into negotiations on the future political arrangements in Afghanistan as the NATO and ISAF pull out by the end of 2014. Last peace talks between the US and the Taliban had broken down in March 2012 mainly because the Taliban had refused to agree to a deal under which detainees released from Guantánamo Bay would remain under Qatari government supervision at Doha.

## Meeting

Shahabuddin Delawar and Naeem Wardak represented the Taliban in Paris. Dilawar is a former deputy head of the Taliban's Supreme Court. The Taliban negotiators were a part of what the US views as a "pragmatist" faction within the Taliban headed by Akhtar Mohammad Mansour. A Taliban spokesman had been reported as saying prior to the Paris meeting that "We are not going to discuss peace," he said. "This gathering is not about

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\* *Monish Gulati*

peace.”

At the meeting, Delawar and Wardak read a prepared statement and the five-point outline of their agenda called, amongst other things, for amendments to the Constitution. They said the current “Constitution is illegitimate because it is written under the shadows of B-52 aircrafts” (referring to the US invasion). They demanded a new Constitution be written by Afghans in “free atmosphere”, implying after the withdrawal of NATO/ISAF troops. And the new Constitution should be based on “principles of noble Islam, national interest and historical achievements.” They also asked for the withdrawal of the NATO/ISAF troops prior to peace talks and the upcoming elections.

The FRS had presented an agenda for discussion during the meeting. A key demand was to study the possibility of moving the country towards a parliamentary system, with less concentration of power in the hands of the President. This view is also held by several

Western analysts who consider it as a drawback of the Afghan Constitution. Other issues raised at the meeting covered human and gender rights, and amnesty from prosecution. The unanimous opinion regarding the Taliban at the meeting was that they should lay down their arms, stop the violence, leave their Pakistani sanctuaries and enter the Afghan political process starting with the participation in the upcoming provincial and presidential elections.

The Afghan government initially expressed optimism after the Paris talks, “We welcome the Paris negotiations as well as the participation of Taliban at the meeting. We hope such negotiations continue,” Foreign Ministry Spokesman Janan Mosazai said at a press conference.

The Afghan government initially expressed optimism after the Paris talks, “We welcome the Paris negotiations as well as the participation of

Taliban at the meeting. We hope such negotiations continue,” Foreign Ministry Spokesman Janan Mosazai said at a press conference. He added that the government’s preconditions for the talks with the Taliban have not changed: a cease-fire, recognition of the Afghan Constitution, cutting ties with international terrorists and agreeing to respect the rights of Afghan citizens including women and children.



The Afghan government did not comment on the demands of the Taliban raised during the meeting.

Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef, who was the Afghan ambassador to Pakistan before the US invasion of Afghanistan, was also present at the Paris meeting, not part of the Taliban team but in an individual capacity. He suggested the establishment of a commission comprising of all Afghan stakeholders to discuss proposed changes in the Constitution in 2013, a suggestion the Taliban team did not oppose. This was possibly one of the positives of the meeting which otherwise was merely restating of positions by various stakeholders. Mohammad Hanif Atmar, former minister of interior and representative of the Rights and Justice Party at the talks said that another meeting, similar to the present one, would be held in Paris in a month.

### **Post Meeting**

The Afghan government and President Hamid Karzai in particular, are wary of peace efforts not led by Kabul and more so by the Taliban's refusal to hold direct talks with it. After the Paris meeting, Afghan Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Zalmai

Rassoul was called to the Afghan Senate to address the body's concerns over the Paris meeting. He reportedly told the Senate, surprisingly, that there was insufficient information about the backgrounds of the two Taliban representatives at the Paris meeting, and that the Taliban faction Delawar and Wardak represented could not be identified. He went on to add that there is no need of holding such meetings outside the country and such talks should be held in Afghanistan. Senator Rafiullah Haidari said the Paris meeting was not representative enough and did not represent those who fought in the Afghan jihad.<sup>1</sup>

### **Taliban Office**

The second twist to the affair was provided by the Afghan government's comments on the establishment of a Taliban office in Doha, Qatar. The Afghan Foreign Minister insisted that the Afghan government would not allow the Taliban group to open a liaison office in Qatar unless the group is prepared for direct peace talks. He said, "The office for the Taliban group will not be opened unless the Taliban group or its representatives announce the start of talks with the Afghan

government. It will be highly risky if the office is opened and secret talks are held.”<sup>2</sup> However, during the 11 January 2013 meeting in Washington, Presidents Obama and Karzai endorsed, without conditions, the opening of a "Taliban office" in a third country to "facilitate" reconciliation talks<sup>3</sup>.

The Taliban too firmed up its position after the Paris meeting and early this year a statement was released on ‘Voice of Jihad’, the official website of the Afghan Taliban, signed by "The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan" which rejected any security agreement between the US and the Afghan government as "a personal deal between Karzai and America," and said "it shall hold no legal credibility. The Islamic Emirate shall continue its sacred Jihad against it just as it has for the past eleven years, if even a single American soldier" remains in country. The Taliban made the statement as the Afghan government is freeing hundreds of Taliban prisoners and the US

government is debating the size of its residual force for post-2014 period.

### Release of Taliban Detainees

Afghan officials believe that freeing Taliban members could be a positive step towards persuading the Taliban fighters to accept peace negotiations, hold direct talks with the government and eventually transform the Taliban into a political movement. The Afghan government has freed more than 250 Taliban prisoners formerly held by the U.S. and plans on releasing an additional 150 soon.<sup>4</sup>

The Taliban too firmed up its position after the Paris meeting and early this year a statement was released on ‘Voice of Jihad’, the official website of the Afghan Taliban, signed by "The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan" which rejected any security agreement between the US and the Afghan government as "a personal deal between Karzai and America," and said "it shall hold no legal

Prisoners were released on January 4, 2013 from the Bagram military prison, north of Kabul, and other jails across the country. Their release was secured through a special complaints committee, amid hopes that it might help peace and reconciliation efforts. An Afghan Defense Ministry official, Jalaluddin Dehati said a total of 1,200 prisoners will be set

free in the coming weeks. According to the official, Bagram prison at present holds about 3,000 Taliban fighters and suspected terrorists.<sup>5</sup>

In neighboring Pakistan, 26 Taliban fighters have been freed in recent months and there are reports that Kabul had presented a 40-man list of detainees to Islamabad. The list includes Mullah Noorudin Turabi, a former Taliban justice minister, Anwar ul-Haq Mujahid, a military commander who headed Taliban operations in Tora Bora. Others on the list include top advisers to Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar.

Pakistan has said recently that it plans to release all Afghan Taliban prisoners still in its custody. Jalil Jilani, Pakistan's foreign secretary said at a news conference in Abu Dhabi that Islamabad was coordinating the release of all prisoners and those released will include Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the militants group's former second-in-command. Kabul has long called on Islamabad to free Baradar, whom it sees as key to moving forward the peace negotiations with the Taliban.<sup>6</sup>

Analysts say the move to free Taliban detainees is fraught with risk. The Afghan government has not been able to track the freed detainees, and some are thought to be returning to the battlefield. Under a "safe passage" agreement between Kabul and Islamabad, prisoners have been released with no conditions and many have simply disappeared. The Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program, which offered resettlement opportunities including security to Taliban foot soldiers and received some \$140 million from international donors, has persuaded only about 1,000 militants to join the mainstream.<sup>7</sup>

### **French Connection**

The French Foreign Ministry had said that the Paris meeting -- called the "third inter-Afghan closed academic seminar" -- will bring together "participants from the various components of Afghan society for discussions on 'Afghanistan -- Toward 2020.'<sup>8</sup> France, which hosted similar meetings in previous years, says it has no direct involvement in the event other than hosting it. The Paris meeting had been preceded by similar talks on 28 June 2012 in Japan, between Qari Din Mohammad, the Taliban's former

Afghan minister of planning, and Mohammad Masoom Stanekzai, head of the Afghan HPC, which had been facilitated by the Doshisha University, Kyoto.

The meeting came on the heels of France ending its combat mission in Afghanistan as it withdrew its remaining 500 combat troops from the Nijrab base in Kapisa, a province northeast of Kabul. France was once one of the largest contributors to the NATO mission in Afghanistan, with a peak deployment of 4,000 troops. The Taliban did not fail to highlight the fact that their decision to attend the meeting in Paris was influenced by the French decision of withdrawing all their troops from Afghanistan which met their primary precondition for holding any talks. Hizb-e-Islami representative Ghairat Baheer, son-in-law of Gulbuldin Hekmatyar, too said that his militant group was attending the meeting in France because they admire the French government's decision to withdraw from Afghanistan.

Analysts believe that the French interest in Afghan reconciliation comes from the fact that France had in the past backed Jamiat-e-Islami, a northern, Tajik-

dominated faction and the broader Shura-e Nazar, sometimes known as the Northern Alliance. "The French now realise that the Taliban will have a stronger role in Afghanistan in days to come". They would like the interests of the Jamiat-e-Islami and Shura-e Nazar, secured in the future power equations. The only progress in this direction has been Taliban's public admission of the need to talk to the opposition groups from the former Northern Alliance.

The US was observing the Paris meeting and would like to see this interaction take the next step toward reconciliation in terms of the resumption of what was known as the "Doha process". This would involve an exchange of detainees and the opening of a Taliban office in Doha, Qatar. US analysts strongly believe that the Taliban can be persuaded to "cut a deal", which might lead to an eventual cease-fire in Afghanistan. Taliban leaders, on the other hand, are said to resist any compromise that might not show them as victors. Significantly, the US ambassador to Afghanistan, James B. Cunningham, has said that Washington will never attend any peace talks with the Taliban group where the Afghan government representative is not

involved. He said in the context of the recent meeting between Obama and Karzai that, “The two leaders made clear that peace negotiations and reconciliation are vital for the two nations and they encourage the establishment of Taliban liaison office in Qatar so that the Afghan government and Taliban group can hold peace talks. The decision will finally depend on the Taliban group.”<sup>9</sup>

### Taliban Strategy

Some observers feel that the Taliban leadership is changing its stance on the Afghan war and peace negotiations.<sup>10</sup>

Prior to the Paris meeting, it was said that the Taliban leadership was considering a change of strategy on a wide array of issues. Zabihullah, a senior Taliban leader in the Quetta Shura said that they were reconsidering the peace talks, the hostility towards the former Northern Alliance, their rejection of the Afghan Constitution and even participating in the next presidential and National Assembly elections. The Taliban moderation towards the

predominantly ethnic Tajik, Uzbek and Hazara Northern Alliance was attributed to the fact that it is opposed to the Karzai government and in favour of an Islamic state. Zabihullah also said that the Taliban were willing to accept the Afghan Constitution and democratic elections with some changes to the electoral law; a view that was debunked at the Paris meeting.

One political analyst in Kabul believes that the conflicting

signals remain because of the Taliban leadership, which is in a real quandary about how to proceed and where it can make compromises, acceptable to its own followers.

signals remain because of the Taliban leadership, which is in a real quandary about how to proceed and where it can make compromises, acceptable to its

own followers. “For the last 11 years, Taliban leaders have motivated their forces to carry on the fight by saying the country is under attack, its government is not Islamic, and God's religion is under threat,” he said. “While the war is framed in terms of religion, it also highly personalised because the Taliban ranks include people who have lost family members. “If foreign forces are still based in Afghanistan, the Constitution remains unchanged and the

movement has no substantial guarantees inside or outside the country, how can its leaders convince the rank-and-file? This will split the Taliban."<sup>11</sup>

Others take a more cynical view of the insurgents' ability to make peace, regarding them as merely an instrument of Pakistan's intelligence service. Afghan HPC saw the release on 31 December 2012 by Pakistan of eight Taliban members imprisoned by them as supportive of the peace negotiations and promoting stability in Afghanistan. However, many observers feel that the Taliban are tired of fighting and want to end the war, but have been prevented from proceeding with peace talks by Pakistan which is pushing for a larger role in the region. The softer stance of Taliban is also viewed as a manipulation by Pakistan to influence the upcoming elections in Afghanistan.

## Conclusion

The Paris meeting was meant to "pave the way for formal talks in the future." But some analysts believe that "the incentives for the Taliban to negotiate a deal just aren't there". The Afghan government's plan to draw the

Taliban to the table through the release of detainees seems more like a shot in the dark as there are no assurances that the freed detainees will help bring the Taliban leadership to the negotiating table. For that matter, these released detainees might reorient the power structure within the Taliban and give 'jihad' a new purpose and direction.

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# Countering New Tactics Of The Maoists: Good Intelligence Is The Key

- *Dr. N Manoharan*

As the whole nation looked on with concern at the brutal mutilation of the Indian Army jawans at the Line of Control by Pakistani soldiers, few took notice of a similar wanton act by Maoists in Latehar district of Jharkhand. After killing a few CRPF jawans in an encounter in Katiya forest of the district on 07 January 2013, the Maoists booby trapped two of the bodies with IED's. Tying explosives to dead bodies was not new to the Maoists. They have adopted several such methods of causing mayhem and destruction before. But, the present tactic seems cruelest of all. Bombs weighing about 1.5 kilogram each were surgically planted inside the stomach of the two dead CRPF jawans. They were pressure bomb prototypes, which were to explode either at the time of evacuation or during autopsy. The bombs were made of a mixture of nitrate explosive and gelatin sticks, nine volt batteries and a detonator. Thanks to alert doctors, bomb disposal squads

were quickly called in and one of the bombs was defused. However, the other bomb had already gone off during evacuation, killing three villagers who were helping in the removal of the dead bodies.

From time-to-time, the Naxals have been trying out new tactics to catch the security forces off-guard. Last year, they indulged in a series of high-profile abductions to force the authorities to accede to their demands. Some of the abductees included two foreign tourists, a member of the Odisha Legislative Assembly (MLA), and a district magistrate of Sukma district of Chhattisgarh. In 2010, the attacks were characterised by ambushes involving heavy fire power and casualties. The ambush in Dantewada district in April 2010 that killed 76 jawans of 62nd Battalion of the CRPF is still fresh in our memory. As the security forces prepare themselves to counter the new tactics, the Maoists move on to another innovative method, just to keep

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alive the 'element of surprise'. Apart from the surprise element, the Maoists also tried new tactics as and when they were cornered and wanted to inflict maximum damage to break the morale the of security forces. Without doubt, measures would be taken to tackle booby-trapped bodies hence-forth, but it is expected that the Naxals would now resort to fresh tactics in an attempt to meet new challenges. But wisdom lies in pre-empting such efforts with honing of our jawans' skills in matters of field-craft, IED and counter-ambush training and good leadership at all levels, especially at the junior levels.

Something that has come out clearly in the present incident is that it was not done impromptu, but was planned well in advance. Before planting explosives in the dead bodies of the jawans, the Naxals were said to have carried out such experiments on animals like donkeys, dogs and goats. The fact that the bomb was neatly packed in a plastic container to ensure that it did not get moist due to blood also showed careful consideration of various technical and practical aspects. Such

After the Latehar incident, the CRPF Director-General Pranay Sahay observed, "I agree we were operating on general intelligence and there are technological constraints but we're trying to give our men the best."

planting of booby traps in the dead bodies is not a novel phenomenon, especially when one looks back at the annals of military history. This incident, however, may have been first of its kind for the CRPF jawans.

After the Latehar incident, the CRPF Director-General Pranay Sahay observed, "I agree we were operating on general intelligence and there are technological constraints but we're trying to give our men the best." Therefore, real time and actionable intelligence is essential for any successful counter-insurgency operation. It is all the more crucial if the enemy is invisible as in the case of Indian Maoists. Without reliable strategic and tactical intelligence inputs, any counter-insurgency force, however well-trained and sophisticated it may be, is severely handicapped.

The Indian Maoists may also have an edge over the government forces both on the quantity and quality of the intelligence available to them. The main reason for this advantage is their elaborate spy network, besides

having formal and informal informers. The former include sympathisers in the local areas, nearby towns and even far away cities. Informal informers are those who find the Maoist cause “genuine” and voluntarily pass on whatever information available to them. They could be activists, intellectuals, journalists or laymen. The Maoists also rely on open source information, consisting of statements, interviews, press releases and news reports, through which they gauge patterns of thinking and behaviour of the government and its forces and their movement to an extent.

In this regard, it is imperative to develop a proper network of informers consisting of locals who could be relied on for delivering credible and contact intelligence. Winning the trust of the population would enable automatic flow of first hand information.

On the other hand, the LWE intelligence network of the government needs to become more effective. The issue is not dearth of, but the availability of several intelligence agencies both at the Central and State levels. Yet, the Central Reserve Police Force, identified by the Group of Ministers as the nodal counter-insurgency force does not have a full-fledged intelligence arm of its own. It has to depend by-and-large on the intelligence inputs from the

state police and intelligence agencies where its units are deployed. It is vital to build up CRPF’s own tactical intelligence network that is sound in both technical and human aspects.

Technical intelligence capability of the counter-Maoist forces are presently not up to the mark, both in terms of equipment and human resources. The Army, the Air Force and the nodal TECHINT agency, and the National Technical Research Organisation can be approached for the requisite assistance. The above bodies can be of immense help in aerial reconnaissance, communication interception and terrain mapping.

More emphasis should be laid on human intelligence on the Maoists, who are invisible and evasive like a “fish in the water”. In this regard, it is imperative to develop a proper network of informers consisting of locals who could be relied on for delivering credible and contact intelligence. Winning the trust of the population would enable automatic flow of first hand

information. Efforts should be made to penetrate the rank and file of the Maoists to relay accurate inside information. Such 'soldiers in residence' and informers should be provided with suitable communication mechanisms to pass on information in real time.

Delayed information is as good as no information. What is also required on an urgent basis is a suitable informer protection mechanism. Unless informers are protected, it is difficult not only to sustain the present crop of informers, but also to develop their network further. At the same time, intense counter-intelligence should be carried out just to make sure that Maoist informers

working within the government and in other areas do not succeed. Attention should also be paid to enhancing investigative and analytical capabilities of the local police to tap maximum information from the target population. Intelligence also has to target external linkages of Maoists that are forged for the purpose of procuring arms, training, funds, and propaganda. Timely and accurate intelligence remains the most significant factor in successful counter-insurgency operations.

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# Electronic Voting Machine: New Attack Vector

- *Cmdr. Mukesh Saini*

The concept of Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) was first mooted by the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) in 1977 to save avoidable and recurring expenditure on printing, storage, transportation and security of ballot papers to the exchequer. It was Shri R. V. S. Peri Sastri who realized this dream. The scope for EVM given to the ECIL (Electronic Corporation of India Limited), Hyderabad included the development of a machine which would fit into the existing election procedure, appear familiar even to the illiterate voters and with a mechanism so strong that technologically and procedurally it would address the skepticism of the political parties as well as the intelligentsia. ECIL designed the machine according to the best contemporary technical feasibility and ensured that, according to the best 'knowledge base' of the 1980s, the machine was reasonably tamper proof and remaining residual risks were addressed

through procedures and training. In view of huge quantity requirements, another PSU (Public Sector Undertaking), BEL (Bharat Electronics Limited), Bangalore was involved in mass manufacturing. At that point of time, there was no appropriate micro-chip manufacturing unit and also technology with India was not sufficiently advanced to program the PROM (Programmable Read Only Memory). Therefore, a US based private company was given the contract to program the PROMs! ECIL was also directed to design the EVMs to stand the scrutiny of the courts according to the laws that existed at that time.

The EVMs were first introduced in the year 1999 and most of the constituencies were covered using EVMs from year 2002 onward. It is pertinent to mention that the design was obviously not aligned to the Information Technology Act 2000 and relevant amendments made to the Evidence Act by the

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\* *Cmdr. Mukesh Saini (Retd.), Former National Information Security Coordinator*

IT Act. The concepts of software testing were evolving and there were not many test benches. Security tests on software were just coming into being and were extremely costly affair. There was no recognition of electronic signature, hence ECIL did not even consider it. The Election Commission of India (ECI) did identify existing vulnerabilities and risks. These risks were mitigated through physical security, procedural controls and training. Since then, no technological changes have been undertaken despite many new risks and vulnerability vectors having been identified. There have been some minor procedural changes on the basis of inputs received from various stakeholders including political parties.

In 2009, Mr Hari Prasad demonstrated that if someone can access an EVM physically it is susceptible to manipulation. In pre-poll unauthorised access, malicious hardware can be installed which can later, at the time of voting, be programmed on the fly using Bluetooth technology

Technology with India was not sufficiently advanced to program the PROM (Programmable Read Only Memory). Therefore, a US based private company was given the contract to program the PROMs!

to transfer a certain percentage of votes to the desired candidate. In a second approach he demonstrated that, after voting, if access to the control unit of an EVM can be obtained, it is possible to manipulate the stored voting information though the seal will be required to be tampered in this case. The assertion by ECI that it is practically impossible to achieve physical access to these machines fell flat because of the very fact that Mr Hari Prasad demonstrated the risks on a stolen EVM.

Investigation by police could not identify which machine was stolen and later replaced. He or anyone, who can get

unauthorised access to these machines, can also get the source program and reverse engineer the EVM to create fake-modified-duplicate EVM's to be replaced at the opportune moment by corrupt or 'ignorant' officials.

In addition, there are several occasions when EVM's behaved abnormally such as vote getting recorded in favour of one candidate while button was pressed for any of the other

candidates. Examples of Nutan School, Chandrapur (Maharashtra) Booth No.176; Nimasahi, Cuttack (Orissa), Booth No.160; Khammam Constituency, Polling Station 198, Pedakurapadu (Guntur, AP) Booth No. 2 are just a few of many examples. Mr L.K. Advani gave a much more detailed report on it to the ECI and these are not being repeated.

### **New Attack Vector**

While researching on the subject, a new and not yet reported attack vector was identified. In this attack vector, no physical access to internals of the EVM is required. The malware can be prepared and distributed to low ranking officials in charge of election booths who can plug in this malware any time during the election process and remove it before end of the process. It will leave no trace whatsoever of its existence and no seal need be tampered with, nor is the software of the EVM's required to be modified or changed. The correct light will light up when the button is pressed while voting, but the wrong vote will be registered in the Control Unit Memory. Even intense intermingling of the EVM's, as now being practiced by

the ECI, cannot protect malpractices using this attack vector. The theory of this attack vector is explained below in brief.

The Control Unit is connected with the Ballot Unit through a cable which uses a 15-pin connector (Fig 1) on either side. It is possible to design programmable two faced 15 Pin dongle which can be inserted between the cable and connector (Fig 2) at any point of time. The programming can be fine tuned at the last moment using many methods including, but not limited to, the Bluetooth technology (Fig 3, 4 & 5). Once this dongle is programmed to transfer a certain percentage of votes in favour of a particular candidate, it can be inserted by anyone at a polling booth who can access the EVM even during operation and quietly insert this very small piece of hardware on some pretext, and this cannot be seen and understood by untrained persons. This hardware can be removed at the end of polling or in the event that they apprehend a surprise check.

Any computer expert will substantiate the possibility of this attack vector. It will require about five lakhs of rupees in R&D to

develop this malware. Once designed, this reusable dongle can be mass produced at an approximate cost of Rs 1000 per piece.

### **Legal Challenge**

In addition to the above mentioned risk, the present software does not use a secure Digital Signature and its results cannot, therefore, be presumed genuine due to the special bars on the courts from such presumptions under section 85B(2)(b) of the Indian Evidence Act 1872, which states that, “except in the case of a secure electronic record or a secure electronic signature, nothing in this section shall create any presumption, relating to authenticity and integrity of the electronic record or any electronic signature.”

### **Way Forward - Immediate Solution**

Considering the fact that Shri Salman Khurshid as law minister has stated in the Parliament that the EVM software is being redesigned, the inclusion of a digital signature should be made a mandatory part of it. The Digital Signature can provide authenticity and integrity of records as well as

provide confidentiality of results till the time of declaration of results. However, the pressing need is for an immediate solution which has three fold security controls to prevent / detect malpractices.

(a) **Post - audit.** The ECI should institute a random audit of hardware to be conducted by an expert group which should not be from ECIL or BEL. Some of the members could be external experts to provide transparency and remove any presumed biases. All machines where malpractice is alleged to have occurred must be audited by this expert committee. The expert committee should be instituted prior to elections.

(b) **Securing Software.** The Hash value, as defined in Section 3 of the Information Technology Act 2000, original software source code as well as its compiled version should be made public so that it is verifiable that the compiled version is actually from the original source code and no additional source lines have been added just prior to

compilation. The hash value of the compiled version must be verified by the company loading the software on PROM and provided certificate of the same for each and every PROM so loaded. The PROM must be loaded by an Indian Company.

(c) **Awareness.** Not only officials but party agents must be made aware of the vulnerabilities especially the above-mentioned vulnerability; probably it is only the human eye that can provide some defence against such malware.

(d) **Paper slip.** ECI has proposed paper-slip mechanism to the Supreme Court; this must also be implemented.

Fig 2

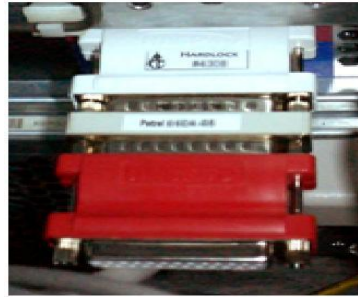


Fig 3

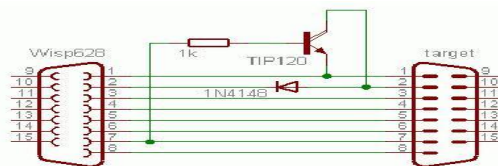


Fig 4

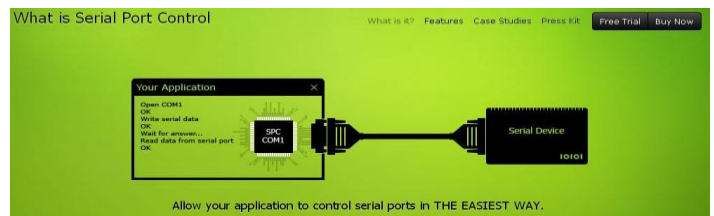


Fig1



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# Vimarsha: 'Swami Vivekananda on Women: Meeting the Contemporary Challenges'

With the gruesome Delhi gang-rape of last December shaking up the conscience of this very nation, also providing a strong stimulus for the course of corrective measures, a talk on 'Swami Vivekananda on Women: Meeting the Contemporary Challenges' was organized by Vivekananda International Foundation on January 28, 2013, with Shri Dhanendra Kumar, former Secretary Culture, Govt. of India and former Executive Director of the World Bank, as the chief speaker. The significance of VIF's first 'Vimarsha' (an ongoing series of monthly talks) in the year 2013 gets underlined by the fact that the Foundation chose to highlight it at a time when the country is already celebrating the 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, a great saint who worked tirelessly to uplift the plight of women, in particular the Indian women.



As the evening session progressed after the traditional chanting of mantra invoking universal peace, Shri Ajit Doval, KC, Director VIF, made an introductory speech, highlighting, in particular, the fact that the heinous crime perpetrated against a hapless girl, however, condemnable it might be, pointed to a much bigger malice - the seeping rot in the society at large. He observed rather ruefully that, while India may have progressed economically, technologically and so on, she is increasingly devoid of the centuries' old civilizational ethos and values – bonds that have held India together as a nation for centuries. It is highly deplorable that those bonds are being eroded with impunity.

A series of youth protests and demonstrations in recent times, starting with the anti-corruption campaign in 2011, is a clear indication of the degradation of

age old values, but it is also pointer to a much larger issue - the systemic failure of governance. As far as the condition of women in the society is concerned, he observed that, "there is a very strange correlation between the growth of a society and the status of women in that society". History is a testimony that as long as women are respected and enjoy a certain degree of status in the societies, the societies themselves progress. In the case of India, our golden periods in history were those when women were at the forefront of our philosophical thoughts. However, with the gradual marginalization of the Indian women, the status of India as a nation also suffered a decline correspondingly. Swami Vivekananda, who wanted India to reawaken to its true potentials, had great respect for women. What can be a better tribute to this great saint of the land than to relook at the status of women in our societies, especially in the year of his 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary?

The chief speaker, Shri Dhanendra Kumar, a retired I.A.S. with long working experience on women empowerment, also underscored that mobilization of youth support for the rape victim presents a ray

of hope that all is not lost yet. Swami Vivekananda had reposed great faith in the power of youth to bring about the right transformation within the society. The tsunami of emotions unleashed after the rape incident, especially the massive outpouring of anger by the youth, has undoubtedly presented the country with a historic opportunity to galvanize the youth power for constructive purposes, especially towards nation building. The nation must seize this opportunity.

The erudite speaker, who is also one of the Vice Presidents of Swami Vivekananda Sharada Shati Samaroh Samiti, a national level committee formed to carry forward the teachings of Swamiji in five segments of the society – one of them being *Samvardhini*, which focuses specifically on women empowerment, highlighted that unlike in the West where woman is perceived only as a 'wife', the Indian tradition has been to treat women reverentially as a 'mother'. However, women in India suffer from the worst form of discrimination, including a dismal sex ratio, as compared to men. Quoting Swami Vivekananda copiously, Shri Kumar said that women empowerment and

mobilization of youth power are among the essential ingredients needed to make India a great nation. There is, however, a requirement to build a system of education which focuses on character building, especially among the children and youth. A lively interactive session followed after the talk.

Before the session drew to an end, Shri Manas Bhattacharya, Assistant Secretary VIF, gave a broad overview of the various activities and programmes which

are planned to be undertaken across the whole of India as part of the 150th birth anniversary celebrations of Swamiji. He urged everyone present to take part whole heartedly in these activities, covered broadly under five dimensions – Asmita, Gramayan, Yuva Shakti, Prabuddha Bharat, and Samvardhini.

*Report prepared by Sanjay Kumar*

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